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Palestine Studies: An Activist Academic Field

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ABSTRACT

This Article follows the emergence and development of Palestine Studies. Palestine Studies today is a recognized academic pathway in many universities around the world. This Article argues that Palestine Studies was born from the twin impulses of activism and scholarship which still characterizes the area of study today. Palestine Studies benefitted considerably from the developments in other disciplines over the years that focused on subaltern groups but also contributed significantly to these disciplines. It plays a crucial role in the battle of narratives between Israel and Palestine. This role does not undermine the scholarly level and value of Palestine Studies—on the contrary, it seems to ensure a high-level acumen and professionalism, which will help to build a future intellectual elite for the Palestinian people and their struggle for justice.

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INTRODUCTION

From Edward Said's *Permission to Narrate*¹ to Rana Barakat's *Writing/Righting Palestine Studies*,² much scholarly attention and activist energy has been devoted to answering the question of who tells the story of Palestine. In the 1980s, Said insisted that despite all the catastrophes that befell the Palestinian people, their right to narrate their own history can never be taken.³ Many years later, Barakat expressed concern that Palestinians are still presented mainly as victims without agency or hope for a triumphant future, despite the fundamental change in the way the Palestinian narrative is received globally.⁴

The struggle to articulate Palestine's past, present, and future is not solely a matter of discourse nor an intellectual pursuit—it is existential and material. Yara Hawari, Sharri Plonski, and Elian Weizman draw our attention to the significance of knowledge-as-story to settler-colonial projects and anticolonial organizing:

Knowledge production in, for[,] and by settler colonial states hinges on both productive and repressive practices that work together to render their history and present 'normal' by controlling how, where, to and through whom they tell their story. This makes the production and dissemination of knowledge an important battleground for anti-colonial struggles.⁵

Sustained by academic work, ideological narratives influence school curricula, mainstream media discourse and reportage, cultural production, and policies. Israel invests an incredible amount of energy and resources in attempting to validate its territorial claims and justify its policies regarding Palestine, often based on purportedly scientific academic research.⁶ In many ways, the contest over narrative can be seen as a zero-sum game, where acceptance or successful validation undermines—and even prevents—any counter claims. This is certainly the hope of those who control a given narrative and fight to maintain discursive domination. While Israel since its

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1. Edward Said, *Permission to Narrate*, 13 J. PALESTINE STUD., Issue 51, Spring 1984, at 27.
 2. Rana Barakat, *Writing/Righting Palestine Studies: Settler Colonialism, Indigenous Sovereignty and Resisting the Ghost(s) of History*, 8 SETTLER COLONIAL STUD. 349 (2018).
 3. Said, *supra* note 1.
 4. See Barakat, *supra* note 2, at 349.
 5. Yara Hawari, Sharri Plonski & Elian Weizman, *Seeing Israel Through Palestine: Knowledge Production as Anti-Colonial Praxis*, 9 SETTLER COLONIAL STUD. 155, 155 (2019).
 6. See ILAN PAPPÉ, *THE IDEA OF ISRAEL passim* (2014).

inception has held the upper hand when it comes to representation in global mainstream media, political decision-making, and public opinion in the Global North,⁷ the presence and mounting strength of the Palestinian story—or rather stories—galvanizes support for decolonization and liberation. What empowers Palestinian versions of the narrative, particularly in the Global South, is that Palestinian stories can be shared and connected to nodes of other anticolonial narratives and decolonial struggles.⁸ In the Global South, the Palestinian struggle for liberation is associated with the revered past liberation struggles in Latin America, Asia, and Africa as well with current struggle by Indigenous and marginalized groups in the Global North.

Yet successfully shifting the story—seizing the power to narrate, without seeking permission—also requires a specific vocabulary. Discourse and diction can spotlight how past and present injustices are grounded in claims to the truth, supported by the labor of academics, politicians, and media outlets. The public, mainstream acceptance and uncritical circulation of these claims might shape the future and materialize not utopic visions, but some of the darkest realities imaginable. The reaction of some governments to the genocide in Gaza illustrates this point.⁹

This vocabulary can be found in the new field of Palestine Studies.¹⁰ Palestine Studies offers a body of experience and a living dictionary with which to conduct the work of diagnosis, confronting the operation of power

