INTELLECTUAL RESISTANCE AND THE STRUGGLE FOR PALESTINE

Matthew Abraham

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This book is dedicated to the life and legacy of Edward W. Said (1935–2003), whose example of intellectual resistance continues to inspire so many.

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"Tracing the Discourse of Defiance: Remembering Edward Said Through the Resistance of the Palestinian Intifada." *Nebula: A Journal of Multidisciplinary Scholarship* 2.2 (2005).

"Territorial Ambition: Edward Said's Unmasking of the Intellectual's Complicity with State Expansion," *Paradoxical*

Citizenship: Essays on Edward Said, Ed. Silvia Nagy-Zekmi. Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2008.

"Alan Wald's The New York Intellectuals and the Discourse of Shifting Alliances: Anticommunist Liberalism, Neo-Conservatism, and the Rise of Israelism as a Manifestation of Jewish Nationalism." *Reconstruction* 8.1 (2008).

"Obama's Cairo Speech: Beyond the Rhetoric and Politics of Good Muslim and Bad Muslim." *The Making of Barack Obama: The Politics of Persuasion* (Anderson, SC: Parlor, 2013).

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INTRODUCTION

Intellectual Resistance and the Struggle for Palestine

Resistance as a Political Act

I have been thinking and writing about the Question of Palestine (the Israel-Palestine conflict) for a little more than ten years. While I am not an expert on the Middle East and am neither Arab nor Jewish, I have grown increasingly concerned—as someone interested in the state of public discourse in the United States and the declining quality of American democratic deliberative processes—by how the political and intellectual stakes around the conflict have been obscured by charges and countercharges of extremism and bad faith. An open and frank discussion about the Israel-Palestine conflict in the United States faces certain obstacles and discursive roadblocks, preventing a complete consideration of the range of facts necessary for understanding the far-ranging consequences that continued strife in the region will produce for the rest of the world.

Since the US government plays such a central role in what has been called the "peace process" as a supposedly "neutral broker," American citizens should at least aspire to possess a basic sense of how their tax money is being spent in the context of fueling—instead of ending—the conflict. In other words, the "peace process" has been a sham if "peace" in the normal sense has been the goal. In fact, the lexicon of the "peace process" ensures the promotion of US and Israeli strategic goals in the Middle East with the Palestinians

representing an afterthought at best and an obstacle to the powerful at worst.[1] Amazingly, those who have sought to introduce and inject the very information that might enable this understanding into the public sphere have often been maligned and misrepresented. The act of speaking out about the Question of Palestine, and against injustice in Palestine, represents an act of significant resistance precisely because of the strength of those who deny the existence of Palestine and the historical grievances of Palestinians. Resistance, then, takes on a twofold meaning in this context: The act of resisting both censorship and surveillance by speaking out in support of Palestinian rights meets significant resistance (psychological, material, and political) as a result of the central place Israel and Zionism hold in the American psyche. The intense surveillance around the Question of Palestine, the monitoring of what constitutes legitimate knowledge and claims within the Israel-Palestine conflict, brings together a complex set of social and political forces. Israel's supporters recognize the significance of winning the public relations battle against those who support finding an international consensus for a just resolution to the conflict. Edward Said eloquently addressed this concept of Palestine-as-resistance in all these senses in *The Question of Palestine*: "The idea of resistance gets muscle and context from Palestine; more usefully resistance gets detail and a positively new approach to the microphysics of oppression from Palestine. If we think of Palestine as having the function of both a place to be returned to and of an entirely new place, a vision of a partially restored past and of a novel future, perhaps even a historical disaster transformed into a hope for a different future, we will understand the word's meaning better" (125). The emphasis Said places on Palestine as a geographical location and as an idea, as a site of resistance through which various liberation struggles find a point of articulation, is extremely significant for understanding how the struggle for intellectual freedom in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict depends on acts of resistance.

Serious questions have arisen about the parameters of debate shaping the conflict as a result of public controversies surrounding former president Jimmy Carter, who wrote *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid* in

2006 and Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer, the authors of *The Israel Lobby*, as well as other academic controversies involving Norman Finkelstein, Juan Cole, Joseph Massad, Nadia Abu-Haj, and others. I have written about some of these controversies elsewhere.[2]

Despite the political reputation of Carter and the scholarly reputations of Walt and Mearsheimer, several Zionist organizations and pro-Israel partisans raised questions about Carter and Walt and Mearsheimer's judgment due to their seemingly harsh criticisms of the Israel Lobby and its role in enforcing a certain political correctness about the acceptable limits of debate about the Israel-Palestine conflict.[3] For example, organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee, and the Zionist Organization of America launched scathing attacks against Carter for being so openly critical of Israel in the context of recounting his efforts in the Middle East peace process.[4] These organizations seemingly portrayed Carter as having betrayed Israel, and the Jewish community more generally, with his commentary in *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid* about how Israel's defiance of the international consensus on a just resolution to the Question of Palestine poses a serious challenge to bringing peace to the Middle East. Carter's good-faith effort in *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid* to recount his failed attempts to hold Israeli leaders, such as Menachem Begin, to their promises about halting settlement construction made him the object of derision among those who are blinded by their loyalty to the Zionist project. Carter confirmed that Israel has failed to abide by many peace agreements over the years, agreements that the Palestinians have faithfully followed. Carter's insights about Israel's unwillingness to abide by past agreements undoubtedly came as a shock to many people who had long believed that Palestinian rejectionism of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state constituted the real basis for the absence of peace in the Middle East.

Carter's judgment in *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid* upset conventional views on the conflict, which inevitably blame the Palestinians for their desperate condition and present Israel as continually coming to the negotiating table without a genuine Palestinian peace partner.

In arguing that Israeli rejectionism—Israel's refusal to comply with international law and view the Palestinian leadership as a legitimate negotiating partner—forms the real barrier to a lasting peace in the Middle East, Carter violated a cultural taboo in highlighting Israeli exceptionalism; hence the strong, nearly hysterical, reaction to a book that simply laid out the international consensus and Israel's repeated refusal to comply with it. Carter was accused of senility and misrepresenting the historical and diplomatic record, as well as harboring an animus against Jews. The vehemence of these attacks against Carter suggested to me that special interests, with a heavy investment in protecting the US-Israel special relationship from full exposure, are deeply committed to preventing a full understanding and discussion about the historical and diplomatic record with respect to the Israel-Palestine conflict. These special-interest groups, committed to blocking serious discussion about the conflict, are a direct threat to the fabric of US democracy and its deliberative processes.

The steady efforts to legitimize Israel's illegal settlements and to undermine international law (the Palestinian right of return, the illegitimacy of acquiring land through force, the de-Arabization of East Jerusalem, and the condemnation of Israel's occupation) point to a broader effort to legitimate Israel's status within the international system. The frequent invocations of Israel's standing as the only democracy in the Middle East, a country committed to pursuing terror within the rule of law, an upholder of civil liberties, a protector of minorities, and so on, speaks to this process of legitimizing Israel's breach of numerous international laws and protocols with respect to its occupation of the West Bank. Inevitably, Israel's defenders bellow, "What about Darfur? What about Tibet? Why doesn't the Left denounce these occupations and land thefts?" What these diversionary questions fail to address is the fact that Israel is the single biggest recipient of US military aid, a significant reason progressives continually criticize Israel's occupation, not because they are "obsessed" with Israel or are motivated by anti-Semitism.

A promiscuous form of anti-Semitism-baiting has arisen as part of a campaign to "protect" Israel against criticism. As part of this

effort, a veritable industry works to probe the psyches of Israel's critics, searching for the merest hint of unconscious anti-Semitism. As the argument goes, these critics are obsessed with denouncing the Jewish state, not because of what it does but because of what it is—a Jewish homeland. By this argument, the widespread criticisms of Israel—from the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement to the condemnations Israel receives at the United Nations from year to year—are directed at the worldwide Jewish community with Israel representing a convenient target for this anti-Semitism. These attempts by Israel's apologists to smear those who are seeking to bring greater attention to the plight of the Palestinians living under occupation are disingenuous because they seek to divert attention away from serious issues. In fact, these attempts border on deep-seated totalitarianism. The rise of the so-called new anti-Semitism has provided a convenient way to do this, deploying a stifling form of political correctness that derails substantive debate and criticism through a set of gangster tactics. Many Zionist organizations seem committed to upholding a party line on Israel, often hewing to the same script about how Israel is subject to an unrelenting hostility and attacks by leftists who supposedly don't see their own anti-Semitism.[5] By suggesting that critics of Israel are motivated by a hatred of Jews and not a concern over Palestinian human rights or justice, these organizations can effectively avoid the substance of the debate: Israel's annexation of Palestinian land.

As my thinking and writing about the conflict have matured, I have been repeatedly struck by the historical similarities between Jewish and Palestinian suffering. What bring these two histories of suffering together, of course, are Zionism and the creation of Israel. In a very real sense, both Jews and Palestinians in historical Palestine are victims of the Zionist movement's quest to create a Jewish homeland in the Middle East. Regardless of how one feels about the feats of daring, ruthlessness, and supposed heroism that brought Israel into existence, there can be little doubt that Zionism set the two peoples on an inevitable collision course that has indelibly altered world history. Zionism's insistence that it represents world Jewry places those Jews,

who refuse to allow Israel to speak in their names, in an almost heretical position within the public space. Naturally, the costs of Zionism for the Palestinians have been enormous, pitting them against a historical underdog. Within this context, conceptions of resistance against Zionism, as advanced by Jewish and Palestinian intellectuals, emerge as a distinct historical theme as anti-Zionist Jews and Palestinians living under occupation have sought to resist Zionism's claims about each group.

Through dissident speech and writing, anti-Zionist Jews resist Zionism's suggestion that Israel speaks and acts for all Jews throughout the world. Famous dissident Jews against Zionism range from Martin Buber to Hannah Arendt to Noam Chomsky to Norman Finkelstein to Judith Butler. This dissent from the Zionist consensus often results in exclusion and abuse within the Zionist community. Through symbolic and physical acts of resistance, Palestinians living under occupation resist Zionism's territorial claims about Judea and Samaria belonging to the ancient Israelites and hence to current Israel. Both anti-Zionist Jews and Palestinians enact a resistance against the silencing of their respective narratives, refusing to become objects in the Zionist fantasy that underwrites the removal of the indigenous population from historical Palestine and deeming those Jews who refuse to play along as self-hating. Positioning Jews and Palestinians as victims of Zionism is a very useful way to create lines of solidarity between two populations frequently pitted against each other in popular media representations of the conflict.

The Structure of This Book

The chapters in this book consider how the Question of Palestine carves out a *topoi*, a site of controversy, a location associated with silencing, contestation, and repression. The Question of Palestine, despite numerous attempts to ignore it, returns again and again, intruding on US national and international affairs. While "the Question of Palestine" is a phrase associated with "the Israel-Palestine conflict," for many Palestinian intellectuals such as Edward Said it has much a larger significance as a concept possessing historical echoes

of Palestinian loss, dispossession, and exile in the wake of Israel's creation.[6] The various and sustained attempts that have been made to control how the Israel-Palestine conflict is understood and discussed in the United States are largely geared toward limiting a broader understanding of the dimensions of the Palestinian tragedy from emerging. I describe how a dialectical relationship has been obtained between Zionist repression and Palestinian resistance and that the Question of Palestine returns again and again in acts of intellectual and physical resistance. While I confess that connecting acts of intellectual resistance—in this case supporting an unpopular national cause through one's scholarship and public intellectualism—to acts of armed physical resistance can be complicated, I do think it is appropriate in considering the predicament of the Palestinian intellectual who faces a unique existential condition in the United States. Edward Said, as the leading spokesperson for the Palestinian cause in the United States, exemplified this existential condition until his death in September 2003. Two chapters of this book focus on Said's persistent attempts to grant the Palestinians the "permission to narrate" their story of loss and dispossession in a public space still reflexively sympathetic to historical Jewish suffering.[7]

In this context, those advancing claims about Palestinian suffering and grievance are likely to find themselves on the rocky shoals of historical anti-Semitism, not because that is what is intended but because those who seek to disrupt the hegemony of Jewish suffering will be positioned as harboring illegitimate motives.[8] This is a unique historical situation: the suffering of a group of people, in this case the Palestinians, can be held at bay out of deference to a larger historical framework of Jewish suffering extending back more than five thousand years. Those seeking to resist this framework by displacing the discourses of exceptionalism around it, and the ways in which this framework obstructs dealing with the present, are challenging a cultural and discursive hegemony. This hegemony has been wedded to defending Israel against criticism within the public space by harnessing the exceptionalism around Jewish suffering for the purpose of producing a discourse of Israeli exceptionalism. As Alam notes,

> The Zionists were determined to reenact in the middle of the twentieth century the exclusive settler colonialism of an earlier epoch. They were determined to repeat the supremacist history of the while colons in the Americas and Oceania. By the measure of any historical epoch, much less than an age of decolonization, the Zionist project was radical in the fate it had planned for the Palestinians: their complete or near complete displacement from Palestine. A project, so daring, so radical, so anachronistic could only emerge from unlimited hubris, deep racial contempt for the Palestinians, and a conviction that the Palestinians, and a conviction that the "primitive" Palestinians would prove to be utterly lacking in their capacity to resist their own dispossession. (138)

This wedding of Zionist history to Jewish history required an illegitimate abduction: the theft of the history of the Jewish people for a colonial project in the Middle East. This move to consolidate Zionist, Jewish, and Israeli history is a perverse one, since it brings all three histories together to position Israel as a representative for all Jews and Jewish memory for all time.

In Chapter 1, I take up what Benjamin Ginsberg has called "the fatal embrace," the modern Jewish tendency to seek out state power to keep their historical enemies at bay. What this fatal embrace has meant is an identification of Jews with the state and its bureaucracies, contributing to the perception that Jewish interests drive the media, the Pentagon, and the push for war in the Middle East in defense of Israel. This historical stereotype of the court Jew whispering into the ears of powerful gentiles in an attempt to steer a state policy in a particular direction has gained traction in the modern period because of the visibility of prominent Jews in key strategic positions within the American government. These figures have possessed significant loyalty for Israel with suspicions circulating that they have greater affection for Israel than the United States. As Ginsberg writes in his *The Fatal Embrace*,

> Jews have played important roles in the construction of absolutist, liberal, and socialist states as well as in major parts in movements seeking to reform or supplant regimes to which they were unable to gain access. Jews have traditionally offered their services to the state in exchange for

> the regime's guarantee of security and opportunity. Ironically, however, precisely this relationship between Jews and the state has often organized anti-Semitic attacks.
>
> The power and protection offered Jews by the state, however, has tended to be evanescent. It lasts only so long as Jews' allies in government coalitions continue to find them useful and their "state" continues to have the capacity to defend them from attack. In the meantime, by employing the state to hold off their enemies, the Jews add its foes to their own. (57–58)

This fatal embrace of the state has frequently positioned Jews as proxies of unpopular governmental actions and policies. In Chapter 1, I consider the implications of the neoconservatives' connection to the 2003 invasion of Iraq. This connection generated suspicions that the Iraq invasion was motivated by concerns about Israel's security needs, leaving many to conjecture that the American public was being duped about the real reasons for the war. In this chapter, I consider how the rightward political shift among Jewish intellectuals after 1967—in the wake of Israel's impressive defeat of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan in the Six-Day War—seemingly coincided with a more general retreat from supporting progressive social causes. The New York intellectuals, an idealistic group of activist writers who were considered liberal on social equity and opposed to US colonialism and adventurism, began to align with the power establishment in an attempt to facilitate their own careerism. I argue in Chapter 2 that the late Palestinian intellectual Edward Said, in his opposition to many of those Jewish intellectuals on the Israel-Palestine conflict, represented a throwback to what the original New York intellectuals were. In Chapter 3, I broaden my focus on Said, arguing that his intellectual example constituted a form of intellectual resistance connected to the kind of resistance driving the second Palestinian intifada. Chapter 4 examines the kind of Palestinian resistance to Israeli colonization that is the most controversial: suicide bombing. I argue that suicide bombing is a form of resistance that has been misunderstood as a nihilistic and gruesome act committed by an individual, whereas it should be considered an affirmative, communal act

advancing Palestinian political goals. It is this context of violence and extremism that President Barack Obama spoke about to the Arab-Muslim world on June 4, 2009, seeking to repair the United States' relations with the East in the wake of the War on Terror. This address at Cairo University, Obama's first to the Muslim world since his inauguration, sought to outline his plan to address the continued cycles of violence in the Israel-Palestine conflict. In Chapter 5, I analyze Obama's Cairo Speech, seeking to identify the specific political and discursive constraints around Obama's treatment of Jewish and Palestinian narratives of suffering.

Academic intellectuals, media pundits, and even US presidents (present and former) have been vilified and attacked for working outside a certain framework of constraints or criticizing the growth of Israeli settlements and Israel's numerous violations of international agreements and laws. These criticisms of Israel create discursive controversy because they cut against the grain of the discourse of exceptionalism that has been created around Israel. The chapters gathered here attempt to argue how extreme this discourse has become, positioning those who are in favor of the international consensus as radical and exotic. Indeed, advancing claims about Palestinian human rights and the justness of the Palestinian cause is an act of resistance in a number of different registers. First, it is a symbolic act of resistance against Zionist domination of the US public sphere, where Palestinian stories of suffering are crowded out by the nearly obsessive focus on the Holocaust and post–World War II Jewish experience.[9]

I define anti-Semitism as the irrational hatred directed against Jews. I define anti-Zionism as opposition to Israel's treatment of the Palestinians in the occupied territories, Israel's refusal to comply with many aspects of international law, including UN Resolutions 242 and 194, and its refusal to cease its current settlement expansion. While it is true that Zionism posits that Israel is the Jewish State, a large number of Jews refuses to allow Israel to speak in its name. Those who argue that anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism emerge out of the same discursive well seek to alter the framework through which criticisms of Israel emerge by insisting that it is impossible to criticize

Israel without harboring resentment and hatred for the Jewish people. This position creates an affective context where intellectual assertion and resistance become framed as manifestations of anti-Semitism and Judeophobia, relegating even the most well-documented criticisms of Israel as suspect and discreditable. Far too often, Israel's defenders state that legitimate criticism of Israel must be reasonable and contextual, whereby Israel is not singled out and held to a higher standard than other countries facing comparable threats. Criticism of Israel, according to this line of argument, is wholly out of proportion to Israeli misdoing. How true is it that repressive Arab regimes in the past have used the Palestinian issue as a political rallying cry through which to deter the oppressed from focusing on the regimes' shortcomings? Even if this is the case, it would not—in itself—be a reason to jump to the conclusion that Israel is being singled out for unfair criticism. That Israel's defenders enlarge the frame of discussion to minimize the criticisms suggests that it's easier to change the subject than to rebut what's being alleged about Israel's behavior.

Israel's supporters (and one might really argue that their kind of "support" is detrimental to Israel) argue that there is continued and persistent hostility directed against Jews as Jews. According to this view, self-styled antiracists attack Israel (as the Jew among the nations) viciously and relentlessly in the name of anti-Zionism, not realizing that these attacks are informed by a rhetoric and motivated by perhaps unconscious forces that are indeed anti-Semitic. Alvin Rosenfeld's *Resurgent Anti-Semitism: Global Perspectives* traffics in just this sort of endeavor, attempting to argue that anti-Zionists are indeed closet anti-Semites, even though they are horrified by such a description.

An observer from another planet, witnessing debates about the Israel-Palestine conflict, might be perplexed by the amount of ink and bad blood that has been spilled in debating the Question of Palestine. How has a country the size of New Jersey become the focus of so much polarizing debate and acrimony, the object of boycotts, United Nations resolutions, and militants? Is it a target because it is the Jewish state or because its behavior is so reprehensible and

beyond the pale that it deserves international opprobrium? Its critics argue that it has been granted a unique status in international affairs, protected against serious criticism and sanction by the United States.

As a national movement, Zionism, from its very origins, has been committed to suppressing dissent in its ranks. Jewish dissidents who believe that a Jewish homeland was not in the best interest of the Jewish people were marginalized and silenced. Therefore, it should hardly be surprising that a commitment to repression and censorship has been a major part of Zionist history. Since it purported to be protecting the future of the Jewish people in the wake of the Holocaust, its censorship and suppression were special and necessary. That Zionist propaganda passes as historical fact in the United States is a testament to the power of American Zionist Jewry, one of the most committed ethnoreligious groups in US history, which is dedicated to protecting its own history of suffering and the memory of victims central to preserving that history. To shutdown critical inquiry of the relevant facts, a number of ingenious and underhanded methods are employed.

What Is Legitimate Criticism and What Isn't?

It is no mean accomplishment to bemoan the supposed efforts of Israel's critics to "reject the right of the Jewish people to self-determination and statehood," while Israel completely destroys the Palestinian nation and the hopes and aspirations of the Palestinian people. The self-righteousness of these performances is truly astounding. If these defenders of Israel are to be believed, Israel teeters on the brink of annihilation by Muslim extremists from countries ranging from Lebanon to Iran, subject at any moment to all-out destruction at the hands of its many enemies, ever innocent of any wrongdoing and subjected to unjust defamation and accusations of wrongdoing within the international arena. This performance enacts the famous "thief, thief" technique: When you're caught with your hand in someone's target, yell "thief, thief" to shift attention away from your crimes to those of your accusers. By doing so, you will effectively change the topic of discussion from your transgressions to those of your accusers.

This repeated tactic has proven to be somewhat effective over time in terms of protecting Israel against international condemnation for its behavior, particularly during the 2006 Lebanon war. Indeed, these Zionist organizations have fundamentally changed the discursive contours of the debate by so inflating the currency of anti-Semitism, insinuating that anyone who opposes what Israel is doing (or criticizing its territorial ambitions) is somehow anti-Semitic, that the charge of anti-Semitism itself has become a very blunt instrument through which to discipline dissent. Unfortunately, this inflationary use of the charge of anti-Semitism has ironically made it an obligation to be an anti-Semite, to speak out against Israeli human rights violations in the occupied territories.

In my previous book, I described the travails of several dissident scholars seeking to advance the international consensus on the Israel-Palestine conflict through scholarship.[10] The pressures placed upon those refusing to abide by the dominant narrative, celebrating Israel's creation as a major miracle in the Middle East while marginalizing claims to justice advanced by the Palestinians, are immense. Indeed, the suppression of Palestinian claims of injustice against Israel is carefully hidden from the view of American citizens. An immense industry dedicates itself to marginalizing and misinforming the American public about the Israel-Palestine conflict. This industry is supported by pro-Israel organizations and individuals. The casualness with which Palestinian suffering is dismissed by the US media is astounding, suggesting that those who lack power, privilege, and money are fated to silently suffer their fate as *untermenschen*. Despite the imbalance of forces, there have been developments over the last five years that attest to a shifting momentum: The boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement, otherwise known as BDS, has made substantial strides to raise international awareness about the fundamentally unjust conditions under which Palestinians living under occupation must contend. That there is a growing international movement dedicated to building public awareness and consciousness about the plight of the Palestinians suggests that attempts to exclude this narrative have failed, largely because Israel's attempts to explain its role

in the region do not add up from the standpoint of understanding what is happening in the Middle East and the seeming impossibility of establishing a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

Although this inability to establish a peaceful resolution between Israelis and Palestinians has been blamed on the unwillingness of both sides to give up mythological narratives about their historical connections to Palestine, the balance of violence has overwhelmingly been on Israel's side despite representations to the contrary in the popular media. In fact, Israel fears the cessation of violence or any attempt that would force it to make painful concessions that require it to give up land it currently occupies. The current predicament suggests that the international community, specifically the United States, cannot control what Israel does in the region despite protestations that Israel can only go as far as the United States will let it. This sense that Israel has been blackmailing its main client, with the promise of cataclysmic violence if its demands for military aid and diplomatic cover are not met, is beginning to gain some traction in the mainstream after years of portrayals of Israel as the victim in the conflict. The inversion of reality, with the Palestinians repeatedly being cast as incapable of peace and aggressors in the conflict, must stand as one of the major propaganda triumphs of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It is in this context that telling the truth about Palestinian suffering has actually become difficult, heretical, and downright dangerous to careers and livelihoods.

In 1986, Noam Chomsky published an article titled "Thought Control in the USA" for the journal *Index on Censorship*, published in England, arguing that discussions about the Middle East conflict take place within narrow and carefully controlled bounds. This controlled discussion paints the Palestinians as intransigent rejectionists of Israel's right to exist as an exclusively Jewish state while portraying Israel as the only party genuinely committed to peace. Chomsky maintained that a carefully constructed lexicon had been built to prevent American citizens from understanding the ledger sheet of violence in the Middle East, hiding the fact that the guilty parties, Israel and the United States, are committed to preventing the

emergence of a substantive peace process. Those who go outside of these bounds, revealing that Israel has never been committed to peace and, in fact, desperately fears a cessation of violence, will find themselves becoming the objects of abuse and vilification. The language of the peace process, which paints Israel as the victim of Palestinian terrorism and rejectionism, distorts the actual historical record, turning reality on its head by insisting that if only the Palestinians would join Israel in its quest for peace and become a genuine peace partner, the Middle East conflict would be solved. The strong reaction to Chomsky's article was unprecedented; the *Index on Censorship* was targeted for opprobrium for publishing a dissident author on a nearly taboo topic. After all, the *Index on Censorship* is devoted to exposing instances of censorship; yet, some seemed to insist that Index had not done an effective enough job screening out dissident thought on this particular issue: thought control about the Middle East in the United States.

In a letter addressed to *Index*'s editor Dan Jacobsen, dated July 29, 1986, Elliot Abrams, a State Department official in charge of Central American Affairs, expressed astonishment that Chomsky had been given space to criticize "the freest press in the world," wondering aloud if Jacobsen was aware that no one takes Chomsky seriously on Middle East issues. "Did you, perhaps being aware of this, publish Chomsky's views anyway?"[11] Amazingly, a US State Department official expressed concern to the editor of an English journal that it should not have published an article by a dissident that was critical of the US press. This is tantamount to a Soviet commissar writing to the editor of an American journal devoted to exposing censorship, complaining that it had published an article by a Russian dissident that was critical of *Pravda*. Abrams's letter appeared on official US State Department letterhead, indicating that he was representing the viewpoint of the US government. That a dissident's commentary in an obscure journal in England could elicit the reaction of a senior figure in the Reagan administration attests to the central role that propaganda plays in controlling what Americans think and understand about the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Given the mounting evidence and data condemning Israeli policy in the region, Israel's defenders have been forced to adopt increasingly desperate measures to marginalize significant commentators on the Israel-Palestine conflict. Commentators as prominent as Desmond Tutu, Jimmy Carter, and Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer cannot be easily dismissed when they providing far-ranging moral and political critiques of Israel's occupation policies. The fact that these criticisms have broken into the mainstream represents a tremendous problem for Israel's public relations specialists. In each of these cases, inevitable questions have been raised about the critics' unconscious anti-Semitism or supposed hidden agenda against Israel. If one does not support Israel's immoral policies—or in these cases are quite critical of these policies in print—then one is a *de facto* "Israel basher," refusing to provide contextual criticism of Israel in relation to other human rights crises in Darfur, Tibet, and Rwanda.

In the view of one of Israel's most ardent defenders, Alan Dershowitz, these critics are seemingly living in some alternate universe where Israel's misdeeds are pulled out of thin air, seemingly confirming that the Israeli government is the prime human rights violator in the world today. Dershowitz and others, such as Anthony Julius, insist that those seeking to denounce, sanction, and divest from Israel are not motivated by conscience, morals, or lofty principles such as human rights but are driven by a hatred for Israel as a Jewish State, "the Jew among the nations."[12] What such a charge helps to circumvent is a substantive engagement with the relevant issues around Israel's occupation of Palestinian land.

By attempting to shift the debate from what Israel is doing in the occupied territories to the hidden psychological forces supposedly propelling Israel's critics, Dershowitz and other staunch supporters of Israel seek to divert attention away from the international consensus for the resolution of the conflict and toward speculation about dark psychological forces rooted in historical anti-Semitism. What sort of litmus test will critics of Israel have to pass to prove that they are not driven by anti-Semitism but instead out of a concern for Palestinians living under Israeli occupation? Lamentably, many

supporters of Israel have made it nearly impossible to even entertain this question because any attempt to reign in, or even question, Israeli policy is framed in the context of anti-Jewish animus. While many critics of Israel will admit they are anti-Zionist, they naturally object to the conflation of anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism, recognizing that anyone who wanders into the discursive terrain of the Israel-Palestine conflict will inevitably face questions about his or her identity, motivations, alliances, allegiances, and so on, upon adopting a seemingly pro-Palestinian stance, even if that stance fully conforms to the dictates of international law. The attempts to undermine the international legal consensus on the Israel-Palestine conflict are unprecedented, a recognition by Israel's most zealous defenders that the international legal consensus does not support what Israel wants in terms of eventually annexing the occupied territories. In this context, the concept of "lawfare" has been developed to talk about how international law and protocols have been deployed by academic leftists to delegitimize Israel.[13]

The attempts to present Israel as "the only democracy in the Middle East," a country attempting to comply with the rule of law and uphold civil liberties in the face of unprecedented security threats, fail to take into account the reasons Israel faces such threats in the first place. In this context, Palestinian anger toward, and resistance against, Israel's occupation policies becomes framed as being nonsensical as part of the narrative of historical anti-Semitism directed against Jews. The significant efforts that have gone toward maintaining this frame, even to the point of absurdity, suggest that the "nazification" of the Palestinians and their supporters will continue apace as Israel continues to face international condemnation for its occupation and settlement expansion. The persistent image of Palestinian intransigence in the face of Israeli beneficence continues to falter, requiring Israel's propagandists and spin doctors to develop increasingly novel ways to malign critics.

For example, the attempts to characterize Palestinian professor Joseph Massad of Columbia University as a violator of the academic freedom and speech rights of the students in his class on Israel-Palestine

were part of a larger effort to clear the playing field of effective advocates for Palestinian rights in the US public sphere. The clear misrepresentation of Massad's classroom statements and the Columbia administration's ridiculous attempt to appear evenhanded in expressing concern about Massad's supposedly problematic conduct bordered on farcical. The administration went so far as to put together an ad hoc committee to investigate whether professors in the Middle East and Asian Languages and Culture (MEALAC) Departments were contributing to the creation of an anti-Semitic environment.[14]

A student group at Columbia focused on Massad's classroom statements, expressing concern that they created an uncomfortable environment for Jewish students.[15] Massad had been pegged as Edward Said's successor as the principal spokesperson for the Palestinian cause in the United States, making him an obvious target for Zionist organizations wishing to control all relevant discussion about the conflict in the United States. These organizations succeeded in derailing future offerings of the course and complicating Massad's tenure bid in 2006 despite Massad's enviable publication record. Senior medical school, business, computer science, and journalism faculty at Columbia got involved in the controversy, penning a letter to Columbia's provost Claude Steele in June 2009 requesting a reevaluation of MEALAC's positive recommendation of Massad's tenure bid.[16] Moshe Rubin wrote a harassing email to Massad, telling him to "get the hell out of America" and to "go back to Arab land."[17] It is an open question whether those opposed to Massad's presence at Columbia had read Massad's work or even comprehended his nuanced arguments about the conflict, perhaps instead relying on media accounts about the controversy.[18] Former New York congressman Anthony Weiner was one of the most outspoken critics of Columbia's MEALAC Department.[19]

The Demands of Israeli Hasbara

That the US public sphere has been primed and restructured to serve the demands of Israeli hasbara (facts for the outside world) reveals the depth of the penetration of Zionism's narrative about the conflict with respect to the kinds of knowledge claims that can be credibly

advanced in the public space. That factual claims about the conflict that support the Palestinian perspective are so frequently characterized as bizarre and unrealistic demonstrates the triumph of Israeli propaganda. That American citizens and news outlets have become unwitting hasbara agents in Israel's push to colonize the US public sphere by simply repeating mantras about the conflict speaks to the enormity of Israeli power in shaping American perceptions about the Middle East. While it is taboo to acknowledge it, the prominence of American Zionist Jews sympathetic to Israel in the uppermost echelons of government and media plays an extremely important role in shaping and nurturing the US-Israel special relationship.

While the role of neoconservatives, particularly Jewish neoconservatives such as Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz, is well known, the important role played by a whole host of individuals deeply committed to the US-Israel special relationship, who occupy important positions throughout civil society—from doctors to judges to mayors in small town America—has not been properly appreciated. James Petras, in his *The Power of Israel in the United States* and other books, has developed a powerful explanatory framework to describe the hegemony of the special relationship. Petras coins the concept of the "Zionist Power Configuration," which addresses more than the influence of the Israel Lobby in the beltway, extending to how the political, social, and financial institutions within the United States control the major decision making on domestic and foreign policy issues. Naturally, this control reaches into the intellectual sphere where substantive criticisms of Israel's occupation of Palestine frequently emerge.

Unsurprisingly, individuals who challenge conventional thinking about politically charged topics such as the Israel-Palestine conflict face the most serious infringements of their academic freedom protections. With respect to discussions about the Israel-Palestine conflict in the United States, intellectual freedom is neither guaranteed nor protected because Zionist organizations seek to impose a politically correct vocabulary and framework through which to discuss the substantive issues around the Israel-Palestine conflict, for example international law and the international consensus.

Even well-meaning intellectuals often slide into obscuring the fundamental injustice at the heart of the conflict. Here is what Daniel Gordis asks in his recent book *The Promise of Israel*:

> What kind of society do the Palestinians wish to foster? Will they have the courage to embrace minorities? Will they create a public square in which the values of Islam and the commitments of the West struggle for the hearts and souls of everyday citizens, in which Islam and the West learn from each other? Will they guarantee the freedoms of those who dare to challenge even Islam's most sacred commitments? If they can do this, then Palestinian statehood will enrich not just Palestinians but also the one and a half billions Muslims across the world. If they cannot or will not, then sovereignty and the end of living under Israeli occupation will not have made them any freer? (16)

What makes this paragraph particularly ridiculous is that Gordis seems to present Israel's refusal to comply with the international consensus and to end its occupation because the answers to the previous questions are in doubt. It's an interesting trick designed to produce anguish and lamentation. Numerous intellectuals, including Noam Chomsky, Norman Finkelstein, Jonathan Cooke, and Jeffrey Halper, have documented an unsettling pattern of intellectual suppression of viewpoints conducive to supporting Palestinian human rights in the Israeli occupied territories. The concerted attempts to derail conversations about Palestinian suffering or to defame those forwarding a narrative uncongenial to Israel's supporters suggest that there are parties in the United States determined to squelch the truth about the Israel-Palestine conflict through the most underhanded means. The amount of effort required to generate the steady stream of propaganda necessary to protect Israeli rejectionism from any serious scrutiny suggests that there are people and institutions sure to be exposed if the heavy-handed tactics of the past continue into the present. The nearly total control over discussion that Zionists have exercised has effectively worked to marginalize the suffering of Palestinian Arabs.

The presentation of Israel as a beleaguered state in the Middle East, surrounded by so many hostile neighbors, is such a firm and persistent image in the United States that to correct it would require a

remarkable and persistent challenge to the doctrinal system, a destabilization of founding assumptions about what American citizens have come to believe is the "reality" of the region. That Israel has become stronger militarily over the last twenty years while simultaneously securing the propaganda image of an extremely vulnerable state that is constantly threatened by its Arab neighbors stands as a fantastic achievement of the US "friends" of Israel. These friends believe they are serving a vital function by creating the conditions that grant Israel the unique immunity it has enjoyed in world affairs since 1967. As Noam Chomsky has pointed out, these "friends"—in obscuring the historical and diplomatic record—have in fact contributed to Israel's increasing militarization and its commitment to remaining in a state of siege—commitment to rejecting the legal demands of conforming to the international consensus.[20] Of course, this has increasingly become an untenable position for Israel. That some believe it to be taboo and anti-Semitic to speak of the power of the Israel Lobby, when the Lobby plays a pivotal role in shaping US Middle East policy speaks to how merely accusing someone of being anti-Semitic or of invoking of Jewish conspiracies is deliberately used to shut down open discussion. The hushed statements of rebuke around Israel's aggression and gross apologetics for Israel's "defense needs" suggest that people have stopped thinking in a critical way about the conflict.

The discursive constraints governing the production of statements about the Israel-Palestine conflict lead to some interesting and more than ironic results within the US domestic system. In this context, a civil libertarian can become a censor of speech critical of Israel, a defender of torture, and a depriver of due process without any serious consequences. That Israel's supporters are able to justify these contradictions that emerge in their defense of Israel reveals the sharp constraints in thinking about and issuing utterances about Palestinian human rights.

The "Unreasonable" Arabs

A mainstay of Israeli hasbara has been to portray the Palestinian "demands" for a homeland, Israeli evacuation of the West Bank,

reparations, implementation of the right of return, and so on, as unreasonable and out of all proportion to a reasonable grievance. Israel's defenders point out that a sign of Israeli good intentions is that Jewish settlers were removed from the Gaza Strip in 2005 in an act of anguish and sacrifice. Israel's generosity was also supposedly on display at Camp David II in 2000 when Ehud Barak supposedly offered then Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat the deal of a lifetime: 90 percent of the West Bank and a Palestinian police force that would replace the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) in the territories. In fact, what Arafat was offered was not the deal of a lifetime but, in fact, a deal no Palestinian leader could accept: an Israeli matrix of control that would be consolidated under the Camp David II formula, with the Palestinians being offered three cantons of land (Areas A, B, and C) reminiscent of the South African bantustans. In brief, Arafat was being used to shore up the Israeli matrix of control in the occupied territories. This was not the story that was told in the United States: Arafat was demonized in the media for walking away from the supposed "deal of a lifetime." Alan Dershowitz frequently cites Prince Bandar, who allegedly pronounced that Arafat has committed a crime against his own people by refusing to accept what was offered to him.[21]

The scapegoating of Arafat within the mainstream US press as the proximate cause of the failure of Camp David II shows how Israel's needs will seemingly always trump Palestinian needs, an acknowledgment of the far-reaching power of the Israel Lobby. While Dennis Ross may have acted like Israel's lawyer at Camp David, he was nonetheless recognized as an official "negotiator" without a hidden private agenda. However, as so often happens, an American's support of Israel was able to upend the negotiating situation by using influence within the presidential administration in power at the time. From Henry Kissinger to Elliot Abrams to Dennis Ross, Israel has always been able to get its way because of it supposed friends in various corners of Washington. Of course, to acknowledge this is anti-Semitic.

This embargo on identifying American Jews in high places in Washington, DC, must be lifted if there is to be a serious understanding of

why there has been no resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict. To this day, many American citizens, if as asked, would indict Arafat for his intransigence at Camp David. What Arafat was actually offered is relevant, since Israel's settlement expansion depended upon his surrender to become a collaborator against his own people.

When Arafat refused to capitulate to this supposed deal of a lifetime, he was constructed as being unreasonable and committed to the destruction of Israel as the Jewish state. Furthermore, the US press and elites—as part of this narrative of demonization—alleged that Arafat encouraged the second intifada in the wake of the failure of Camp David. According to this narrative, Arafat did not get everything he wanted at Camp David, so he encouraged Palestinians to engage in a strategy of street fighting as part of a larger plan to destroy the Jewish state. Anyone remotely familiar with Israel's military dominance in the region should have known this was sheer fantasy, an absolute impossibility given the imbalance of forces clearly in Israel's favor.

The demonization of Arafat succeeded with the resulting effect that the collapse of the negotiations was blamed on him when what he was offered was the choice to basically surrender all future grievances against Israel, including the ever-important right of return and a compensation package for the refugees. Essentially, Arafat was being coerced into an untenable situation in which he was manipulated into participating in the complete depoliticization of the Palestinian people, a renunciation of the very basis for their political grievance: Israel's dispossession of nearly 750,000 Palestinians between 1947 and 1949, its then 33-year occupation, and the complete dedevelopment of the West Bank and Gaza. Israel and the United States were cornering Arafat into accepting the parameters for future negotiations, which would not include Palestinian grievances about loss of land and demands for compensation and justice. In essence, the international framework for the just resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict was being completely undermined by US and Israeli negotiators, which included Clinton, Ross, and Barak.

The collapse of the Camp David II talks was indicative of how Israeli overtures toward peace have always been deceptive; they have

been geared toward subverting "peace" in the normal sense and continuing states of belligerency for the purpose of eliciting Palestinian responses, which could then be used as a pretext for supposed Israeli responses to Palestinian terror. Israel's insistence that peace would be possible if it could only locate a genuine Palestinian peace partner is especially cunning, since Israel has considered it one of its prime objectives to nurture Palestinian terrorism for the purpose of ratcheting up its matrix of control over a resisting Palestinian population. Palestinian resistance against Israel's occupation is protected by international law, which is precisely why Israel seeks to undermine the international legal framework, including the Palestinian right of return (UN Resolutions 242 and 194, etc.)—because it does not serve Israeli territorial needs and ambitions.

Yaacov Lozowick writes the following in *Right to Exist: A Moral Defense of Israel's Wars*:

> After centuries of European persecution and the collapse of the anticipation that the Enlightenment would end it, a growing number of Jews decided to reconvene their original homeland, hoping that might weaken the persecution and open a new chapter in their history. Most of them came from Eastern Europe and had nothing in common with either the goals or the methods of the imperial colonists of Western Europe. The international community condoned this effort and voted to partition mandatory Palestine between a Jewish and Palestinian state. The Arab world embarked on a genocidal war to prevent this, and the same international community did nothing to stop them. (110)

Furthermore, according to Lozowick, "Israel, having established her right to exist in a bloody war, was then forced to fight for the same right again and again. Moreover, the international community never forced her enemies to abandon their hopes of destroying her, demonstrating how flimsy the connection can be between international decisions and morality. As we shall see, *the Palestinians are still actively seeking the reversal of 1948, and Israel is still expected somehow to recompense the Palestinians for the crime of having won a war that was forced upon her and fairly won*" (emphasis added; 111).

As Lozowick seemingly proves, Joan Peters's thesis, as advanced in her *From Time Immemorial*, continues to live on in various ways. Peters set out to prove that the whole world had been duped by the Palestinians' claims to dispossession and injustice and that those Palestinians who were supposedly dispossessed during the 1948 exodus were recent in-migrants to Palestine, not residents of Palestine since time immemorial. This argument seeks to undermine Palestinian claims of grievance by deconstructing the supposed mythology around which the Palestinians have rallied much of the world to their cause. Peters sought to show how faulty demographic data, constructing the Palestinian population as perpetually oppressed by the evils of colonialism and Zionism, had been employed to advance the status of the Palestinian refugees.

As Peters attempted to prove, there had been an exchange of populations within the Middle East with as many Jews being displaced as Palestinians throughout the region, which undercut Palestinian claims of dispossession and injustice at the hands of Israel. Peters sought to undermine Palestinian grievances that placed any onus on Israel to accept responsibility for the events of 1948. Israel's die-hard supporters fear that Israel will be forced by the international community to take back the 1948 Palestinian refugees. This would forever shift the demographic makeup of Israel, transforming it from a Jewish state into one that would be poised to soon become an Arab-Palestinian one.

Talk of Israel's existential crisis, its struggle for survival, and its "right to exist" are expressions of a fear that Israel will be held accountable for its "original sins" and required to either grant the right of return to these Palestinian refugees or provide massive compensation packages to make up for nearly 68 years of dispossession and loss. Obtaining a Palestinian renunciation of these historical claims against Israel is the real purpose of the peace process and US involvement in any negotiations. Zionists understand that it is essential to control any US overtures toward peace, requiring the constant application of a continual, but subtle, pressure on every presidential administration since managing the US involvement in the conflict is vital to

protecting Israel's territorial interests. It appears that Israel's strategy is to annex the territories, holding out in the context of the supposed peace negotiations to ensure this outcome. In brief, Israel seeks to complete its theft of Palestinian land under the cover of the peace process, while at the same time positioning the Palestinian Arabs as the unreasonable and intransigent party unwilling to accept Israeli and US generosity in the context of the "land for peace formula."

Israel wants the land containing the valuable water aquifers in the West Bank but not the Palestinian Arabs there; hence the length of the security fence, which is twice as long as the recognized border. Israel's leadership from Begin to Sharon to Netanyahu has recognized that the defiance of international law and the international community can only go on so long. As Sharon told the settlers in 2000, grab every hilltop because soon we'll have to make painful concessions at the negotiating table. This has long been the strategy: "hold out for as long as possible because what we grab now will be ours forever when we are finally forced to end the occupation and commit to the final borders."[22] This strategy has been very successful as Israeli leaders have repeatedly feigned an interest in the peace process while doing everything in their power to undermine it.

This commitment to "Israeli rejectionism," a phrase referring to how the Israeli government has actively aimed to exacerbate violence and extremism in the conflict to advance its militarization and provide pretext after pretext for retaliation against Palestinian "terrorism," is not recognized as being the main reason for the continuation of the conflict into its sixty-eighth year. That Palestinian rejectionism is often forwarded by media pundits and academic commentators as the sole reason for the perpetuation of the conflict demonstrates how reality can be turned on its head by an effective propaganda system. That American citizens remain relatively in the dark about this inversion of reality is quite remarkable given the stakes revolving around the Israel-Palestine conflict for the United States and world affairs. If US citizens developed a basic grasp of how politicians and the media have obscured the central facts of the conflict from plain view, they would be outraged that they have been complicit in a cover-up of fantastic proportions,

a cover-up indicting the media and much of the American intellectual community.[23]

Peter Beinart's *The Crisis of Zionism* sent shockwaves throughout the American Zionist community when it was released in 2012.[24] Beinart highlighted the continual denial within American Zionist circles that the philosophical underpinnings of Zionism are to blame for the perpetuation of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Since Zionism recognizes the Palestinians only to the degree that they stand in the way of Israel's territorial maximization, it is incapable of viewing them as human beings within the context of good-faith negotiations. Furthermore, Beinart has argued that American Zionist Jews live in a cocoon that prevents them from understanding the conditions under which Palestinians live, contributing to a sort of self-absorption that conveniently avoids talking about Palestinian suffering.[25] As a former commentator for the conservative publication the *New Republic*, Beinart emerged as a welcome but seemingly unlikely person to act as an effective critic of Zionist power. However, it's precisely because of his supposedly "conservative" credentials that his stance on Israel-Palestine is taken so seriously.

The crisis of Zionism emerges around Israel's predicament as a state devoted to the protection of the Jewish people, which necessitates viewing its Palestinian Arab population as a problem to be dealt with through either legal exclusion or possible expulsion if and when the Arab demographic poses a threat to Israel's "Jewish character." Israel cannot continue to be a democratic and Jewish state given its current demographic predicament as Arab families reproduce at a faster rate than Jewish ones. If Israel is to maintain its Jewish majority, Israel's Arab Palestinians will either face greater and greater legal regulation or eventually be expelled—possibly under the cover of war.[26] This predicament, existing as an apartheid state or a state committed to making refugees of its own citizens, is not a pleasant one.

Zionism, in its intense commitment to fulfilling the dream of the Iron Wall of Vladimir Jabotinsky, has never been an ideology of compromise or one willing to adapt to changing social realities. On the contrary, in its zealotry and fanaticism, it is unbending in its

single mindedness to defend its settler-colonial project. This single-mindedness refuses to bend to the contingencies of circumstance. The Zionist ideal posits the creation of a perfect Jewish state, a state that is more racial than religious, although Israel's supporters fiercely deny this.

The creation of a Herrenvolk democracy, an ethnocracy, necessitates excising the undesirable elements through various means. It is in this desperate context that Israel's apologists have been forced to become very creative with their arguments about Israel's exceptionalism.[27] Any and all human rights organization reports that suggest that Israel has dispossessed and continually violated its peace commitments with the Palestinians do this by targeting legal conventions that question Israel's "right" to defend itself, which always means Israel's right to act as an aggressor in the region. Recognizing how the demographic threat Israel faces is far more serious than any military threat that it faces, Israeli leaders continually confront the challenge—to borrow from Avi Raz—of how to keep the dowry (the land) while ridding itself of the bride (the Arabs). This has been the continual Gordian knot of contemporary Zionism: How does one annex the land without becoming responsible for the population that resides within it? To pull off this difficult task Israel has to carry out its annexation plans under the cover of war for the purpose of avoiding international censure.

The main obstacle to Israel carrying out its territorial annexation is the continual stream of international opprobrium that it incurs every time it invades Gaza, South Lebanon, or the West Bank under the pretense of its security needs. Containing expressions of Palestinian nationalism and resistance, whether that takes the form of civil disobedience, active, ongoing attacks against the Israeli civilian population, or Hezbollah support of these acts of resistance, has been the main goal of the IDF, Shinbet, Mossad, and the General Security Forces. As I have argued elsewhere, the Palestinian presence in the political economy of Zionism is inassimilable, a foreign mass that impedes the realization of Zionism's dream and the complete eradication of an enemy's existence.[28]

While non-Jewish life is less valued than Jewish life within the ideology of Zionism, Palestinian life is viewed as a direct threat to the central tenets of Zionism, which espouses the superiority of Jewish over Arab life. According to Israel Shahak in *Jewish History, Jewish Religion*,

> Influential rabbis, who have a considerable following among Israeli army officers, identify the Palestinians (or even all Arabs) with those ancient nations ("other nations who lived in Palestine before its conquest by Joshua, as well as against the Amalekites"), so that commands like 'thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth' acquire a topical meaning. In fact, it is not uncommon for reserve soldiers called up to do a tour of duty in the Gaza Strip to be given an 'educational lecture' in which they are told that the Palestinians of Gaza are 'like the Amalekites.' Biblical verses exhorting to genocide of the Midianite were solemnly quoted by an important Israeli rabbi in justification of the Qibbiya massacre, and this pronouncement has gained wide circulation in the Israeli army. There are many similar examples of bloodthirsty rabbinical pronouncements against the Palestinians, based on these laws.[29]

This point is very relevant to the crisis around intellectual freedom when it comes to criticism of Israeli policy because—as Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory and the philosophy of Zionism behind it have reached their crisis points—intellectual freedom has been strained, redefined, and even withdrawn when it comes to protecting Israel's behavior from critical scrutiny. These overlapping crises, of Zionism and intellectual freedom, suggest that when a philosophy supporting open intellectual exchange challenges concentrated power, concentrated power will, in fact, contract in response. There are so many societal mechanisms that contain and prevent radical social critique, particularly when it comes to protecting the vital issues around the Israel-Palestine conflict. The US mass media's seeming indifference to the relevant issues around the international consensus, which are pushed to the margins of coverage, creates a situation that deprives the public of the necessary knowledge it requires to make informed judgments about how US foreign policy is contributing to the solidification of Israeli hegemony in the Middle East.

Without adequate coverage of the effect Israeli settlement expansion and its occupation have had on the life prospects of the Palestinian population, US citizens simply cannot fathom how they are directly contributing to the oppression and humiliation of another people. Furthermore, there are no real incentives (financial or political) for American citizens to learn the truth about Israel's illegal annexation of Palestinian land and the subversion of the peace process. Indeed, there is a distinct disincentive to pursuing any inquiry that highlights Israeli misdoing in the conflict. Journalists have been fired and harassed, academics denied tenure, and high-profile politicians and media pundits have been forced to defend themselves against spurious charges of anti-Semitism. Truthful reporting and commentary about the Israel-Palestine conflict frequently leads to public controversy and the scapegoating of the messenger as irresponsible, dishonest, misrepresenting the diplomatic and historical record, and, of course, harboring anti-Semitic animus.

That there are so few forums in American civil society to openly discuss the relevant issues around the Israel-Palestine conflict suggests that there has been a concerted effort to suppress the fact that Israel is—and always has been—the aggressor in the Middle East. This fact will come as a complete shock to most Americans, who have been subjected to a barrage of Zionist propaganda positioning Israel as David and the Arabs as Goliath. The success of movies such as *Exodus*, which was based on Leon Uris's bestselling book, can be explained by an American willingness to position post–World War II Jews as in need of gentile protection after the Holocaust at any cost, especially if that cost entails dispossessing Palestinian Arabs.

If supporting Israel contributed to an insurance policy against another Holocaust, American gentiles (who felt guilty about not doing enough during World War II to protect European Jewry) were more than willing to overlook the suffering of a few hundred thousand Arabs to solidify the future of the Jewish people. At that time, in April and May 1948, the international community was willing to ignore the Palestinian refugees who were produced in response to Zionist demands for a Jewish homeland. As Truman himself acknowledged,

he had domestic constituencies at home that he was politically obligated to support. He was of course talking about the Zionist lobby, as Lawrence Davidson and Zvi Ganin amply document.[30] The strength of this constituency in shaping American perceptions of the Middle East, essentially generating a kind of knowledge conducive to Zionism's territorial ambitions, should not be underestimated. This knowledge has continually erased Palestinian history and political needs from dominant narratives about the region's history. However, as Josh Ruebner points out in his new book, *Shattered Hopes: Obama's Failure to Broker Israeli-Palestinian Peace*,

> Simply put, the genie cannot be put back into the bottle. Discourse in the United States about the Israel-Palestine conflict has been fundamentally altered for the better. Thanks in large measure to Israel's brutal assaults on the Gaza Strip in 2008–09 and the Gaza Freedom Flotilla in 2010, and also to the diligent efforts of activists to run coherent campaigns to challenge US support for Israel's brutality, US public opinion is in the midst of a sea change in its understanding of the Israel-Palestine conflict and the role that the United States plays in sustaining it. No outcome is assured, but Israel's supporters in the United States have every reason to be nervous about the long-term sustainability of US support for Israeli military occupation and apartheid toward Palestinians. (16)

Ruebner captures, quite precisely, just how crucial this historical moment is to the future of the Israel-Palestine conflict. I close this introduction with a brief reflection on the recent controversy around the American Studies Association's decision to endorse the call of Palestinian civil society to boycott Israelis academic institutions, which reflects that Ruebner's prediction about a sea change in public opinion concerning the conflict has in fact occurred.

Debates about the Israel-Palestine conflict frequently slide into a familiar pattern of assertion and counterassertion: if one asserts that Israel's treatment of the Palestinians in the occupied territories deserves formal condemnation in some forum, it is only a matter of time before someone else counterasserts that the condemnation employs "a double-standard," "hypocrisy," and "loaded language," representing an attempt to "demonize" and "delegitimize" Israel.

Then the motivations of Israel's accusers must be analyzed for some hidden animus against the Jewish people. Indeed, words or actions that are sufficiently critical of Israel are framed as an existential threat to the Jewish state, and by extension (if one buys into Zionist logic) the Jewish people. Without fail, a rallying cry goes out to respond to the "existential threat" by defunding the organizations housing Israel's critics through legislation prohibiting such words and actions at the state level, or by looking into these organizations' tax-exempt status. And so it has been with the endless stream of commentary about the American Studies Association's endorsement of the call by Palestinian civil society to boycott Israeli academic institutions, a part of the BDS movement. Roz Rothstein, cofounder and CEO of *StandWithUs*, recently declared, "We certainly hope that the MLA does not consider a one-sided punitive resolution against Israel like the one adopted by the American Studies Association [ASA]. The 'blowback' against the ASA has been significant."[31]

Members of the ASA frame the urgency of their resolution around the dire living conditions Palestinians face under Israeli occupation, which often prevents them from moving between their homes to work and school and infringes on their right to pursue an education. These conditions contribute to what the late Baruch Kimmerling labeled "politicide," Israel's destruction of Palestinian civil society and its political institutions. As the ASA has made clear, "The resolution is in solidarity with scholars and students deprived of their academic freedom, and it aspires to enlarge that freedom for all, including Palestinians."[32] In its essentials, the resolution supports the academic boycott against Israeli institutions until Israel brings itself into compliance with international law, specifically UN Resolutions 242 (requiring an Israeli withdrawal to its pre–June 1967 borders and the cessation of states of belligerency—ending the occupation and removing the security wall) and 194 (recognizing the right of return and the justness of compensation for Palestinian refugees), while also calling for an end to all discrimination against Israel's Palestinian-Arab citizens. On the other hand, those incensed by the ASA's endorsement have been effective in questioning these political goals by also invoking the

principle of "academic freedom," the freedom to pursue the academic profession within the bounds of the profession, something they argue Israeli researchers will be deprived of if the boycott of Israeli academic institutions goes forward.

Those supporting the boycott seemingly argue that worrying about the academic freedom of Israeli researchers, who may be inconvenienced by the boycott, is beside the point, given the crisis Israel's occupation has produced for Palestinian civil society. Supporters of the boycott recognized in their letter to Ashley Dawson, the editor of a controversial issue of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP)'s *Journal of Academic Freedom*, that "all parties to the debate on the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (ACBI) believe that they are defending academic freedom, but they hold differing understandings of this guiding principle of our professional activities as scholars and educators."[33] This brings us to the heart of the issue: *One group's use of academic freedom can lead to deadly consequences for another group. Indeed, curtailing one group's academic freedom may be the only way to alleviate the suffering of the other group. In brief, one group's use of academic freedom may restrict another group's ability to realize its academic freedom.*

Israeli universities, like their US counterparts, produce significant research for the country's military-industrial complex. Academic studies contribute to an understanding of Palestinian demography, the development of high-tech surveillance equipment such as optic scanners, the effects of toxic agents on humans, and the psychology of despair produced under confining conditions, making a distinct contribution to increasing the grip of Israel's occupation. While academic freedom may protect these Israeli researchers' knowledge pursuits as they produce what is—from a Zionist perspective—socially beneficial research, it is of deadly consequence for Palestinians on the receiving end of these instruments of social control. According to the academic boycott's supporters, if disrupting these types of research endeavors within Israeli institutions—and frustrating collaborations that produce them—violate "academic freedom," so be it. As David Lloyd and Johar Schueller note in their essay "The Israeli State of

Exception and the Academic Boycott," "the point of the boycott is structural and is meant to challenge the state of exception through which Israel has escaped reprimand or penalty and has created conditions under which the rights of Palestinian scholars, academics, and students are routinely suppressed."[34] The leading organization on academic freedom, the AAUP, which has condemned the boycott, insists that the surveillance of human rights violations throughout the world falls outside of its purview.

Judging by the amount of ink and venom that have been spilled since the ASA announced on December 16, 2013, to endorse the boycott, it is clear that something extremely significant is developing with respect to the parameters of debate about the Israel-Palestine conflict in the United States. The debate seems to be moving into the mainstream, especially as the failures of the US-brokered "peace process" become self-evident. A number of pro-Israel organizations are marshaling forces and preparing for a major battle if the academic and cultural boycott of Israel continues to gain traction. Newspaper headlines such as "Academic Scandal Headed for Chicago," "Backlash against Israel Boycott," "Boycott Battles," "A Vote against Israel and Academic Freedom," and "Over 100 Universities Reject American Studies Association Boycott" move through cyberspace at the speed of light. As Judea Pearl, father of the late Daniel Pearl, stated, "It is still too early to assess, but I would nevertheless venture to predict that next year will not be an easy one for Israel's enemies on campus."[35]

This upping of the rhetorical *ante* suggests that the BDS movement, which began in 2005, is forcing the issue of Israel's occupation into larger public consciousness. The various attempts that have been made to mischaracterize the movement as part of an attempt to destroy Israel's legitimacy within the international community range from the outright misinformed to the libelous. Harvard Law Professor Alan Dershowitz describes BDS "as largely a plaything of the hard left . . . an irresponsible gambit being promoted by irresponsible people who are more interested in being politically correct and feeling good than in helping bring about a reasonable solution to a complex problem, the

fault for which is widely shared."[36] Peter Beinart asserts that the real problem with the ASA's resolution is that "it's denying the legitimacy of a democratic Jewish state, even alongside a Palestinian one."[37] In other words, the boycott's call for the implementation of UN Resolution 194, which would lead to the return of Palestinian refugees displaced by Israel's creation in 1948, would usher in the end of Israel as a state consisting of a Jewish majority. For Zionists, Israel's existence as a state without a Jewish majority is a veritable catastrophe. Supporters of the ASA's endorsement of the boycott, such as Steven Salaita, David Lloyd, and Robin D. G. Kelley, seem to be arguing that those who denounce BDS in the name of "academic freedom" (in this case, the academic freedom of researchers within Israeli institutions complicit in the occupation, who would supposedly be inconvenienced by a boycott), are oblivious to the day-to-day struggles of Palestinians living in the grip of an increasingly tightening Israeli matrix of control, revealing their reliance on a neocolonial logic within liberal Zionism.[38]

Nearly one hundred college and university presidents in the United States have registered their disagreement with the ASA's December 15, 2013, vote. These presidents insist they are taking this strong stand in defense of academic freedom (the main principle animating academic life as researchers exchange knowledge and viewpoints across national boundaries), recognizing the pernicious effects such boycotts could have on dialogue and discovery. For these presidents, the ASA has acted hypocritically in singling out Israeli institutions for boycott because of Israeli human rights violations without simultaneously expressing concern about human rights violations in other parts of the world.

As the ASA has gone to great lengths to specify, the boycott does not target individual professors in Israel, who may very well oppose Israel's occupation policies, but is directed at disrupting formal institutional ties with Israeli institutions. As the ASA's statement notes, the resolution "is limited to a refusal on the part of the ASA in its official capacities to enter into formal collaborations with Israeli academic institutions, or with scholars who are expressly serving as representatives or ambassadors of those institutions (such as deans, rectors,

presidents and others), or on behalf of the Israeli government, until Israel ceases to violate human rights and international law."[39]

As I have argued elsewhere, the reason relatively obscure corners of academia are generating so much controversy in relation to the Israel-Palestine conflict is because these are relatively independent spaces that special-interest groups cannot compel into silence. However, this independence of a few organizations within the academy is being compromised and contained as the university increasingly takes on a corporate form. For example, I suspect the reason so many college and university presidents have been so quick to distance themselves from the ASA's endorsement is to stay in the good graces of their donors. How else does one explain the strong denunciations directed against an academic organization's symbolic vote responding to the call from Palestinian civil society? The lesson is this: intellectual freedom can be just as easily invoked by those promoting injustice as it can be used by those seeking to resist it.

CHAPTER 1

From Resistance to Accommodation

The Origins of the Policy Intellectual's Alignment with the State

Introduction

The US invasion of Iraq in March 2003 and the disastrous results of the ensuing occupation placed American Jewry in a difficult and undeserving position. As the US occupation seemed to descend into increasingly more chaos, and as the original justifications for the war emerged as untenable, an unfortunate caricature emerged of American Jews' political perspectives, which are presumably as diverse as those of any ethnoreligious group might be.[1] Such caricaturing enabled reactionaries to resurrect, and to deploy with great effectiveness, the nasty "dual loyalty" charge against prominent American Jewish neoconservatives who served in the Bush administration, which unfairly suggested that—within the context of formulating Middle East policy as US officials—these figures will always place Israel's interests ahead of those of the United States.[2] While "Richard Perle," "Paul Wolfowitz," "Douglas Feith," "Scooter Libby," "Eliot Abrams," "Dov Zakheim," and "Eliot Cohen" are the names offered up as examples of high-standing American Jewish neoconservatives in the Bush administration who were eager to see the United States invade Iraq, they very well may have believed that US and Israeli interests coincided with respect to toppling Iraq's Saddam Hussein. These neoconservatives believed in and hoped for a domino effect in the Middle East after Hussein's ouster—one in which

corrupt Arab regimes would fall one by one. Some figures, including Israel's top military commanders, have identified Israel's key role in hyping the intelligence used to justify the US invasion of Iraq in March 2003, suggesting that Israel's long-term security needs were the main motivation for the US invasion.[3] Given the prominence of so many American Jews in key foreign policy positions who dealt with shaping US Middle East policy within the Bush administration, a facile assumption has emerged: namely, that individuals such as Richard Perle, Douglas Feith, Elliot Abrams, and Paul Wolfowitz have really acted as agents of the state of Israel in their capacity as American officials.

With a great deal of blame for the invasion being lodged against the neoconservative movement, and with many of that movement's leading figures being of Jewish origin, a tacit—and, I would argue, unfortunate—assumption has disseminated that the philosophical foundations for concepts such as preemptive war against nations in Bush's Axis of Evil, the denouncement of international bodies such as the United Nations that uphold international law and diplomatic negotiations, and the demonization of much of the Arab world for its inability or reluctance to create free markets and sustainable democracies were in fact generated with the interests of Israel in mind. Surely, one could evaluate Richard Perle, Douglas Feith, and Paul Wolfowitz as one-time Bush administration officials—who happened to be Jewish—working for the best interests of the United States and not as agents of the Israeli government seeking to craft US Middle East policy for the sole benefit of Israel as some have argued.[4] What made it difficult to believe, however—prior to the US invasion of Iraq in March 2003—that figures such as Perle, Feith, and Wurmser were working within their administrative positions solely with the best interests of the United States in mind was their endorsement of a policy report called "A Clean Break: A Strategy for Securing the Realm," written in July 1996 for then-Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu. It argued that Israel could take care of its security needs by pursuing an aggressive military strategy in dealing with its Arab neighbors, as had long been advocated by right-wing Zionism.[5]

This report pushed for preemptive military action against Syria, Iran, and Hezbollah. Five years earlier, this report, titled the "Defense Policy Report," was presented to George H. Bush as he neared the completion of his one and only term. At that time, the report was the object of ridicule because the United States, rather than Israel, was being forwarded as the regional hegemon capable of fighting Israel's supposed enemies.

The authors of the "Clean Break" and "Defense Policy Report" were—as a matter of coincidence—American Jews with close connections to key officials in the Israeli government. It is dubious whether, from this observation, one can make any empirically verifiable inferences that American Jewish officials with Zionist sympathies were able to exert undue influence within the Bush administration in formulating US Middle East policy, but, nonetheless, it has a polemical edge that has obtained some salience within the public sphere. It is important either to dispel, once and for all, this polemical charge or to find a more intellectually satisfying basis for its articulation. In his *Deadly Dogma: How Neoconservatives Broke the Law to Deceive America*, Grant Smith contends that "one of the last significant colonial questions, that of the state of Israel, has enjoyed absolute US weight on the side of the Israelis, thanks in part to neocon thought, leadership, and lobbying, which is partisan to Israeli retention of occupied territories, nuclear weapons, and subsidies from the U.S." (21). On what grounds, if any, does Smith's condemnation of the neoconservative movement—as it has sought to advance the US-Israel special relationship—stand? What relationship, if any, exists between neoconservatism and Zionism? Has the neoconservative movement's forwarding of an aggressive US Middle East policy merely allowed for an all-too-easy conflation of American Jewish interests and Zionist interests by critics, or are there, in fact—as many suggest—deeper ties between these two ideological tendencies? It is these questions, as broad as they are, to which we must turn.

The Intellectual Stakes

William King and Alan Wald responded to the allegation, which was first made by Michael Lind in the *New Statesman*, that there is a direct line of descent from Trotsky's "Permanent Revolution" to the neoconservative dream of Perle, Feith, and Wolfowitz to remake the Middle East through preemptive military intervention.[6] As I argue, it is not the Trotskyist wing of the New York intellectual movement to which one must turn, but instead attention must be paid to the radical shift that ensued among leading American intellectuals after Israel's impressive military victory in the Six-Day War in 1967. Prior to 1967, Israel did not merit much attention among either the New York intellectuals or other elite intellectuals in the United States. It is this shift one must address to better understand why modern-day neoconservatism fully supports Israel's aggressive militarism in the Middle East. Before doing so, however, we must consider the configuration of the current historical moment, particularly with respect to American Jewry and Israel.

While it is undoubtedly true that the majority of American Jews opposed the Iraq invasion, the majority of American Jewish *organizations* supported it. How does one explain this disparity? According to Eric Alterman, "major Jewish groups respond to the demands of their top funders and best-organized constituencies," while "most American Jews, however, have little or nothing to do with these groups." As people struggle to find answers to the question "Why did the United States really invade Iraq?" the interests of another country—Israel—repeatedly surface as possibly providing the "real" motivation behind the press to invade Iraq in March 2003.[7] But how could Israel, as a "junior" partner in its alliance with the United States, influence the world's remaining military superpower to invade another country? Certainly such a suggestion presumes that the United States went to war in March 2003 to remove even the remote possibility that Iraq's large Sunni population could ever pose a security threat to Israel's quest for regional supremacy—a central tenet of Labor Zionist thinking.[8] If this thesis is plausible, then, what does it mean that an analysis of a possible central reason for the US invasion of Iraq has been

placed beyond the bounds of political discussion in the United States, as, for instance, Virginia Congressman James Moran quickly discovered when he tried to raise the issue?[9]

Similar concerns about Israel's attempts to push the United States toward military engagement with Iran—to disarm Iran's supposed military capability—have been expressed by figures such as General Wesley Clark, who, when asked why the United States favored war with Iran, said, "you just have to read what's in the Israeli press. The Jewish community is divided but there is so much pressure being channeled from the New York money people to the office seekers."[10] Clark was immediately denounced as an anti-Semite for these remarks and was asked to apologize by the Anti-Defamation League and the American Jewish Committee, with both organizations taking out full-page ads in the *New York Times* condemning Clark for trafficking in unsavory stereotypes that have historically been deployed against Jews. As *American Prospect* journalist Matthew Yglesias noted, however, "everything Clark said is true. What's more, everyone *knows* it's true" (emphasis in original).[11] Of course, Yglesias is being hyperbolic with this statement, since not everyone knows—or believes—what Clark said is true. Nonetheless, the notion that wealthy Jewish Americans in New York somehow placed pressure on the Bush administration to go forward with the invasion of Iraq in March 2003 repeats an anti-Semitic stereotype that has been deployed against Jews throughout history.

Given the discursive contours shaping the extremely sensitive debates around the specific roles Israel and the Israel Lobby play in shaping US Middle East policy—and the location of American Jews and Israel's Christian Zionist supporters in contributing to efforts to tilt US foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction—it is understandable why it is so difficult to have frank discussions about the US-Israel special relationship; the rhetorically loaded charge of anti-Semitism is strewn about widely, in effect, allowing for comparisons to be drawn between justifiable criticisms of Israel and its US supporters (Jewish and non-Jewish) and the anti-Semitic rhetoric of Hitler's Third Reich. Many individuals and organizations seem intent on making it impossible to think about

or discuss difficult issues such as the new anti-Semitism, Israel, and the extent to which American Jews (Zionist and non-Zionist) either support or speak out against Israeli militarism. Unless one resists the tendency to invoke the evil specters associated with Germany in 1933, there is little or no chance of understanding the predicament animating the present historical moment.[12] To claim, however, that Hamas, Hezbollah, and Ahmadinejad are the "new Hitlers" is neither helpful nor responsible; indeed, to traffic in such comparisons is to do violence to history and to the present context. To conduct a productive discussion about the US-Israel special relationship and the key function neoconservatives have played in promoting it, one must make key distinctions between vastly different historical moments. As the late Israeli dissident Israel Shahak, a survivor of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, once wrote,

> true, any knowledge, no matter how approximate, of the extent of Jewish influence upon the US policies is hard to obtain. The topic is taboo in the US (although not in Israel), with all major American Jewish organizations exerting themselves to maintain the taboo, often with the help of philosemitic Christians, who delude themselves by gagging discussion of Jewish affairs, and in particular about Jewish chauvinism and exclusivism, they 'atone' for the Holocaust. Reliable knowledge about Israeli influence, as about any other taboo subject, can be arrived at only after the interdict is lifted and the subject is freely discussed. (141)

If free discussion about the possible interrelationship between Israel and the US invasion of Iraq is to take place, it seems necessary then to openly explore the possible connection between neoconservatism, Zionism, and US Middle East policy—allowing, at the same time, for analytical errors to be made, as is often the case when dealing with any subject, taboo or not—without any error being flagged in advance as evidence of "anti-Semitism."

US Support for Israel: The Background

As the United States' vital ally in the Middle East and as arguably the fourth strongest military power in the world, Israel is a regional

and international player in the game of geostrategic dominance and power politics. A popular and persistent illusion—that Israel has long sought peace with its Arab neighbors but has been unable to find a genuine "peace-partner"—persists, however, despite diplomatic and historical evidence to the contrary.[13] The following facts are uncontroversial: since 1976, the Arab states have (1) recognized Israel's "right to exist" within its pre-June 1967 borders and (2) not been committed to Israel's destruction. This version of history, of course, does not sit well with the widely disseminated propaganda version, which requires that Israel's "very existence" be continually presented as being in jeopardy. As Livia Rokach documents in *Israel's Sacred Terrorism*, in which she draws on Moshe Sharett's diaries for supporting evidence, Israel has sought—since its founding—to follow a program of perpetual war with its Arab neighbors.[14] In fact, Israel has not sought to live in peace with its Arab neighbors, as is popularly believed. Instead it has sought to exert its quest for regional dominance whenever possible. Israel frequently creates pretexts for supposedly defensive wars—as it did in June 1982 prior to its invasion of Lebanon—for furtherance of its strategic aims.[15] While pressuring its patron, the United States, with promises of cataclysmic violence in the region if its demands for unprecedented military support and diplomatic aid are not met, Israel has made it difficult—if not impossible—for the Israel-Palestine conflict to actually be resolved.[16] Indeed, preventing an actual resolution to the conflict is a goal that a number of dedicated individuals and organizations pursue with great energy.[17] Although popularly portrayed within the mainstream media as a "neutral broker" in the Israel-Palestine conflict, the United States has unequivocally sided with the Israeli government in its continual efforts to dispossess the Palestinian population of crucial pieces of territory in the West Bank, giving Israel full access to the United States' top-shelf military armaments such as F-16s and Apache and Blackhawk Longbow attack helicopters, knowing full well that Israel will use this weaponry against Palestinian civilians.[18] In addition, the United States has used its considerable standing in the world community to shield Israel from having to comply with international law,

frequently vetoing near-unanimous UN security resolutions that call upon Israel to cease hostilities with its Arab neighbors, dismantle illegal settlements in the West Bank, and reveal the extent of its own nuclear facilities to the international community.