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7. The term “Global North”—and its counterpart, “Global South”—is “the most neutral term available to denominate the relationship between the dominant and the subaltern regions of the world. Global South [is] shorthand for a complex, historically evolved configuration of global power relations. [. . .] [It] is not strictly a geographical expression.” Tobias Schwarz, *What I Thought of the Term Global South... Before I Learned How the Mainstream Uses It*, in CONCEPTS OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH—VOICES FROM AROUND THE WORLD 11 (Global South Studies Center, 2015).
 8. For a thorough survey of this, see SEYED HADI BORHANI, *TEXTBOOKS ON ISRAEL-PALESTINE* (2022).
 9. One example is the United States’ mobilization of the language of “human shields” as a means to justify the mass killing of civilians in response to anti-colonial resistance, and to deny genocidal intent. In fact, this term was widely used to justify massacres of civilians by United States soldiers in Vietnam—the claim was that the Vietcong were using human shields. See Ayça Çubukçu, Noura Erakat & John Reynolds, *Human Shields and the Location of Agency*, *THIRD WORLD APPROACHES TO INT’L L. REV.* (Feb. 16, 2021), <https://twailr.com/human-shields-and-the-location-of-agency> [<https://perma.cc/M5SX-VXTV>].
 10. See the Institute for Palestine Studies and the *Journal of Palestine Studies* for more information about Palestine Studies. *Institute for Palestine Studies*, INST. FOR PALESTINE STUD., <https://www.palestine-studies.org> [<https://perma.cc/GD3F-ZUSM>]; *Journal of Palestine Studies*, INST. FOR PALESTINE STUD., <https://www.palestine-studies.org/en/journals/jps/about> [<https://perma.cc/8ARK-U4YC>].

and its manifestation as both knowledge and violence. At the same time, this discipline gives us practical, political, and imaginative tools for building the world anew.

Told one way, the disciplinary story of Palestine Studies might be tied to the emergence of another field of study—Israel Studies. While acknowledging this connection, one must take care to avoid reproducing the discursive and political terrain which Israel—and Zionism—creates (and forecloses) the possibility for Palestine. Countries are not usually an area of study, nor do they often constitute disciplines by themselves. Yet, many Israel Studies scholars and their supporters adopted this very approach when establishing Eretz Israel Studies (later Israel Studies) departments within Israeli universities and abroad.¹¹ Beyond the discipline, many Jewish Studies departments devote a prominent part of their program to Israel and Zionism, reinforcing the sense that the Zionist claim that Zionism equates Judaism is accepted as a given by these departments.¹² It should be noted, though, that in recent years a more critical approach has emerged towards Zionism both in Israel and Jewish Studies departments in the United States.¹³ It is very likely that this trend will continue in the future.

But a significant number of those who produce knowledge in Israel and in other parts of the world still adhere to the baseline Zionist narrative. While institutional departments and their associated academics vowed an unequivocal commitment to objective and unbiased academic research, they also declared that only Zionist scholars were qualified to work within this new field of inquiry.¹⁴ Their rationale was to provide academic scaffolding for the Zionist narrative about the past and present realities in Palestine.¹⁵ From its inception, Israel Studies was a search for scholarly validity to support the Zionist argument that Palestine was “a land without people”

11. On the rise of Eretz Israel Studies see Ilan Pappé, *Critique and Agenda: The Post-Zionist Scholars in Israel*, 7 HISTORY & MEMORY, Spring-Summer 1995, at 66. On the emergence of Israel Studies see Hawari et al., *supra* note 5.

12. See Ilan Pappé, *Post-Zionist Critique: Part I: The Academic Debate*, 26 J. PALESTINE STUD., Issue 102, Winter 1997, at 29.

13. The association of these centers was founded by a very well-known critical voice on Israel, Ian Lustick. See Mari Cohen, *The Fight for the Future of Israel Studies*, JEWISH CURRENTS (Sept. 28, 2022), <https://jewishcurrents.org/the-fight-for-the-future-of-israel-studies> [<https://perma.cc/S3W2-DV62>]. See also Mitchell Bard, *Israel Studies in the United States: A Growth Industry*, 8 ISRAELIS 215 (2017) (describing the growth of Israel Studies in the United States as being tied to donor funding).

14. See Pappé, *supra* note 12.

15. See PAPPÉ, *supra* note 6.

waiting for the return of its “original” inhabitants.¹⁶ Zionist scholars, in particular Orientalists¹⁷ and archaeologists, contributed their expertise to the group of leaders that planned and executed the ethnic cleansing of Palestine during 1948 (as they would assist later in policing the millions of Palestinians under occupation since 1967).¹⁸ Thus, quite a few Israeli academics lent their knowledge and influence to the brutal exercise of colonial power in service to a vision of depopulation.