The United States and Israel have chosen to ignore United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, which requires Israel to pull back to the 1967 Green Line and immediately remove its population from the West Bank in accordance with international law, demonstrating that Israel does not have to comply with international law as long as the balance of military might is on its side. Since the United States is the most powerful member of the United Nations, whose veto can obstruct the will of nearly 190 other countries, Israel can act as an outlaw state with relative impunity. Given Israel's human rights record in suppressing any base for the expression of Palestinian nationalism, along with Israel's extensive nuclear arsenal and the United States' seeming support and shielding of both, it is hardly surprising that calls for Iran to terminate its uranium enrichment program are greeted with ridicule and contempt within the Arab world and much of Europe.[19]

When this factual record is compared with what the average American knows about the US-Israel special relationship, it becomes clear that several discourses have grown up, and taken root, around these specific topics, surveilling and controlling what can be articulated—and even known—about the subject of Israel's influence over US Middle East policy. Understanding how these discourses have grown and taken root requires one to inventory the intellectual precursors of neoconservatism. Jewish intellectuals, as intellectuals of legitimation, have played a key role in this movement. And ironically, American welfare liberalism has functioned as the midwife of this Israelist-neoconservative linkage. Jewish liberal intellectuals' work in helping to expand state protections for vulnerable minorities during the civil rights movement, for instance, later became a key aspect in explaining how and why American Jews, sympathetic to Zionism's aims, became key players in the American welfare state and supporters of the aggressive, interventionist neoconservative state in later years.[20]

Jewish Intellectuals and Neoconservatism

Tracing the rise of Jewish intellectuals as they have become associated with legitimizing the state and its agencies is an important part of understanding the rise of the neoconservative movement.[21] To borrow a phrase from Benjamin Ginsberg, the Jews' "fatal embrace" of the state has been both a godsend and a curse.[22] It has been a godsend in that the state has provided vital corrections to the perfidy of societal and institutional anti-Semitism. It has been a curse in that the figure of the Jew once again has been unjustly associated with capitalism, mercantilism, wage exploitation, usury, and the legitimizing functions of the state. In *The Utopian Dilemma: American Judaism and Public Policy*, Murray Friedman writes, "At least until recent years, political liberalism has been the secular religion of American Jews" (6). In *America Alone: The Neo-Conservatives and the Global Order*, Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke write, "Intellectuals such as [Norman] Podhoretz argued that the American commitment to Israel derived from Israel's democratic rather than religious nature. He emphasized that the profound neo-conservative commitment to Israel's security transcended individual religious status. This is not to say that neo-conservatism at any point in its history was a purely or predominantly Jewish phenomenon. To depict it as such is a sloppy and false characterization—one that has been abused by tabloid polemicists of both left and right to distract attention from the substance of neo-conservative ideas" (58).

Although neoconservatism cannot be characterized as a purely or predominantly Jewish phenomenon, it can be characterized by its close connections to liberalism since the 1930s and to Zionism, especially since the 1970s. The neoconservative dream of transforming the nations of the Arab world into Western-style market democracies—as envisioned by the Project for a New American Century (PNAC), whose signatories included Richard Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, and Jeb Bush—seemed to have unleashed a civil war in Iraq that could conceivably have created widespread regional conflict and instability in the Middle East.[23] While plans to invade Iran have perhaps been put on hold in light of

the latest National Security Estimate, opportunities to preemptively strike against nations comprising the Bush administration's Axis of Evil were apparently not to be missed.[24] According to PNAC, and many affiliated organizations such as the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, the Brookings Institution, and the Saban Center for Middle East Studies, many of the 22 Arab nations in the Middle East are awash in political corruption, are incapable of protecting the civil liberties of its citizens, and perhaps most importantly, refuse to recognize Israel's "right to exist."

A few of the neoconservatives who initially exerted a great deal of influence in shaping the Bush administration's Middle East policy were students of University of Chicago philosopher Leo Strauss; Wolfowitz and Perle are the two most obvious examples. Although Strauss had no relation to the New York intellectual movement, his views on how national leaders should employ noble lies and deception to hide the country's true military aims from the general population—particularly in the context of preemptive war—has found some resonance in the present-day neoconservative outlook. This outlook actually dovetails with the views of the later New York intellectuals who, in their retreat from principled radicalism, conspired with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to combat communism. But while the Straussian origins of neoconservatism have been widely noted, a careful reckoning of how neoconservatism grew out of the New York intellectual movement has not been rendered.[25] Alan Wald's *New York Intellectuals* traces the intellectual and political trajectories of figures such as Sidney Hook, Irving Howe, and Lionel Trilling—who, like all New York intellectuals, showed no particular interest in or affection for Israel prior to 1967—and in particular, traces their shifts from communism to Trotskyism to an embrace of conservatism. However, there has been no complete accounting of how exactly Jewish nationalism, or Israelism, emerged as a result of a larger fascination for Israel within US intellectual culture after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, in which Israel demonstrated its military serviceability for US aims of state.

At the same time that Israel was winning the 1967 war, the United States was losing the war in Vietnam, which led many to wonder out loud if perhaps Moshe Dayan, the celebrated Israeli general and prime minister, should be sent to Vietnam to put the "Third World upstarts" in their place. Israel's impressive military performance in the Six-Day War, in addition to the demographic shifts within US society, which were accompanied by growing social unrest, led to a rightward shift in the wake of the civil rights movement. The New York intellectuals went from first being supportive of civil rights liberalism, to then opposing the "radical" Black Power movement.[26] Indeed, this shift in attitude in the US intellectual culture toward Israel and social change within US society more generally, represented a prelude to the rise of the neoconservative movement.

To understand the full gravity of this shift today, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, consider the rise of the Project for a New American Century, which boasted members ranging from Jeb Bush to Irving Kristol—all of whom were signatories to "Rebuilding America's Defenses" document in 2000.[27] The Project for a New American Century can be viewed as an umbrella organization for the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), and the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). Each of these organizations has sought to argue that the United States and Israel should remake the political structure of the Middle East through the flouting of international law and the use of Carl Schmitt's "Law of Exception," whereby the strongest states are exempt from the regular conventions of the international community in times of crisis or social upheaval, such as that offered by the events of 9/11. These organizations have found that the promotion of democracy and the expansion of market economies, in such contexts, often serve as a useful pretext for aims of war. As if deploying insights inherited from their distant and disavowed leftist intellectual forbearers, think tanks such as the American Enterprise Institute and Hoover Institution have been fighting Gramsci's "war of position" for nearly two decades, creating

the necessary epistemological framework for the events of the last 12 years in the Middle East.

Shifting Intellectual Alliances

By extending Wald's analysis of the New York intellectuals into the present by examining how Jewish nationalism, or Israelism, became a central—but unarticulated—aspect of American left-liberalism after 1967, one can learn a great deal about the current politics of the neoconservatives. More importantly, such an examination may help us to understand the policies informing the Bush administration's decision to launch the Iraq invasion in March 2003. By drawing on current intellectual debates around Israel, especially through the examples of Alan Dershowitz and Michael Walzer, I will demonstrate that American liberalism has really been at one with, if not Zionism, then certainly Israelism, since 1967. Indeed, there is a hidden religion-approximating devotion to Israelism within American liberalism, which desperately needs to be explored and analyzed, since this devotion has assumed an almost hegemonic status within US culture as relatively recent intellectual controversies clearly demonstrate. Among such controversies, we might include the dominant elite responses to the publication of Walt and Mearsheimer's *London Review of Books* article "The Israel Lobby" and their book of the same title; Jimmy Carter's *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*; and the row surrounding Norman G. Finkelstein's tenure denial at DePaul University. In each instance, the specific writings of these authors were ignored, with innuendo and insinuation about hidden anti-Semitic motivation successfully replacing sober analysis. This is a clear indication that the charge of anti-Semitism can be used to distract attention away from Israel's human rights record.[28]

The New York intellectuals, as a predominantly Jewish-dominated movement, struggled with the Jewish Question as early as the 1930s, albeit in subtle and indirect ways. As questions go, the Jewish Question seems to have been answered, however temporarily, through the "normalization" of the Jew through the creation of Israel as the Jewish state, a state in which Judaism and Jewish culture would define the

limits of the normal. Clearly, then, the resolution of the Jewish Question initiated the beginning of the Palestinian Question. Although Israel did not figure prominently in the writings of the New York intellectuals prior to 1967, figures such as Herbert Solow did struggle with the implications of Zionism for Arab Palestinians even before 1948, resulting in Solow's separation from the *Menorah Journal* in 1933 after he penned several articles critical of Zionism.

The rise of the New York intellectuals, as a countercultural phenomenon in opposition to the movement of the tendencies of the dominant consensus, followed many eddies, as Wald documents in *The New York Intellectuals*. By forsaking the radical roots from which the movement began, by the 1970s, the New York intellectuals turned their back on the fight against US imperialism, antiblack racism, antifeminism, and the destruction of indigenous cultures throughout the postcolonial world. As Wald writes, "in the 1960s quite a few of the New York intellectuals would be distressed more by rebelling students, women, and blacks than by the American government's slaughter of Vietnamese peasants and its support of reactionary dictatorships around the world, some, in fact showed a real fear and loathing of the new militants precisely for the wrong reasons—because many of the students raised intellectual challenges, refused blind obedience, and significantly raised the country's moral and cultural level" (270).

According to Wald, the New York intellectuals' antiradical stance took place in four central stages: Trotskyism, Menshevism, anticommunism, and liberal anticommunism. More importantly, according to Wald, "there is a direct line of continuity between many of the New York intellectuals engaged in the American Committee for Cultural Freedom and subsequent right-wing developments culminating in the Neoconservative campaign of the 1970s against affirmative action and feminism, coupled with a new cultural elitism and a foreign policy somewhat to the right of Ronald Reagan" (10). This direct line of continuity that Wald points to has not been adequately appreciated. Indeed, the political deception of the New York intellectuals forms a pivotal but understudied aspect of American intellectual

history. Wald claims that, "in fact, only by understanding the peculiar nature of their transformation can one come to grips with the most contradictory and confusing aspects of the New York intellectuals: *that a group of individuals who mainly began their careers as revolutionary communists in the 1930s could become an institutionalized and even hegemonic component of American culture during the conservative 1950s while maintaining a high degree of collective continuity. This pendular evolution by so many New York intellectuals suggests, from a radical point of view, that their politics were deceptive from the beginning*" (emphasis added; 10).

Wald points out that the New York intellectuals' politics only appear deceptive if one does not understand the contexts in which their political transformations took place. Rather than being motivated by principled political commitments, one-time radicals such as Sidney Hook and Irving Howe often trimmed their politics to fit the moment. Howe's commitment to Israel after 1967 verged on the bizarre as he issued a steady stream of apologetics for Israel's treatment of the Palestinian Arabs. Similarly, one can locate an equally problematic political opportunism among contemporary Jewish policymakers such as Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, Douglas Feith, Martin Indyk, and Dennis Ross as these figures have placed their commitment to promoting the territorial expansion of Eretz Israel ahead of their responsibilities to the "United States' national interest" in their capacities as American government officials.[29] These neoconservatives represent the pinnacle of an intellectual corruption that began nearly sixty years earlier. It is to this earlier era that we will now turn.

Alienation from the Intellectual Mission

The ideals of the intellectual class often find their way into the mainstream culture. Potentially, they can buoy the laity against the corruption of a particular era, providing people with hope in the recognition that a thoroughgoing group of individuals has forsaken the materialism and the fashions of an age for genuine intellectual inquiry, refusing to act as mere sycophants of power—consequences

be damned. In the modern era, however, locating such thoroughgoing individuals is a daunting task. Beyond figures such as Noam Chomsky, the late Howard Zinn, and perhaps the late Gore Vidal, one is hard-pressed to identify a group of dissident intellectuals who conduct—and widely publicize—radical social critiques that expose the very seams of the operations of power.[30] The New York intellectuals possessed an opportunity to be just such a coterie of individuals but forsook it for the rewards of the mainstream and, ultimately, the trappings of power.

The New York intellectuals, a group that shared, in its early stages, so much that is admirable about a group of progressive thinkers, eventually made common cause with repressive and totalitarian aspects of the American power elite and its neoimperialistic aims. That a fairly independent group of intellectuals could be so totally co-opted by the American power establishment should give us pause for concern. As Lionel Trilling contended in the 1930s,

> today, when so many of our middle-class intellectuals are swinging left, it is well to remember that the position of the bourgeois intellectual in any proletarian movement has always been an anomalous and precarious one. However sincere he may be, the mind of the intellectual is apt to be overlaid with conflicting values so that it is impossible for him to be sure of his position; having so many values, he is likely to betray one to defend others. In this dilemma the recognition of his own training and nature can be his only safeguard against confusion and eventual missteps. (qtd. in Wald 64)

Regrettably, the New York intellectuals' complicity with some of the worst aspects of American foreign policy, which manifested during the US adventures in Vietnam and throughout Indo-China, should serve as a reminder of the seductions of imperial power and the effects these may have on intellectuals who purportedly protect themselves with ideological cover. Norman Podhoretz, Midge Decter, and William Kristol succumbed to this tendency, channeling their intellectual commitments to dovetail with US imperial interests, particularly as the United States began fighting communist influence in Indochina.

Ironically, throughout their careers, the New York intellectuals used a sense of their alienation and distance from the corridors of power as the basis for much of their critique. How far the New York intellectuals really ever were from power, however, is debatable. That Norman Podhoretz, Irving Howe, Alfred Kazin, and Phillip Rahv eventually became a part of the American establishment, despite beginning their careers detached from it, reminds us that the pangs of social anomie in early adulthood often propel ambitious men into the seat of conservatism. How much of this commitment to social justice animated the New York intellectuals' mission? One can never be sure how much of their critique of the status quo really developed out of the egoism and resentment that often drives young people to speak for, rather than on behalf of, the oppressed and downtrodden. That Norman Podhoretz, the longtime editor of *Commentary*, became and continues to be such a representative voice of neoconservatism in the United States, suggests that intellectual engagement with idealism, and even radical social critique, can fall by the wayside when power calls.

Podhoretz, in *Why We Were in Vietnam*, argued that the US presence in Vietnam became misrepresented in the American imagination because of leftist distortions of the war. While figures such as Edward Said spoke out and wrote against the US invasion of South Vietnam because it was a colonial enterprise, Podhoretz claimed that the US "protection of South Vietnam against North Vietnamese aggression" proved itself vital to the promotion of US interests. Podhoretz's defense of US imperialism has found analogs in contemporary political discourse.

The Birth of Israelism and Liberalism's Love Affair with Israel

Since 1967, the country of Israel has been an object of near-religious devotion for US intellectuals, particularly among those who style themselves as "liberals." After Israel's impressive victory over Egypt in the Six-Day War, Israel became a strategic asset for the United States, and the special relationship was born, along with all the numerous problems it has yielded for the indigenous Palestinian population,

the stability of the region, and the world. As Chomsky and others have noted, the term "rejectionism," within the doctrinal system, is reserved exclusively for the Palestinians in their supposed refusal "to recognize Israel's legitimacy" or "right to exist" (terms applied to no other country in the international system). These phrases "right to exist" and "legitimacy" frequently appear without some crucial additional language—"right to exist" *as an apartheid state* and "legitimacy" *as a state that bases citizenship on religious affiliation*. This Newspeak hides the fact that Israel is a country with no declared borders, actively forcing the Palestinians not only to admit the loss of 78 percent of their historical homeland (which they did formally and unambiguously in 1988 and implicitly well before), as Benny Morris has noted, but also to accept the legitimacy of that loss. In fact, the admission of this loss is the required starting point for any negotiations.[31] That is the point of the extraordinary demand for the "right to exist" phrase, a right that no state in the international system requires. It is important to remember that the right to exist in peace and security had already been granted in UN Resolution 242 and had already been conceded in 1976. All this has to be presented as something other than what is—a reflection of our society's deep-seated racism against Arabs, particularly Palestinian Arabs. Alan Dershowitz is, in many ways, symbolic of this US intellectual love affair with Israel, representing the particular intellectual difficulties—and benefits (media access, entre to the corridors of power, and immunity from serious criticism)—apologists for a holy state encounter in their near-lifelong quest to dutifully serve a perverted nationalism's aims.[32]

Within a well-functioning propaganda system, such as the one that governs discussion of the Israel-Palestine conflict in the United States, a figure such as Alan Dershowitz can pose as a defender of Israel and, by extension, Jewish interests, while in fact posing a distinct danger to Israel by defending its governmental policies. Similarly, he can pose as a "civil libertarian" while devoting the lion's share of his public energies to preventing free and civil discussion about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from occurring. The continued conflation of Israelism and Zionism with Judaism, which then allows charges

of anti-Semitism to be lodged against well-meaning people seeking to preserve the time-tested ethical dimensions of Judaism, prevents a serious intellectual debate from emerging about the distinct threats US and Israeli militarism pose to the stability of the Middle East region. Yet as the American public comes to learn more about the exact circumstances surrounding the ongoing ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians from what is now Israel proper, which began in 1948, this debate will arise out of sheer necessity. Dershowitz and Walzer continue the long and dishonorable tradition of the New York intellectuals' flight from principled intellectual activity. A more accurate, and widely disseminated, accounting of this flight is very much in order.

Alan Dershowitz and Michael Walzer, who should not be identified as occupying the same portion of the political spectrum, offer somewhat similar approaches in providing apologies for Israel's behavior toward its Middle East neighbors. Walzer, the "Just War" theorist, is considered a leading left-liberal intellectual. His writings on war, and the justifications states employ to forward it, are quite well known. While it would be inaccurate to describe Walzer as an apologist for US imperial aggression—since he has opposed some US military interventions (such as the invasion of Iraq)—he can be viewed as a representative of American liberalism, particularly with respect to this milieu's views on Israel. With all too much frequency, American left-liberal intellectuals have erected the most elaborate justifications for describing the events of 1948 and the Arab-Israeli War of 1967 in terms more favorable to Israel. Walzer has played a key role in this propaganda effort that operates under the banner of Western liberalism. Walzer's *Just and Unjust Wars* claims to conduct a historical survey of warfare from antiquity to the present, highlighting conflicts that possess components of moral ambiguity and tracing a model that distinguishes just from unjust conflicts. In his analysis pertaining to the 1968 counterterror operation at Beirut airport, launched in response to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)'s attack on an Israeli airliner in Athens, Walzer argues that the Israeli response was clearly justified as a "counterterrorism operation" that

falls within the category of a "just war" because "it was clearly responsive to the incident at Athens; it was parallel and proportionate in its means (for one can destroy a great deal of property in answer to the destruction of human life); and it was carried out so as to avoid civilian death" (*Just and Unjust Wars* 202). The point to be made here is that Walzer rules out the possibility that the PFLP's attack upon an Israeli airliner was in response to Israeli atrocities in the Occupied Territories, a mere year after the Six-Day War. In addition, Israel's retaliatory response in Beirut is not labeled "terror" because it is carried under the aegis of state authority. Walzer's statements become somewhat curious in light of his repeated defenses of Israel's military actions, however, particularly because one can never find an instance in which he actually points out Israeli wrongdoing.

Walzer makes history ideologically serviceable to his political commitments, as a critical reading of many of the cases he deals with in *Just and Unjust Wars* indicates, particularly in his handling of Israel's Six-Day War, which he justifies as a "defensive" war, although Israeli New Historians, such as Pappe and Morris, have suggested that it was actually an Israeli offensive war. Walzer makes up part of the American intellectual scene that Chomsky calls "admiring left-liberal commentary," a group that conveniently sanitizes the history and facts of the Israel-Palestine conflict for easy consumption by a Western audience that is too craven and lazy to "dig" for the truth yet may not be comfortable with the strict, amoral Schmittian power terms of the neocons. Because of its hold on elite public opinion, "admiring left-liberal commentary" suppresses aspects of the conflict that are unfavorable to Israel, manufacturing consent for continued American economic, ideological, and military support. Anyone presenting a reality of the conflict outside the sharply defined fiction created by "admiring left-liberal opinion," will possibly be portrayed as "objectively anti-Semitic." The unwillingness of this segment of the American intellectual community to address how this slander has essentially silenced critical debate about the Israel-Palestine conflict in the United States warrants its own intellectual history.

For example, Israel's real purpose in invading Lebanon in June 1982 was to crush the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and to break the remaining vestiges of Palestinian nationalism.[33] Apologies for Israel's aggression and rationalizations for Israel's "self-defense" cannot circumvent this central point. Admiring left-liberal commentary in the United States, however, provided just the right explanation to keep elite opinion in check and the ideological, diplomatic, and economic aid to Israel flowing. Fantastic distortions and accusations and unnecessarily childish illusions went unchallenged because of the docility and subservience of the American media and politicians regarding US support for Israel. Although the US press faced repeated accusations of "anti-Israel bias" during the 1982 Lebanon war, the opposite was, in fact, the case: since 1967, Israel has enjoyed a unique immunity in world affairs with the 1982 Lebanon war damaging—but not crippling—Israel's public-relations image in the United States. In *The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians*, Noam Chomsky painstakingly traces out—through news event coverage in the United States and official statements made by Israeli and US politicians—how the image of Israel's commitment to "purity of arms" was not consistent with reality. This, Chomsky argues, is indicative of the disciplining of the news media and the tight control exercised over the propaganda system by supporters of Israel.[34] The refusal of these supporters of Israel to accept that the 1982 invasion was launched to subvert a PLO peace offensive reached absurd heights with *The New Republic* and *Commentary* producing a steady diet of articles alleging the supposed biases of the US press against Israel, when, in fact, Israel has been given unique immunity within the United States against serious criticism for its military adventurism.

One of the triumphs of Zionism, as it has infused the philosophical outlook of neoconservatism with Israelism, is the ease with which it has become part of the American ethos, an extension of the US quest for empire, while staying closely wedded to American liberalism. This helps explain how and why the US intelligentsia, particularly at the left-liberal aspect of its spectrum, has been so willing to

support Israel's Labor government policies in the Middle East in the name of universalism and emancipation.

As Norman Finkelstein copiously documents in *Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History*, Dershowitz's writings on the US-Israel-Palestine conflict are symptomatic of a much larger problem within the US intellectual world: there is a systematic bias in our cultural institutions against viewing the indigenous Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza as human beings worthy of respect and rights collectively. While presenting himself as a civil libertarian, Dershowitz, who claims to be in favor of the free exchange of ideas, has managed to establish an interesting track record on the US-Israel-Palestine conflict.[35] Dershowitz's advocacy as a civil libertarian, which has made him a world-renowned legal scholar, ends right where his defense of Israel's military adventurism begins. Furthermore, Dershowitz has successfully fused his defenses of Israelism with defenses of Judaism, believing that in defending Israel's unlawful military behavior, he is somehow defending Judaism. As he writes,

> I plan to continue—as a proud Jew and a proud American—to speak out on every issue of importance. *Sha shtil* has never served us well. It did not save us from the Nazis. It did not help Soviet refuseniks. And it will not protect our interests as Jewish Americans. We cannot accept one standard of freedom for Jewish Americans on the one hand and a different standard for "real" Americans on the other. I know that I will never accept the status of guest in America, Harvard, or in the world at large. We are full citizens, and as such we have an obligation to speak our minds. (*Chutzpah* 126)

In such rhetoric, one can trace the twisted civil rights liberalism of Israelism. As Finkelstein demonstrates in *Beyond Chutzpah*, Dershowitz—like the New York intellectuals before him—seemingly makes his actual political calculations based on a *realpolitik*, perhaps realizing that he can write whatever he likes about the conflict as long as his conclusions conform to the interests of ruling elites in the United States.[36] Dershowitz's calculations as a supposed civil

libertarian in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict are reminiscent of the New York intellectuals' bizarre retreat from their previous political commitments: "The behavior of the New York intellectuals is suspect because of the hastiness with which Marxism was entirely abandoned in the absence of a viable alternative theory of society; the falsification of past history to erase the revolutionary anti-Stalinist tradition; the blind spot exhibited in regard to U.S. imperialism; the dissipation of militant anger against domestic racism and class exploitation; and the gross insensitivity to the costs of the McCarthyite witch-hunt" (Wald 309).

How could Dershowitz, as a civil libertarian, attempt to interfere with the publication of Finkelstein's *Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History* if he really believes in "the marketplace of ideas"? In Dershowitz's case, Finkelstein exposed the bizarre costs discipleship can extract from those adhering to the pro-Israel line; in doing so, Finkelstein paid a high price for it professionally.[37]

As Finkelstein argued, Dershowitz's scholarly conclusions about the Israel-Palestine conflict seemingly always line up with the demands of concentrated of Israeli and US state power. As a particularly sad example, consider Dershowitz's claim in *The Case for Israel* that Rachel Corrie, an American student from Olympia, Washington, who was killed when she was run over by an Israel Defense Forces (IDF) bulldozer in April 2003 while defending a Palestinian home in Gaza against demolition, "threw herself in front of the bulldozer" (170). He writes, "She belonged to a radical pro-Palestinian group of zealots—some from the extreme left, others from racist 'right wing'—who are one-sided supporters of Palestinian terrorism" (170). Dershowitz provides this remarkable explanation right before stating that the International Solidarity Movement is a group dedicated to aiding and abetting Palestinian terrorism, even though the group's mantra—borrowed from Albert Einstein—is "the world is a dangerous place to live; not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it" (qtd. in Finkelstein, *Beyond Chutzpah* 119). That Dershowitz chose to describe the

ISM as supporting Palestinian terrorism, when, in fact, it is devoted to defending Palestinian homes against IDF demolition, is disturbing. There has been no official investigation of Rachel Corrie's death by the US government, which is clearly shielding Israel from critical scrutiny in its role in killing a US citizen.

Conclusion

Modern-day neoconservatism is at an impasse. Its commitment to producing a steady stream of apologetics for US and Israeli military adventurism and dominance in the Middle East has resulted in the warping of the once honorable political tradition of American liberalism. The early New York intellectuals represented the best of this tradition, upholding the radical political principles that often animate progressive social change. Unfortunately, the movement's abandonment of these principles for accommodation with ruling political power bases—in the wake of sweeping social change in the late 1960s—created the conditions for supporting Zionism after 1967. The disastrous results of this change, of course, are readily apparent as the future of the Middle East hangs in the balance.

CHAPTER 2

Edward Said and Intellectual Resistance

Refusing the Politics of Accommodation

Introduction

In an interview in the summer of 2000 concerning the 1947–1948 Palestinian dispossession at the hands of the yet-to-be-formed Israeli Defense Forces in the form of the Haganah and the Irgun (IZL), Ha'aretz's Ari Shavit and the famed cultural critic Edward Said reflected on the possibilities of an Israeli-Palestinian binational state, something Said had advocated for quite some time—long before the failure of the Oslo Accords and Camp David II. This interview took place just a few months before the outbreak of violence that began the Second Intifada in the occupied territories, a possible reaction to the failure of Camp David II talks where, brought together by then-president Bill Clinton, Ehud Barak had supposedly offered Arafat (in exchange for the Palestinian recognition of "Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state") nearly 80 percent of the West Bank for a viable Palestinian state, a deal of a lifetime. Many, however, considered the offer a call for Palestinian submission to a Bantustan arrangement reminiscent of the South African national territories.[1] As he came to fully understand Said's nuanced position, which clearly placed reconciliation between the Israelis and the Palestinians ahead of revenge or retribution for either group's historical grievances and the identification of a mutual interest in peace and coexistence in a future binational state before the assignment of blame, Shavit proclaimed, "You sound

very Jewish." Said replied, "Of course. I'm the last Jewish intellectual. You don't know anyone else. All your other Jewish intellectuals are now suburban squires. From Amos Oz to all these people here in America. So I'm the last one. The only true follower of Adorno. Let me put it this way: I'm a Jewish-Palestinian."[2]

The concept of a "Jewish-Palestinian"—clearly provocative and intriguing in its attempt to employ notions of exile, loss, and refugeehood to understand the historical suffering of two peoples that are engaged in a seeming death struggle in the Middle East—articulates a condition of loss, longing, and hopelessness for the modern age. A Jewish-Palestinian does not attempt to privilege the historical wrongs committed against one of the peoples in this binary over another, employing a superior sense of victimhood to deny the suffering of the other side, but instead recognizes the singularity of each people's oppression and dispossession. Shavit's observation suggests that to be Jewish ("to be a Jew") is to occupy a specific political-historical space, a space in which someone appreciates the condition of exile and the insights it brings to the human experience. Historically speaking, to be a Jew is to be an exile. To be a Palestinian at this historical moment does not hold the same meaning, even though the stateless Palestinians living under occupation may know something more about what it means to be an exile than an Israeli or American Jew. I do not intend to employ the term "Jew" as a caricature but instead to articulate how a concept of "Jewishness" can be used to understand all human suffering, even Palestinian suffering.

As a condition, Jewishness has signified the capacity to empathize with suffering, homelessness, wandering, and powerlessness. Can one honestly describe Jews—at this present historical moment—as suffering, homeless, wandering, and powerless? Ironically, these adjectives aptly describe the Palestinian condition under Israeli occupation; however, when one understands that anti-Semitism and Orientalism are different sides of the same coin of age-old hatreds directed against distinct populations, whether these are Jewish or Muslim, an interesting complementarity emerges. Anti-Semitism, as a European-generated hatred directed against Jews, has been effectively transferred

to the Palestinian Arab in his or her resistance against Israeli occupation. Palestinian Arab resistance to Israeli occupation is configured as anti-Semitism because the occupiers of what was previously Palestinian land are Jewish. Orientalism, as a discourse that essentially constructs the "existence" of Eastern peoples such as Arabs, is also a European creation that allowed for colonial domination through the wedding of power and knowledge. The domestication of the East and its peoples through Western social sciences such as anthropology and linguistics created discursive targets through which to understand and control non-Europeans. Said described this process in great detail in his *Orientalism*: "By an almost inescapable logic, I have found myself writing the history of a strange, secret sharer of Western anti-Semitism. That anti-Semitism and, as I have discussed it in its Islamic branch, Orientalism, resemble each other very closely is a historical, cultural, and political truth that needs only to be mentioned to an Arab Palestinian for its irony to be perfectly understood."[3] The Jewish embrace of the state, specifically in Israel, signals an end to the Jewish Question and the beginning of the Palestinian Question; however, can one say that the Jewish Question ever really ended? Zionism, as a form of Jewish nationalism, has ironically ensured the perpetuation of the Jewish Question and concomitantly the Palestinian Question. Both questions, as Joseph Massad has suggested in his *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question*, are intimately connected; one question cannot be solved without turning to the other. Analyzing the Palestinian condition, then, requires a precise accounting of the place of non-Jews within the economy of Zionism, a task that Said made both personal and professional.

Although some have argued that Said compromised his status as a public intellectual because of his embrace of Palestinian nationalism, the evidence suggests a far more complicated picture.[4] Said's commitment to bearing witness to grave injustice (not just the injustices committed against Palestinians), as well as documenting the intellectual evasions surrounding difficult human questions about neglect and dispossession (and not just the Palestinian Question) stands as a

testament to his special type of intellectual style, which was reminiscent of the early New York intellectuals such as Hannah Arendt.

Arendt, because of her critical statements about Zionism as outlined in *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report of the Banality of Evil* and an essay titled "Zionism Reconsidered," was plagued by controversy in the later part of her life for questioning the foundations of Jewish nationalism and the necessity of a Jewish state. Her most controversial work interrogated the role of the Judenräte (Jewish Councils) in cooperating with the Third Reich by turning over to the Nazis fellow Jews who were eventually murdered in the Holocaust.[5] That Arendt tackled such taboo and explosive subjects as part of her intellectual work suggests that she was committed to exposing the contradictions and inconsistencies within lachrymose and easily formulated narratives if doing so would provide greater insight into the human condition. Said approached the problems of Zionism from a far different subjectivity but with the same acumen. His "American Zionism: The Last Taboo" raises disturbing questions about how Israeli nationalism has always been perverted by military aims that have compromised the moral integrity of American Jews.[6] In writing about Zionism from their very different positions, Arendt and Said assumed an almost pariah-like status among segments of the public, which were intensely focused on promoting Israelism, if not Zionism. Such a status is a prerequisite for moral rebellion and intellectual responsibility. Arendt explained her own perspective in a letter to Gershom Scholem:

> What confuses you is that my arguments and my approach are different from what you are used to; in other words, the trouble is that I am independent. By this I mean, on the one hand, that I do not belong to any organization and always speak only for myself, and on the other hand, that I have great confidence in Lessing's selbstdenken [self-thinking] for which, I think, no ideology, no public opinion, and no "convictions" can ever be a substitute. Whatever objections you may have to the results, you won't understand them unless you realize that they are really my own and nobody else's.[7]

This sort of intellectual independence and refusal of intellectual orthodoxy characterized Arendt's positions on Zionism and Israel throughout her career. Ironically, she and Noam Chomsky—who has been considered (for more than fifty years) a strong critic of Israeli policies toward the Palestinians—were proud Zionists in the 1940s before the actual founding of Israel in 1948, at which point it became known that there could be no rapprochement with the Arabs because of the UN partition and growing Jewish immigration into what was once considered Palestine.

In his *The Politics of Dispossession*, Said writes, "I go so far as to be convinced by Rosa Luxemburg's statement that one cannot impose one's own political solution on another people against their will. As a Palestinian who has suffered loss and deprivations, I cannot morally accept regaining my rights at the expense of another people's deprivation."[8] As perhaps the last true follower of Adorno, Said brought an enlightened skepticism toward all nationalisms, including Palestinian nationalism, realizing the necessity of creating conditions for noncoercive community by bringing together discrepant experiences, an indication of his commitment to exposing how nationalism and its attendant cultural discourses often separate people from one another based on little more than territorial divides. Explaining the almost religious fervor with which such divides are policed and protected became Said's enduring passion, an effort that permeated both his literary criticism and his political work on behalf of the Palestinian people.

Said, Arendt, and the New York Intellectuals

If we view the New York intellectuals as representing a group of committed individuals devoted to working against the grain of mainstream culture and society while exploring how dominant values and modes of conceptualization come into being through art and literature, as well as politics, we should evaluate how the conditions of exile and marginality—and sometimes pariah status—inform their social analyses. There are inherent contradictions in describing Edward Said as an outsider because his academic position allowed him to

command cultural capital and to take advantage of an academic location that has largely dissolved in the contemporary academy, a location of immense prestige and influence where one can move into expert (nonacademic) social spaces while being taken seriously as a critic and commentator. For Said, this was the subject of Islam, the Question of Palestine, and the relationship of each to the terrorism industry, subjects far outside his formal academic training but firmly within the grasp of his social experience as an Arab Palestinian. He was alert to the ways in which knowledge reifies human experience, reducing it to something that can be quantified, analyzed, and removed from crucial contexts that give it meaning and shape. The Palestinian intellectual, schooled as a New York intellectual, becomes something other than Jewish; he becomes capable of using Jewish experience to explore other human experiences, extending senses of Jewish suffering to the suffering of others. One recognizes the ambivalence in Said as he speaks of confronting Zionist aggression, being careful to underscore that Zionism is not Judaism and that Palestinian resistance is directed at Zionists and not Jews qua Jews. Although this is most definitely a complicated and hazardous task, it was necessary for Said to make distinctions where others had left the political field unanalyzed, allowing violence to reign where understanding and reconciliation should have entered.

In this section, I would like to draw some parallels between Said and Arendt, someone who is occasionally mentioned as being part of the New York intellectual scene. Arendt, like Mary McCarthy, was one of the few women considered as part of this male-dominated group. Arendt achieved notoriety with her coverage of the Eichmann trial in 1961 in a series of articles for the *New Yorker* that took form as a controversial book titled *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, which reached the startling conclusion that Adolph Eichmann was far from the epitome of evil many had reckoned him to be; instead, he was, in Arendt's estimation, the banality of evil—someone quite average caught between his career ambitions as a Nazi bureaucrat who was attempting to please his superiors and a lack of scruples that prevented him

from confronting the horrors of the bureaucratic machinery of which he was a part.

Arendt, who during her early life was a Zionist, became very skeptical of Zionism because of what she witnessed at the Eichmann trial, where she saw the aims of Israeli nationalism rather than those of universal justice being served. The book created a firestorm of controversy that occupied Arendt for many years because she was forced to defend herself against accusations of anti-Semitism and self-hatred while witnessing most of what she wrote in the book being distorted and misread. The most damning accusation lodged against Arendt was that she had betrayed the Jewish people with the book, providing non-Jews with an excuse to not pay attention to the moral gravity of the Holocaust due to her depiction of Eichmann as an ordinary man, a man who could have been any of us. Perhaps Arendt's most controversial claim in the book involved the Judenräte councils that were complicit in aiding the Nazis to bring Jews to their eventual deaths in the concentration camps. That Arendt confirmed that there was widespread cooperation between Jews and Nazis to kill fellow Jews highlighted a tragic and unspoken aspect of the Holocaust. This aspect of Arendt's commentary in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* continues to be a point of fierce contention and debate. In some sense, this book made her a pariah within the Jewish community. The word pariah means something more than outcast; it is meant to emphasize that someone is the lowest of the low, beneath contempt and unworthy of notice. This designation is usually reserved for the unforgivable sinner, the violator of some taboo, or the transgressor of some sacred principle. However, those who tell deeply unpopular truths—prophets—face similar ostracism because they erode a community's confidence in a vital myth, creating crisis and uncertainty about the past and one's identity as a result of that past.

Arendt became a pariah in the Jewish community because of her unwillingness to uphold Zionist myths for the sake of the nation. She sought complexity where others demanded simplicity and orthodoxy in the name of nationalism. Ostracized by those who demanded that he toe a line with respect to Palestinian nationalism, Said often had

to go it alone in his struggle to humanize the Palestinian people for a Western audience in the United States. After serving on the Palestinian National Council for 14 years, Said resigned in protest in 1991, mainly due to his dissatisfaction with Yasser Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), both of which, in his estimation, had begun to betray the Palestinian people for personal privilege and comfort. In short, the PLO had become an extension of Israeli domination, acting as the comprador arm of the Israeli government, which seeks to destroy all vestiges of Palestinian culture through a form of "politicide," to borrow a term from the Israeli sociologist Baruch Kimmerling.[9]

Like Arendt, Said was suspicious of nationalism, nationalistic impulses, and the consequences of both for colonized peoples. Arendt viewed Zionism as placing the future of the Jewish people in jeopardy because it would place Jews living in Palestine in a compromised position of having to rely on the generosity of a superpower and its diaspora to maintain itself militarily, politically, and diplomatically. In this sense, Arendt was predicting Zionism's future predicaments as it sought to secure and guard land on behalf of a colonial power. Most find comfort and solace in nationalism; it is an indication of home, comfort, and friends. To be an exile is to be without a nation, a nationality, a home, and security. Nationalism, in Said's estimation, is a God that always fails because it reduces human experience and lines of solidarity between people to territories and borders that, in reality, carve up the world in unproductive and destructive ways. To be an exile is to relate to all people regardless of their country of citizenship or point of origin, nationality, or birth. This catholicity of thought, this openness to different forms of social experimentation, allows for the type of worldliness, spontaneity, plurality, and natality characteristic of both Said and Arendt. The rejection of crippling orthodoxies that reduce human action to Realpolitik allows for human action to change the world, deep commitments that Said and Arendt worked toward throughout their careers and lives.

Restlessness, Alienation, and the Intellectual Spirit

As part of his efforts to create such conditions through his literary and political work, Said's notions of "worldliness," "exile," "secular criticism," "contrapuntal reading," and "structures of attitude and reference" find a specific place in the New York intellectual tradition because these concepts contribute to a harnessing of critical energy to progressive social movements, whether Marxist, postcolonial, Trotskyite, or anticommunist. While the "postcolonial"—as a rubric representing a commitment to the liberation of Third World peoples—never held a place in the New York intellectual's imagination, especially by the time the Vietnam War rolled around, Said, of course, is recognized as the founder of postcolonial studies, even though he never claimed this for himself.

Said's Adornian discomfort with mass culture suggests that an oppositional stance to the dominant forces within a society is necessary for an engagement and serious critique. The critic requires a constant sense of alertness, of not quite being at home, an uneasiness with facility and clichés. Said's restlessness, his guardedness against sleep, his easy movements between—and his attempts to fuse together—the genres of personal and academic writing, suggest a cosmopolitan fluidity that sought to upset established conventions and easygoing platitudes. The New York intellectuals, a group that was initially composed of unassimilated Jews, felt a similar sense of alienation as they wrote about and critiqued American culture. This is perhaps why they share the term "diaspora," which is increasingly adopted by dispossessed groups. To this end, Said felt most at home on a plane, never being part of anything for very long, while stating that he could never have lived anywhere but New York, a city of many cultures that never sleeps, embracing all those who come within its borders. As the city that set the pace in publishing and media throughout the twentieth century, New York has long been a natural draw for writers and intellectuals. Especially for those who have no place or are searching for a place, New York presents opportunities to recreate one's sense of self in relation to the dominant mode—its polyphonic character and fast pace allow for a reinvention of the self and one's relation to the

past; this was certainly true in Said's case. There is a desire to recoup family stories and histories as one comes to construct one's personal history; the tendency to do this is quite strong as one enters one's later life or, as in Said's instance, when one is handed a death sentence like leukemia.

Edward Said's relationship to the city of New York figures prominently in his attachment to the phenomena of "exile," "homelessness," and "in-betweenness": all are states of restlessness, anxiety, and uncertainty that marked much of Said's life, even his childhood years, as he writes in the opening paragraph of *Out of Place*,

> All families invent their parents and their children, give each of them a story, a character, fate, and even a language. There was always something wrong with how I was invented and meant to fit in with the world of my parents and four sisters. Whether this was because I constantly misread my part or because of some deep flaw in my being I could not tell for most of my early life. Sometimes I was intransigent, and proud of it. At other times I seemed to myself to be nearly devoid of any character at all, timid, uncertain, without will. Yet the overriding sensation I had was of always being out of place.[10]

Said's sense of being "out of place," his discomfort with his personal, social, and political surroundings, created—to a degree—the very conditions of his possibility as an exiled critic. The pain accompanying a loss of home and identity, along with the alienation that comes with embodying the Palestinian Other in the West, which has yet to come to grips with what a Palestinian identity might mean and be, buoys the critic against the trappings and seductions of the larger culture.

As an outsider-cum-learned-insider (by virtue education) to Western culture, Said assumed a certain DuBoisian double consciousness, turning a mirror on the epistemological categories and assumptions of the West as he stood outside and criticized them—seeing both himself and those who objectified him. In the introduction to his now-famous *Orientalism*, Said speaks of the cruel and punishing destiny of a Palestinian in the West in these terms: "The life of an Arab Palestinian in the West, particularly in America, is disheartening.

There exists here an almost unanimous consensus that politically he does not exist, and when it is allowed that he does, it is either as a nuisance or as an Oriental. The web of racism, cultural stereotypes, political imperialism, dehumanizing ideology holding in the Arab or the Muslim is very strong indeed, and it is this web which every Palestinian has come to feel as his uniquely punishing destiny."[11] With the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 seeming to have resolved the Jewish Question and perpetuated the Palestinian Question—along with the demonization of much of the indigenous population of the Middle East—throughout the latter half of the twentieth century into the present, a current of postcolonial thought now argues that Arabs have become the new "Jews."[12] Orientalism, as anti-Semitism's "secret sharer," deploys many of the same vile stereotypes against Arabs as anti-Semitic discourse deployed against European Jews. As a new Jew, Said could easily have laid claim to the New York intellectual heritage; in fact, the comparison has been made by some.

In his *Edward Said and the Politics of the Limit*, Moustapha Marrouchi writes, "Edward Said may be the last of a special breed of wide-ranging literary-political-aesthetic New York intellectuals, who are grouped around *Raritan*, one of America's most prestigious and influential voices of high culture."[13] Although his detractors branded him an ardent Palestinian nationalist, he was an inheritor of the Enlightenment's most cherished values: reason, tolerance, noncoercive community, and mutual coexistence; like the New York intellectuals, he blended study of high culture, largely European, with a genuine concern for injustice and dispossession. As Irving Howe claimed, "The New York Intellectual [had] a fondness for ideological speculation; [he] strive[s] self-consciously to be 'brilliant.'"[14]

Said lived up to Howe's expectations of the New York intellectual: they were radicals, had a fondness for ideological speculation, wrote literary criticism with a strong social emphasis, reveled in polemic, strove self-consciously to be brilliant, and by birth or osmosis, they were Jews.[15] In a way, these expectations—with the exception of the last one—could be seen in the "two conflicting impulses of [Said's] own literary career" as he excelled as a literary critic and a spokesperson

for the Palestinian cause.[16] To a degree, the public intellectual grew out of the New York intellectual tradition of the early and mid-twentieth century. Said, as a Palestinian, has never really been considered part of this overwhelmingly Jewish intellectual movement. Despite this categorization, Said did have close personal ties to some of the most prominent New York intellectuals, such as F. W. Dupee, to whom he dedicates his massive *Reflections on Exile*, and Lionel Trilling, for whom Said held immense respect and admiration.

Between Worlds, Out of Place, and Outside the Intellectual Fold

Said's education in the United States and his relatively comfortable life as an academic at Columbia University occupied his early adulthood and midlife. Despite these comforts, he came to identify with lost causes—those that one supports or believes in because one cannot experience hope and achievement without them.

> The time for conviction and belief has passed; the cause seems to no longer contain any validity or promise, although it may once have possessed both. But are timeliness and conviction only matters of interpretation and feeling, or do they derive from an objective situation? But there is no getting around the fact that for a cause to seem or feel lost is the result of judgment, and this judgment entails either a loss of conviction or, if the sense of loss stimulates a new sense of hope and promise, a feeling that the time for it is not right, has passed, is over.[17]

This theme of lost causes was most attributable, of course, to the Palestinian struggle to which Said became most attuned while a professor at Columbia in New York City. Edward Said's relationship to the city of New York merits an examination, particularly as it explains his attachment to the phenomena of exile, homelessness, and in-betweenness: all are states of restlessness, anxiety, and uncertainty that marked much of Said's life, even his childhood years. In the introduction to *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, Said remarked that

> when [he] arrived in New York [in the fall of 1963] there was still some vitality left in its most celebrated group of intellectuals, those clustered

> around Partisan Review, City College and Columbia University, where Lionel Trilling and F.W. Dupee were good friends and solicitous colleagues of [his] in the Columbia College English Department . . . Very early on, however, [he] discovered that the battles the New York intellectuals were still engaged in over Stalinism and Soviet Communism simply did not have much interest for [him] or for most of [his] generation, for whom the civil rights movement and the resistance against the U.S. war in Vietnam were much more important and formative.[18]

Those who took part in the civil rights movement and the resistance against the US war in Vietnam were not central players in the New York intellectual movement. The implications of the civil rights movement and the cultural resistance to the Vietnam War for US culture were, of course, instrumental in shaping the trajectory of Said's thought and work, connecting quite naturally to Said's abiding concern, Palestinian self-determination. Each issue became a consciousness-raising exercise requiring a consideration of the rights of minority peoples and the legitimacy of their response and resistance to white supremacy, imperial hegemony, or settler-colonialist expansion.

The political turn in Said's work came in 1967 as the Arab-Israeli War and Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza forced him to confront his Palestinian identity in a new way:

> The experience of 1967, the re-emergence of the Palestinian people as a political force, and my own engagement with that movement was what in a sense made it possible for me to live in New York, despite the frequent death threats, acts of vandalism, and abusive behavior directed at me and my family. In that rather more agitated and urgent environment than the one fussed over tiresomely by the New York intellectuals . . . a wholly different set of concerns from those of the *Partisan Review*—for whom I wrote one of the early essays in this book—gradually surfaced in my work, coming to an explicit statement first in my book *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, then in *Orientalism*, then still more insistently in my various writings on Palestine. These concerns, I believe, were magnified and made clear by the other New York, that of the diasporic communities from the Third World, expatriate politics, and the cultural debates, the so-called canon wars, that were to dominate academic life in the 1980s and after.[19]

The year 1967, then, represented a crucial year in Said's thinking and development, particularly as he conceptualized the New York intellectuals and the failures of the movement. It was a time of great social ferment, and yet the New York intellectuals, instead of remaining true to their renegade beginnings, had settled down into close readings of modernist poetry and novels, an indication of an accommodationist turn in their political aspirations. No longer standing in distinct opposition to the status quo, the New York intellectuals had become apologists for the American power establishment.

Interestingly enough, just as Said was beginning to grapple with the implications of being a Palestinian in the context of the Arab-Israeli Six-Day War in 1967, US intellectuals began their intellectual love affair with Israel. A distinct interest in Israel, Israelism, and Jewish nationalism began at this historical moment in the wake of Israel's impressive military victory against multiple Arab enemies, proving the possible effectiveness of Israel as a US strategic asset in containing Arab nationalism. This "turn" resonated in the lives of Jewish and Palestinian Americans. Compare Said's statement about his coming to recognize his out-of-placeness as a Palestinian to Irving Howe's assessment of the New York intellectuals as "Jewish writers com[ing] out of the immigrant milieu":

> The New York intellectuals comprised the first group of Jewish writers to come out of the immigrant milieu who did not crucially define themselves through a relationship to memories of Jewishness. They were the first generation of Jewish writers for whom the recall of an immigrant childhood seems not to have been unshakeable. They sought to declare themselves through a stringency of will, breaking clean from the immediate past and becoming autonomous men of the mind. If this severance from immigrant experience and Jewish roots would later come to seem a little suspect, the point needs nevertheless to be emphasized when the New York intellectuals began to cohere as a political-literary tendency around *Partisan Review* in the thirties, Jewishness as an idea or sentiment played only a minor, barely acknowledged role in their thought.[20]

To what degree Said identified with the populations being devastated in Vietnam or discriminated against in the United States is perhaps

impossible to know. Recognizing the connections between the Palestinian struggle and the liberatory struggles of other oppressed peoples (the Vietnamese and African Americans), Said began to lay the theoretical ground for an expansive study of how Western culture represents and subjugates difference through the prism of culture. Ironically, Jews also often claim a similar position, although detractors now argue that this is paternalistic—that the Jewish experience is no longer comparable to that of oppressed minorities.

As the purported founder of the field of postcolonial studies, Said sought to create noncoercive communities through the fusing of the discrepant experiences of ethnic minorities whether African American, Vietnamese, or Palestinian. Although the New York intellectuals did not focus primarily on these issues, one can argue that Said extended the soul-searching ethos of this overwhelmingly Jewish movement; as Jews struggled to cope with the challenges of assimilation in the early twentieth century, Said recuperated the experiences of other types of minorities, particularly people of color. Therein, I believe, rests Edward Said's legacy as a New York intellectual. Abdul Jan Mohammed labeled Said a "specular border intellectual" in that he turned a mirror on the West, revealing structural underpinnings, erasures, and commitments that have excluded ethnic minority voices. Said's recuperation of such colonial subjects as Fanon, James, Antonius, Kanafani, and his contrapuntal placement of those voices against and within the West stands as an unparalleled critical achievement.

Said's literary and very public intellectual career also fit quite squarely, albeit somewhat uneasily, within an intellectual tradition shared by such figures as Lionel Trilling, Sidney Hook, Phillip Rahv, Irving Howe, and Norman Podhoretz. Although certainly sharing many of the same intellectual commitments that define the New York intellectual—fierce intellectual independence, an enforced self-isolation from political power and the corruptions of the mainstream, and a rejection of a gregarious tolerance for present circumstance—Said can be viewed as defining the very characteristics of the engaged public intellectual while actively pursuing a political agenda that

often put him at direct odds with the New York intellectual tradition's most important figures, such as Michael Walzer.

Exodus, Statehood, and Empowerment

Although it is important not to view Walzer as, in any way, a representative of all New York intellectuals who shared a diversity of opinions and political views, one can catch a glimpse in Walzer's later political writings of how Jewish nationalism or Zionism came to occupy a central place among many Jewish writers who styled themselves as New York intellectuals. In Walzer's writing, Said claims, one can find the following strategy:

> *One:* he finds a contemporary situation in the world that could, if it isn't immediately addressed, affect Israel's standing adversely; *Two:* he does that [deals with the discredited appearance of Jewish fundamentalism and continued colonial rule over many Arabs and Arab land] initially by appearing to condemn something close at hand, which progressives can also condemn without much effort and for which an already substantial consensus exists; *Three:* he shows how certain rather provocative aspects of Jewish and/or Israeli history and/or related episodes in, say, American or French history, do not at all fit the condemned instances, although some obviously do. *Four* (the really important intellectual move)*:* Walzer formulates a theory and/or finds a person or text—provided that none is totally general, too uncompromising, too theoretically absolute—that provides the basis for a new category of politico-moral behavior. *Five:* he concludes by bringing together as many incompatible things as possible in as moral-sounding as well as politically palatable a rhetoric as possible (emphasis added).[21]

By tracing such a strategy of apologetics for a liberal democracy such as Israel, as Said identifies in Walzer's *Exodus and Revolution* and other works, such as *Just and Unjust Wars*, he traces the connection between Zionism and US nationalism, which permeates the outlook of those who would become neoconservatives (Podhoretz, Peretz, Kristol, Krauthammer, etc.). Said states, "If Jews were still stateless, and being held in ghettoes I do not believe Walzer would take the positions he has been taking."[22] In contrast to earlier figures labeled

New York intellectuals, such as Hannah Arendt, who expressed strong skepticism toward Zionism, a later group of intellectuals who experienced a political turn that aligned them with anticommunist movements opposing social change emerged. This group found itself toeing the line of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Committee for Cultural Freedom, and other reactionary cultural forces attempting to stifle internal dissent against the US intervention in Vietnam. Although the New York intellectuals may have had their roots in Jewish radicalism, by 1950 they had become ensconced well within the American establishment. By that point, figures such as Norman Podhoretz, Irving Kristol, Sidney Hook, and Dwight Macdonald were praising the worldwide benefits of American militarism. How did the New York intellectuals, a group that had its beginnings in intellectual independence, become so seemingly dependent upon the judgments of the corridors of power in such a relatively short time?

Said's debate with Walzer, which will be discussed in the latter half of this chapter, highlights his sharp differences with the New York intellectuals as he defends the Canaanites, not just Palestinians, but the indigenous populations of other times and contexts: Algerians, Vietnamese, and others. These native inhabitants, he argues, have been pushed out, repressed, and forgotten. In perhaps Said's most visible exchange with a New York intellectual, he refuses to allow Walzer to conduct this tidy history without recognizing the pain and costs endured by indigenous populations through settler colonialism, even when that settler colonialism is tied to the liberation of another oppressed people—the founding of Israel. Although *Exodus and Revolution* claims to be a liberatory narrative for all people, Said finds this claim to be nonsensical and purblind to the realities of what the Canaanites (Palestinians) have suffered. He reminds Walzer that native resistance is the price of settler-colonial domination while condemning intellectuals who rationalize the latter with notions like the "connected critic": "No one would deny that critics belong to a community, work in a sphere, are connected to people. What Walzer cannot see is that there is considerable moral difference between

the connectedness of a critic with an oppressing society, and a critic whose connection is to an oppressed one."[23] Said's exchange with Walzer highlights the difficulties of maintaining a critical consciousness when one's own people face destruction.

Lost Causes

The New York intellectuals sought to create a union between critical consciousness and political conscience. Irving Howe writes, "Throughout the thirties the New York Intellectuals believed, somewhat naively, that this union was not only a desirable possibility but also a tie both natural and appropriate."[24] Said's commitment to and enactment of worldliness surpassed the New York intellectuals' attempts to link literary criticism and political activism. Said's public interventions, his search for solutions to seemingly intractable international problems and conflicts, refused the oft-portrayed and often easily formulated and bandied about image of the impotent literary critic. The skills of the engaged critic, if deployed in the spirit of withering critique and in the context of "lost causes" can contribute to the overturning, or at least an unsettling, of destructive orthodoxies that often pass as almost "natural"—for example, the current state of affairs.

Through an exertion of will and a great refusal of what mere mortals accept as necessary evils or an unfortunate state of affairs, the engaged critic resists, unsettles, and defiantly seeks alternative explanations, histories, narratives, and solutions to create a culture and climate of coexistence. The erasure and deliberate forgetting of nondominant voices and perspectives creates the continual production of an overwhelming common sense that, when challenged, makes the critic appear silly or Martian-like, as the critique cannot be understood within the dominant idiom. Said championed "lost causes": "But does the consciousness and even the actuality of a lost cause entail that sense of defeat and resignation that we associate with the abjection of capitulation and the dishonor of grinning or bowing survivors who opportunistically fawn on their conquerors and seek to ingratiate themselves with the new dispensation? Must it always

result in the broken will and demoralized pessimism of the defeated? I think not, although the alternative is a difficult and extremely precarious one, at least on the level of the individual."[25] Never satisfied by the approval of a boss's nod, the promise of a guild prize, or even an ambassadorship to some exotic place, the committed critic seeks to tell the truth regardless of whom he may embarrass or expose; he sits back and accepts the repercussions—whether they be personal or professional—as they come, often seeking to "shock" well-entrenched stakeholders, for whom Realpolitik is a religion rather than an easily identifiable code word for "the American establishment," into a recognition of the too often damaging effects of the corrupt application of power in the world. As Said writes in his *The Politics of Dispossession*, "[And] orthodoxy quickly arms itself with such self-confirmations as 'responsible,' 'realistic,' and 'pragmatic,' which lay upon the intellectual the burden to 'stop questioning our values and threatening our privilege.' 'Our' in this sentence is the possessive of the apologist, who will pay any moral or intellectual price in order not to trouble himself with the radical issues."[26]

Using Raymond Williams's "structure of feeling" as the basis for a critical heuristic that he came to call "structures of attitude and reference," Said exposed the subtle ways through which the sheer power of empire exercised a definitive control over not only geographic space but also the literary and literal imagination—the structuring of social space through narrative enclosures and the very forms through which narratives can be told. Empire, the overwhelming suzerainty of imperialism, controls the structure of stories and the outlook of the characters contained therein, as Said demonstrates with respect to Austen's *Mansfield Park*. The exclusion of resistant voices and dissenting views is enabled by the structure of the narrative itself, facilitating a sutureless presentation of imperial dominance that extends political-military might into literary spaces. Within such a tightly controlled public space that so completely controls who may speak as an "expert" on terrorism or American foreign policy, those who reject the facile formulations—so often found in the "clash of civilizations" thesis and "you are either with us or against us" formulations, Said enacts a

brand of public intellectualism that recaptures the spirit of speaking the untrammeled truth to power, the consequences be damned.

Said's notion of exile, an out-of-placeness that endows one with a critical edge and fierce independence so very necessary to casting criticism and judgment from afar matches the New York intellectuals' 1930s-style commitment to staying out of power's entrapment: its material rewards and attractive sinecures that are surely meant to co-opt any and all into the ideology of the status quo.[27] As Said notes, exiles experience a twoness in this being as outsiders who seek to understand the inside:

> The greatest single fact of the past three decades has been, I believe, the vast human migration attendant upon war, colonialism, and decolonization, economic and political revolution, and such devastating occurrences as famine, ethnic cleansing, and great power machinations. In a place like New York, but surely also in other Western metropoles like London, Paris, Stockholm, and Berlin, all these things are reflected immediately in the changes that transform neighborhoods, professions, cultural production, and topography on an almost hour-to-hour basis. Exiles, émigrés, refugees, and expatriates uprooted from their lands must make do in new surroundings, and the creativity as well as the sadness that can be seen in what they do is one of the experiences that has still to find its chroniclers, even though a splendid cohort of writers that includes such different figures as Salman Rushdie and V.S. Naipaul has already opened further the door first tried by Conrad.[28]

The exile can see what others, intoxicated by the rewards of orthodoxy, no longer can: the general corruption of the guild structure and its embarrassing willingness to suppress rather than reveal unpleasant truths about the nation-state. What remains is an immigrant's and exile's city existing in tension with the symbolic (and at times actual) center of the world's globalized late capitalist economy whose raw power, projected economically, militarily, and politically everywhere, demonstrates how America is the only superpower today.[29]

Said's sense of self, his ability to use his own human agency in the world, signaled a larger-than-life person. He wished to write his life and identity into existence through his literary-cum-political work.

One gets the sense that Said is coming to know himself for the first time. A contrast can be seen between what Said does in this book and what someone like Norman Podhoretz does in *Making It* and *Breaking Ranks*. A parallel can be drawn between Said's post-1967 experience living as a Palestinian in the United States while coping with the indignities of anti-Arab sentiment, which has historical roots in the Orientalism Said analyzed with such precision, and the prevalence of anti-Semitism in America during the 1930s and 1940s. This replays the experience Irving Howe demonstrates in *World of Our Fathers*—understanding what it means to be an ethnic minority within a larger American culture where one has to assimilate to or isolate oneself from the larger homogeneous mass.

This aspect of Said's criticism, its relationship to Said's "Oriental" identity and the inevitable ways in which it trafficked in—but never directly engaged—anti-Semitic caricatures and stereotypes, deserves more critical attention. If it is in fact the case that Palestinian Arabs are the new Jews, Said, in writing the history of Orientalism, has—by the same logic—written the history of the new anti-Semitism, not the new anti-Semitism trumpeted so loudly by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and World Jewish Congress but instead the racial hatred directed against Arabs within a cultural climate where it is sanctioned and quietly condoned. While striving to write the history of Orientalism, Said quite naturally wrote the conditions of his own possibility. Driven by an enduring commitment to placing "criticism before solidarity," Said continually rejected the easygoing style of the pundit and the "Orwellian terminology" of the up-and-coming establishment figure, qualities that no doubt position him as a New York intellectual while also ensuring him an anomalous place within the same tradition.

Resisting the Trappings of Power

In his lifelong search to bring together the insights of literary criticism and the far-reaching implications of a directly engaged and necessary political activism, Edward Said traversed many disciplines and modes of thought, often upsetting well-entrenched interests and the

ideological ruses that hide and make them more palatable and less unsettling. What made Edward Said's life and career so extraordinary was the way in which he challenged the dry-as-dust criticism of his day to be something more than textual exegesis bent on preserving idealized abstractions devoted to preserving aesthetic imperatives.

Like the earlier New York intellectuals, Said moved literary criticism into the world, where the life-preserving function of secular criticism—unhampered by the divine edicts and metaphysical absolutes that drive various types of religious enthusiasm—might grapple with the concerns of the day. The retreat of various literary specialists, seemingly bent on avoiding sensitive political issues and the commitments that come along with resolving them, into schools of criticism that promote the production of precious terminologies, finely crafted to highlight textual operations, suggests the abandonment of the one-time oppositional function that many engaged critical intellectuals, such as Sartre and Chomsky, have found so dear: the continual monitoring and withering criticism of centers of concentrated power. The old "New Critics" shared this trait in contrast to the New York intellectuals who were largely a renegade group in the 1950s.

Said asks, "What does it mean to have a critical consciousness if . . . the intellectual's situation is a worldly one and yet, by virtue of that worldliness itself, the intellectual's social identity should involve something more than strengthening those aspects of the culture that require mere affirmation and orthodox compliancy from its members?"[30] He contends that exposing those aspects of a culture that promote stifling orthodoxies, that soften and tame the critical sense, will contribute to human freedom and fulfillment. He implores his fellow critics to understand that "criticism must think of itself as life-enhancing and constitutively opposed to every form of tyranny, domination, abuse; its social goals and non-coercive knowledge produced in the interests of human freedom."[31] The individuals who conduct these critiques upset the comfort level of those regulating the types of criticism that become tamed by institutions and orthodoxies. Those who resist the *idée reçues* and strike out on their own to find out the truth about the structures of domination that soften the critical

sense in lesser men are labeled as "agitators," "a set of interfering, meddling people, who come down to some perfectly contented class of community and sow the seeds of discontent among them," Said contends. "That is the reason why agitators are so completely necessary."[32] Being comfortable or feeling at home reduces the very conditions of possibility for the exile's existence: uneasiness, restlessness, uncertainty, out-of-placeness, and a constant state of alertness. This vigilance arises out of the awareness that at any moment, conditions may change such that the exiled critic will be forced to flee from state authorities because of a specific statement he has made or a specific commitment he has honored. Abuse, slander, and even threats of death only embolden the dedicated critic as he seeks, at any cost, to avoid Benda's *trahison des clercs*. Although the New York intellectuals aspired to Said's level of commitment with respect to engaged social critique, they clearly did not, and perhaps could not, meet his standard. As the quintessential specular border intellectual, Said traversed the often self-imposed fiefdoms that hamper the professional literary critic's career, daring to take up the cause of populations long forgotten by academics and politicians, as well as fad and fashion.

Predicting the vagaries of intellectual culture represents a daunting, if not impossible, task: the politics of one era are swept away and replaced by another, clearing the intellectual horizon and posing new challenges and obstacles. The volatility of the New York intellectual scene from the 1930s to the 1950s certainly merits close examination, with particular emphasis placed upon the shift from clearly demarcated Marxist positions to rabid anti-Stalinism and liberal anticommunism. Many of the New York intellectuals, in the course of their careers, drifted from the Communist Party to Trotskyism to anti-Stalinism to liberal anticommunism and finally to conservatism, with Sidney Hook being perhaps the most prominent example of this intellectual trajectory. Adept popular intellectuals are able to measure the winds of fashion and change while gauging the survivability of any one political position. Convictions are easily replaced by pragmatic considerations, such as economic livelihood and professional popularity.

Although it might be easy to conclude that many of the later New York intellectuals were not intellectuals at all but merely sham intellectuals, such a judgment does not adequately take into account the political pressures around intellectual work during the 1950s and 1960s. Although Said came upon the scene somewhat later, he managed to enter the "political fray" after 1967 when his own identity as a Palestinian could be neither ignored nor hidden: in some sense, he saw little choice in his "decision" to become an engaged intellectual. An urgency and restless energy pulse through Said's political essays—tampering with the normalcy of the everyday, undermining its unity and simplicity; a contrapuntal reading reveals the ruthlessness with which empire structures time, space, and sense. Said's alertness—his ability to strip away all the layers of camouflage that conceal the brutalities of power and its excessive cruelty and insidious reach—along with his own sense of displacement, loss, and migration permeated this work; the essay form itself worked through the sense of torment and anguish, relieving Said of his obligation to bear witness to his people's suffering.

Despite his training as a high humanist, Said struggled with the narratives and histories of those who fell out of humanism's reach—those who, due to an epistemological willfulness, had no identity: "They cannot represent themselves. They must be represented" (Marx 102). This epigram from *Orientalism* captures quite perfectly the modern Palestinian predicament. Although it is true that Said was a Palestinian representing Palestinians, as well as an Arab representing Arabs, he found his destiny wrapped up in making these intellectual representations to a Western audience woefully ill-informed about either. Said's recuperation, what Abdirahman Hussein calls an "activated agonistic dialectic," pours a corrosive acid on Western traditions, customs, and discourses that have for centuries "spoken to and for" Arabs.[33]

Resisting Accommodation

Like many of the early New York intellectuals, such as Herbert Solokow and Max Eastman, Said quite naturally adopted an oppositional

stance toward the dominant American culture, seeking a leveraging position through which to not only conduct critique but also create a cognitive dissonance among those in power—a recognition that willful domination brings with it a price for whole populations and pieces of geography. Unlike the New York intellectuals, however, Said refused the temptations of power and never committed the apostasy so central to the New York intellectuals' evolution. The excision of the New York intellectuals' revolutionary beginnings and the deradicalization of the movement demonstrate the immense strides the movement took to avoid being associated with the anti-Stalinist left—although many of them had belonged to it. The amnesia of the New York intellectuals on this point suggests the enormity of the political stakes involved: to admit the shift in position would have meant to admit being pulled in by power's centripetal force.

Encounter, the Committee on Cultural Freedom, and other CIA-backed venues gave the New York intellectuals a way to ideologically manage the rapid changes in American culture. Racial issues, the rise of feminism, protests against US involvement in Vietnam, and the growing resistance culture forced the New York intellectuals to shift rightward, suggesting that their real interests resided not with the people of color and other marginalized groups—with whom they previously allied, at least theoretically—but instead with the white, power establishment. As Jewish writers prior to assimilation, they stood in opposition to this establishment and critiqued the chauvinism and the alienation it produced. The seemingly paradoxical history of the New York intellectuals, with the deradicalization of the movement's leading figures throughout the Cold War, is just now being rewritten.

As one-time radicals such as Sidney Hook and Phillip Rahv traded in their revolutionary garb for the trappings of power that came along with CIA front money, they consciously rewrote the fabric of their political convictions while maintaining that their belief systems had remained consistent across the years of change that swept the country in the 1950s. Although it's true that the ravages of Stalin did play a part, some intellectuals used this shift to reinvent themselves in

extremely self-serving ways, and it is difficult to disentangle motives on this front. Nonetheless, the vehemence with which New York intellectuals like Diane Trilling resisted opinions that hinted at anything to the contrary suggests that the politics of apostasy brings with it many a bitter pill.

As Frances Stone Saunders writes in *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War*, the idea that former left-wingers should have come to be roped together in the same enterprise as the CIA is less implausible than it seems. There was a genuine community of interest and conviction to fight the cultural Cold War between the agency and those intellectuals who were hired, even if they did not know it. The CIA's influence was not always, or often, reactionary and sinister, wrote America's preeminent liberal historian: Arthur Schlesinger said, "In my experience its leadership was politically enlightened and sophisticated."[34] In light of the neoconservative self-portrait being created by many of the New York intellectuals, one is tempted to conclude that they have had a stake in perpetuating an amnesia that avoids a forthright disclosure of their previous political history as revolutionary but anti-Stalinist Marxists.[35] Wald writes, "In fact, only by understanding the peculiar nature of their transformation can one come to grips with the most contradictory and confusing aspects of the New York intellectuals: that a group of individuals who mainly began their careers as revolutionary communists in the 1930s could become an institutionalized and even hegemonic component of American culture during the conservative 1950s while maintaining a high degree of collective continuity. This pendular evolution by so many New York intellectuals suggests, from a radical point of view, that their politics were deceptive from the beginning."[36] Although it is true that many of the New York intellectuals fell victim to the "God that failed" syndrome, the dimensions of their intellectual treason should be measured in increments: It was by successive stages that the New York intellectuals moved from a distinct variety of communism in the 1930s to a distinct variety of liberalism in the 1950s; from advocating socialist revolution to endorsing capitalism. "Anti-Stalinism" became a catchall phrase in the United

States, representing a resistance to social change. In the 1950s the formerly radical New York intellectuals defended themselves against being implicated as radicals by attacking those further to their left, sometimes using the theory of "totalitarianism" to claim that the concepts "left" and "right" had lost their traditional meanings. Essentially they purged from the pale of respectability those adhering to ideas fundamentally at odds with Cold War liberal ideology, starting with all variants of Leninism.[37] As Wald argues, "the logic of pure and simple anti-Stalinism is to move its adherents toward an anticommunism that views the imperialist practices of the United States as a lesser evil in a world conflict of two 'camps.'"[38] By the time Edward Said came onto the political scene in the late 1960s, these camps were on a collision course.

Saidian Resistance

Edward Said dedicated his scholarly career to exposing how systems of thought create exclusions that divide human beings, who might otherwise find lines of connection and mutuality between one another, along filiative lines, such as blood, ethnos, and nation, and affiliative ones, such as professions, alliances, and organizations. Said's critical concern for the ways in which cultures erase the voices of ethnic minority figures, evident throughout his scholarly corpus, restored faces to the victims, particularly victims of imperial violence and erasure. Occupying an in-between space that was the condition of the New York intellectuals in an even more special way, Said echoed Adorno that the exile sees what others cannot see. If nothing else, the history of the New York intellectuals ultimately represents a cautionary tale about how allegiance to power can corrupt the intellectual mission in a very serious way. When adherence to a party line and doctrinal truths becomes the calling card of a group of intellectuals rather than the unfettered pursuit of truth, Benda's cry of "trahison des clercs" is in order.

Said's career avoided the pitfalls to which many New York intellectuals eventually succumbed. Said's sense of self, his ability to use his own human agency in the world, signaled a larger than life person. He wished to write his life and identity into existence. One gets

the sense in *Out of Place* that Said is coming to know himself for the first time. This follows the path of many New York intellectuals, who understood what it meant to be a minority within a larger American culture where one has to assimilate or isolate oneself. The ability of the individual to begin, to break free of tradition and to start anew—either as a writer or as a burgeoning sign of critical consciousness—represents a radical act of freedom, a necessary act of resistance that occurs between culture and system. Affiliative loyalties replace filiative relationships; in this sense, one can refashion an identity through relations unconnected to birth, relations that can be invented according to time and circumstance.

It is this individual effort, in Said's estimation, that allows a breaking free from the constraints of a textual tradition or a disciplinary apparatus, or a departing from the cliché-ridden dictates of a cynical *realpolitik* manufactured for the benefit of a crippling conformism. This effort can have a numbing effect upon the critical mind as it navigates between the Charybis of independence and the Scylla of communal acceptance. The condition of exile, as Said so powerfully demonstrated, provides a site—a stance or state of mind—through which to remain alert to the seductions and trappings of power, attractions that often reduce the most perceptive critic to a mere state functionary. In his *Representations of the Intellectual*, Said writes,

> Nothing in my view is more reprehensible than those habits of mind in the intellectual that induce avoidance, that characteristic turning away from a difficult and principled position which you know to be the right one, but which you decide not to take. You do not want to appear too political; you are afraid of seeming controversial; you need the approval of a boss or authority figure; you want to keep a reputation of being balanced, objective, moderate; your hope is to be asked back, to consult, to be on a board or prestigious committee, and so to remain within the responsible mainstream; someday you hope to get a honorary degree, a big prize, perhaps even an ambassadorship.[39]

The constant intellectual vigilance necessary for resisting the desperate longing for mainstream acceptance and the creature comforts that so often can tame the critic brings with it a loneliness and isolation

that become difficult to sustain. The pressures of career, family, and the day-to-day drudgery associated with contemporary life often relegate the embrace of the critical attitude to an unreachable and impractical ideal: only a handful of intellectuals can live up to Julian Benda's critical model that calls for resisting *trahison des clercs*. Standing against daunting odds, going against the cultural flow, and not engaging in the massive, selective amnesia that is so much a part of the American cultural landscape require constant effort, an energy and sense of purpose that never longs for a pep rally, a sign of acceptance and reassurance. When one receives such a sign, it's high time to change course, to reevaluate one's position in relation to the larger culture, and to chart a new direction that avoids the *idée rescues* that reduce the complexity of the human community to a facile formulation of "us" and "them." Said speaks out against a tolerance for the status quo and flight from controversy: "For the intellectual these habits of mind are corrupting par excellence. If anything can denature, naturalize, neutralize, and finally kill a passionate intellectual life it is the internalization of such habits. Personally, I have encountered them in one of the toughest of all contemporary issues, Palestine, where fear of speaking out about one of the greatest injustices in modern history has hobbled, blinkered, and muzzled many who know the truth and are in a position to serve it."[40] The ability of the individual to make an impression, a mark, upon the collection of civilization's accumulated texts and traditions signals the importance of human agency in forging intellectual resistance against discourses such as Orientalism, imperialism, and the luxuries of a culture's selective amnesias. Through the trope of Blackmur's "technique of trouble," Said created trouble along disciplinary lines, subjecting the cult of expertise—whether that of the Orientalist or the literary critic—to radical unsettling. Said's career-long belief that the individual still could emerge through these mazes of discourses—while attempting to awaken an intellectual community from its self-induced philosophical slumber—finds repeated expression from *Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography* to *Freud and the Non-European*. The importance of the individual's relying upon, while also resisting, tradition found

such repeated articulation in Said's work because it was directly tied to Said's self-construction as a critical intellectual: as Said wrestled to understand how the West constructs its Other, in this case the Oriental, he mastered the major figures of the Western canon, coming to a deep understanding of how the most prominent figures in the history of European thought managed, and to a degree contained, the conditions of possibility for difference's expression. Unlocking the master code of Orientalism—locating the unarticulated Manichaeism that propels the separation of cultures while, in fact, such cultures are interdependent—stood as Said's most valuable achievement as he strove to write between culture and system.