While this vision of depopulation was partially realized through the Nakba¹⁹ and Israel’s subsequent ethnic cleansing policies, scholarly energy has also been recruited and deployed to further indigenize Jewish—now Israeli—settlers and strip Palestinians of their claims to land and identity.²⁰ This inherently colonial project requires political, social, economic, cultural, and intellectual labor, carried out in part by Zionist academics working in specific institutions and departments.²¹ The denial of Palestinian presence, indigeneity, and rights within academic knowledge production does not merely complement or reflect the attempts to physically expunge

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16. See ILAN PAPPÉ, *THE TEN MYTHS OF ISRAEL* 3–13 (2017) (describing how “[t]he Zionist historical account of how the disputed land became the state of Israel is based on a cluster of myths that subtly cast doubt on the Palestinians’ moral right to the land”).
 17. “Orientalist” and “Orientalism” is used in this Article to refer to “Saidian Orientalism,” which is the description of traditional Orientalism, also often called classical Orientalism. This term was first coined in Edward W. Said’s book, *Orientalism*, and was elaborated upon in his later works. EDWARD W. SAID, *ORIENTALISM* (1978). According to Said, Orientalism is a centuries-old traditional body of knowledge created by Western scholars and others who are considered experts on the “Orient.” *S: Saidian Orientalism, ORIENTALISM STUD.*, <https://www.orientalismstudies.com/s> [<https://perma.cc/U8LW-WYV2>]. Said argues that this body of knowledge imagines and constructs Orientals as being uncivilized, unprogressive, immoral, passive, emotional, sensual, and otherwise unsavory. *Id.* He goes on to say that at points there is no real “Orient,” and it is merely a “mythical” discourse invented by Europeans on the basis of their fear of the Arab people and their fear of Islam. *Id.* Said argues that the West has used this Orientalist body of knowledge as a tool for establishing and expanding Western power in Asia. *Id.* As such, Orientalism is an ideological tool of Western colonialism and imperialism. *Id.*
 18. See ILAN PAPPÉ, *THE ETHNIC CLEANSING OF PALESTINE* (2006).
 19. The Nakba, otherwise referred to as “*Al Nakba*” or “*al-Nakba al-mustamirrah*,” literally translates as “The Catastrophe”. It refers to the mass exodus of at least 750,000 Arabs from Palestine in 1948. Rawan Damen, *Al Nakba*, *PALESTINE REMIX* (2013), <https://remix.aljazeera.com/aje/PalestineRemix/al-nakba.html#/17> (watch the film via video player). More information on the Nakba can be found in Part I of this Article. See *infra* Part I.
 20. See PAPPÉ, *supra* note 16.
 21. PAPPÉ, *supra* note 6.

Palestinians from Palestine—rather, it animates and legitimates the “elimination of the native” as a logic of settler colonization.²²

Framed as such, it is possible to see Palestine Studies taking root as a decolonial antidote to Israel Studies’s project of erasure and denial. These roots tell the story of Palestine Studies as a riposte, an insistence on presence and audibility—a knowledge project as a strategy for survival. Yet narrating the emergence of Palestine Studies as enabled by the development of Israel Studies risks reproducing the violence that Palestinian scholars, activists, educators, and organizers are fighting to make known. Firmly tying Palestine Studies to Israel Studies enacts a form of epistemic violence that must be acknowledged and confronted if one is truly committed to working in decolonial and anticolonial ways.

Grounded in scholarly knowledge, cultural production, political organizing, and everyday life, Palestine Studies traces its roots to a rich intellectual history created by and for Palestinians.

In this Article, I explore Palestine Studies as an activist-academic field. This Article serves as a survey based on my long engagement with the topic over the past 45 years. I was born in Israel.²³ Due to my political solidarity and scholarly identification with the Palestinian struggle, I had to move to the United Kingdom in 2006. In 2007, I founded the first ever academic center for Palestine at Exeter University; the first such center at a university located in the West.

In Part I, this Article begins by examining the origins of Palestine Studies as the product of Palestinian scholarship before 1948 and not, as commonly argued, an antidote to Israel Studies. Part I elucidates how Palestine Studies did not begin with a single moment or event. Rather, Palestine Studies developed as a discipline through a process of struggle and a convergence of forces—a drawing-together of experience, narrative, and imagination oriented toward making Palestine knowable. In Part II, I examine the present status of Palestine Studies in the academic world, focusing on its nature and interdisciplinarity contributions. Finally, in Part III, I conclude by envisioning what Palestine Studies has to offer for the future, even in the face of ongoing and increasing repression.

22. For a description of the role of the “elimination of the native” within the logic of settler colonization, see Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native*, 8 J. GENOCIDE RSCH. 387 (2006).

23. For more information about how I came to this area of scholarship, you may read ILAN PAPPÉ, *OUT OF THE FRAME: THE STRUGGLE FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN ISRAEL* (2010).