Systems of thought, such as Orientalism, rely on the creation of mythologies, which must be held in place through intellectual omissions, excisions, and amnesias. The perversity of knowledge systems contributes to the creation of discursive divisions that undermine human unities. Said claims that Orientalism, for example, was an intellectual and human failure because it demonstrated how knowledge can be deployed to undermine human divisions instead of highlighting human commonalities. Obviously, the *Orientalism* project was deeply personal for Said:

> Much of the personal investment in [Orientalism] derives from my awareness of being an "Oriental" as a child growing up in two British colonies. All of my education, in those colonies (Palestine and Egypt) and in the United States has been Western, and yet that deep early awareness has persisted. In many ways my study of Orientalism has been an attempt to inventory the traces upon me, the Oriental subject, of the culture whose domination has been so powerful a factor in the life of all Orientals . . . Along the way, as severely and as rationally as I have been able, I have tried to maintain a critical consciousness, as well as employing those instruments of historical, humanistic, and cultural research of which my education has made me the fortunate beneficiary. In none of that however, have I ever lost hold of the cultural reality of, the personal involvement in having been constituted as, "an Oriental."[41]

For Said, the task of the responsible intellectual should be to upend knowledge's reificatory and placeholding power, while articulating

the commonalities in discrepant human experiences; doing so is the key to forging the conditions for "noncoercive" human communities. Nationalism, one of the most destructive forces of the twentieth century, remade the outlines of the world and relied on the creation of narrative stories to support its development. The Exodus story, the biblical story of Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt to the Promised Land, represents just such a narrative in that intellectuals have seized upon it in the course of explaining national liberations.

The Said-Walzer Exchange

The publication of Michael Walzer's *Exodus and Revolution* in 1986 sparked a vitriolic and protracted exchange between Walzer and Edward Said in the journal *Grand Street*, pitting two well-established academics, one Jewish and one Palestinian, in a conflict of interpretations over the biblical text Exodus. Walzer can be seen as a prototypical New York intellectual. A longtime contributor to *Dissent* magazine and the *New Republic*, Walzer has earned a reputation as liberalism's respectable voice, a man of the left who knows well the pitfalls of radicalism and has frequently written about them. Walzer dedicates *Exodus and Revolution* to the *New Republic*'s longtime editor, Martin Peretz.

Why did Walzer turn his critical arsenal upon this particular biblical story? He presents Exodus's supposed linear structure with oppression, promised land, redemption, the crushing of antirevolutionary violence in the golden calf episode, and so forth, as a divine warrant for Israel's creation and the resulting destruction of the Canaanite Palestinians. In *Exodus and Revolution*, Walzer argues that the Exodus story represented a narrative basis for contemporary liberation politics that provided hope for oppressed peoples. He claims, using the argument within Exodus, that "wherever you are it's probably Egypt; the departure from Egypt requires a march through the wilderness; we can march to the Promised Land by joining arms and marching together; this story forms the basis of all modern liberatory movements, including the African-American civil rights movement" (Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* 149). Said viewed Walzer's

argument as a bad-faith, Zionist attempt to justify the expulsion of more than 750,000 Palestinians between 1947 and 1949 and the creation of Israel in 1948. He argued that Walzer must take Israel and Palestine out of the colonialism-anticolonialism discussion to avoid indicting Israel in the same way the United States was indicted in Vietnam. The Israeli occupation in 1967 made this increasingly difficult, leading to a whole industry of Israeli apologetics and historical revision.

Walzer's compact and tidy history of Exodus politics in *Exodus and Revolution* suggests a complete "blindness" to the oppression of those who have suffered under the Israeli military occupation: the Palestinians of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights. Said's indignation is apparent in the following quotation:

> [But] the one thing I want Walzer to remember is that the more he shores up the sphere of Exodus politics the more likely it is that the Canaanites on the outside will resist and try to penetrate the walls banning them from the goods of what is, after all, partly their world too. The strength of the Canaanite, that is the exile position, is that being defeated and "outside," you can perhaps more easily feel compassion, more easily call injustice "injustice," more easily speak directly and plainly of all oppression, and with less difficulty try to understand (rather than mystify or occlude) history and equality.[42]

In its general outlines, the Said-Walzer debate over Exodus was reminiscent of the Sartre-Camus debate over the *pied noirs* in Algeria, Frenchmen who lorded their power over a native majority, and the legitimacy of colonial regimes and the resistance that native populations often direct against them. In 1952, Camus and Sartre, who had worked together as part of the French resistance against the Nazis, broke their friendship due to a series of events centering on the Communist Party's stance on anticolonial violence. Camus took a decidedly anti-Marxist stance, becoming a darling among Cold War liberals, while Sartre joined the Communist Party. Camus rejected the politics of the engaged critic for the distance of what he called the connected critic, an intellectual who admits his ties to an ethnic

community while realizing that these ties may condition and compromise his ability to criticize or condemn that community's actions, particularly when they exert colonial dominance. Whereas Sartre condemned the French *pied noir* community of Algeria, even going so far as to label the native resistance against it "legitimate," Camus chose "his mother over justice," deciding not to condone anticolonial violence, in direct contrast to Third World revolutionaries such as Franz Fanon and C. L. R. James.

Said harshly judges Walzer's tidy reading of Exodus, which excises inconvenient aspects of the Israelites' escape from Egypt and bondage, a blatant apology—similar to Camus's evasions on Algeria—for the expulsion of the Palestinians prior to Israel's creation, excusing the creation of a neocolonial dependency that seeks to blot out the memory of the Canaanites. In his response to Said's "Michael Walzer's *Exodus and Revolution*: A Canaanite Reading," Walzer amazingly compares the Palestinians to the *pied noirs*, whom Camus eventually encouraged to leave Algeria because of the native uprising. Said writes: "Walzer can't distinguish between the victims and the conqueror-colonizers. Is this the sort of analysis we should expect from a professor at Princeton's Advanced Institute?"

This debate with Walzer is Said's most heated with a New York intellectual and reveals a great deal about how the New York intellectuals drifted toward Jewish nationalism and the pitfalls they encountered in the course of embracing a strong identity politics. Walzer, among all the New York intellectuals, worked quite hard to distinguish Israel's wars against the Arab states, and in particular against the Palestinians, from America's adventure in Vietnam.

According to Said, Walzer argues,

- Jewish liberation provides a model for all liberatory movements.
- Israel's creation, and the destruction of the Canaanite Palestinians, was legitimate and biblically ordained.
- There is a connection between secular and religious worlds.
- Exodus is secular and progressive, about liberation and against oppression, and a paradigm for radical politics. Said asks,

> "Why is Walzer so undialectical, so simplifying, so ahistorical and reductive?" (Said and Hitchens, *Blaming the Victims* 169). According to Said, the first answer is that he really is not and that Walzer's argument in *Exodus and Revolution* has an altogether different, and quite complex, trajectory from the one presented on a surface reading (Said and Hitchens, *Blaming the Victims* 172–74).

The material in Walzer's work that touches upon Israel's predicament since 1967 (*Just and Unjust Wars*, *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad*, *Spheres of Justice*, and *Exodus and Revolution*) is made to shore up the more unpleasant aspects of Israel's founding through philosophical arguments while serving a resolutely political (and not philosophical) agenda. Its path is marked by repeated words and phrases: "progressive," "moral," "radical politics," "national liberation," "oppression," "liberalism," "liberal subject," "community," "democracy." It is necessary, in order to understand Said's multilayered reading of the text, to quote at some length from his "Michael Walzer's *Exodus and Revolution*: A Canaanite Reading." He begins by discussing Walzer's redeployment of Jewish myth and history:

> Considered as a group, the provenance of these [progressive, moral, radical politics, national liberation, oppression] is not Exodus. The terms enter American and European political vocabulary after the Second World War, usually in the context of colonial wars fought against movements of national liberation. The power of "liberation" and "oppression" in the works of those Third World militants like Cabral and Fanon, who were organically linked to anticolonial insurrectionary movements, is that the concepts were later able to acquire a certain embattled legitimacy in the discourse of First World writers sympathetic to anticolonialism. The point about writers like Sartre, Debray, and Chomsky, however, is that they were not mere echoes of the African, Asian, and Latin American anti-imperialists, but intellectuals writing from within—and against—the colonialist camp.[43]

Like Sartre, Debray, and Chomsky, Said wrote from within—and against—the colonialist camp, presenting a perhaps even more compelling portrait as an embattled Palestinian spokesperson. After the 1967 Arab-Israeli Six-Day War, the New York intellectual was forced to question his relationship with his Jewishness and Israel just as Said was forced to confront his identity as a Palestinian within a context of loss and dispossession. The Jewish intellectual, like the Palestinian intellectual, sought to understand his relationship within a national, or aspiring national, community, measuring the pitfalls of blind loyalty to an unreflective nationalism. Such blind loyalty leads to a *trahison des clercs*, a treason Said finds Walzer guilty of committing throughout *Exodus and Revolution*:

> Although most commentators recognize that that period is now practically over (largely because the anticolonial movement were victorious), only a little attention has been devoted to the ideological aftermath in Europe and America. A "return" to Judeo-Christian values was trumpeted; the defense of Western civilization was made coterminous with general attacks on terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism, structuralism and communism . . . Much retrospective analysis of the colonial past focused on the evils of the newly independent states—the corruption and tyranny of their rule, the betrayed promise of their revolutions, the mistaken faith placed in them by their European supporters. The most striking revisionist has been Connor Cruise O'Brien, whose total about-face found him an entirely new audience . . . extremely eager to hear about the evils of black or brown dictators and the relative virtues of white imperialism.[44]

As American liberals worked hard in the midst of the Cold War to condemn the excesses of dictatorial rule in Soviet-backed regimes, their stances with respect to countries in which the United States backed harsh and repressive regimes—while often directly interfering with the formation of democratic rule and worker participation—were quite different. A noticeable silence attended US intellectual discourse with respect to bloody US interventions in Nicaragua and South Africa during the 1980s. Similarly, a silence has attended US intellectual discourse with respect to US support for Israel's 47-year military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. The revival

of anti-imperialist and liberationist language in discussions of Nicaragua and South Africa is one major exception to this pattern. The other major exception has been the rhetoric of liberal supporters of Israel. I speak here of a rather small, but quite influential and prestigious, group that since 1967 has conducted itself with—from the perspective of students of rhetoric—considerable tactical flexibility. All along, in the face of considerable evidence to the contrary, members of this group have tried to maintain Israel's image as a progressive and wholly admirable state.[45]

The upshot of Said's exchanges with the New York intellectuals revolves around the responsibility of the intellectual and the difficult issues that attend a committed criticism, which often forces one to leave ethnic loyalties behind while affirming an oft-cited but frequently avoided dictum: "criticism before solidarity." This debate highlights the war, or "conflict of interpretations"; in this case, the text in contest is Exodus. Said's and Walzer's stances vis-á-vis Sartre's and Camus's stances toward Algeria act as a proxy for their stances toward Israel and Palestine. For Said, there can be no Jewish march through the wilderness out of the oppression of Egypt, culminating in the creation of Israel, without the destruction of the Canaanite-Palestinians. Although Walzer has long argued that there are sometimes minorities caught between the borders of nations who "must be helped to leave," he makes the seemingly inexplicable error of comparing the Palestinians to *pied noirs*, who in Said's words "battened themselves by force on an overseas possession whose natives were abused, exploited, repressed until those natives rose up and sacrificed one million dead in the process of liberating themselves from French settlers."[46] In this exchange, one can easily see how historical representations of Jewish suffering and the struggle for Palestinian self-determination in the American public sphere can create violent intellectual confrontation.[47]

I find this exchange with Michael Walzer to have been Said's most interesting and provocative exchange with any of the New York intellectuals. We see here Said's and Walzer's stances on colonial violence and native resistance, exchanges between dominating and subjugated

populations, and—of course—Said's and Walzer's varying stances on Israel's creation. "[Walzer] has the gall to say that I am represented by 'Arafat, Habash, and Abu Musa,' mixing together the one acknowledged symbol of Palestinian nationalism with two of his bitterest, most implacable enemies. Well, who represents Walzer, the Israeli pilot who drops cluster bombs on children in Beirut, or Generals Sharon and Eytan?"[48] In this question, Said implies that American Jews, in their "embrace of the state" and state power, are no longer powerless and can indeed make victims of others in the name of Jewish nationalism. The deaths of nearly twenty thousand Palestinians between June and September 1982, with nearly three thousand Lebanese-Palestinians killed by Israel's Phalangist allies at the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila, with troops from the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) purportedly overseeing the massacre, led to a great deal of soul-searching in Israel about the specific aims of the invasion of South Lebanon. The apologetics for the invasion among left-liberals in the United States has been well-documented.[49] Said asks, "Whom does one respect more, in the accredited Western and Judaic traditions, the courageously outspoken intellectual or loyal member of the complicit majority?"[50]

With the New York intellectuals' drift away from the Communist Party to Trotskyism and eventually to liberal anticommunism leading to conservatism, we see a shift in their view of colonialism and antiliberation movements—for example, Vietnam and Israel. In fact, Walzer has been viewed as one of the leading liberal voices in the United States for nearly thirty years. His *Spheres of Justice*, *Just and Unjust Wars*, and *Thick and Thin: Moral Arguments at Home and Abroad* have contributed greatly to left-liberal thought in the United States. Anticommunism, a US nationalist version of liberalism, has, with respect to American foreign policy, camouflaged military adventurism and colonial exploitation by describing them in more palatable ways, "defensive wars," "occupation," and the like. Neoconservatism, then, really became a "middle way" between liberal anticommunism and right-wing conservatism. Although the pitfalls of Vietnam were recognized, great efforts were made to show that "Israel was not

Vietnam," reinforcing the purity and necessity of Israel's birth in the wake of the Holocaust.

Through his writings, Said projects an anguish and despair at the state of contemporary intellectual culture; at the same time, however, there is, in Paul Bové's words, an attempt to attain "hope and reconciliation."[51] Without hope, it's impossible to fight for a lost cause, a cause that represents a discrepant experience, and disentangle it from the grips of highly mediated discourses. Said's persistent efforts in criticizing the ayatollahs and imams of the Middle East, while also leveling withering critiques of US presidents, PLO leader Yasser Arafat, and Israeli prime ministers, suggest that he was capable of living out the highest ideals of the committed intellectual: extending the application of a principle to friend and foe equally, regardless of the consequences. In rejecting the cult of expertise and the policy intellectuals who proffer the peace of the powerful, Said challenged the easygoing collegiality of the academic and the sycophantic behavior of the politician on the stump. While the public rhetoric of "us versus them" and "the clash of civilizations" is consumed by the jingoists and the newsmakers, Said cautioned us against enjoying the collective comforts of nationalism and its attendant patriotic fervor. As went the American power establishment, so went the New York intellectuals, bringing accommodation politics to a new level. As Alan Wald points out, the erasure of this accommodationist style from the New York intellectuals' history has allowed the movement's leading figures to maintain that they have held a consistent politics when, in fact, they drifted quite far across the 1930s to 1950s from communism to Trotskyism, liberal anticommunism, and finally conservatism. The "politics of memory" game has made the telling of the New York intellectuals' history a complex task indeed. Edward Said's engagement with and within that history forms a unique chapter in American intellectual life. As the late Christopher Hitchens noted, "If it wasn't for this offense done to the Palestinians in 1947 and 1948, Edward would have become what he basically already is: a New York Jewish intellectual."[52]

CHAPTER 3

Edward Said, the Question of Palestine, and the Continual Quest for Intellectual Freedom

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Ari Shavit of Israel's leading daily newspaper *Ha'aretz* spent three days in New York interviewing Edward W. Said in the summer of 2000. In this interview, which was—in Said's words—"eminently fair" and accurately reproduced in print throughout Israel—he traced the events surrounding the 1947–1949 expulsions of nearly 800,000 Arab inhabitants in an area known simply as "Palestine," culminating in the birth of Israel.[1] He also stressed the necessity of acknowledging what so many are pained to admit: the existence of nearly three million people, currently living under military occupation, who share among themselves the "Palestinian" identity, an identity that—while continuously contested—represents a suffering and tragic dispossession that stands at the very heart of the present Middle East conflict.

In this interview with Shavit, which could never have appeared in an American paper, Said made a prediction: until the Palestinians were recognized by the Israelis as equals, and embraced as such, no workable solution would emerge to the 64-year death struggle. As he stated in another interview, "Human beings are very stubborn. It takes a slow seeping into the consciousness that the other side is not going to go away. Thinking that the Palestinians are going to simply give up if they are brought to their knees is foolish because they're not [going to give up]."[2]

The continued cycles of violence and occupation, the effects of which occasionally find their way into the American taxpayer's consciousness through television images, often have a numbing effect; solutions to the underlying causes of such images seem wholly unrealizable. In Said's mind, an Israeli-Palestinian binational state remained the one last prospect for peaceful coexistence. In reflecting upon Edward Said's life over the last several years, I've continually returned to two somewhat enigmatic statements that Said made during that interview with Shavit: "The only true follower of Adorno . . . I'm a Jewish-Palestinian."[3]

Along with Erich Auerbach, Adorno was Said's prototypical exile: someone who was never part of anything for very long and was perhaps most at home on a plane, always in and out of activities and places. Said's restlessness and discomfort with either a programmatic politics or an unreflective group allegiance fit quite nicely with the exilic image of Auerbach composing his *Mimesis* without the proper textual resources in a besieged Istanbul or of Adorno fleeing Nazi Germany for the safety of America to establish the New School for Social Research.

Said seemed always to reject the comforts and easy solidarity of the group, seeking instead the complexities and shades of grey that emerge in solitude and through fits of dissatisfaction with the status quo. As a Palestinian working in the very finest Jewish critical-intellectual tradition, Said could indeed claim the "Jewish Palestinian" appellation for himself.

As a Jewish Palestinian, Said wrestled with the clear dialectic between repression and resistance that animates interactions between the Israeli government and the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza: a dialectic between the powerful and the powerless, the occupiers and the occupied, and those who inflict humiliation and those who are continually humiliated. Said continually wondered what actuated someone such as the late Israel Shahak, the great Israeli defender of Palestinian civil rights, and continues to actuate solitary Jewish thinkers, like Noam Chomsky and Norman Finkelstein, to

speak out on behalf of the besieged Palestinian population, in the face of overwhelming odds.

All the silence and polite evasion about the Palestinians' plight of the Occupied Territories, passes under the shameful guise of "professionalism," "pragmatism," "realism," and "responsible journalism"—of course, each of these are the result of doctrinal constraints, and the "requisite commitments" within a properly functioning propaganda system that enforces the necessary illusions of state.[4] In many ways, Said's persistent efforts to resist and expose the bad-faith handwringing and polite evasion that predominates in elite intellectual circles, seemingly whenever the Palestinian issue is mentioned, continues a tradition of resistance writing and activism reminiscent of the Palestinian writer, Ghassan Kanafani, assassinated by the Mossad in a car bomb explosion in July 1972 in Beirut. Kanafani was a "commando who never fired a gun" whose "weapon was a ballpoint pen and his arena newspaper pages. And he hurt the enemy more than a column of commandos."[5]

At the conclusion of Kanafani's most famous novella, *Men in the Sun*, a set of questions that fully resonate with the twentieth-century Palestinian predicament confronts the reader: "Why didn't you knock on the sides of the tank? Why didn't you bang the sides of the tank? Why? Why? Why?"[6] A character in the novel, Abul Khaizuran, no longer able to maintain his composure, returned to his truck after disposing of the bodies of Qais, Marwan, and Assad—three Palestinian men, attempting in the early 1960s to cross from Iraq into Kuwait, who had paid Khaizuran to take them across the Iraq-Kuwait border. These men, according to Barbara Harlow, "[left] behind not only the dispossession of refugee life but also a broken and disrupted family tradition."[7]

Ultimately, due to the heat of the afternoon sun, the three men suffocated to death inside an empty water tank attached to Khaizuran's lorry because of a delay at the border crossing. The reader is left to wonder, "Did the men not scream out to save their lives because they feared being discovered by the guards at the border crossing, or did they cry out and bang on the side of the tank with no one to hear

them?" Is this not the Palestinian predicament? No one can hear the cries of the Palestinians because of an inability or unwillingness to listen.

In the context of discussing Kanafani's *Men in the Sun*, Said writes, "The Palestinian must make the present since the present is not an imaginative luxury but a literal, existential necessity."[8] In his "Homelessness and Worldliness," Bruce Robbins reminds us that "the reality of the Palestinians is not what they have lost, but the state of loss itself."[9] Said describes this experience as cubistic, bringing with it "a burden of interpretation and a multiplication of selves that are virtually unparalleled in modern political or cultural history—a fact made more impressively onerous in that it is all filtered through negation and qualification."[10]

In attempting to capture this "state of loss itself" and "multiplication of selves" through his actual and scholarly position, it's no accident that words such as "dignity," "defiance," "resistance," "orthodoxy," "authority" and "dogma" appear repeatedly in Said's literary and political writings.[11] Said, of course, embraced the first three terms—dignity, defiance, and resistance—as emancipatory, expansive, and necessary prerequisites to the fulfillment of human freedom; each of them informed the politics of the Palestinian uprising. The latter three terms—orthodoxy, authority, and dogma—often justify the very worst kinds of state worship and unleash a return to repressive religiosity that channels collective passions into the perversions of nationalism.

As a critic, Said seemed to be continually balancing the demands of orthodoxy, authority, and dogma against his humanistic commitment to preserving the conditions of possibility for human expressions of resistance, dignity, and defiance in the face of injustice. He balanced these through the actual and metaphysical condition of exile.

Said's criticism of the Palestinian authority led to the banning of his book *After Oslo* on the West Bank. He called the Oslo Accords and the Declaration of Principles what they were: documents intended to transform the occupied territories into Bantustans. I use this word "Bantustans" in an attempt to draw parallels between what Israel's

leadership was actually offering the Palestinians—something tantamount to what the white minority offered the black majority in South Africa in the 1980s—a national territory governed by black chiefs, such as Butalezzi, who were controlled by white elites. At that time (September 1993), Said held a fiercely unpopular minority position amid the continual paeans sung to Clinton and Rabin and the redemption of Arafat in the Western press. In embracing "criticism before solidarity" as a credo, Said enacted a form of oppositional criticism that exists between culture and system.

Through both his daunting scholarly production and inspiring political activism, Edward W. Said enacted a rhetoric of resistance situated within and often constrained by the harsh political realities of the American and international public spheres. This extraordinary enactment, as an intellectual performance, of Palestinian resistance to the ritual humiliations of life under occupation—torture, deprivation, detention, and dispossession—experienced by nearly three million Palestinians gave his academic and public careers a distinctiveness unlikely to be matched among future generations of critical intellectuals. By a rhetoric of resistance, I mean the lived strategies and exertions of will that create the existential condition of "no surrender," enabling a beleaguered people to retain a sense of identity in the face of the 1948 *al-nakba* (catastrophe) no matter how under siege, contributing to the formation of a collective memory.

In his essay "Intifada and Independence," Said recounts how at the nineteenth session of the Palestinian National Council in Algiers, Mahmoud Darwish—the Palestinian people's national poet—insisted that Said, who had been asked to translate the 1988 Palestinian Declaration of Statehood from Arabic into English, tell Yasir Arafat that the phrase "collective memory" (which was to be included in the document) possesses a very precise, technical definition that must be acknowledged and is not simply a poetic phrase devoid of political implication: "Tell him, [Arafat], it has a serious and even scientific meaning,"[12] said Darwish. Said, in struggling to understand the Palestinian condition, sought to understand the form just such a Palestinian collective memory might take: "How does one rise beyond the

limiting circumstances, beyond negativity, into a positive affirmation of what we [as Palestinians] are and want? But this is not just a matter of will, it is also a matter of finding the right modality, the right mixtures of forces to harness, the right rhetoric and concepts by which to mobilize our people and our friends, the right goal to affirm, the right past to drop away from, the right future to fight for."[13] Expressions of Palestinian dignity and solidarity present a living, breathing reality that cannot be simply effaced through a convenient redescription of facts. To avoid this living, breathing reality—while overlooking the Western intelligentsia's role in trying to efface it through word and deed—is to miss the main reason for the necessity of a road map to peace. Indeed, to believe that the road map to peace was necessitated by American and Israeli cooperation and goodwill is to be purblind to the realities of Palestinian life under occupation. As the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza have the right to resist the Israeli occupation under international law and as the Israeli government with its US patron continues to block an international consensus on a diplomatic settlement in the region, the politics of the intifada are a reminder or how the force of an oppressed people will and can keep superpowers in check. Said reminds us that "it's quite clear that the Palestinians' sheer physical presence has always been the main problem. Whether it's trying to get rid of them or pretending that they weren't there or that they're really not the original inhabitants or something else, all of this is what I call gratuitous epistemological willfulness to pretend that the Palestinians are a negligible quantity. The problem is increasing. It hasn't decreased."[14] We must remember that the first and second Intifadas were uprisings initiated by young Palestinians, the Children of the Stones, between the ages of 12 and 20. The young often refuse the platitudes about "time and patience" that the old are far too often willing to accept as conventional wisdom. As Said claimed in his *Al-Ahram* essay, "Punishment by Detail," "Hope has been eliminated from the Palestinian vocabulary so that only raw defiance remains, and still Sharon and his sadistic minions prattle on about eliminating terrorism by an ever-encroaching occupation that has continued now for more than 35 years."[15]

Said's unswerving commitment in advocating the cause of Palestinian self-determination, in conjunction with an engaged form of cultural criticism, defied the constrictive boundaries of mere literary study. This brand of intellectual independence challenged traditional notions of "a career in literature" and the conventional pieties that often tame fierce political stands.

While many often toe some imaginary ideological line in the service of an academic realpolitik, demonstrating a greater allegiance to the professional guild structure than to an interrogation of the wider social conflicts that condition our world, Edward Said sought to realize the full dimensions of "intellectual responsibility" in the spirit of Voltaire, Benda, Zola, and Chomsky.

Although the phrase "speaking truth to power" long ago became an overused cliché, describing seemingly each and every academic position that entailed even the minutest expenditure of political capital, it is well-suited for understanding Edward Said's critical interventions on behalf of one of the most explosive and controversial international issues of the last 46 years: Palestinian self-determination. Said's persistence and indefatigable energy in representing the humanity and resilience of his own people within an American public sphere that often views Palestinians as less than human affirms the very highest of intellectual ideals: he is, in the very truest sense, speaking truth to power.

By making the connection between intellectual resistance and the resistance politics of the Palestinian Intifada, Said drew upon the rhetoric of a nationalist struggle (Third World struggles) in the formulation of a strategy of intellectual defense. The Intifada, for example, has become a byword for liberation and struggle in the development of a critical outlook that refuses the logic of occupation and military might, enabling the type of risk taking exemplified by those few willing to cry "J'accuse" when grave injustices, such as human rights abuses, present themselves. Rachel Corrie's courageous and dignified act of resistance on March 16, 2003, in Rafah (Gaza) stands as the most graphic and compelling example.

That an intellectual would look toward these nationalist struggles, inspired by their representation and enactment of the universal values of the Enlightenment (such as freedom and human dignity), suggests a certain desperation, a loss of faith in the intellectual mission itself—a surrender of professional decorum and its prescribed paths for career advancement. As Said states in his *Representations of the Intellectual*, intellectual commitments are often tamed because "you do not want to appear too political; you are afraid of seeming controversial; you want the approval of a boss or authority figure; you want to keep a reputation for being balanced, objective, moderate; your hope is to be asked back, to consult, to be on a board of a prestigious committee, and so to remain in the responsible mainstream; someday you hope to get an honorary degree, a big prize, perhaps even an ambassadorship."[16]

A commitment to objectivity, detachment, and dispassionate analysis often quells the instincts that might compel one to take a stand on either side of the Palestinian Question. In his essay, "The Burden of Interpretation and the Question of Palestine," Said reminds us that the question "where do you stand on the question of Palestine?" is "shamelessly provocative" and cannot be answered from some Archimedean viewpoint above the political and epistemological fray.[17] To even begin to attempt to answer this question is to enter into a multiplicity of discourses that are interactively heterogeneous and heterogeneously interactive, inevitably pitting Jewish against Palestinian suffering. Rather than turning to impossible comparisons, assessing alternative narrative constructions may be the key to working through the discursive complexities versus acting out the dynamics of the actual conflict.

In such pivotal texts as *After the Last Sky*, Said establishes a narrative "density" for a people whose narrative has continually been under erasure and attack.[18] Said's scholarship and political activism seemed always to place the plight of the Palestinian people and their quest for self-determination in front of an evasive and complicit American audience. As Noam Chomsky has repeatedly pointed out, the "Israel-Palestine" conflict is really the Israel-US-Palestinian conflict: an

acknowledgement of the crucial role played by the American paymasters. As much as the issue of Palestinian self-determination seemed to be at the forefront of all his critical efforts, Said could not sit by passively allowing an unreflective Palestinian nationalism, in contradistinction to a repressive Zionist ideology, to emerge. He deftly measured the fundamental transformations of the Palestinian social and political consciousness, as it has evolved during the last 46 years of Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Through such heroic efforts, Edward Said threatened, what Abdirahman Hussein calls, the triadic interaction between the discourses of (a) American neoimperialism (b) Zionism and (c) Orientalism.[19] To these three discourses, I would add the discourse of the Christian Right and speak of a quaternary, or four-way, dynamic interaction between these coextensive ideologies.[20]

In writing against this overwhelming quaternary structure of neoimperialist, Zionist, Orientalist, and fundamentalist Christian discourses, Said found himself facing a seemingly impossible task: he was, in effect, resisting the discourses of the military industrial complex (*Orientalism*), the War on Terror (*Covering Islam*), Israeli expansionism (*The Question of Palestine*), and religious enthusiasm as found in Christian evangelism (*Culture and Imperialism*). Within this quaternary structure, Palestinians are reduced to Iraqis, Saudis, and Afghanis—all are reduced to one seething mass of Arab fanaticism that must be contained and controlled. Said's relentless acts of intellectual resistance against this seemingly metaphysical, but let's never forget only political, behemoth merits our close attention.[21]

In his preface to Noam Chomsky's *The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians*, perhaps the most ambitious book ever attempted on the Israel-Palestine conflict, Said writes—in words that we can just as easily use to describe him as Chomsky—that "there is something profoundly unsettling about an intellectual such as Chomsky [Said] who has neither an office to protect nor territory to consolidate and guard. There is no dodging the inescapable reality that such representations by intellectuals will neither make them friends in high places nor win them honors. It is a lonely condition,

yes, but it is always a better one than a gregarious tolerance for the way things are."[22] Creating facts on the ground—to enforce a false, self-justifying, and comforting reality—will no longer suffice as either an intellectual or rhetorical performance: if we are to count ourselves among those living within a universe that holds out even the slightest concern with fulfilling ethical imperatives, the story of Palestinian dispossession must be heard. Edward W. Said's critical corpus created the conditions of possibility for that story's telling; indeed, Said sought—often demanded—the world's "permission to narrate" the Palestinian viewpoint. Because of his scholarly and political resistance, no one can simply forget the Palestinians. Indeed, that rhetoric of resistance continues because the spirit of dignity and defiance Said exemplified—throughout his life as a literary critic, political activist, and public intellectual—lives on.

Edward Said's capacity to connect the various, and sometimes insidious, ways that academic scholarship connects with the territorial ambitions of state expansion will stand as an achievement unlikely to be matched. Said's notion of "worldliness," the stirrings of curiosity and conscience that obligate the critic to articulate a stinging and very often unpopular critique—even at the risk of professional ostracism or death—urges an interrogation of the professional parameters that currently govern intellectual life, particularly now as this present historical moment as the discourse of Orientalism seems to be alive and well.

The question of the critic's responsibility in the face of daunting odds and the hegemonic discourses that reduce human experience to manageable categories still stands as one of the central problematics in the early years of the twenty-first century. In the face of such discourses, intellectual resistance remains a difficult albeit necessary intervention.

The Palestinian experience of life under occupation can act as a political synecdoche that enables a consideration of how political and lived resistance to harsh and oppressive conditions connects to the critical intellectual's will to resist complying with, and becoming complicit in, the promotion of the aims of state. In every aspect

of his scholarly production, whether it was in *Beginnings: Intention and Method, Covering Islam: How Experts Determine How We See the World, The World, the Text, and the Critic*, *Representations of the Intellectual, Orientalism*, or *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said explored the deep and far-reaching implications that stem from the intellectual's far greater allegiance to the professional guild than to the far more difficult and continued commitment to critical interrogation that guided the likes of Fanon, Adorno, or Auerbach.

It is important to note the continued relevance of Edward Said's lifelong search and articulation of a "rhetoric of resistance" that joined the political resistance of the Palestinian experience to the intellectual resistance of the exiled critic. Such a rhetoric of resistance stands in stark contrast to the gregarious tolerance of oppressive circumstance that currently mars a great deal of left-liberal commentary.

Satisfying the state's territorial ambitions requires the continual development of the state functionary class. Territorial acquisition depends on ideologies and ideas that justify the colonization of people and resources. Think tanks, government agencies, academic guilds, and media experts create the conditions of possibility for state expansion. Creating a material density around these ideologies and ideas requires the wedding of pure knowledge and *realpolitik*, connecting theory and practice. In his *Orientalism*, *Covering Islam*, *The Question of Palestine*, and *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said masterfully connects the ways in which this happens.

Said was equally masterful in his ability to trace the resistance movements that stood and continue to stand in the way of neoliberal markets and in the case of the Palestinian *Intifada*, a settler-colonialist state (Israel). Channeling the collective energy and resistance of a mass movement, such as the *Intifada*, into the politics of an intellectual style, described so aptly by Abdul Jan Mohammed as "the specular border intellectual," Said conducted a dizzying array of critiques and incisive analyses, exposing the coextensive operation between academic disciplines and the accumulation of bodies and territories that are so central to the imperial enterprise. Said's investigations find a locus in the political turmoil that surrounds the Middle East

region, a host of problematiques that, in some sense, demonstrate the Foucauldian formulation that power and knowledge are inextricably intertwined while also extending this insight to a form of civilizational domestication of the East by the West.

The implementation of state policy, in an attempt to make the world's reality conform to a metaphysics, requires the facilitation of demeaning stereotypes of a conquered or soon-to-be-conquered people. Depicting Arabs as an irrational, lethargic, and bloodthirsty people confirms an Orientalist thesis that connects a state metaphysics with the necessity of dominating the petroleum reserves of the region. When state policy works coextensively with the desires and fears of a culture, the power of imperialism holds sway as it confirms the necessity of the white man's civilizing mission.

> Underlying social space are territories, lands, geographical domains, the actual geographical underpinnings of the imperial, and also the cultural context. To think about distant places, to colonize them, to populate or depopulate them: all of this occurs on, about, or because of land. The actual geographical possession of land is what empire in the final analysis is all about. At the moment when a coincidence occurs between real control and power, the idea of what a given place was (could be, might become), and an actual place—at that moment the struggle for empire is launched. This coincidence is the logic both for Westerners taking possession of land and, during decolonization, for resisting natives reclaiming it. Imperialism and the culture associated with it affirm both the primacy of geography and an ideology about control of territory. The geographical sense makes projections—imaginative, cartographic, military, economic, historical, or in a general sense cultural. It also makes possible the construction of various kinds of knowledge, all of them in one way or another dependent upon the perceived character and destiny of a particular geography.[23]

The necessity of dealing with and domesticating people, while also conquering territory, poses a distinct problem: how can the taking away of territory from those with flatter noses and darker skin become a state religion? The answer to this question lies at the heart of today's neoimperialism. As Said so aptly demonstrated in *Orientalism* and *Covering Islam*, at the base of US foreign policy in the region

sits an ugly and unarticulated assumption: Arabs are less than human and incapable of tending to their interests much less the region's.

It is this demonization of a region and its people, whether by Zionism or Western imperialism or through Orientalism, that occupied Said's critical effort throughout his career. The political turn in his work occurred through the trilogy of *Orientalism*, *Covering Islam*, and *The Question of Palestine*; these three works developed a comprehensive understanding of the macro- and micro-operations of discursive power in defining the racial Other, as this Other is neither Christian nor Jewish, European nor Anglo, Zionist nor American neoimperialist. Mobilizing the orientalist imagery of this discursive network through the sheer material density of the academic disciplines disconnected representation from human experience. This was, as Said tells us, a human and intellectual failure: "I consider Orientalism's failure to have been a human as much as an intellectual one; for in having to take up a position of irreducible opposition to a region of the world it considered alien to its own, orientalism failed to identify with human experience, failed also to see it as human experience" (328).

What role, then, does the individual or individual consciousness play in resisting these discursive, seemingly metaphysical, constructions? How does an individual gain agency within this seemingly impenetrable triadically interacting discursive web, which includes Zionism, orientalism, and American neoimperialism? These questions, according to Abdirahman Hussein, stand at the heart of Said's critical corpus and find their first expression in *Beginnings: Intention and Method*.[24] While the individual relies on tradition as a guide to understanding the disciplinary "lay of the land" or a broad historical configuration, such as a history of the Middle East, he or she deviates or departs from such traditions when doing so will permit him or her to narrate an untold story such as that of the Palestinian dispossession. This dispossession, largely silenced in the West by the narrative of the Holocaust and Jewish suffering, forces an epistemological vertigo, a recognition of how a people who have suffered so much (pro-Zionist Jews) have created suffering among the Palestinians.