I. THE ORIGINS OF PALESTINE STUDIES

During the mandatory period, a hostile policy prevented Palestinians from opening a university, while permitting the Jewish community to establish two such institutions.²⁴ Undeterred, the Palestinian intellectual elite utilized various existing teachers' colleges as institutions for research, education, and scholarly exchange. Universities in neighboring Arab countries acted as springboards for individual academic careers, which helped to build human capital for Palestinian society. These graduates of the Arab College became journalists, writers, and researchers who, after 1948, were forced to pursue their careers and professions outside of Palestine, contributing to educational systems in countries such as Kuwait and Iraq.²⁵

Within the story of Palestine Studies, the Nakba constitutes a watershed moment that shattered every aspect of Palestinian life. This included the scholarly and academic structures that emerged during the British Mandate.²⁶ Institutionalized forms and sites of knowledge were nearly decimated by the Zionist campaign of devastation and displacement in 1948, with villages and their seats of learning razed, teachers and elders displaced or killed, and archives of collective history geographically scattered.²⁷

The Nakba did not end with the establishment of the Israeli state. It is ongoing: Palestinians refer to this structural destruction of Palestine as *al-Nakba al-mustamirrah* (the ongoing catastrophe).²⁸ This means acknowledging that the cultivation and sharing of knowledge remains a target for elimination, whether through destruction, omission, or assimilation. However, a rich intellectual practice has persisted, growing in depth, and driven in part by noninstitutionalized ways of knowing. Palestine Studies owes credit to storytelling, embodied memory, and artistic expression as much as academic labor.²⁹

24. *Id.*

25. *Id.*

26. For more details, see Ilan Pappé, *Why Only a Hebrew University? The Tale of Arab University in Jerusalem*, 92 *JERUSALEM Q.* 102 (2023).

27. For more details, see PAPPÉ, *supra* note 18.

28. An explanation of the term can be found in Ilan Pappé, *Everyday Evil in Palestine: The View From Lucifer's Hill*, 1 *JANUS UNBOUND: J. CRITICAL STUD.*, Fall 2021, at 80.

29. See, e.g., NAHLA ABDO & NUR MASALHA, AN ORAL HISTORY OF THE PALESTINIAN NAKBA (2018) ("In the immediate post-catastrophe period the Arab tradition of storytelling in the form of al-hakawati (the storyteller) was deployed as a way of countering Zionist memoricide and toponymicide—the erasure of the material culture of Palestine and Palestinian cultural memory.")

In the years after 1948, Palestinian energy and resources were dedicated to rebuilding scholarly institutions in sites that circumvented territorial control and in ways that defied the project of erasure. Two major Palestinian research bodies were established in Beirut, Lebanon in the space of two years: the Institute of Palestine Studies (1963) and the Palestine Liberation Organization's (PLO) Palestine Research Centre (1965).³⁰ Fayez Sayigh, the Palestine Research Centre's first director, along with other public intellectuals, laid the foundations for what would later be recognized as Palestine Studies. The intellectual efforts of the Palestine Research Centre included introducing concepts such as "settler colonialism" to define Zionism and "anticolonial" to describe the Palestinian struggle—long before the advent of Settler Colonial Studies as an academic field.³¹

Between 1965 and 1982, forty researchers associated with the Palestine Research Centre produced more than 300 publications, creating the foundational body of work for a discipline.³² As embodiments of knowledge produced about and in the Arabic-speaking world, many of these books and articles were not accessible in English, which posed an obstacle to reaching wider audiences with shared intellectual and political interests. This obstacle was surmounted by the Institute for Palestine Studies's publication of the *Journal of Palestine Studies* (JPS) in 1971, as well as its establishment of a Washington, D.C. branch in 1983 dedicated to producing English language publications and publishing JPS. Along with *Jerusalem Quarterly*, a second English-language journal founded by the Institute for Palestine Studies in 1998, and its parallel publications in French and Arabic, these were some of the first safe, scholarly spaces for thinking and writing on Palestine.³³

This investment in research and publication emerged in the context of sustained attacks on dispersed Palestinian archives and the continuing oppression of academic life in the occupied territories. In places like Beirut

30. See Sabri Jiryis & Salah Qallab, *The Palestine Research Center*, 14 J. PALESTINE STUD., Issue 56, Summer 1985, at 185, 185–87.

31. See, e.g., Fayez Sayegh, *Zionist Colonialism in Palestine (1965)*, 2 SETTLER COLONIAL STUD. 206 (2012).

32. Jiryis & Qallab, *supra* note 30.

33. See Sherene Seikaly, *In the Shadow of War: The Journal of Palestine Studies as Archive*, 51 J. PALESTINE STUD., Issue 202, 2022, at 5, 5–6 (describing the first two decades of the *Journal of Palestine Studies* including its shifting form and content). See also *Jerusalem Quarterly*, COLUM. UNIV. CTR. FOR PALESTINE STUD., <https://palestine.mei.columbia.edu/jerusalem-quarterly-2/2017/3/30/jerusalem-quarterly> [<https://perma.cc/SVJ3-QZPX>] ("The *Jerusalem Quarterly* is the only journal focused on the city of Jerusalem's history, political status, and future.").

and Jerusalem, repositories of collective knowledge faced looting, seizure, and destruction—often at the hands of the Israeli state.³⁴ For example, the Palestine Research Centre was targeted by a 1983 car bombing in Beirut. This event occurred during the same period as Israeli raids in the city, which were intended to destabilize the PLO's influence across southern Lebanon.³⁵ Worryingly, the story does not stop here. As Hannah Sleiman reminds us:

[A]rchives do not perpetually serve the narrative of their creator. Rather [the archives] come to serve the narrative of their captor. Upon creation, the documents in the PLO offices were intended to serve quotidian purposes. Once the Israeli army stole them, it extracted them from the domain of the PLO's administration and put them in the domain of Israel's narrative. The PLO documents could not fend for themselves; they could not curate themselves in order to serve a Palestinian narrative.³⁶

Yet these concerted attempts at further dispossession and erasure have failed to deter generation after generation of Palestinian scholars from reconstructing the past, analyzing the present, and imagining the future, wherever they may be.

Efforts to cultivate, protect, and circulate knowledge of Palestine has been enriched by the development of intersectional fields of inquiry elsewhere, including cultural, decolonial, feminist, Indigenous, Marxist, and postcolonial studies. By working in connective ways—across disciplines, contexts, struggles, and scales—scholars of Palestine Studies have successfully challenged the Orientalist approach that once dominated Western scholarship on the region and its people. Until the 1980s, this approach largely enabled Zionist academics to play a central role in determining the research agenda on Palestine.³⁷

An important milestone in challenging Israeli dominance was the 1978 publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, a critical treatise on discourse and power grounded in literary criticism, art history, and Cultural Studies.³⁸ While key to the development of Postcolonial Studies more broadly, Said's

34. Hana Sleiman, *The Paper Trail of a Liberation Movement*, 24 ARAB STUD. J., Spring 2016, at 42, 47–49 (“Israeli soldiers systematically looted the contents of the [PLO Research] library and pursued the [PLO Research] Center’s workers around the city. This event was not an anomaly but part of a broader Israeli imperative to seize documents from PLO offices during raids in the south of Lebanon.”).

35. *Id.*

36. *Id.* at 49.

37. See THE ISRAEL/PALESTINE QUESTION 1–8 (Ilan Pappé ed., 2d ed. 2007).

38. See SAID, *supra* note 17.

work bolstered Palestine Studies by contributing to the deconstruction of the Zionist narrative's core assumptions.³⁹ Rather than reflecting an empirical or historical reality as claimed, Palestinian narratives were thus definitively located within the world of colonial and imperial discourses used to justify past and present oppression. The pendulum swung from one side to the other quite dramatically. Where Palestinian narratives were once considered figments of Oriental imagination and the Zionist story a product of erudite scholarly research, now Zionist scholarship could be placed under intellectual scrutiny. Cultivated partly in the universities of the West Bank and Gaza, Palestinian knowledge became respected as valid and essential—narrated on its own terms.

II. PRESENT STATE OF THE ART

On these broad shoulders rest the present field of Palestine Studies, now a recognized area of inquiry in a growing number of academic centers around the world. Between 2010 and 2020, Palestinian Studies took hold in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. In the United States, Brown and Columbia University opened centers. In the United Kingdom, institutes were opened at the University of Cambridge, Oxford University, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) University of London, and the University of Exeter. Most recently, in Canada, the University of Waterloo hosts a Palestine Studies program.⁴⁰ Similar initiatives appeared in Qatar and Malaysia, and there are attempts to open such pathways in Mexico, Columbia, and Argentina, complementing a growing interest in the Arab world and the

39. See Danilo Zolo, *The Palestinian Question by Edward Said*, JURA GENTIUM (2008), <https://www.juragentium.org/topics/palestin/en/zolo.htm> [<https://perma.cc/VLM5-EHAV>].