By using a "technique of trouble," to borrow R. P. Blackmur's phrase, Said created—through a sort of disciplinary boundary straddling—a crisis within the social sciences through his *Orientalism*, *The Question of Palestine*, and *Covering Islam*. To what degree, these books asked, have the social science disciplines been complicit in accomplishing and extending the goals of imperial expansion? How have these sciences, in other words, helped to domesticate the Other—made the Arab radically outside the projects of Enlightenment, Zionism, Western development, rationality, and so on. Containing the Arab, particularly the Palestinian, between these coextensive discursive networks necessitated the creation of a sort of "common sense" about what the Arab was and is: incapable of civilization and reform, emotional, lethargic, and prone to violence and revenge. That this image has survived for so long and that it continues with all its vividness through to the present day shows the remarkable resiliency of the orientalist project. Although the Orientalists of old—Nerval, Massignon, Flaubert, and Renan—are no more, the Henry Kissingers, Bernard Lewises, Elie Kedouries, Fouad Ajamis, Steve Emersons, and Judith Millers of the academic and media world remind us that old stereotypes die hard deaths, if they die at all.

Part of the failure of Orientalism stemmed from its flattening of human experience onto a grid of intelligibility that served the aims of state before serving any facilitation of human community. In this sense, the Palestinian *Intifada*, through its resistance to the discourses of Zionism, Orientalism, and neoimperialism, created a community within an oppressed population as it sought to fight against a state's territorial ambitions. This resistance constitutes *de facto* anti-Semitism in the minds of many because it challenges the supposition that Israel can annex land in the West Bank that is not part of the 1947 mandate.

Negating the existence of a coherent Palestinian people, regrettably, has been a central part of the Zionist project. To recognize the existence of a single people would be to admit the wrongdoing of *al-nakba* (the catastrophe). Destroying all signs of Palestinian collective unity and nationalism, including schools and offices of the

Palestinian authority, continues the ethnic cleansing of Palestine that began more than fifty years ago.

That European subjectivity came to embody objective knowledge posed one of the central problematics of Said's investigations. How this happened, through the forging of a connection between European identity and a discourse of power, such as that of European imperialism, and orientalism, revolves around the question of how empiricism, the science of the senses, made the domination of the native a natural, and inevitable, state of affairs. The domestication of people and resources by virtue of their location on a map shows the extreme narcissism of the imperialist enterprise as it sought to control the identities of people in far-away places according to how they occupied a portion of a matrix.

Imperial domination, as an extension of the nation-state's will to power, requires a necessarily egotistical reliance on an objective knowledge that privileges a certain subjectivity; in this case, European subjectivity. That some people's mental abstractions could become state policy, against the mere ruminations of those not sharing the same imperial ideology, suggests the degree to which the imperial nations (Britain, France, Germany, and the United States) have drawn upon and nurtured to extend their imperium. In each instance, the racial science of a Gobineau, for example, justifies the taking of land from indigenous populations who are incapable of securing its resources for maximum profit. Underlying every imperial enterprise is this same suggestion of racial or ethnic inferiority. C. L. R. James, Franz Fanon, and W. E. B. DuBois recognized just how insidious this thinking becomes for the future of a people. With respect to the Palestinians, Said played a similar role—since the permission to narrate would never be simply given, it had to be seized. Said performed this task with admirable strength.

The fact, then, that knowledge becomes wedded to a state's territorial ambitions poses a problem in terms of freeing oneself from the coercive aspects of knowledge production. If knowledge and power are always conjoined, as Foucault's critique emphatically proves, there is no escaping the discursive constructions of Orientalism; because

to talk about a deconstruction of Orientalism is to acknowledge its effectiveness in creating something called the "Orient." Said answers this seeming paradox by finding all knowledge claims to be contaminated by power and a point of view; however, this does not remove the effectiveness of his critique of Orientalism because he never claims to have transcended Orientalist discourse to then analyze it. Instead, he acknowledges his own viewpoint and its marginal status in relation to the overwhelming and hegemonic apparatus of Orientalism while seeking to insert a form of intellectual resistance against an unforeseen, albeit undoubtedly operative force, within Western culture. *Orientalism*, he writes, is "an attempt to inventory the traces upon me, the Oriental subject, of the culture whose domination has been so powerful a factor in the life of all Orientals" and to document the "uniquely punishing destiny" of a Palestinian in the West.[25]

As a Palestinian schooled in the most elite aspects of Western culture, Said could act as the specular border intellectual, a native informant who turns critical mirrors on the dominant culture and reveals its epistemological tendency to suppress elements of minority culture. This neutralizing function that the dominant culture performs and extends through neoimperialistic foreign policy undermines the resistance of subaltern groups that seek to challenge the reigning episteme.

As a case in point, Said examines how Zionism's territorial acquisition depended upon the elimination of any signs of Palestinian national consciousness; the eradication of even the most rudimentary forms of something called "Palestine," whether it be a flag or the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), required continual and harsh vigilance. Early Zionist planners understood that the reacquisition of Palestine proper would require denying a coherent nationalist narrative to the indigenous population. Zionist propaganda often describes the Palestinians as a loose collection of Arabs or Eretz Israeli Arabs. The recognition of "Palestine" or "Palestinians" never enters into the discussion. That parallels have been drawn between the Zionist and puritan "errand into the wilderness" to reclaim land from the indigenous populations helps one to understand the special

and symbiotic relationship between the United States and Israel, a relationship that was established on the basis of a mutually beneficial containment of Islam. A strain of romantic, European nationalism connects both projects.

The fact that both ideology and (eventually) law would condemn Indians and Palestinians to a subordinate status in North America and Israel demonstrates the flexibility and easy linkages made through Orientalist discourse. That disparate historical circumstances, connected only by a colonial power's treatment of a native population, can be explained through Orientalist discourse, whereby land ownership is decided on the basis of ethnoreligious discrimination, demonstrates the adjacencies that Orientalist discourse created. The ease with which someone like Osama bin Laden can be connected to a figure such as Saddam Hussein highlights the guiding assumption of Orientalism: like bodies, in this case Arab bodies, can be treated alike. This is the human and intellectual failure of orientalism—its pernicious tendency to subject geographic areas and its peoples to the most debilitating assumptions and stereotypes.

The state functionaries, often vulgar propagandists, who lent ideological cover to the orientalist project, solidified the territorial ambitions of empire. Said's exposure of this ideological enterprise frustrated the modern day Orientalist enterprise. For example, his always heated exchanges with Bernard Lewis about the Orientalist assumptions and representations of Islam in the West attest to the stakes involved in hiding the West's epistemological domestication of the East. The naturalization of this dominance, its ease in remaining just below consciousness as a reminder of the violence and deprivation that conquered people and territory, suggests that resisting the dominance of the colonialism's legacy brings with it another sort of resistance: the psychological resistance of the disciplines and groups that benefited from colonial plunder.

CHAPTER 4

Biopolitical Resistance in Palestine

Suicide Bombing and the Fanonian Specter

Introduction

In this chapter, I move from questions about intellectual freedom and the Question of Palestine to the material reality of Palestinian resistance against occupation, humiliation, and dispossession. I attempt to join intellectual resistance, as it manifests itself in the context of the struggle for Palestinian liberation, to a most unsettling form of physical resistance: suicide bombing. Palestinian suicide bombing represents the last form of resistance, as futile as it is, against colonization. It is in some sense a rejection of deliberation, dialogue, intellectualism, and debate. After all the rationalizations that have been provided by media pundits and academic intellectuals for why Israel's occupation must continue in the face of Palestinian extremism and violence, the suicide bomber rejects intellectuality and polite evasion as grotesque in such extreme circumstances. The act of suicide bombing itself becomes a form of self-defense for oneself and one's community.

In the wake of the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of Franz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, we continue to be haunted by the Fanonian specter, the ghost of continuing anticolonial resistance in historical Palestine, as well as the global struggle to obtain justice for the Middle East's wretched of the earth.[1] The Fanonian specter returns to us in the form of Middle Eastern resistance, most graphically and insistently in the form of Palestinian resistance. As the theorist of colonial psychopathology, Fanon diagnosed how the violence

within the colonizer-colonized relationship is channeled into subtle expressions of domination and resistance in day-to-day activities. This chapter specifically addresses how Palestinian resistance manifests itself in the act of suicide bombing—here suicide bombing represents a type of violence continually seeking a point of articulation for its expression. In other words, the suicide bomber seeks to make his or her life a work of art, a final exertion of agency in an ongoing war against colonizing populations.[2] As Ghassan Hage points out, "The PSBs [Palestinian suicide bombers] disrupt the ability of the colonizers to consolidate a 'normal peaceful life' inside the colonial settler state of Israel" (68).

Although Fanon does not discuss suicide bombing as a form of anticolonial resistance in his *Wretched of the Earth* and other texts, we might be able to argue that the forms of aggression and resistance in the pursuit of liberation that Fanon explores could find a modern manifestation in the act of suicide bombing.[3] Fanon's most lasting legacy revolves around his seeming advocacy of violence in the context of colonial struggle in which the colonial act itself is met by the resistance of the colonized. This colonial scene is shaped by a certain psychoaffectivity, a plethora of emotions and hateful feelings that the colonized direct toward the colonizers; the colonized are powerless to express these feelings or to find an adequate means of expression for them. Over time, these feelings produce despair, helplessness, and alienation, resulting in "a person who [has] been dispossessed of his own subjectivity, alienated from himself, and made into a tool of destruction" (Halkin). Are the "muscular dreams" of the colonial subject, which are mentioned in "On Violence," the first chapter in *The Wretched of the Earth* (Fanon 15), manifestations of the longing to physically confront the colonizer and defeat him? Might one posit that, over time, these dreams become so psychologically overwhelming that the colonized subject seeks to give life to these dreams, ultimately deciding to commit his or her life to a death mission against the colonizers who have oppressed the colonized subject's community?

A New Biopolitics

The suicide bomber is a biopolitical force of resistance that must be fully comprehended in the Palestinians' war against Israel's colonization project. While the suicide bomber is typically considered an outlier in the calculus of violence that typifies the day-to-day struggle in the Israel-Palestine conflict, the act of killing oneself as part of a strategy to strike terror in the hearts and minds of the civilian population (a reminder of sorts about the indescribable suffering that Israel has inflicted on the Palestinians) represents realpolitik at its most cunning and cynical. As a biopolitical strategy of resistance requiring the most extreme sacrifice by the martyr, suicide bombing needs to be understood within a historical frame of anticolonial struggle invoking the resistance of the National Liberation Front (FLN) in Algeria—the very resistance at the center of Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. The Palestinian struggle against Israeli occupation and colonization acts as a historical analog to the mid-twentieth-century Algerian resistance against French colonization. Both movements employed ingenious tactics necessitating the critic's attention, especially in light of the growing instability in the Middle East. As Achille Mbembe argues in his "Necropolitics":

> Death is not simply that which is my own, but always goes hand in hand with the death of the other[.] How does it differ from death inflicted by a tank or a missile, in a context in which the cost of my survival is calculated in terms of my capacity and readiness to kill someone else? In the logic of "martyrdom," the will to die is fused with the willingness to take the enemy with you, that is, with closing the door on the possibility of life for everyone. This logic seems contrary to another one, which consists in wishing to impose death on others while preserving one's own life. (37)

The colonized subject views his or her life as a weapon that can be used against the colonizer. This decision can be understood as a form of biopolitics, for those in an oppressed population use their lives to destroy the comfortable living conditions of the colonizing population. This rejection of rational self-interest turns this death quest against the colonizer into a productive form of life. Even in

death, the lives of the colonized count biopolitically; in this instance, life is geared toward the production of death—the deaths of strangers, as well as one's own death. As Fanon reminds us, "The violence of the colonial regime and counter-violence of the native balance each other and respond to each other in an extraordinary reciprocal homogeneity" (88). The shahid (male martyr) or shahida (female martyr) sacrifices his or her life out of devotion to the *umma*, the worldwide Muslim community, and to strike a blow against injustice in Palestine.

Consider the following from "On Violence," the first chapter in Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*: "To blow the colonial world to smithereens is henceforth a clear image within the grasp and imagination of every colonized subject. To dislocate the colonial world does not mean that once the borders have been eliminated there will be a right of way between the two sectors. To destroy the colonial world means nothing less than demolishing the colonist's sector, burying it deep within the earth or banishing it from the territory" (6). While Fanon may not have had the use of human bombs in mind when he wrote these lines in 1963, he could just as well have. At that time, Israel's colonization project in Palestine was only 15 years old with settlement expansion to begin only four years later in 1967. It would take another 29 years before the first Palestinian suicide bombers would emerge in 1994 in the aftermath of Oslo, nurtured possibly by a steady dose of Israeli settler-colonial violence, the corrupt leadership of Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Liberation Organization, broken political promises on the part of Israeli and US negotiators, disillusionment in the face of a harsh occupation, and continued Israeli land theft. As Nasser Abufarha argues in *The Making of a Human Bomb: An Ethnography of Palestinian Resistance*, "The 'amaliyyat istishhadiya (martyrdom operations) practiced today in Palestine are a fairly recent development in the Palestinian resistance discourse that started in 1994" (7). These bombers would leave an indelible mark on the Western consciousness, a reminder that history returns with a sinister vengeance when decades of repression are compelled to find an adequate release.

The utter unpredictability of suicide bombing, the randomness of those it victimizes, and the seeming senselessness of the act confounds the Judeo-Christian tradition. The utter devastation left in the wake of a suicide bombing registers not only a material toll but also an obvious human one, for those who are fortunate enough to survive are left traumatized for life. These survivors and those who survive a loved one killed in a suicide bombing are left to consider the cruelty of death, possibly questioning why the bomber chose to shape his or her own death into a weapon against life (Bloom; Hafez; Pape; Reuter). The suicide bomber does not know who his or her victims will be, for they are strangers of a sort: fellow passengers in buses or fellow patrons in restaurants and cafés. While bombers may believe that they will strike a blow against Israeli colonialism by killing Israeli Jewish civilians as they go about their day-to-day activities, these bombers can never be certain that they will kill only Jews; some suicide bombers have killed at least as many Palestinians in the course of committing such acts.

Fanon's conceptualization of the colonized's psychoaffective state provides an innovative way to analyze how the suicide bomber finds his or her final release through the full expression of the death drive and all the pent up aggression that is part of the colonial context. Is the suicide bombing a natural extension of how the colonized would channel his or her psychoaffective energy into achieving liberation, as Fanon outlines in *The Wretched of the Earth*? When the colonized's outlets for the release for psychoaffective energy (the aggressive drives associated with Eros and Thanatos) are blocked and these drives are turned within, he or she becomes—in turn—an enemy of the self. At that point, the prospective suicide bomber's life takes on the dimensions of a weapon directed against the colonizer, unleashing his or her humanity in the course of securing martyrdom and glory. By choosing to become martyrs, bombers solidify their places as heroes in their community, heroes who sacrificed themselves to secure the futures of others. As Lorenzo Veracini remarks in *Israel and Settler Society*, "The Palestinians that annihilate themselves in order to kill must face a condition in which a suicidal determination has become

an ontologically available one" (12). Indeed, this ontological possibility becomes a way of exercising individual and communal agency.

The Bomber and the Gift

While despair and oppression are frequently dismissed out of hand as the sufficient cause in motivating Palestinians to become suicide bombers, with critics of this view pointing to martyrdom's significance within Islam, one must consider that a larger transcendental purpose may guide some martyrs-to-be. This seemingly more complex view has been offered by Ivan Strenski. For Strenski, martyrdoms "are deaths suffered in active struggle on behalf of Islam or Palestine" (3). Furthermore, according to Strenski, martyrdoms are viewed as "supreme gifts given in the interests of enhancing the conditions of others" (3). If the desire to be a shahid does not come from a sense of despair and hopelessness, as a result of living under Israeli occupation, but is instead a direct result of wanting to contribute to a larger cosmic struggle between Islam and Western domination by sacrificing one's life to destroy an enemy, then the Palestinian suicide bomber may come to symbolize a form of struggle for a new humanity (Devji; Israeli). However, given Fanon's critique of nationalism and his call for national consciousness to be transformed into a larger social consciousness to avoid imperialism's total domination, does the suicide bomber ultimately become a victim of the very cause he or she supposedly promotes? Palestinian liberation, then, in its resistance to Israeli colonization, could conceivably be viewed as extending the colonial system. The concept of Palestinian liberation, therefore, becomes co-opted within this system to actually reinforce Palestinian oppression.

In "On Violence," Fanon tells us that "the immobility to which the colonized subject is condemned can be challenged only if he decides to put an end to the history of colonization and the history of despoliation in order to bring to life the history of the nation, the history of decolonization" (15). Furthermore, "the relationship between colonist and colonized is one of physical mass" (17), suggesting that bodies are being pitted against bodies. The colonial context is geared

toward controlling other bodies, particularly the relations between the bodies of the colonizers and the colonized, especially since the sheer mass of the bodies of the colonized overwhelm the colonizing administrative apparatus. To deny the inevitable clash with the colonizer, the colonized tend to feud among themselves by redirecting internal rage against those who are equally weak. As Fanon explains, "By throwing himself muscle and soul into his blood feuds, the colonized subject endeavors to convince himself that colonialism has never existed, that everything is as it used to be and history marches on" (17). In this context, the colonized subjects themselves become the displaced target of the very rage that should be directed at European colonialism. With Fanon's reflections on violence in mind, might we view the emergence of the Palestinian suicide bomber as the last and ultimate warrior in the fight against European colonialism? To assert such a thing is to advance several controversial and contested claims about the motivations of Palestinian suicide bombers, whether Zionism (as an ideology) and Israel (as a nation committed to preserving a Jewish majority) are directly linked to European nationalism, and whether or not the Israelis and Palestinians are locked in a mutually destructive colonial struggle.

Moving from Condemnation to Understanding

While suicide bombings are greeted with reflexive condemnation by and within the West, as if suicide bombers are incapable of rational calculation and thought, there is a more clear-eyed, nonmoralizing, and nonjudgmental way to assess such supposedly desperate acts of martyrdom (Hage; Chan). While it is true that most suicide bombers do not come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds or from necessarily religious extremist backgrounds (some are even professionals leading "successful" lives), the suicide bomber's motivation for committing the act is about preserving his or her personal dignity—as well as the dignity of his or her community—in the face of colonial oppression. According to some righteous moralists such as Israel Charny, there are absolutely no conditions under which the killing of civilians can possibly be justified, particularly when those civilians

are on the receiving end of a kind of narcissistic rage. It is agreed that there are no sufficient excuses for Palestinian suicide bombings, as if empathizing with and seeking to understand the suicide bomber is to create the conditions of possibility for condoning terrorism—a descent into the logic of justifying murder for the sake of pursuing an anticolonial politics.

Fanon's critical writings enable an analysis of the logic of suicide bombing, justifying a politics of anticolonial struggle. This manifests itself in the Palestinian's decision to take hold of his or her humanity by any and all means necessary, even if this means annihilating himself or herself in the process. In other words, we look to Fanon's texts for guidance in assessing how to go about constructing an anticolonialist, axiomatic politics—a politics of refusal grounded in an unrelenting drive to defend one's community at the cost of destroying oneself (Farred). This defense of one's community through the erasure of self seems paradoxical—an individual's ultimate sacrifice for some larger goal, the promotion of one's memory after death as a martyred hero who died to support the rise of the next generation.

As Hage and Roxanne L. Euben argue, condemning suicide bombing in the context of anticolonial struggle depends on selecting and enforcing strict definitions of what constitutes legitimate versus illegitimate violence, as well as whether this violence is considered "state violence" or "terrorism." Contained within these distinctions is an implicit Eurocentric judgment about the communities on either side of this so-called divide between the civilized world (the European states) and the uncivilized world (the wretched of the earth), between Israel (Israeli Jews) and Palestine (Palestinians in Israel and those living under occupations and in various states of dispossession and loss), between those lives counted as "worthy" and those considered negligible within the calculus known as the biopolitical. What are the necessary conditions for living a worthwhile and dignified life? Freedom, autonomy, leisure, and the capacity to order one's affairs on the basis of a plan are the things that most people consider as prerequisites for a life worth living. A life worth living possesses what Pierre Bourdieu, in *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*, terms

illusio, "the deep belief in the importance of our life pursuits and thus the deep belief in the importance of our selves" (qtd. in Hage 78). In the absence of these necessary conditions, and hence illusion, could a life be deemed unlivable, unworthy of happiness and fulfillment, or could a life sacrificed in the name of future lives even be deemed a biopolitically negligible life? The suicide bomber turns his or her unworthy life into a life for all time, a life that in death finds its full actualization. In the instant of erasure, the suicide bomber renounces the prospect of living day to day at the level of immanence and seeks to skip to the level of all-time transcendence, where he or she will go beyond the bounds of the human, fully embracing death as an act of resistance in order to extend life.[4]

Suicide bombing gives meaning to a meaningless life. Hage draws on Bourdieu's conception of "premature social aging," showing that Palestinians who choose to become suicide bombers do so because it gives their lives meaning (78). In effect, the human bomber says, "I'm going to die anyway, perhaps in a way that I'll have no control over. Therefore, I will become the architect of my own death." As John Collins writes, "[The] notion of 'premature social aging' suggests that Palestinians who choose to become suicide bombers do so, in part, because they feel that death is already on the immediate horizon; it is simply a question of finding a way to take control of how that death ultimately occurs and what kind of social meaning will be attached to it" (99).

By focusing on the graphic violence of suicide bombing, commentators can avoid addressing Israel's violence as a settler-colonial state seeking to finalize its legitimacy by expelling the Palestinians living within Israel and annexing the West Bank by creating unlivable conditions within the territories for the Palestinians residing there. This disappearance of Palestine, as part of Israel's experiment in despair, is completely consistent with the strategies of a state in suicide mode (i.e., Israel).[5] Israel's "Samson option" ("If ever again, not us alone") seems to mirror the creed of the suicide bomber, who attains a kind of respect in the moment of death that he or she could not attain in all the years of his or her "worthless life" (Hersh 1993).

As Ramadan Shalah, secretary-general of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, stated in 2000, "Our enemy possesses the most sophisticated weapons in the world and its army is trained to a very high standard . . . We have nothing with which to repel killing and thuggery against us except the weapon of martyrdom. It is easy and costs us only our lives . . . Human bombs cannot be defeated, not even by nuclear bombs" (qtd. in Sprinzak 68). In the instances of both the Samson option and the suicide bomber, identification with the Other—an overwhelming desire to ingest and devour the Other—simultaneously entails the destruction of the self. Hage aptly captures the Palestinian suicide bomber's desire to equalize the politics of self-destruction: "Suicide bombings are seen here as a marriage between the necessity of resistance and the quantitative and qualitative deprivation of military hardware" (73).

There is a crucial distinction between suicide and martyrdom. Whereas suicide is considered to be an option of the weak-minded (Charny), martyrdom is about noble sacrifice by strong-willed individuals (Hafez 40). As Abufarha explains, "Those who carry out martyrdom missions can be motivated with a sense of obligation toward the land, the homeland, the city or space to which they are strongly connected, the nation, the Divine, or previous and future generations. Hence even the notion of altruistic suicide does not fully describe the logic of the . . . act" (12). Furthermore, as Abufarha notes, "In the Palestinian context, the notion of sacrifice is a more appropriate way to describe the act of the human bomb than 'suicide' in any of its forms, because it encompasses the transformations and exchanges that take place between the sacrificed human body . . . and the land of Palestine and the Palestinian people" (15).

Western analysts have frequently sought to understand the act of suicide bombing in terms of classic models of rational self-interest, repeatedly failing to acknowledge that shahids are not interested in living a normal life. Shahids seek to actualize their rage through the ultimate release of the colonized's affective energy against the colonizer. It is simply incomprehensible to apologists for Israel's experiment in despair that one would refuse self-interest to further the destruction

of the enemy (Brooks; Goldberg).[6] As Charny writes, "The fact that the suicide bombers blow themselves into total oblivion and nothingness shocks and horrifies normal human beings in our Western world as a violation of the most basic instinct of self-preservation" (2). This refusal to examine, much less work toward improving, the conditions that produce shahids contributes to the reinforcement of a willful ignorance that sustains the labeling of the Palestinian community as less than human. After all, according to this logic, what community would work toward the creation and glorification of a culture of death in a seeming rejection of every normal human instinct? As Collins aptly explains, "Some of the most strident voices, echoing the kinds of arguments long deployed on the war on poverty, drugs, and terrorism, have attempted to locate suicide bombing within a pathological 'culture of death' that is assumed to be detachable from the socio-historical context of colonization or military occupation" (96–97). This attempt to decontextualize what Palestinians do as they resist Israeli colonization is obviously purposeful: without the occupation, Palestinian suicide bombing can be presented as completely unfathomable and unexplainable behavior, behavior beyond the pale of any civilized people. As Collins concludes, this approach "ignores the obvious reality that, from the perspective of the colonized, settler colonialism might be viewed as the real 'culture of death'" (97). Suicide bombing becomes pathologized as arising from within the religious extremism of Islam. However, as Robert Pape and James Feldman argue, "Examination of the universe of suicide terrorist[s] around the world from 1980 to 2003 shows that the principal cause of suicide terrorism is resistance to foreign occupation, not Islamic fundamentalism" (20). The tendency to place suicide bombing outside the realm of discussion and analysis, as if suicide bombing as a tactic within a colonial context can be clearly and solely associated with a culture of death and nihilism, only compounds Western difficulties in empathizing with—much less comprehending—why a human being would become a human bomb.

As Hage, Euben, and Talal Asad argue, however, suicide bombing is completely logical and understandable within the politics of

anticolonial struggle, for it has been a viable and effective means for an oppressed population to send an unmistakable message to the colonizer: Your tactics will be met with violent resistance, resistance that will result in my death but will be remembered by my children and my children's children for as long as you continue to deny my humanity. There is every reason to be skeptical when commentators suggest that the Palestinians might be well served by a Palestinian Gandhi, implying that the Palestinians have never adopted nonviolent methods against Israel's occupying forces (Friedman). As this line of thinking goes, the Palestinians would receive international support for their struggle if they would show that they are interested in peace by lying down in front of tanks and bulldozers, prostrating themselves in the hope of sparking something in the Israel Defense Forces' sense of compassion and humanity. This poetic approach to Palestinian liberation borders on perversity, representing the kind of feminization of the Palestinians that Fanon's theory of nationalism would predict (Dworkin).

Paradise Now

Does Fanon help us understand why the Palestinian shahid or shahida finds liberation in the push of a button and the ignition of TNT strapped to his or her waist? Ending one's life in such a violent way signals a refusal to continue to be ground into dust by the imperial masters, an indication of how desperation can be formulated into a biopolitical strategy as colonized populations take their fates into their own hands and refuse to subject themselves to the conditions imposed on them by increasing annexation and other strategies of colonial control. This great refusal finds its theoretical basis in Fanon, who articulates the intensity and scope of the Third World's rage in *The Wretched of the Earth*, *Black Skin*, *White Masks*, *Toward the African Revolution*, and *Toward a Dying Colonialism*. When the limits of human suffering are breached, an extreme politics emerges—an axiomatic politics as Grant Farred labels it—whereby those standing in the way of liberation must be removed by force if necessary. This lack of ambiguity in terms of an oppressed

population's purpose in removing the forces of colonization cannot be denied or suppressed.

There is no higher honor than to die as a shahid or shahida in service of a national liberation movement. The Palestinian suicide bomber is nurtured within a community on the verge of "politicide," or political extinction (Kimmerling). Within this climate of oppression, the recruitment of shahids is not at all difficult, as young men and women are willing to give up their own lives to strike a blow against what they perceive to be a racist Zionist state. To sacrifice one's life for the sake of advancing their community's long-term political goals against an oppressive settler-colonial state introduces an interesting paradox into our considerations: how can one's life become part of both a program of death and a program of life? In other words, how does the termination of life contribute to a larger vision of national struggle when the young people of an oppressed community view their deaths as part of a national liberation movement? The life of the community persists in the death of the individual shahid or shahida, as well as in the glorification of the shahid's or shahida's death in the Palestinian national memory. In brief, biopolitical violence is employed to save humanity as a form of biopolitical violence for humanity, a form of terrorism in the service and defense of one's own community.[7] As Mbembe asserts,

> In the logic of martyrdom, a new semiosis of killing emerges. It is not necessarily based on a relationship between form and matter . . . The body here becomes the very uniform of the martyr. But the body as such is not only an object to protect against danger and death. The body in itself has neither power nor value. The power and value of the body result from a process of abstraction based on the desire for eternity. In that sense, the martyr, having established a moment of supremacy in which the subject overcomes his own mortality, can be seen as laboring under the sign of the future. In other words, in death the future is collapsed into the present. (37)

In seeking to inflict violence on supposedly innocent civilians living in Israel by exploding bombs full of nails and metal shards geared to cause maximum biopolitical destruction, the Palestinian suicide

bomber refuses to collaborate in his or her own slow evisceration, preferring to blow his existence sky high (to smithereens) to avoid continued suffering in Israel's experiment in despair (Cook, *Disappearing Palestine* 206).

According to the shahids' line of thinking, a quick and violent death is preferable to the slow and soul-destroying microphysics of oppression that structures Israel's occupation in the territories, a realization that living in shame and humiliation as colonized subjects is not to live at all. That is the condition of death in life before (physical) death. If one can actualize one's subjectivity in a meaningful way as part of a martyrdom operation while striking a blow against those who are complicit in supporting the very social and political arrangements that have contributed to the maintenance of a Jewish supremacist state, the motivation to become a shahid or shahida becomes clear. "Martyrdom operations," as Abufarha explains, provide "a medium for mimetic practice to the Israeli state violence through a performance of violence and sacrifice within an articulated system of meanings" (72). The prospects of living as a humiliated and desperate subject represents a life-denying force (an affront to life), whereby sacrificing one's existence as part of a biopolitical project larger than oneself possesses a powerful and seductive allure. It is this allure that attracts so many Palestinians to the possibility of becoming a shahid or shahida. It is of course a painful contradiction that a woman, who gives birth to life, would choose to end her life and that of others in such a horrific way, cynically interpreting the meaning of life ("I will blow myself to pieces and take a few colonizers with me in the process") and, for those who are already mothers, leaving an infamous legacy for their offspring. Israeli soldiers are less suspicious of women at the checkpoints, enabling shahidas to pass undetected in most cases because the soldiers are trained to detect male suicide bombers.

These Palestinian suicide bombers can be viewed simply as "coming home" to former Palestine to die when they set off bombs in Israeli towns such as Tel Aviv. They are returning home to a place that will never be theirs to live in. The shock and horror left in the wake of

their suicide mission seem to say, "My people have suffered enough. Now, you should suffer, too, since you're complicit in my people's suffering. We're leaving this earthly life together." This release of psychoaffective rage cannot be measured by simply calculating the oppression and suffering the martyr has endured; instead, this release should be viewed as part of the Palestinian resistance against Israel's colonial-settler project, which has deprived Palestinians of the land. This interference with Palestinian land possession, as Abufarha discusses, is extremely significant:

> Through the bodily practice of sacrificing Palestinians' bodies in the land of Palestine, Palestinians are recreating the ontologically fragmented Palestine and segmented Palestinians; as the sacrifice is performed. The violence disturbs the normalcy of the cultural order in Palestine (Israeli society) that replaced the Palestinian order, created the current ontology, and represents the primary obstacle to the physical unity of Palestine and the connectedness of the Palestinian people. *The intentionality of taking one's own life through an act of sacrifice in the mission of martyrdom asserts an agency and an independence that articulate Palestinian identity and peoplehood in the face of an ontological order imposed by Israel that denies recognition and entitlements to the Palestinians and subjects them to social fragmentation*. (emphasis added; 16)

This previously unexplored agency and independence become license for robbing Israeli Jews of a proper death. For example, for Israeli Jews, one of the most disturbing aspects of suicide bombing is that the bodies of those killed in such attacks are literally found in pieces. The neck is the weakest part of the human body; as a result, the heads of the suicide bombers and their nearest victims separate from their bodies. The act itself results in flesh and blood being strewn everywhere, so much so that it becomes nearly impossible to determine which body parts belong to whom. It is considered a violation of Jewish law to bury a dead body that is not completely intact, making the suicide bombing a particularly traumatic event for family members who lose loved ones whose whole bodies cannot be collected. Is this the revenge the Palestinian suicide bomber seeks against the Israeli Jewish population, leaving a vicious reminder of how the calculus of

violence can be completely inverted when the martyr-to-be decides to press the button igniting the explosive pack?

By Way of Conclusion: Suicide Bombings as Biopolitical Struggle

Out of frustration with the political corruption of the Palestinian National Authority and its inability to deliver serious concessions from Yitzhak Rabin's government, more politically radicalized aspects of the Palestinian population adopted suicide bombings as a legitimate form of anticolonial struggle after it became clear that Oslo would not deliver a viable Palestinian state. After the Oslo Accords were signed in September 1993, Hamas began martyrdom operations in an attempt to stall the peace process in April 1994. There is little doubt that martyrdom operations were used to derail the "peace process," which many felt would only lead Palestinians to submit to Israeli demands, such as Israel's insistence that Palestinians renounce the "right of return" and all future claims for restitution of property lost by the 800,000 Palestinians in 1948 upon Israel's creation. Although Arafat called the Oslo Accords "the peace of the brave," Israel's matrix of control over Palestinian lives and land became stronger and more consolidated through the negotiation process. The Palestinian leadership had reached the end of the road as the more radicalized segments of the population turned to martyrdom operations to end a peace process that could only create the conditions of possibility for collaboration between the Palestinian comprador class and Israel. It is in this context of disappointment, loss, and betrayal that the Palestinian martyrdom operations became a biopolitical strategy and a legitimate form of anticolonial struggle. Reading Fanon's writings in their totality, especially Fanon's theory of violence as a weapon in anticolonial struggle, one can easily conclude that Fanon would have endorsed the biopolitical goals of the Palestinian suicide bombers. Indeed, Fanon himself could not have written a better script to describe the last great colonial war in Palestine.[8]

CHAPTER 5

Obama's Cairo Speech

The Failure of Resistance and Refusal

> No single speech can eradicate years of mistrust, nor can I answer in the time that I have all the complex questions that brought us to this point. But I am convinced to move forward, we must say openly the things we hold in our hearts and that too often are said only behind closed doors. And I consider it part of my responsibility as President of the United States to fight against negative stereotypes of Islam wherever they appear.
>
> —President Barack Obama

Introduction

In his critique of the first one thousand days of President Barak Obama's presidency, and what he calls the "Obama Syndrome," political commentator Tariq Ali notes, "From Palestine through Iraq to Iran, Obama has acted as just another steward of the American empire, pursuing the same aims as his predecessors, with the same means but with a more emollient rhetoric."[1] In an assessment of Obama's June 2009 Cairo speech, and in seeming agreement with Ali's characterization of Obama's presidency, Deepa Kumar writes, "What Obama's speech represents is a repackaging of U.S. imperial aims in liberal terms. It heralds a new rhetorical approach built on the ashes of the now widely discredited cowboy diplomacy of the Bush era."[2]

Although Obama positioned himself during the 2008 presidential race as a candidate who would bring sweeping change to America's domestic and foreign policy after the missteps of the Bush

administration, many have been disappointed with Obama's inability to fundamentally alter the corrupting influences of corporate greed—from Main Street to Wall Street—and also with the decline of America's image throughout the world as a result of its hard power approach to difficult conflicts.[3] Obama's early and highly anticipated speech to the Muslim world in Cairo, Egypt on June 4, 2009, represented a supposedly new era of engagement between the United States and nations in the Middle East. Indeed, Obama called for "a new beginning" in East-West relations. Obama sought to address many key issues in his Cairo speech: "violent extremism in all its forms"; "the situation between Israelis, Palestinians, and the Arab world"; "the rights and responsibilities of nations on nuclear weapons"; "democracy"; "religious freedom"; "women's rights"; and "economic development and opportunity."[4]

Obama sought to seize upon the "we are more alike than we realize" theme, as he referenced several aspects of Muslim culture that are central to the West. The events of 9/11, of course, were used by various neoconservatives as part of a narrative about the clash of civilizations, a narrative that largely backfired because it refused to consider the complexity of the region's people, traditions, and histories. In this speech, Obama's rhetorical task was to create trust and political friendship between the United States and the Arab world by locating mutual interests between the East and the West. To accomplish this task, Obama repeatedly noted that neither the West nor the Arab world should be held hostage by the past. Obama was obviously referencing the events of September 11, 2001, and the US military response to those events. Within the Arab world, Osama bin Laden was successful in drawing upon a reservoir of anti-American resentment to justify al-Qaeda's attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. The Bush administration justified the US bombings of Afghanistan in October 2001 and the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, as just responses to the prospect of future terrorism. In his call for a new beginning, Obama invited his audience to reconceive US-Muslim relations based on a common future instead of a clearly divisive past.

As a political figure, Obama is a study in paradox rooted in his ability to engage in political calculation to avoid division. This paradoxical Obama made himself most evident with respect to his political calculations in forming positions about the turmoil in the Middle East. Obama's political pragmatism has tempered the very idealism that made him an attractive political candidate in 2008, suggesting that, long ago, Obama understood the demands of concentrated power when it comes to the US special relationship with Israel and the Arab states in the Middle East.

As part of his appeal to foreign audiences as the first African American US president, Obama faced an interesting rhetorical predicament: he seemingly possessed sympathy for—and empathy with—the people of the region as a result of his ancestry on his father's side and the time he spent in Indonesia (which has the largest Muslim population in the world) as a child, but he had to present his loyalties as being wholly with Americans. Obama did this despite the fact that the United States was guilty of supporting state terrorism in the Middle East, and given its reflexive support for Israel in its struggle with the Palestinians, the United States aided and tacitly endorsed Israel's occupation. It was in this context, then, that Obama wished to address topics such as confronting extremism in all its forms, the necessity of solving the Israel-Palestine conflict, the importance of addressing nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, creating and maintaining democratic institutions and free elections, upholding religious freedom, protecting women's rights, and fostering economic development and opportunity. These themes are central to addressing oppression, political instability, questions about US commitments in the region, and the growing sense that Samuel Huntington's thesis of the "clash of civilizations" may have been wildly wrong in approaching various conflicts in the Middle East. It also serves a polarizing but ideologically serviceable role in a particular historical moment that some have called a period of American ascendency. The tragedies of American foreign policy in the Middle East over the last eight years necessitated that Obama separate "Good Muslims" from "Bad Muslims."

In this chapter, I examine how Obama employed a conception of the "Good Muslim, Bad Muslim" in his Cairo speech as part of his rhetorical appeal to the Arab world. I borrow this phrase "Good Muslim, Bad Muslim" from Mahmood Mamdami, who, in his book *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, argues that since the Cold War, the designation of Arab countries and the citizens within them as either "good" or "bad" has depended on how these countries have served US strategic interests in the Middle East.[5] Obama avoided using the specific terms "Good Muslim" and "Bad Muslim" by speaking of those countries in the Arab world committed to democracy, human rights, and the dignity of all human beings versus those that harbor religious extremists, who deny the authority of the rule of law, or deny the ability of people to choose a government instead of being coerced into complying with a course of action.

In speaking about "religious extremists," Obama clearly had al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden in mind, hoping to make it clear that the United States' war is against radical Islam and not the two billion Muslims throughout the world. Obama made a pitch for the virtues of liberal democracies when he stated, "But I do have an unyielding belief that all people yearn for certain things: the ability to speak your mind and have a say in how you are governed; confidence in the rule of law; and the equal administration of justice; government that is transparent and doesn't steal from the people; the freedom to live as you choose. Those are not just American ideas, they are human rights, and that is why we will support them everywhere."[6] Within liberal democracies, one has the right to speak one's mind because free speech is guaranteed under the constitution. One can also be confident that the rule of law and the administration of justice will be applied equitably, regardless of the color of one's skin or one's religious preference. Within liberal democracies, one can live freely because governments operate transparently without deceiving the people as to their intentions.

Good Muslims and Bad Muslims

Good Muslims are those who serve US interests as loyal proxies, while Bad Muslims are those who resist modernity, seek to demonize and delegitimize Israel as a Jewish state, and engage in and support terrorism against the United States and its allies. In his Cairo Speech, Obama made it clear that the United States wishes to increase cooperation and goodwill among Good Muslims, and to use Good Muslims to control and offset the influence of Bad Muslims, or those seeking to undermine and resist US influence and dominion in the Middle East. Obama is extremely diplomatic, posturing for the Muslim world as a friend, while erasing the history of US opposition to expressions of Arab nationalism and self-determination.

While pointing out the many military mistakes the United States has made since 9/11 (Afghanistan, Iraq, Abu Ghraib, etc.), Obama, in an effort to seek a new beginning between East and West, also acknowledged the distinct problems presented by religious extremism in the Middle East. In addition, he spent a great deal of time addressing very specific problems in the region; for example, the lack of economic development and opportunity, educational opportunity, treatment of women, and the lack of democratic governments in the region.

Obama called for a new beginning in relations between the United States and the Arabs. Of course, beginnings presuppose pasts that must be transcended. In the first paragraph of his speech, Obama mentioned a legacy of colonialism, a clear reference to British and American imperialism. He also noted the ways in which the forces of globalization and modernity have shaped the world; these forces are often portrayed as being at odds with religious traditions within the Muslim world. Obama insisted that the tensions that exist between the United States and the Muslim world are "rooted in historical forces that transcend any current policy debate,"[7] a subtle way of avoiding the United States' invasion of Iraq and support of Israel's occupation of Palestine. By sidestepping these policy debates, Obama makes an appeal for unity. In the wake of 9/11, he made it clear that those who believe in a common humanity must not allow extremists

to undermine cooperation and partnership between people of goodwill. All the aforementioned issues created a critical rhetorical situation for Obama as he stood at the podium before his audience at Cairo University. He poetically addressed these issues by appealing to universal themes of life, death, alienation, the fleetingness of time, and the fragility of the human condition when he stated, "All of us share this world for but a brief moment in time. The question is whether we spend that time focused on what pushes us apart, or whether we commit ourselves to an effort—a sustained effort—to find common ground, to focus on the future we seek for our children, and to respect the dignity of all human beings."[8] Indeed, as Obama stated, "So long as our relationship is defined by our differences, we will empower those who sow hatred rather than peace, those who promote conflict rather than the cooperation that can help all of our people achieve justice and prosperity." Obama insists that the United States and Islam need not be in competition, noting that they both are committed to principles of justice, progress, tolerance, and the dignity of all human beings. He stated, "There must be a sustained effort to listen to each other; to learn from each other; to respect one another; and to seek common ground." He poignantly concluded that "the interests we share as human beings are far more powerful than the forces that drive us apart."[9]

As the son of Kenyan man who converted to Christianity after being raised in a Muslim family and a white woman from Kansas, Obama—as the first African American president of the United States—was uniquely positioned to recapture some of the respect and goodwill the United States lost upon declaring the War on Terror during the Bush administration. At the beginning of his speech, Obama claimed that he would work, as president of the United States, to correct harmful stereotypes of Muslims. At the same time, he assured his Cairo audience that the United States does not conform to the stereotype of a self-interested empire and asked for his audience's help in spreading that message. Obama seemed to tell his audience that he would do his part to repair the harm done to US-Muslim relations if the audience meets him halfway.

Obama admitted that the United States has made mistakes in its execution of the War on Terror, justifying these missteps in the wake of 9/11, as his country sought to separate religious extremists from devout Muslims. In an attempt to heal the break between the United States and the Muslim world that religious extremists created on 9/11, Obama appealed to his Cairo audience to transcend religious and national divisions. Obama made it clear that the United States has never been at war with Islam, going so far as to insist that Islam has contributed great inventions, such as mathematics and calligraphy, to civilization. Additionally, he insisted that Islam has always been a part of America, as Muslims play key roles in civic life as doctors, lawyers, teachers, business people, and soldiers. As part of this description, Obama noted that the first Muslim to be elected to the US Congress, Keith Ellison, took his oath of office while placing his hand on the Koran. As Obama put it, "They [Muslims] have fought in our wars, they have served in our government, they have stood for civil rights, they have started businesses, they have taught at our universities, they've excelled in our sports arenas, they've won Nobel Prizes, built our tallest building, and lit the Olympic Torch."[10] He noted that there were more than 1,200 mosques in the United States. Obama stressed the interdependency between the East and the West by noting their points of identification. As he aptly put it, "That is what it means to share this world in the twenty-first century."[11] We should notice the similarity between Obama's statement and Burke's famous statement on consubstantiality: "To identify A with B is to make A consubstantial with B."[12] In other words, a union is created between disparate elements when they identify with a common symbol. Obama stressed the interdependency of our globalized world—what he sees as the unifying aspects of human identity: "So let there be no doubt: Islam is a part of America. And I believe that America holds within her the truth that regardless of race, religion, or station in life, all of us share common aspirations—to live in peace and security; to get an education and to work with dignity; to love our families, our communities, and our God. These things we share. This is the hope of all humanity."[13] Obama's rhetorical strategy was

to show that the United States is not in competition with the Muslim world. To demonstrate this, Obama noted that Islam has been a part of America since the country's founding. He quoted from John Adams, who (in signing the Treaty of Tripoli) wrote, "The United States has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion or tranquility of Muslims."[14] Obama resolved to show that the world is interdependent and that divisions cannot be drawn between nations and peoples at this historical moment.

By focusing on the tensions between modernity and religious traditions within Islam as contributing to conflict between the United States and the Arab world, Obama sought to persuade his Cairo audience that globalization and development will raise the standards of living for everyone. In his Cairo speech, Obama acted as spokesperson for neoliberalism and its commitment to the flow of capital and the expansion of markets. Obama, seemingly drawing upon the writings of Fareed Zakaria, suggested that the slow rates of economic and technological development in the Arab world can be blamed on Arab culture.[15] If the Arab world will follow the United States' lead on these key themes of economic and technological development, modernity can be harmonized with resisting religious traditions. The United States has been a trailblazer in this respect. As Obama pointed out, "The United States is one of the greatest sources of progress the world has ever known . . . We are shaped by every culture, drawn from every end of the Earth, and dedicated to a simple concept: *E pluribus unum*—'Out of many, one.'"[16] By stressing the interdependence of regions of the planet, and by noting how events in one part of the word have far-reaching effects on others parts of the world, Obama sought to impress upon his audience the consequences of continuing a clash of civilizations, pitting East against West and Muslims against Christians and Jews. Such a continued divide produces feelings of hopelessness and cynicism.

At the center of the Cairo Speech, and of greater interest to the Cairo audience, was the Israel-Palestine conflict. Obama acknowledged, against the demands of the US-Israel special relationship that enables the building of illegal Israeli settlements, that Israel's occupation of

the West Bank and blockade of Gaza are illegal, a continual source of Palestinian suffering, and a source of considerable antagonism in the Arab world. Israel is the only country in the Middle East that possesses nuclear weapons, a fact that most deny because of Israel's refusal to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.[17] Of course, the United States launched its invasion of Iraq based on the suspicion that Saddam Hussein possessed or had the capability of building nuclear weapons, and is now (along with Israel) placing considerable pressure on Iran to terminate its nuclear program. These circumstances make the United States look hypocritical as it seeks to maintain a firm grip on those countries that can manufacture nuclear weapons in the region (Israel, Pakistan, and India) and those that cannot (Iraq and Iran) while continually calling for peace in the Middle East. Clearly, the distinction between those who can possess nuclear weapons and those who cannot are based on US interests. With the exception of Israel, the United States tends to employ the "Good Muslim, Bad Muslim" test to make the distinction. Obama, then, sought to restore through his Cairo Speech a good-faith relationship with the world, a cooperative relationship that he realizes must address past grievances without becoming hostage to them. To these ends, Obama sought to create conditions of possible trust in a region that has little reason to trust US intentions nearly ten years after the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

A Brief History of US Intervention in the Middle East

During his speech, Obama maintained that the United States is not interested in building an empire or in maintaining military bases in the Middle East but in forging partnerships with Arab countries. To convince his audience of this intention, Obama owned up to the mistakes of previous US administrations. These mistakes included the 1953 coup in Iran that overthrew a democratically elected Mohammad Mosaddegh, the attempted Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) assassination in Beirut of Lebanese cleric Sheikh Fadlallah on March 8, 1985, by a truck bomb that killed eighty people, the 1979 Iranian Revolution and hostage crisis, the United States' support of Israel, and the United States' general efforts to suppress pan-Arab nationalist

movements such as those represented by Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1967. These events are not easily forgotten and have to be contextualized and understood as part of a larger historical picture, one in which the United States may have temporarily lost sight of its noble intentions but never deviated from moving toward the larger goal of controlling oil resources in the region.

Obama's acknowledgement of Arab inventions, scientific skills, tolerance, and advanced political structures and institutions was meant to offset the stereotypes that often are presented as fact about the Arab world—that it is uncivilized and resistant to science, the development of democratic institutions, and social progress. These stereotypes had to be dispensed with before Obama could meet his audience on firmer ground about divisive and immediate political issues, such as the Israel-Palestine conflict. Obama's back and forth rhetorical strategy—moving between establishing the greatness of the Arab and Islamic past, dissociating it from Islamic extremism, and tying this to the exigencies of the present—was a conscious strategy. His psychology appealed to an audience that wished to trust Obama the person but has little reason to trust him in his role as president of the United States. Obama seemed to understand this tension as he drew upon his biography: "Part of this conviction [about the greatness of Islam] is rooted in my own experience. I am a Christian, but my father came from a Kenyan family that includes generations of Muslims. As a boy, I spent several years in Indonesia and heard the call of the azan at the break of dawn and the fall of dusk."[18] Obama directly connected this aspect of his personal story to his Cairo audience, insisting that he understood what it means to live as a Muslim, to endure the difficulties of living a Muslim's life, and perhaps, most importantly, the particular religious commitments devout Muslims observe (e.g., *zakat*, "religious giving"). No previous US president had demonstrated this level of understanding and compassion for Muslims in the Middle East. Obama's multicultural upbringing in Indonesia and Hawaii created the conditions for his capacity to connect with people in various regions of the world, such as the Middle East. Several of Obama's relatives are Muslim, although he is not.[19] Of course, this aspect of his

background has become fodder for conservative critics. For example, in *The Roots of Obama's Rage*, Dinesh D'Souza argues that Obama is driven by his rage against colonialism, spurred on by the memory of his father ("Luo tribesman of the 1950s"), who died in Kenya after a failed political career. D'Souza claims that Obama is haunted by his father's legacy, which is steeped in anticolonial ideology. According to D'Souza, Obama Sr. was deeply influenced by anticolonial writers, such as Fanon, Cabral, Nukrumah, and Cesaire, and came to resent Western power and influence in Africa in the 1950s, although he was educated in the West.[20] D'Souza paints a complex psychological portrait of Barack Obama, arguing that he is not the suave, cool individual on the outside that the public sees but is instead a fierce anticolonialist ideologue inspired by the writings of Fanon and Edward Said, who is trying to live up to his father's disappointments and failed expectations. D'Souza goes on to argue that this psychological portrait of Obama provides a far more accurate indicator of Obama's disposition on key domestic and foreign policy issues than his policy speeches. Although D'Souza does not directly address Obama's stance on the Israel-Palestine conflict, we can infer that Obama, as an "anticolonialist" (to use D'Souza's characterization), privately cheers for the Palestinians because they are an oppressed people resisting Israeli occupation, regardless of what Obama states in public.[21]

Obama's election to the presidency signaled that the country had expressed a desire to change on several fronts. Beyond changing the occupant of the Oval Office, the country sought to repair the country's image throughout the rest of the world, particularly the Middle East. The United States had elected its first African American president, an indication that US citizens had left identity politics behind and that they possessed a readiness to engage different cultures beyond their historic comfort level. To prove this, Obama drew upon his own interesting biography. As Obama said, "Now, much has been made of the fact that an African American with the name Barack Hussein Obama could be elected President. But my personal story is not so unique."[22] Obama wished to show that his story could be anyone's story in the land of opportunity. However, Obama's journey to this

moment at Cairo University in June 2009 can be seen as topping off a lifetime of efforts to understand racial politics and division in the United States, as well as the vast, persuasive potential that could be tapped by successfully navigating the shoals of the racial divide.

Growing up, Obama learned the hard-won lessons that came with facing white resistance to discussions about race and racial justice. He quickly learned that whites could not be directly confronted with evidence, no matter how convincing or compelling, that they were somehow responsible for the failure of blacks in social, political, and economic spheres. What is the direct relationship between the history of the struggle for racial equality in the United States and the struggles for democracy, economic development, freedom, women's rights, and so on, in the Arab world? Both took place in the shadow of colonialism, are parts of the story about modernization, and are enmeshed in the rise of globalization. Obama hits all three of these themes in his speech.

Obama positioned himself as better able than previous US presidents to help the divisions within the Arab world by virtue of who he is and also because of the political conditions that led to his election to the presidency. Obama pointed out that his election itself is evidence of how committed and tolerant the United States is with respect to judging racial, ethnic, and religious difference. He attempted to quell those concerned that the United States is committed to Islamophobia as a normal part of American life, seemingly incapable of appreciating individuals for who they are by pointing out the many visible signs of cooperation between Muslims, Christians, and Jewish Americans. By insisting that the way forward in diplomatic relations between the West and the Middle East depends on good faith negotiations on both sides, Obama drew a symmetry where none exists: the United States has been responsible for illegal invasions of countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan on the basis of flimsy pretexts, in addition to inflicting massive violence against the indigenous populations during those invasions. Using an "on the one hand, on the other hand" logic, Obama deftly wove a nicely constructed tapestry that left American exceptionalism and military power unacknowledged, as if

US culpability for the numerous deaths resulting from the war in Iraq could be erased by not mentioning them. He got right to the point when he stated, "So America will defend itself, respectful of the sovereignty of nations and the rule of law. And we will do so in partnership with Muslim communities which are also threatened. The sooner the extremists are isolated and unwelcome in Muslim communities, the sooner we will all be safer."[23] Although he called for a partnership between the United States and the Arab world, Obama made it clear that the United States will continue to serve its interests. Despite this stance, Obama sought to help his audience see past stereotypes.

Getting Past Stereotypes

Stereotypes hold people back when responding to the complexities of individuals and their circumstances in a world of contingency, change, and difference. It is far too easy to reach for the easy categorization than do the hard work of explaining how each individual is situated in the world. These stereotypes are what Obama sought to disable as he spoke in Cairo, asking his audiences to move past the caricatures that reduce discussions about the Middle East to misleading sound bites that erase not only what different cultural groups hold in common but also the diversity of their experiences. The assumption that we must engage in the politics of division by subscribing to the "Clash of Civilizations" thesis made popular by Huntington obscures the fact that lines of solidarity are created within the human community outside of the common racial, religious, and gender classifications.[24]

Obama forced his Cairo audience to reflect not only on the creation of community but also on how identities sometimes work to divide communities on the basis of flimsy premises, which results in individuals falling victim to illusions about those we assume are our enemies.[25] The politics and rhetoric of demonization are created too easily, allowing for the facile separation between "us" and "them" that is consistent with the demands of the current propaganda need. By recognizing the destructiveness of identity politics, Obama sought to

create points of identification between people throughout the world despite the intractable conflicts in the Middle East. Obama uses this speech to demonstrate that more brings Muslims and Westerners together than what pulls them apart. Furthermore, he emphasized the importance of listening, mutual respect, and identifying common ground. Obama spent several years in Indonesia, the home of the most Muslims in the world. Drawing on his time as a community activist in Chicago, a city with a large Muslim community, Obama suggested that he knew Muslim religious traditions. More importantly, he established that he was comfortable speaking to and dealing with Islam and Muslims—a far cry from previous US presidents.

Through his election to the presidency, Obama has introduced new communicative modalities and competencies, enabling historically marginalized groups to present their grievances within the public sphere through Obama's life story. This is extremely significant. It is this promise that Obama has exploited rhetorically in various speeches, including the Cairo Speech. Through his election, Obama hoped to lend an ear to suffering voices in the Muslim world that had been previously ignored under the Bush administration. Though not a Muslim, he has been accused of being one—as if being a Muslim would somehow have made him ineligible to be president. Although the United States declares that it is not at war with Islam, the parameters of Islamophobia in the United States suggest otherwise. Obama's election, it might be claimed, is confirmation that those marginalized voices—Muslims in America and in the Arab World—can no longer be misrepresented by extremists. As he noted in his speech, "throughout history, Islam has demonstrated through words and deeds the possibilities of religious tolerance and racial equality."[26] Obama sought to show his Arab audience that he, as the president of the United States, intends to represent Islam as a tolerant religion.

Obama emphasized that the United States was born out of revolution against an empire, the British Empire, and does not easily conform to the stereotype of a self-interested empire: "We were founded upon the ideal that all are created equal, and we have shed blood and struggled for centuries to give meaning to those words—within our borders,

and around the world."[27] He continued, "For human history has often been a record of nations and tribes subjugating one another to serve their own interests. Yet in this new age, such attitudes are self-defeating. Given our interdependencies, any world order that elevates one nation or group of people over another will inevitably fail. So, whatever we think of the past, we must not be prisoners of it. Our problem must be dealt with through partnership; progress must be shared."[28] In the first paragraph of the Cairo speech, Obama mentioned the colonial legacy that has shaped modern relations between the West and the Middle East, the very relations that form the basis of present Arab resentments. This legacy "denied rights and opportunities to many Muslims." While recognizing this historical background, Obama identified the centrality of the forces associated with globalization and modernity that shaped the current predicament—forces that are often portrayed as being in conflict with the religious and cultural traditions of the Arab world. For Obama, this is the "harmony between tradition and progress." Furthermore, he poignantly noted, "All of us share this world for but a brief moment in time," pushing his audience to recognize that "it's easier to start wars than to end them. It's easier to blame others than to look inward. It's easier to see what is different about someone than to find the things we share. But we should choose the right path, not just the easy path."[29]

These attempts to encourage his audience to look beyond the mistakes made in the War on Terror and US occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, however, sound hollow. By blaming the current tensions between the United States and Arab countries on "violent extremists," Obama avoided directly addressing how US imperialism and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq—as well as strong signals that the United States would like to invade Iran because of its burgeoning nuclear weapons capability—have affected the region. However, Obama made clear that "as the Holy Koran tells us, 'Be conscious of God and speak always the truth.' That is what I will try to do today—to speak the truth as best I can, humbled by the task before us, and firm in my belief that the interests we share as human beings are far more powerful than the forces that drive us apart."[30]

Obama and the Israel-Palestine Conflict

While fully aware that US support for Israel's settlement project poses a serious problem for building and maintaining goodwill toward the United States in the Middle East, Obama was forced to walk a very narrow tightrope, balancing the need to be protective of Israel—and to refrain from being overly critical—in his public statements. This is consistent with the behavior of past US presidents, who acknowledged legitimate grievances in the Arab world while being highly protective of Israel. These grievances include the United States' support of corrupt regimes throughout the Middle East (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, etc.), its support for Israel's occupation of the West Bank and the military blockade of Gaza, its support for continued Israeli settlement building, and its support for Israel's military adventurism in Lebanon and possible military action against Iran.

Ever wary of the Israel Lobby's power to shape US foreign policy in the Middle East and to defeat alternatives to supporting the Israeli right wing, Obama faced a nearly impossible task: he had to profess undying loyalty to Israel (as every US president must), and all that commitment entails, while also creating the rhetorical ground to slowly revise this support in response to the long-recognized grievances and governmental changes in the Arab world. In other words, Obama had to position himself to back away from Israel's repressive policies toward the Palestinians if and when the time arrives, creating the rhetorical situation to question Israeli hegemony in the Middle East in advance of a regional crisis that could possibly involve the use of nuclear weapons. US support for Israel, as the old saying goes, is the elephant in the room of American politics. Indeed, Obama's May 2011 State Department speech signified a milestone in American politics as Obama mentioned the international consensus for resolution of the conflict: Israel's withdrawal to the 1967 Green Line and the removal of illegal, "Jews only" settlements in the West bank.[31] Of course, politicians must genuflect to the Israel Lobby's unspoken power in the hallways of the American political establishment, fully cognizant that criticisms of Israel can be reframed as anti-Semitism

if the stakes are high enough. This creates an impossible situation for those seeking to pursue alternative policies in the Middle East.[32]

At the beginning of his remarks about the Israel-Palestine conflict, Obama made clear that the United States' bond with Israel is unbreakable: "America's strong bonds with Israel are well known. This bond is unbreakable. It is based upon cultural and historical ties, and the recognition that the aspiration for a Jewish homeland is rooted in a tragic history that cannot be denied."[33] Reflexive congressional support for Israel's punishing treatment of Palestinians in the territories is a seemingly permanent part of the American political landscape. Although criticisms of Israel exist at the margins of American political life, the establishment speaks with one voice when it comes to supporting the Jewish State.[34]

We are told that Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East, yet the very conditions of possibility for the state (as the state of the Jewish people) is that the majority must always remain Jewish, even if this means expelling the growing Arab Palestinian population that constitutes a little more than 20 percent of Israel's total population. Israel is a democracy to the degree that it is committed to the preservation of a Jewish majority. As Obama has openly cited the international consensus for resolving the conflict, specifically the 1967 borders that are recognized as the legitimate basis for bringing all hostilities to an end, he has come under increased criticism from US supporters of Israel like Alan Dershowitz and others. While it is easy for Obama to criticize Islamic extremism, as Obama frequently does, criticizing Zionist extremism is taboo; it is an unspeakable crime that no US president can afford to commit to this endeavor and expect to politically survive. For Obama to publicly acknowledge what was privately acknowledged long ago—that Israel has long been in violation of international law—is considered by Israel's US defenders to be tantamount to heresy.

Far too often, commentators attempt to draw symmetries between Israeli and Palestinian power; inevitably, these symmetries are drawn because of a desire to assign equal blame in the conflict, leaving out any analysis of Israel's disproportionate counterviolence to

Palestinian terrorism. Obama falls into this trap in the Cairo Speech, suggesting that blame for the continuation of the conflict can be equally apportioned between Israelis and Palestinians. This tendency is extremely unhelpful and obfuscates many important issues in an attempt to appease audience psychologies—in this case, the bases of Israeli power. While recognizing the legitimacy of Palestinian suffering, Obama insisted on protecting Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, even if protecting that right entailed denying Palestinians the right to return to their previous homes and demanding that denial as a prerequisite for recognition at the negotiating table. In other words, a starting point for negotiations is the Palestinian renunciation of any and all claims to historical Palestine or a recognition of their dispossession; they are required to accept Israel's "right to exist" as a state committed to preserving a Jewish majority. Obama's calls for an end to Palestinian terrorism ring hollow in this context, particularly since the balance of power is overwhelmingly in Israel's favor. Similarly, the ledger sheet of violence shows that Palestinians die at the hands of Israel's military machine at far greater rates than Israelis do at the hands of suicide bombers, Hamas, Fatah, and so on. However, Obama simply could not avoid addressing the international consensus on the resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict, leading him to openly acknowledge UN Resolution 242 and the illegality of Israeli settlements. This is a major step for a US president. Israel's open flouting of previous agreements to cease settlement construction at Camp David, as described by Carter in *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*, suggests that it is not interested in peace except as a rhetorical device to advance its own strategic interests in the region.[35]

Building a Relationship

Ever since he announced his candidacy for president of the United States in February 2007, Barack Obama has had to prove who he "really" is while simultaneously working to prove—in the midst of what have often been wild mischaracterizations about his birth and person—what he is not. Whether proving that he is a native-born American citizen, that he is not a Muslim (the implications

of which, if it were true, are unclear), or that he does not hold the same political beliefs as Bill Ayers or Jeremiah Wright, Obama has been forced to remove doubts about his birth place, his genealogy, his political loyalties and affiliations, and his religion.[36] This sort of skepticism about the background of someone elected president of the United States is unprecedented, emerging within a discursive environment plagued by racism and Islamophobia. This discursive environment plays a key role in mainstream media representations of Obama's Middle East policy, producing caricatures and misleading propaganda about how Obama's religious and ethnic identity informs his perspectives and sympathies toward the Arab world, particularly in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict.[37] Aaron Klein, in *The Manchurian President*, claims that "future historians will have to grapple with the fantastic phenomenon of the U.S. news media's having, as a class, almost completely abdicated their traditional responsibility when it came to investigating the background of the 'unknown politician' running for the country's highest office."[38] My analysis of Obama's 2009 Cairo Speech reveals how Obama sought to achieve a balancing act of sorts in this rhetorical situation, assuring his Arab audience that the United States' intentions toward the Arab world are not malevolent, despite the War on Terror launched by his predecessor, George W. Bush.

Barack Obama has used a rhetoric of commonality to great effect in the course of advancing arguments in support of his domestic and international political agendas. Through this rhetoric, Obama reminds us that despite our divisions, we hold our humanity in common; it is this common humanity that is the source of strength, possessing the potential to surmount division and conflict. As he stated in his Cairo Speech, progress, respect for the dignity of human life, and a belief in coexistence should guide those seeking to defeat religious extremists. He reminded his Cairo audience that "whoever kills an innocent is as—it is as if he has killed all mankind . . . whoever saves a person, it is as if he has saved all mankind."[39] Obama was, of course, talking about Muslim extremists such as Osama bin Laden and his associates. Although these extremists may successfully tap into a reservoir of

legitimate grievances within the Arab world against the United States, Obama—as president—had to defend the country and its citizens against terrorist attacks, but he also had to assure the Muslim world that he would combat damaging stereotypes about Islam.

Despite his own personal differences from a perceived American norm, Obama employed a rhetoric of commonality to rebut those who questioned his origins and loyalties to the United States and its interests. A combination of Islamophobia and racism has produced an insurmountable challenge for Barack Obama's presidency. Obama has had to prove his loyalty to the United States and its interests because of his racial and cultural difference from the white norm despite having a conventional educational background and an enviable multicultural upbringing. However, this elite education and exotic background have in fact made Obama an object of suspicion. In other words, the country's multicultural impulse only extends so far. In this sense, Obama must continually prove his politically bona fides even though he won the 2008 election. His use of the words "partnership," "moderation," "mutual interests," "progress," and "reconciliation" suggested that he was interested in working past differences through negotiation and compromise.

By demonstrating, through his behavior and measured words, that he was not a Muslim, a closet terrorist, a radical, or a "chip-on-his-shoulder" black civil rights activist, Obama had to run away from political instincts that are perhaps grounded in concerns about justice and equity. His desire to transform the world is tempered by a moderation that is grounded in the recognition that reality does not accord with his political vision. While much has been written about Obama's psychological appeal to white voters, little is known about how Obama's positions on Israel allowed him to engage in a political transformation that would catapult him into the White House. His connections to American Jewish activists deeply committed to Israel and its survival, particularly to figures like Saul Alinsky and Harry Pritzker, explain Obama's reticence to directly engage Israel on its settlement policy in the West Bank.

While recognizing how detrimental the US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq have been to the United States' image in the world, Obama was clear that he, as the US commander in chief, must address the geopolitical conditions that led to the tragedy in Manhattan on September 11, 2001. Of course, these conditions are ones that can, at least to a degree, be attributed to US Middle East policy, particularly US support of Israel's occupation of and settlement-building in the West Bank and its evisceration of Gaza. Indeed, Osama Bin Laden claimed as much, insisting that Israel's oppression of the Palestinians is the single biggest example of how the West dominates the Arab world.

Despite his condemnation of Palestinian terrorism in his Cairo Speech, Obama recognized that Israel's continued building of settlements (and the United States' seeming tolerance and support of these actions) only fuels perceptions throughout the Arab world that the United States stands in opposition to the Palestinian people's national aspirations. As he acknowledged forthright, "America will not turn our backs on the legitimate Palestinian aspiration for dignity, opportunity, and a state of their own." While Obama condemned acts of violence by groups such as al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, and Hamas, he also recognized that this violence, whether directed at the United States or Israel, cannot be so easily dismissed as senseless. At the same time, however, he could not justify or provide the appropriate historical context for this violence, even in front of his Arab audience. In the course of moving toward a rapprochement with his audience in Cairo, Obama subsequently alienated a few hardline American supporters of Israel by pointing out Israeli wrongdoing and appeared to place Jewish and Palestinian suffering on the same plane.[40]

> It is also undeniable that the Palestinian people—Muslims and Christians—have suffered in pursuit of a homeland. For more than 60 years they've endured the pain of dislocation. Many wait in refugee camps in the West Bank, Gaza, and neighboring lands for a life of peace and security that they have never been able to lead. They endure the daily humiliations—large and small—that come with occupation. So let there be no doubt: The situation for the Palestinian people is intolerable. And

> America will not turn our backs on the legitimate Palestinian aspiration for dignity, opportunity, and a state of their own.[41]

The political constraints around this speech were enormous, especially given the domestic constituencies at home that he had to please. The political strength of American Jews who support Israel constitutes a major bloc of support within the Democratic Party, a bloc of voters Obama could not afford to alienate, even if his remarks referenced past agreements between Israel and Palestine and each party's commitments under international law. Obama received extensive criticism from American Jewish groups supportive of the Jewish State. Some hardliners insisted that Obama showed true hostility toward Israel through his speech. According to Lanny Davis, "Some American Jews do not like the fact that Obama's speech publicly called out Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for refusing to support a two-state solution and a freeze on all settlements." As Davis noted, "Many American Jews and Israelis feel strongly that Obama should better understand that such public scolding of Israel, which breaks with the bipartisan tradition of previous administrations, will only strengthen the hardliners within Israeli (and Arab) politics, and thus, weaken Netanyahu's ability to make peace, given his already fragile coalition government dependence on right-wing parties."[42]

Obama specifically spoke out on the issue of illegal Israeli settlements on the West Bank: "This construction [of settlements] violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace. It is time for these settlements to stop."[43] The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) noted, "We are disappointed that the President found the need to balance the suffering of the Jewish people in a genocide to the suffering of the Palestinian people resulting from Arab wars."[44] Additionally, the ADL was concerned that Obama created "the impression of equating the Holocaust with Palestinian suffering." In creating an inventory of the positive themes in Obama's Cairo Speech, Abe Foxman, head of the ADL, wrote,

> If this [the concept of a balanced U.S. approach to the conflict] is directed toward saying that each side has to make concessions, as the president indicated in his speech, that's realism and that's a legitimate appeal to the

> Muslim world. If, however, as also was part of the president's speech, an impression is left that Palestinian suffering is comparable to the Holocaust, or that Israel has simply been responsible for Palestinian suffering, ignoring Israel's peace offers and Palestinian rejectionism, that's unhelpful pandering which ignores the moral difference between the sides and is a poor basis for a U.S. role as a interlocutor.[45]

Furthermore, Charles Krauthammer maintained that Obama had done more to delegitimize Israel in the three minutes he talked about the Israel-Palestine conflict in the Cairo Speech than any other US president.[46] It seems many Zionists were disappointed in Obama for his unequivocal pronouncement that just as one must admit that the Jewish people have the right to a state of their own, the Palestinians, who have suffered for so long, also deserve a homeland. It is this recognition of Palestinian suffering and the call for a Palestinian state that made many so defensive.

Conclusion

Barack Obama's biography, *Dreams of My Father*, provides some insight into the philosophy and strategy behind Obama's June 2009 Cairo Speech. In the context of one of the most important of his speeches to the Arab world, Obama drew upon the life lessons that he obtained while growing up as an interracial child in Indonesia and in the United States. Obama used his multiracial, multicultural identity and his election as the first African American president of the United States to argue for the wisdom of seeking common ground, seeing past stereotypes, and working toward international cooperation. As Mohammed Zaki reminds us, "Both the Western and Islamic civilizations have very strong bonds, which have been cemented over centuries, and which have benefitted mankind." Furthermore, according to Zaki, "It is for us to harness the good that exists and to chart a path of friendship for the ultimate goal of peace, prosperity and progress of mankind."[47] Despite the progress he has shown in reengaging leaders in the Muslim world in comparison to past US presidents, Obama still relied upon drawing a clear distinction between Good Muslims and Bad Muslims, reflecting his commitment to maintaining the United States' stronghold in the Middle East.

CONCLUSION

Intellectual Resistance and the Struggle for Palestine

As I have sought to demonstrate, the location of Palestine serves as a site of intellectual and physical resistance, and debates about this location often emerge in the context of suppression and resistance. That dissident intellectual voices, Jewish anti-Zionist and Palestinian, which have sought to counter the hegemonic narrative of Zionism through intellectual acts of resistance, connect to the material acts of resistance on the ground in Palestine, whether in the acts of resistance of stone-throwing youth in the Intifada and suicide bombers seeking to enact a new conception of the biopolitical, is an important aspect of dealing with oppressive circumstances in a colonial context.

While some might claim that this resistance emerges in the context of historical anti-Semitism and violence directed against Jews, it is important to keep in mind that the Palestinians living under Israeli occupation are the "New Jews" in the sense that Orientalism is the analog of historical anti-Semitism. At this point in history, the Palestinians have inherited the subject position of Jewish victimhood by having become the "victims of victims." By shifting the traditional subjectivity of Jewish persecution to the Palestinians living under occupation, we can view suffering and dispossession as carving out a specific subject position that has historically been part of the Jewish experience.

At this historical moment, exile, loss, and dislocation are far more a part of the Palestinian diaspora community than that of the Jewish diaspora community. That Jews and Palestinians have been locked in a struggle of such epic proportions in the Holy Land obscures how their respective histories so closely mirror one another. That Edward Said, the most visible Palestinian spokesperson living in the United States, should be included in the Jewish-dominated New York intellectual movement demonstrates the sharp convergence between historical Jewish and Palestinian alienation from dominant US culture within specific moments in time.

The intellectual resistance to this culture of passivity and cultural consumption positioned the New York intellectuals in the 1950s to discern key insights about American culture. However, as these intellectuals drifted toward power centers, they lost their edge, succumbing to the trappings of privilege—and as a consequence—becoming less capable of discerning how they had renounced their previous ideals. As Edward Said came to represent a sort of throwback to what the New York intellectuals once were, his seemingly threatening presence on the New York intellectual scene and beyond troubled many Jewish intellectuals, who viewed Said as an angry advocate for Palestinian liberation. Said's direct confrontation with prominent Jewish intellectuals, such as Michael Walzer, positioned him as a proponent for Palestinian resistance. When Palestinian resistance is framed as terrorism, it obviously becomes difficult to understand the sense of outrage and betrayal that this population living under occupation endures. The humiliation of living under such conditions ironically creates the conditions of possibility for resistance itself, even when that resistance takes the form of biopolitical resistance like suicide bombing. This distressing and desperate reaction impressed upon US presidents, such as Jimmy Carter, and presidential candidates, such as Barack Obama, the significance of Palestinian grievance against Israel and the United States.

Despite his expressed sympathy for the suffering of the Palestinians living under Israeli occupation during his time as a state congressman in Illinois, Barack Obama quickly learned that his political survival

as a national political candidate depended on aligning himself with the perspectives of the Israel Lobby and Israel's territorial ambitions. When Obama has tried to resist these ambitions by calling for Israel to cease it settlement expansion, he is quickly brought back into line with Israel's wishes by major organizations such as the Zionist Organization of America and the American Jewish Congress. The future of the conflict may very well depend on the ability of future American presidents to challenge and resist these domestic constituencies, a resistance no American political figure has been able to sustain for very long.