40. See INSTITUTE FOR PALESTINE STUDIES, *supra* note 10; *Online Teaching Resources on 'The Untold Story of the Palestinian Revolution'*, UNIV. OF OXFORD (Jan. 30, 2017), <https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2017-01-30-online-teaching-resources-%E2%80%98-untold-story-palestinian-revolution%E2%80%99> [<https://perma.cc/8CAH-C647>]; *Centre for Palestine Studies*, SCH. OF ORIENTAL & AFR. STUD.: UNIV. OF LONDON, <https://www.soas.ac.uk/about/institutes-and-regional-centres/centre-palestine-studies> [<https://perma.cc/5HLH-LLVS>]; *The European Centre for Palestine Studies*, UNIV. OF EXETER INST. OF ARAB & ISLAMIC STUD., <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/research/centres/palestine> [<https://perma.cc/9CUE-99EV>]; *Foundation for Palestinian Studies Fund*, UNIV. OF WATERLOO, <https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/foundation-palestinian-studies> [<https://perma.cc/BX83-63S4>].

development of dedicated academic programs.⁴¹ At the same time, in universities throughout the West and South America, courses focusing on Palestine have enriched the curricula of area studies, politics, and international relations. In the past, Palestine-focused modules were located in Conflict Studies or at best appeared in Middle Eastern Studies departments; at worst they were limited to Jewish and Israel Studies departments. With the emergence of dedicated institutions, programs, and courses across the globe, Palestine has become integral to scholarly discussions about decolonization, Indigenous Studies, international law, and Genocide Studies.⁴²

The new disciplinary homes for Palestine Studies denote an intellectual decision to release Palestine from areas of inquiry such as Conflict Studies. They also issue a moral imperative. The re-articulation of Palestine's history, present reality, and future trajectory is part of a wider movement for decolonization that holds knowledge accountable to power while pursuing the restoration of land and justice. Scholars of Palestine Studies join others whose voices, experiences, and aspirations have been violently erased or marginalized—in spaces including the academy. By working across contexts and struggles, researchers, educators, and organizers speak to new forms of solidarity, means of resistance, and imaginations of the future. In contrast to dominant systems and structures, these ways of being and knowing are not defined by—or necessarily accessible to—the West as a locus of theory, action, and power. Decolonial thought and praxis stand on their own terms.

Yet within the project to decolonize knowledge, Palestine stands out in one regard—it remains the only focus of inquiry consistently undermined by governments and media in the West, as well as by mainstream academia. Whether intimidated by the Israeli state, charged with claims of

41. See, e.g., *Annual Palestine Forum*, ARAB CTR FOR RSCH. & POL'Y STUD., <https://www.dohainstitute.org/en/Events/annual-palestine-forum/Pages/index.aspx> [<https://perma.cc/D2RN-RUD5>]; Hashim Sani *Centr for Palestine Studies*, UNIVERSITI MALAYA (Apr. 18, 2024), <https://fpe.um.edu.my/hashim-sani-center-for-palestine-studies> [<https://perma.cc/GBM9-EBL8>].

42. Unsurprisingly, many of these initiatives were strongly opposed by pro-Israeli lobbies when they emerged in Britain, Canada, and the United States. Opening such programs and courses in most European countries continues to be a difficult endeavor. See *UC Berkeley Censors Course on Palestine and Settler Colonialism*, PALESTINE LEGAL (Sept. 14, 2016), <https://palestinelegal.org/news/2016/9/14/uc-berkeley-censors-course-on-palestine-and-settler-colonialism> [<https://perma.cc/E8TT-YYHA>]. See also Chris McGreal, *Israeli Diplomat Pressured US College to Drop Course on 'Apartheid' Debate*, THE GUARDIAN (Nov. 8, 2023, 2:20 PM), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/nov/08/israeli-diplomat-bard-college-apartheid-debate> [<https://perma.cc/5GBT-HUPA>].

antisemitism, or accused of Holocaust denialism, scholars who direct our attention to the relationship between knowledge, power, and violence in Palestine are met with a special kind of vehemence.⁴³ At first anticolonial struggles such as the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) in Algeria, the Mau Mau in Kenya, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (or Viet Cong) in Vietnam suffered a similar negative framing as designated terrorist organizations. Nonetheless, by the end of the previous century they were hailed as legitimate liberation movements. The PLO was not that fortunate. From the mid-19th century onwards, a powerful anti-Palestine coalition consisting of Christian Zionists, neoconservatives, and a strong pro-Israel lobby in the West have led a mass delegitimization campaign.⁴⁴ Working in tandem with Jewish Zionism, this powerful political, material, cultural, and intellectual campaign dominated and pre-empted the research agenda on Palestine well into the end of the 20th century, effectively circumscribing knowledge of the liberation movement.⁴⁵