Notes

Introduction

1. See Zalman Amit and Daphna Levit's *Israeli Rejectionism: A Hidden Agenda in the Middle East Peace Process* (London: Pluto Press, 2011) and Clayton Swisher's *The Truth about Camp David: The Untold Story about the Collapse of the Middle East Peace Process* (New York: Nation Books, 2004).
2. See Matthew Abraham's *Out of Bounds: Academic Freedom and the Question of Palestine* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).
3. See Marc Tracy's "Carter Sued Over 'Apartheid' Book," *Tablet*, http://www.tabletmag.com/scroll/57833/carter-sued-over-%E2%80%98apartheid%E2%80%99-book (accessed on 18 Jan. 2014) and Alan Dershowitz's "Debunking the Oldest—and Newest—Jewish Conspiracy," http://www.comw.org/warreport/fulltext/0604dershowitz.pdf (accessed on 18 Jan. 2014).
4. See Morton A. Klein's "ZOA Condemns Anti-Israel Book as Inaccurate, Shallow, and Vicious," http://zoa.org/2006/11/101669-zoa-condemns-jimmy-carters-anti-israel-book-as-inaccurate-shallow-vicious/; Klein's "ZOA Rejects Jimmy Carter's 'Apology' for Anti-Israel Statements as Duplicitous, Misleading and Meaningless," http://zoa.org/2010/01/102571-zoa-rejects-jimmy-carters-apology-for-anti-israel-statements-as-duplicitous-misleading-meaningless; Jimmy Carter's *Get the Facts*, http://archive.adl.org/carter; Abraham Foxman's "Judging a Book by Its Cover and Its Content," http://archive.adl.org/israel/carter_book_review.html#.UtsIc87n-t8; Glen Lewy's and Abraham Foxman's "An Open Letter to Jimmy Carter," http://archive.adl.org/presrele/islme_62/4947_62.html#.UtsI6s7n-t8b; The Anti-Defamation

League (ADL)'s "Anti-Semitic Reactions to Jimmy Carter's Book: White Supremacists," http://www.adl.org/combating-hate/domestic-extremism-terrorism/c/anti-semitic-reactions-to.html; ADL's "Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid—Anti-Semitic Reactions to Jimmy Carter's Book," http://archive.adl.org/carter/reactions.html; and David A. Harris's "Despite Title, Carter's Book Plants Screed of Middle East Discord," http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-2785463.html; and Carter's "A Letter to Jewish Citizens of America," http://www.cartercenter.org/news/pr/carter_letter_121506.html.

5. See Bernard Harrison's *The Resurgence of Anti-Semitism*, Robert Wistrich's *A Lethal Obsession* and *From Ambivalence to Betrayal*, as well as Richard Cravitch's *Genocidal Liberalism: The University's Jihad against Israel and the Jews*.
6. See Edward Said's *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage, 1992).
7. See *Journal of Palestine Studies* 13.3 (1984).
8. See Benbassa's *Suffering as Identity: The Jewish Paradigm* (London: Verso, 2010).
9. See Peter Novick's *The Holocaust in American Life* (New York: Mariner, 2000).
10. Abraham, *Out of Bounds: Academic Freedom and the Question of Palestine*.
11. See letter to Dan Jacobsen, 29 July 1986, rpt. in Noam Chomsky's *Pirates and Emperors, Old and New: International Terrorism in the Real World* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1991), pp. 131–52.
12. See Matthew Taylor, Suzanne Goldenberg, and Rory McCarthy's "We Will Isolate Them," 9 June 2007, http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2007/jun/09/highereducation.israel1 (accessed on 29 Jan. 2014).
13. See David Samuel's "Lawyer against Law: Dershowitz Tells Israelis to Pay No Attention to International Law," *Mondoweiss*, 11 Jan. 2014 http://mondoweiss.net/2014/01/dershowitz-attention-international.html/comment-page-1 (accessed on 29 Jan. 2014) and Norman Finkelstein's "Goldstone," *This Time We Went Too Far*, p. 54.
14. See Columbia's ad hoc committee report, 28 March 2005, at http://www.columbia.edu/cu/news/05/03/ad_hoc_grievance_committee_report.html (accessed on 29 Jan. 2014).

15. See Judith Jacobson's "A Call for Civil Discourse," *Columbia Spectator*, 27 Oct. 2011, http://www.columbiaspectator.com/2011/10/27/call-civil-discourse (accessed on 29 Jan. 2014).
16. See letter to Provost Claude Steel, 23 July 2009, http://www.mindingthecampus.com/pdf/provost_steele_letter_072209.pdf (accessed on 29 Jan. 2014).
17. See Ariel Beery's "Moshe Rubin's Email to Massad Was Just Wrong," http://arielbeery.wordpress.com/2004/10/29/moshe-rubins-email-to-massad-was-just-wrong; Adam Federman's "Columbia Profs Smeared as Anti-Semites," http://www.counterpunch.org/2004/11/09/columbia-profs-smeared-as-anti-semites; E. R. Kleinfield's "Mideast Tensions Are Getting Personal," http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/18/education/18columbia.html?pagewanted=print&position&_r=0; Elizabeth Terzakis's "The New McCarthyism: The Assault on Civil Liberties on Campus," http://www.isreview.org/issues/41/new_mccarthyism.shtml; and Joseph Massad's "Statement to the Ad Hoc Committee," http://www.censoringthought.org/massadstatementtocommittee.html. Rubin's email to Massad was dated October 20, 2004, with the subject line "Anti-Semite." Email on file with author.
18. See Jacob Gershman's "Columbia Tenures an Israel Basher," *New York Post*, 29 June 2009, http://nypost.com/2009/06/29/columbia-tenures-an-israel-basher/ (accessed on 29 Jan. 2014).
19. See Amiram Barkat's, "Columbia Professor under Fire for Alleged Anti-Israel Hostility," *Ha'aretz*, http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/columbia-professor-under-fire-for-alleged-anti-israel-hostility-1.138734.
20. See the Introduction to Noam Chomsky's *The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians* (Boston: South End, 1983).
21. See Alan Dershowitz's *The Case against Israel's Enemies*, specifically the chapter on Jimmy Carter, in which Dershowitz suggests that Carter encouraged Arafat to refuse the Camp David offer in September 2000 and to launch the Second Intifada.
22. Jonathan Cook's "Grab Every Hilltop," *The National*, 5 Sept. 2008, http://www.jonathan-cook.net/docs/review-national.pdf (accessed on 9 May 2014).
23. See Adam's and Mayhew's *Publish It Not: The Middle East Cover-Up* (London: Polity, 2001).

24. See Bret Stephens's review, "Peter Beinart's False Prophecy," *Wall Street Journal*, 26 March 2012, http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/94872/peter-beinarts-false-prophecy; David Lauter's "Peter Beinart's Crisis of Zionism Sounds Call," http://articles.latimes.com/2012/may/12/entertainment/la-et-book-peter-beinart-20120512; Sol Stern's review, "Beinart the Unwise," *Commentary*, http://www.commentarymagazine.com/article/beinart-the-unwise/; Jonathan Rosen's review, "The Missionary Impulse," *NY Times*, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/15/books/review/the-crisis-of-zionism-by-peter-beinart.html?_r=0; Alana Newhouse's *Washington Post* review: http://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/books/book-review-the-crisis-of-zionism-by-peter-beinart/2012/03/30/gIQAlQ3rlS_story.html; Dylan Byer's "The Peter Beinart Conversation Is Over," http://www.politico.com/blogs/media/2012/06/the-peter-beinart-affair-may-be-over-125294.html; Jason Zengerl's "The Israeli Desert," *NY Magazine*, http://nymag.com/news/features/peter-beinart-2012-6; and Jason Pollack's "Peter Beinart and the Destruction of Liberal Zionism," http://www.commentarymagazine.com/article/peter-beinart-and-the-destruction-of-liberal-zionism. For a positive view, see Stephen Walt's "On the Crisis of Zionism: Why People Should Read Peter Beinart," http://www.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/06/24/on_the_crisis_of_zionism; Dana Goldstein's review, "Defense of Peter Beinart," *Nation*, http://www.thenation.com/blog/167138/defense-peter-beinart; and M. J. Rosenberg's "Why Peter Beinart's Book is Driving the Pro-Israel Establishment Crazy," http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mj-rosenberg/peter-beinarts-book-israel_b_1388264.html.
25. Peter Beinart, "The American Jewish Cocoon," 26 Sept. 2013, http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2013/sep/26/american-jewish-cocoon/?pagination=false (accessed on 24 Jan. 2014).
26. See the introduction to Norman Finkelstein's *Image and Reality in the Israel-Palestine Conflict*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 2003), pp. xxx–xxi.
27. See Oren Yiftachel's *Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).
28. See Matthew Abraham's "Perils of Separation: Fouzi El-Asmar's *To Be An Arab In Israel* as an Allegory of Colonial Anxiety."
29. Israel Shahak, "The Laws against Non-Jews," http://www.bintjbeil.com/E/occupation/shahak.html#56.

30. See Lawrence Davidson's *America's Palestine: Popular and Official Perceptions from Balfour to Israeli Statehood* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001) and Zvi Ganin's *Truman, American Jewry, and Israel* (Teaneck, NJ: Holmes and Meier, 1978).
31. See *JNS.org*'s "One-Sided BDS Roundtable Scheduled for Modern Language Confab," http://www.jns.org/news-briefs/2013/12/24/bds-roundtable-to-take-place-in-modern-language-association-convention, *Jewish News Service*, 24 Dec. 2013 (accessed on 29 Jan. 2014).
32. See the American Studies Association's "What Does the Boycott of Israeli Academic Institutions Mean for the ASA?" http://www.theasa.net/what_does_the_academic_boycott_mean_for_the_asa.
33. See the USACBI Organizing Collective's "A Response to the AAUP Journal of Academic Freedom, Volume 4," http://www.aaup.org/sites/default/files/files/JAF/2013%20JAF/Responses/Response%20-%20USACBI.pdf.
34. See David Lloyd and Malini Johar Schueller's "The Israeli State of Exception and the Case for Academic Boycott," http://www.aaup.org/sites/default/files/files/JAF/2013%20JAF/LloydSchueller.pdf.
35. Judea Pearl, "Boycott Israel? Not on My Campus," *Jewish Journal*, 3 Jan. 2014, http://www.jewishjournal.com/judea_pearl/article/judea_pearl_boycott_israel_not_on_my_campus (accessed on 29 Jan. 2014).
36. See Alan Dershowitz's "Israel and the Myopic BDS Movement," http://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2013/12/27/israel-and-myopic-bds-movement/wl8CEoDcUVJZuGxraXvgUJ/story.html.
37. See Peter Beinart's "The Real Problem with the American Studies Association's Boycott of Israel," http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/12/17/the-american-studies-association-is-really-boycotting-israel-s-existence.html.
38. See Robin D. G. Kelley's "Defending Zionism under the Cloak of Academic Freedom," http://mondoweiss.net/2014/01/defending-zionism-academic.html; David Lloyd's "The Nightmare Hidden within Liberal Zionism," http://electronicintifada.net/content/nightmare-hidden-within-liberal-zionism/13029; Steven Salaita's "Stanley Fish and the Violence of Neutrality," http://mondoweiss.net/2013/12/stanley-violence-neutrality.html; and Steven Salaita's

"Peter Beinart's Colonial Logic: Opponents of Israel Boycott Make Anti-Democratic Arguments," http://www.salon.com/2013/12/20/peter_beinarts_colonial_logic_opponents_of_israel_boycott_make_anti_democratic_arguments.

39. See the American Studies Association's sample letter to administrators, http://www.theasa.net/images/uploads/Sample_letter_to_administrators.pdf.

Chapter 1

1. This presumption, given the notion of Jewish tribalism, should be backed by meaningful polls or other information. See Israel Shahak's *Jewish History, Jewish Religion: The Weight of Three Thousand Years* (London: Pluto Books, 1994).
2. First, merely stating that people have dual loyalties is either wrong or unconvincing, but when people state this and back it with solid examples of dual loyalty (or even being an Israel-firster), then the criticism becomes legitimate. Second, that reactionaries point out the existence of a Jewish cabal within power structures does not negate the existence of such cabals, nor does it imply that all Jews are part of such a cabal.
3. See John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt's *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (London: Farrar and Strauss, 2007) and Shlomo Brom's "An Intelligence Failure," *Strategic Assessment* 6.3 (Nov. 2003).
4. See Grant F. Smith's *Deadly Dogma: How Neoconservatives Broke the Law to Deceive America* (Washington, DC: Middle East Policy, 2006) and his *Foreign Agents: The American Israel Public Affairs Committee from the 1963 Fulbright Hearings to the 2005 Espionage Scandal* (Washington, DC: Middle Eastern Policy, 2007) and William A. Cook's *Tracking Deception: Bush Mid-East Policy* (Tempe: Dandelion Books, 2006).
5. See "A New Strategy for Securing the Realm" at http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article1438.htm (accessed on 26 May 2014).
6. See William F. King's "Neoconservatives and 'Trotskyism,'" *American Communist History*, 3.2 (2004) and Alan Wald's *History News Network* article "Are Trotskyist's Running the Pentagon?" at

http://hnn.us/articles/1514.html. In addition, see Michael Lind's "The Weird Men behind George W. Bush's War" at http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article10804.htm.

7. See Erick Alterman's *Nation* article "Bad for the Jews" at http://www.thenation.com/doc/20080107/alterman.
8. See Israel Shahak's *Open Secrets: Israel's Foreign and Nuclear Policies* (London: Pluto, 1997) and Avner Yaniv's *Dilemmas of Security: Politics, Strategy, and the Israeli Experience in Lebanon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).
9. See http://www.wsws.org/articles/2003/mar2003/morn-m21.shtml. In early 2003, Moran—after stating that the United States would not be invading Iraq if it were not for the support among Jewish Americans—was denounced by the Anti-Defamation League and other organizations for invoking "historical anti-Semitic stereotypes." At that time, Nancy Pelosi, the Democratic minority leader, stated that Moran should not seek reelection.
10. Qtd. in Walt and Mearsheimer's *The Israel Lobby*, p. 302.
11. Qtd. in *The Israel Lobby*, p. 302. See "Smears for Fears" in *American Prospect* (online), 23 Jan. 2007, http://prospect.org/article/smears-fears.
12. See Tony's Judt's "Goodbye to All That" at http://www.thenation.com/doc/20050103/judt and Brian Klug's "The Myth of the New Anti-Semitism" at http://www.thenation.com/doc/20040202/klug.
13. See Yehuda Lukac's edited collection *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, a Documentary Record (1967–1990)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
14. Livia Rokach's *Israel's Sacred Terrorism* (Washington, DC: The Association of Arab-American University Graduates, Inc., 1980).
15. See "Peace for Galilee" in Noam Chomsky's *The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians* (Cambridge, MA: South End, 1983), pp. 181–315.
16. See Seymour Hersh's *The Sampson Option* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993) and Noam Chomsky's "The Road to Armageddon," in *The Fateful Triangle*, pp. 441–69.
17. See Walt and Mearsheimer's *The Israel Lobby*.
18. On October 3, 2000, just four days after the second Palestinian Intifada began, the Clinton administration approved the sale to Israel of Blackhawk helicopters and spare parts for Apache

Longbow helicopters. Noam Chomsky writes about this issue in his introduction to Roane Carey's *The New Intifada: Resisting Israel's Apartheid* (London: Verso, 2000).

19. See Michel Chossudovsky's "Planned US-Israel Attack on Iran" at http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO505A.html.
20. See Murray Friedman's *The Neoconservative Revolution: Jewish Intellectuals and the Shaping of Public Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
21. In "Are Trotskyites Running the Pentagon" at http://hnn.us/articles/1514.html, Alan Wald observes how the label "neoconservative" is employed quite loosely: "Today the label appears as a catch-all phrase applied to diverse right-wing intellectuals, many with little palpable connection to the famous neoconservative movement that coalesced in the 1970s. The latter were one-time liberal intellectuals who shifted sharply to the Right in response to perceived excesses of 1960s radical movements."
22. See Benjamin Ginsberg's *The Fatal Embrace: Jews and the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
23. In the Project for the New American Century's "Rebuilding America's Defenses," Sept. 2000, http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/pdf/RebuildingAmericasDefenses.pdf, one finds that "the military's job during the Cold War was to deter Soviet expansionism. Today its task is to secure and expand the 'zones of democratic peace;' to deter the rise of a new great power competitor; defend key regions of Europe, East Asia and the Middle East; and to preserve American preeminence through the coming transformation of war made possible by new technologies. From 1945 to 1990, U.S. forces prepared themselves for a single, global war that might be fought across many theaters; in the new century, the prospect is for a variety of theater wars around the world, against separate and distinct adversaries pursuing separate and distinct goals" (2).
24. See "Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities" at http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/international/20071203_release.pdf (accessed on 27 May 2014).
25. In his *Tracking Deception: Bush Mid-East Policy* (Tempe, AZ: Dandelion Books, 2006), William Cook writes, "It is instructive to watch how the [Neoconservative] cabal anticipates the beliefs of the Zionists in Israel and the evangelicals in America as they grasp

at the prophecies in the Old and New Testaments. The need for a 'clash of civilizations' between the Muslim and Jewish world play significantly into their hands. These fanatical groups become the 'glue' that the Straussian can use to unite the people and force allegiance to the government that protects the religious interests. They have made legitimate the taking of Palestinian land by the Jews and denigrated the Palestinians and their leaders, especially Arafat" (112).

26. See chapter 6 in Friedman's *The Neoconservative Revolution*, "The Liberal Meltdown," for a complete explication of this shift.
27. See "Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategies, Sources, and Resources for a New Century" at http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/pdf/RebuildingAmericasDefenses.pdf (accessed on 27 May 2014).
28. See my "The Case for Norman Finkelstein" at http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2007/jun/14/abattleforacademicfreedom.
29. There is no point in bowing to an inaccurate and misleading convention when speaking of a national interest. Perhaps it is more accurate to state what the national interest really is: that of an oligarchy consisting mainly of very rich, white men.
30. Some may question whether this is a fair criticism. It depends on whether one is discussing a paucity of socially active intellectuals or their exclusion from the corporate media. One might submit that other intellectuals have not managed to break into the limelight. The exclusion of James Petras from the corporate media is relevant here.
31. Based in a position of great military weakness and violence against it and based on unfulfilled obligations on the part of Israel, how valid is such an admission? Is only one partner required to fulfill obligations? How could Arafat—without electoral mandate—decide on behalf of Palestinians? Crucially, the Palestinian state never admitted anything; in any case, states grant and withdraw recognition as their ruling class sees fit.
32. See Brant Rosen's "Alan Dershowitz and the Politics of Desperation," *Huffington Post*, 11 May 2010, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rabbi-brant-rosen/alan-dershowitz-and-the-p_b_572645.html (accessed on January 30, 2014).

33. See Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Yari's *Israel's Lebanon War* (New York: Touchstone, 1985) and Robert Fisk's *Pity the Nation*: *The Abduction of Lebanon* (New York: Nation Books, 2002).
34. See *The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians* (Cambridge, MA: South End, 1983).
35. See http://normanfinkelstein.com/2003/alan-dershowitz-exposed-what-if-a-harvard-student-did-this.
36. See Norman Finkelstein's *Beyond Chutzpah* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), p. 229.
37. See my review of *Beyond Chutzpah* at http://www.logosjournal.com/issue_4.4/abraham.htm.

Chapter 2

1. See Swisher, *The Truth about Camp David*.
2. Gauri Viswanathan, ed., *Power, Politics, and Culture: Interviews with Edward W. Said* (New York: Pantheons, 2001), p. 458.
3. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), p. 28.
4. See Mark Krupnick's "Edward Said and the Discourse of Palestinian Rage," *Tikkun* 4.6 (November–December 1989), pp. 21–24, and Michael Walzer's "An Exchange: Michael Walzer and Edward Said," *Grand Street* 5.4 (1986), pp. 246–52 (1986, rpt. in William Hart's *Edward Said and the Religious Effect of Culture* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000]).
5. There is an interesting parallel with Said's views on Palestinian collaborators. The punishment by death for Palestinians who collaborate with the Israeli government is protected under international law, obviously creating serious repercussions for betraying one's "own people." See Said's exchange with Robert Griffin and the Boyarin Brothers in "An Exchange on Edward Said and Difference," *Critical Inquiry* 15.3 (Spring 1989), p. 641.
6. See "American Zionism," http://fromoccupiedpalestine.org/node.php?id=530 (accessed on 3 March 2007).
7. Hannah Arendt, *The Jew as Pariah: Jewish Identity and Politics in the Modern Age*, ed. Ron Feldman (New York: Grove Press, 1978), p. 20.

8. Edward Said, *The Politics of Dispossession: The Struggle for Palestinian Self-Determination, 1969–1994* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), p. 175.
9. See Baruch Kimmerling's *Politicide: Ariel Sharon's War against the Palestinians* (London: Verso, 2003).
10. Edward Said, *Out of Place: Out of Memoir* (New York: Vintage, 1999), p. 3.
11. Said, *Orientalism*, p. 27.
12. See Joseph Massad's "The Persistence of the Palestinian Question," *Cultural Critique* 59 (Winter 2005), pp. 1–23.
13. Moustapha Marrouchi, *Edward Said and the Politics of the Limit* (New York: SUNY, 2003), p. 43.
14. Irving Howe, *Decline of the New* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1963), p. 212.
15. Howe, *Decline of the New*, p. 212.
16. Marrouchi, p. 43.
17. Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 527–28.
18. Said, *Reflections on Exile*, pp. xii–xiii.
19. Said, *Reflections on Exile*, pp. xii–xiii.
20. Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers: The Journey of the East European Jews to America* (New York: Harcourt, 1989), p. 599.
21. Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens, eds., *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question* (London: Verso, 2001), pp. 172–73.
22. Said and Hitchens, *Blaming the Victims*, p. 176.
23. Hart, p. 194.
24. Howe, *Decline of the New*, p. 217.
25. Said, *Reflections on Exile*, p. 527.
26. Said, *The Politics of Dispossession*, p. 324.
27. Although it's true that many New York intellectuals remained aloof from power in the 1930s, by the 1950s many surely took sides as they aligned themselves with US military adventurism, joined the Committee on Cultural Freedom, worked for CIA front magazines like *Encounter*, and so on. By the time Said enters the scene, he's kind of a throwback to what the New York intellectuals once were.
28. Said, *Reflections on Exile*, pp. xii–xiv.

29. Said, *Reflections on Exile*, pp. xi–xii.
30. Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 24.
31. Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, p. 29.
32. Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, p. 78.
33. Abdirahman Hussein, *Edward Said: Criticism and Society* (London: Verso, 2002).
34. Frances Stone Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (New York: Granta, 2002), p. 3.
35. Alan Wald, *The New York Intellectuals* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), p. 9.
36. Wald, p. 70.
37. Wald, p. 348.
38. Wald, p. 367.
39. Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual* (New York: Vintage, 1994), p. 11.
40. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, pp. 100–101.
41. Said, *Orientalism*, p. 26.
42. Said and Hitchens, *Blaming the Victims*, p. 178.
43. Said and Hitchens, *Blaming the Victims*, p. 170.
44. Said and Hitchens, *Blaming the Victims*, pp. 170–71.
45. Said and Hitchens, *Blaming the Victims*, p. 171.
46. Edward Said, qtd. in Hart, pp. 197–98.
47. In "Caliban's Triple Play," Houston Bakes writes that "[it] is difficult to hear a Palestinian voice separate from the world of Jewish discourse." In Henry Louis Gates, ed., *Race, Writing, and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 388.
48. Said, qtd. in Hart, p. 197.
49. Noam Chomsky, "The Peace for Galilee," in *The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians* (Boston: South End, 1983).
50. Said and Hitchens, *Blaming the Victims*, p. 175.
51. Paul Bové, "Hope and Reconciliation: A Review of Edward W. Said," *boundary 2* 20.2 (Summer 1993), p. 266.
52. See Emily Eakin's "Look Homeward, Edward," http://nymag.com/nymetro/arts/features/2038.

Chapter 3

1. The events of 1947–1949 have been extensively researched by Israel's controversial "New Historians," Tom Segev and Benny Morris. See Morris's *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and Segev's *The Seventh Million* (New York: Henry Holt, 2000).
2. Edward Said, "Reflections on Exile," interview by Brian Lamb, CNN, July 2001.
3. Edward Said, *Power, Politics, and Culture: Interviews with Edward W. Said*. Gauri Viswanathan, ed. (New York: Pantheon, 2001), p. 458.
4. On October 3, 2000, just four days after the second Palestinian intifada began, the Clinton administration approved the sale to Israel of Blackhawk helicopters and spare parts for Apache Longbow helicopters. As Noam Chomsky writes in his introduction to Roane Carey's *The New Intifada: Resisting Israel's Apartheid* (Verso: London, 2001), on October 3rd, 2000, "the defense correspondent of Israel's most prestigious newspaper reported the signing of an agreement with the Clinton administration for 'the largest purchase of military helicopters by the Israeli Air Force in a decade,' along with spare parts for Apache attack helicopters for which an agreement had been signed in mid-September" (6). What is crucially important about the sale is that, at that time, the press was reporting on Israel's use of US helicopters to attack civilian targets, killing or wounding dozens of people, and that the Pentagon informed (foreign) journalists that the new shipments had no conditions on use. In October 2000, Chomsky joined a delegation of journalists and other political activists in Boston, attempting to get mainstream newspapers—such as the Boston Globe—to report the unprecedented helicopter sale to Israel for civilian population control. These efforts, regrettably, were to no avail.
5. From Kanafani's obituary, printed in the *Daily Star*, Beirut's English-language newspaper. Obituary information cited in Barbara Harlow's "The Palestinian Intellectual and the Liberation of

the Academy," in Michael Sprinker, ed., *Edward Said: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), n.p.

6. Ghassan Kanafani, *Men in the Sun and Other Palestinian Stories*, Hilary Kirkpatrick, trans. (Boulder: Lynne Rainer Publishers, 1999), p. 74.
7. Barbara Harlow, *After Lives: Legacies of Revolutionary Writing* (New York: Verso 1996), p. 51.
8. Said, *The Question of Palestine*, p. 152.
9. Bruce Robbins, "Homelessness and Worldliness," *Diacritics* 15.2 (Fall 1983), p. 70.
10. Said, *The Question of Palestine*, p. 122.
11. In his *Intellectuals in Power: A Genealogy of Critical Humanism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), Paul Bovey writes, "those interested in that role and function of the critical intellectual today should ask the question when they read Said: how can such a redoubtable humanist function as an oppositional critic? And we should not look for the answer in some discussion of ideology or history of ideas. We should look instead at what is central to all of Said's work, the function of the will in critical intelligence, which appears not only in his writing but which he attempts to embody in his discursive and nondiscursive practice" (emphasis added; xiv).
12. Edward Said, "Intifada and Independence" in Joel Benin's and Zachary Lockman, eds., *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising Against Israeli Occupation* (Boston: South End, 1989), p. 6.
13. Said, *The Question of Palestine*, p. 174.
14. Edward Said, *Culture and Resistance: Conversations with Edward W. Said* (Cambridge, MA: South End, 2003), p. 53.
15. Edward W. Said, "Punishment by Detail." *Al-Ahram* 598 (8–14 Aug. 2002). Online at http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2002/598/op2.htm (accessed 25 May 2005).
16. Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), p. 100.
17. See Edward Said's "The Burden of Interpretation and the Question of Palestine," *Journal of Palestine Studies* (Sept. 1986), p. 28–29.
18. In a chapter titled "The Politics of Historical Interpretation" in *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical*

Representation (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), Hayden White writes, "In fact, its [Zionist interpretations of the Holocaust] truth, as a historical interpretation, consists precisely [in] its effectiveness in justifying a wide range of current Israeli political policies that, from the standpoint of those who articulate them, are crucial to the security and indeed the very existence of the Jewish people. Whether one supports these policies or condemns them, they are undeniably a product, at least in part, of a conception of Jewish history that is conceived to be meaningless to Jews insofar as this history was dominated by agencies, processes, and groups who encouraged or permitted policies that led to the "final solution" of "the Jewish Question." The totalitarian, not to say fascist, aspects of Israeli treatment of the Palestinians on the West Bank may be attributable primarily to a Zionist ideology that is detestable to anti-Zionists, Jews, and non-Jews alike. But who is to say that this ideology is a product of a distorted conception of history in general and of the history of the Jews in the Diaspora specifically? It is, in fact, fully comprehensible as a morally responsible response to the meaninglessness of a certain history, that spectacle of "moral anarchy" that Schiller perceived in world history and specified as a "sublime object." The Israeli political response to this spectacle is fully consonant with the aspiration to human freedom and dignity that Schiller took to be the necessary consequence of sustained reflection on it. So far as I can see, the effort of the Palestinian people to mount a politically effective response to Israeli policies entails the production of a similarly effective ideology, complete with an interpretation of their history capable of endowing it with a meaning that it has hitherto lacked (a project to which Edward Said wishes to contribute)" (80).

19. In *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), Edward Said defines Orientalism as "the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, teaching it, settling it, ruling it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (3).
20. In *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), Edward Said writes, "When you hear the prattling of Jerry Falwell or any of his born-again crew, all of them

staunch supporters of Israel, you are aghast at the utter madness of what they believe, particularly when you hear about their special treatment during visits to Israel—expert tour guides to show them around; leading Israeli government officials to address them. According to the scenario proposed by these fundamentalist Christians, Russia and Israel—Gog and Magog—will have an apocalyptic final battle, which Russia will win, until Jesus intervenes (but not soon enough to prevent the death of all Jews; Arabs don't seem to figure in it at all). In the meantime, the true Christians will be suspended over Israel, above the battle, in Raptures, and after the fighting is over Jesus will restore them to Jerusalem, from which they will rule the world" (152–53).

In addition, we must make note of Said's reference to Tom Delay, who Said says, "came by his ideas concerning Israel by virtue of what he described as his convictions as a 'Christian Zionist,' a phrase synonymous not only with support for everything Israel does, but also for the Jewish state's theological right to go on doing what it does regardless whether or not a few million 'terrorist' Palestinians get hurt in the process" (*Al-Ahram*, Aug. 21–27, 2003). See Abdirahman A. Hussein's *Edward Said: Criticism and Society* (London: Verso, 2002), p. 224–95.

21. In *Orientalism*, Said writes: "The task for the critical scholar is not to separate one struggle from another, but to connect them, despite the contrast between the overpowering materiality of the former and the apparent otherworldly refinements of the latter" (331–32).
22. Noam Chomsky, *The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians* (Cambridge, MA: South End, 1983), p. vii.
23. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1993), p. 178.
24. See Hussein's *Edward Said: Criticism and Society* (New York: Verso, 2002), p. 283.
25. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), p. 23, p. 27.

Chapter 4

1. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri discuss Fanon's revolutionary humanism in *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 127–34.
2. As Nasser Abufarha explains in *The Making of a Human Bomb: An Ethnography of Palestinian Resistance* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), "these aesthetics, along with the act of sacrifice by the actor (the mission carrier), insinuate the meanings of sacrifice for dispossessed land and relate them to local knowledge and semiotics and the history of sacrifice in the Palestinian struggle" (69).
3. Frantz Fanon writes in *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove, 2004), "On the unconscious plane, colonialism therefore did not seek to be considered by the native as a gentle, loving mother who protects her child from a hostile environment, but rather as a mother who willingly restrains her fundamentally perverse offspring from managing to commit suicide and from giving free rein to its evil instincts. The colonial mother protects her child from itself, from its ego, from its physiology, its biology, and its own unhappiness which is its very essence" (214).
4. As Ghassan Hage writes in "'Comes a Time We Are All Enthusiasm': Understanding Palestinian Suicide Bombers in Times of Exighophobia" (*Public Culture* 15.1 [2003]), "the suicide bombers become a sign that the Palestinians have not been broken. They are a sign of life. For what better sign of life is there, in such violent conditions, than the capacity to hurt despite the greater capacity of the other to hurt you" (74).
5. As John Collins writes in *Global Palestine* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), "The suicidal logic of nuclear deterrence—'if I am going to die, I am going to take you down with me'—is really not so different from the logic of the suicide bomber" (99).
6. A more realistic assessment can be found in Nasra Hassan's "An Arsenal of Believers: Talking to the 'Human Bombs,'" *New Yorker*, 19 November 2001, http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2001/11/19/011119fa_FACT1.

7. Hage points out an interesting paradox: "The participant . . . faces the danger of annihilation and at the same time seeks to accumulate personal status and self-esteem" (77).
8. See Fanon's "The Trials and Tribulations of National Consciousness" in *The Wretched of the Earth*.

Chapter 5

1. Tariq Ali, *The Obama Syndrome: Surrender at Home, War Abroad* (London: Verso, 2010), pp. 56–57.
2. Deepa Kumar, "Obama's Cairo Speech: A Rhetorical Shift in US Imperialism," *Dissident Voice*, http://dissidentvoice.org/2009/06/obama%E2%80%99s-cairo-speech-a-rhetorical-shift-in-us-imperialism (accessed on 5 Aug. 2012).
3. See Jeffrey St. Clair and Joshua Frank's *Hopeless: Barack Obama and the Politics of Illusion* (London: AK, 2012).
4. Barack Obama, "A New Beginning," (Cairo Speech), *White House*, 6 June 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-at-Cairo-University-6-04-09.
5. Mahmood Mamdami, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Pantheon, 2004).
6. Obama, "A New Beginning."
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*.
13. Obama, "A New Beginning."
14. Ibid.
15. See Fareed Zakaria's *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); *The Post-American World* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007); and *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009).
16. Obama, "A New Beginning."
17. See Seymour Hersh's *The Sampson Option* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993); Michael Karpin's *The Bomb in the Basement: How*

Israel Went Nuclear and What That Means for the Word (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007); Avner Cohen's *Israel and the* Bomb (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); and Yoel Cohen's *The Whistleblower from Dimona: Israel, Vanunu, and the Bomb* (London: Holmes and Meier, 2003).

18. Obama, "A New Beginning."
19. See Grant Farred's "The Ethics of Colin Powell" in Manning Marable and Kristen Clarke's *Barack Obama and African American Empowerment* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).
20. Dinesh D'Souza, *The Roots of Obama's Rage* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2010).
21. According to D'Souza, "The most powerful country in the world is being governed according to the dreams of a Luo tribesman of the 1950s—a polygamist who abandoned his wives, drank himself into stupors, and bounded around on two iron legs (after his real legs had to be amputated because of a car crash), raging against the world for denying him the realization of his anti-colonial ambitions. This philandering, inebriated African socialist is now setting the nation's agenda through the reincarnation of his dreams in his son. The son is the one who is making it happen, but he is, as he candidly admits, only living out his father's dream. The invisible father provides the inspiration, and the son dutifully gets the job done. America today is being governed by a ghost" (198).
22. Obama, "A New Beginning."
23. Ibid.
24. Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011).
25. See Amartya Sen's *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007).
26. Obama, "A New Beginning."
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. See Barack Obama's "A Moment of Opportunity," *Guardian*, 19 May 2011, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/may/19/barack-obama-speech-middle-east.

32. See Peter Findley's *They Dare to Speak: People and Institutions Confront the Israel Lobby* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2003); Peter Grose's *Israel in the Mind of America* (New York: Schocken, 1984); Edward Tivnan's *The Lobby Jewish Political Power and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987).
33. Obama, "A New Beginning."
34. See Walt and Mearsheimer's *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Middle East Policy* (London: Farrar and Strauss, 2008).
35. Jimmy Carter, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006).
36. See Sean Hannity's six-part series, "Obama and Friends: A History of Radicalism," http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyXJKzUxDlY&feature=related.
37. The insinuations made about the implications of Obama's relationship with Professor Rashid Khalidi and Edward W. Said, Professor of Middle East Studies, have verged on the bizarre. See Andrew McCarthy's "L.A. Times Suppresses Obama's Khalidi Bash Tape," http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/226104/i-1.
38. Aaron Klein, *The Manchurian President: Barack Obama's Ties to Communists, Socialists, and Other Anti-American Extremists* (Washington, DC: WND Books, 2010).
39. Obama, "A New Beginning."
40. A surprising defender of Obama's views on the Israel-Palestine conflict is Harvard Law Professor Alan Dershowitz. See Dershowitz's "Obama Has Undeserved Bad Rap on Israel," http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/news.aspx/140066. Ironically, Dershowitz reversed course with his "Obama Explains—Makes It Worse," http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alan-dershowitz/obama-explains-and-makes-_b_867004.html; and his "President Obama Has Right Goals on Israel-Palestine Peace, but Wrong Strategy," http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alandershowitz/obamas-failing-grade-in-t_b_870443.html. As Dershowitz notes in "Obama Explains," "central to Israel's continued existence as the nation-state of the Jewish people is the Palestinian recognition that there can be no so-called 'right of return' to Israel, and that the Palestinian leadership and people must acknowledge that Israel will continue to exist as the nation-state of the Jewish people within secure and recognized boundaries."

41. Obama, "A New Beginning."
42. See Lanny Davis's "Many American Jews Unnerved by Obama's Cairo Speech," http://www.nhinsider.com/press-releases/2009/6/12/newsmax-lanny-davis-jews-unnerved-by-obama-speech.html.
43. Obama, "A New Beginning."
44. See the Anti-Defamation League's "Obama's Speech to Muslim World Is 'Groundbreaking' But Misses Opportunities On The Israeli-Palestinian Pitfalls of Engagement," http://archive.adl.org/nr/exeres/6083cb32-b8b8-4c07-ae34-649ee55fc2f5,0b1623ca-d5a4-465d-a369-df6e8679cd9e,frameless.html.
45. Ibid.
46. Greg Hengler, "Krauthammer: Obama 'Did More in 3 Min to Delegitimize Israel Than Any Pres in American History,'" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3uKrt2yy3OU.
47. Mohammed M. Zaki, *America's Global Challenges: The Obama Era* (New York: Palgrave, 2011), p. 44.

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