As the field of Palestine Studies grows, it has faced not only the elision of history and silencing of lived experience, but also concerted attempts to expunge the Palestinian anticolonial struggle from (Western) knowledge. Thinker and sociologist Anibal Quijano describes this process in colonial and postcolonial contexts as a comprehensive form of erasure:

[C]olonialism was a product of a systematic repression, not only of the specific beliefs, ideas, images, symbols or knowledge that were not useful to global colonial domination, while at the same time the colonizers were expropriating from the colonized their knowledge, [e]specially in mining, agriculture, engineering, as well as their products and work. The repression fell, above all, over the modes of knowing, of producing knowledge, of producing perspectives, images and systems of images, symbols, modes of signification, over the resources, patterns, and instruments of formalized and objectivised expression, intellectual or visual. It was followed by the imposition of the use of the rulers' own patterns of expression, and of their beliefs and images with reference to the supernatural. These beliefs and images served not only to impede the cultural production of the dominated, but also as a very efficient means of

43. See, e.g., ALVIN H. ROSENFELD, *ANTI-ZIONISM IN GREAT BRITAIN AND BEYOND: A "RESPECTABLE" ANTI-SEMITISM?* (2004).

44. A detailed history of this is given in my book, ILAN PAPPÉ, *LOBBYING FOR ZIONISM ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC* (2024).

45. *Id.* at 1–18.

social and cultural control, when the immediate repression ceased to be constant and systematic.⁴⁶

This near-totalizing system of suppression recalls the matrix revealed by Said's *Orientalism*, wherein the relationship between discourse, knowledge, and power does not simply reflect reality but powerfully shapes it.⁴⁷

Yet the story of Palestine Studies continues to be written, with new and old pathways enabling scholars, educators, organizers, and activists to chart a future determined not by dominant structures and existing relations of power, but by collective vision and action toward liberation. Palestine studies might also be understood as a point of confluence—a place where streams meet and join, and from which they flow together as something greater. Palestine Studies will continue to benefit from the theoretical nuances, comparative case studies, and strategies of resistance offered by Indigenous Studies, literature, social psychology, economics, international law, transnationalism, Settler Colonial Studies, and Cultural Studies.

One can call the contextualization of case studies in Palestine within a wider chronological framework or a comparative one, feeding back into some of the conceptual frameworks that informed the analysis of the case studies. One prominent example of such a development are the discussions around the settler-colonial paradigm. After being an integral part of Palestinian scholarship on Palestine in the 1960s, settler colonialism, as a focal point of research, was absent in the research on Israel/Palestine for four decades mainly because of the hegemony of the Zionist narrative in the field of Middle East Studies. It has since resurfaced in the last two decades. As of this century, this paradigm became very popular among scholars working on Palestine. Its re-appearance took place in a new journal *Settler Colonial Studies* that took a keen interest in Palestine and devoted several special issues in the journal to it.⁴⁸

The rising generation of scholars expressed two major reservations or critiques of the application of the settler-colonial paradigm to Palestine. The first major critique was that earlier contributions to settler colonialism in Palestine were ignored by scholars in the field, including by some Palestinian

46. Aníbal Quijano, *Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality*, 21 *CULTURAL STUD.* 168, 169 (2007).

47. SAID, *supra* note 17.

48. For more on these special issues, see *Past Is Present: Settler Colonialism in Palestine*, 2 *SETTLER COLONIAL STUD. (SPECIAL ISSUE)* 1 (2012); *Collaborative Efforts in Israel-Palestine and Australia*, 4 *SETTLER COLONIAL STUD. (SPECIAL ISSUE)* 327 (2014); *Settler Colonial Studies in Israel-Palestine*, 5 *SETTLER COLONIAL STUD. (SPECIAL ISSUE)* 193 (2015).

scholars. This point has been made in many places, most recently by Lila Abu-Lughod who lamented the disregard for earlier work by scholars such as her father, Ibrahim Abu Lughod, on the topic.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, one could rebut that such omissions are not unique to this particular field on inquiry and also is the product of an academic culture we live in where one is pressured to show originality as part of their career and profile—especially if they are an early career scholar. But it is important to note that Palestinian scholars employed the settler-colonial prism for analyzing Zionism already in the 1960s. The paradigm appeared also later in the works that at the time were ignored by the Western academia such as introduction to the topic by Jamil Hilal in 1976.⁵⁰ Today, some of these works have been salvaged and are accessible a younger generation in *Settler Colonial Studies*.⁵¹

The second and more significant constructive critique on the employment of the old-new paradigm was the need for further and more devoted contemplation of the definition of Palestinians within this paradigm. There was a danger that Palestinians might be framed as another defeated Indigenous group, comparable to the harmful framing levied on groups like Native Americans and First Nations who believe that their struggle is still as valid and alive as it had always been.⁵² A lively debate, that at times seems to be generational, of how this definition of indigeneity corresponds with the national liberation movement and its visions continues until today. The apprehension among scholars such as Rana Barakat, in deploying this framing, is about the damage that the attendant associations of indigeneity with defeat creates inaccuracies on an academic level and despair on a political one.⁵³ A different, but no less poignant, critical engagement with

49. Lila Abu-Lughod, *Imagining Palestine's Alter-Natives: Settler Colonialism and Museum Politics*, 47 *CRITICAL INQUIRY* 1, 2–6 (2020) (“In the same year, the theme of the annual convention of the Arab-American University Graduates (AAUG) was ‘National Liberation and Settler Regimes.’ My father, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, a Palestinian scholar who since 1967 had also been associate director of the program in African Studies at Northwestern, was one of the organizers.”).

50. Jamil Hilal, *Imperialism and Settler Colonialism in West Asia: Israel and the Arab Palestinian Struggle*, 1 *UTAFITI* J. 51 (1976).

51. *Past Is Present: Settler Colonialism in Palestine*, *supra* note 48; *Collaborative Efforts in Israel-Palestine and Australia*, *supra* note 48; *Settler Colonial Studies in Israel-Palestine*, *supra* note 48.

52. An analysis of this fear can be found in Ilan Pappé, *Indigeneity as Cultural Resistance: Notes on the Palestinian Struggle Within Twenty-First-Century Israel*, 117 *S. ATL. Q.* 157 (2018).

53. Rana Barakat, *Lifta, the Nakba, and the Museumification of Palestine's History*, 5 *NATIVE AM. & INDIGENOUS STUD.*, Fall 2018, at 1.

settler colonialism can be found in the works of Areej Sabbagh-Khoury and Nadim Rouhana, among many others.⁵⁴

Critiques under this banner led to some correctives in the way the more general scholarship dealt with this question. But there is still a group of Palestinian scholars and scholars on Palestine who embrace indigeneity as an applicable concept. Nonetheless, this fruitful debate continues and generatively informs the general study of settler colonialism and expands the scope of Indigenous Studies.⁵⁵ Even more importantly, such a critical reassessment of the settler-colonial paradigm transforms a largely academic discussion into a relevant discussion about the future of the liberation movement on the ground, salvaging these fields from being locked within the academic ivory tower.

A similar advantage is illuminated by the critical engagement with international law by several scholars within Palestine Studies, highlighting the interdisciplinary scope of these studies. The Euro-centric and Western-centric nature of international law has already been exposed by scholars in Indigenous Studies. The Palestinian contribution breathed new life into the critique of international law, one that was closely associated with decolonizing the production of knowledge in the West about human rights laws and entrenched attitudes towards refugees, former imperial subjects, and other marginalized groups in the Global North. This discussion is informed by a sense that decolonization is not only an incomplete process in the former colonies of the West but also in the West itself. A fine example of this critique is the work done by Nadine El-Enany. El-Enany claims in her seminal work, *B(ordering Britain)*⁵⁶ that at the heart of the official British attitudes to asylum seekers is a colonialist mindset that alas is also affecting the well-meaning work of human rights lawyers in Britain wishing to help the refugees, but by not daring to challenge the system itself, they inadvertently perpetuate the system.

A more focused failure of international law as applied to Palestine is analyzed in detail in Noura Erakat's famous book, *Justice for Some*.⁵⁷ Erakat asserts international law is not an objective set of rules, but rather a system that can be manipulated according to the political balance of power that so far

54. Nadim N. Rouhana & Areej Sabbagh-Khoury, *Settler-Colonial Citizenship: Conceptualizing the Relationship Between Israel and Its Palestinian Citizens*, 5 *SETTLER COLONIAL STUD.* 205 (2015).

55. Raef Zreik, *When Does a Settler Become a Native? (With Apologies to Mamdani)*, 23 *CONSTELLATIONS* 351 (2016).

56. NADINE EL-ENANY, *B(ORDERING) BRITAIN, LAW, RACE AND EMPIRE* (2020).

57. NOURA ERAKAT, *JUSTICE FOR SOME: LAW AND THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE* (2019).

globally has tilted against the Palestinians. Similar avenues are now explored by those who employ critical frameworks on neoliberalism as means of understanding the political economic dimension of the international aid to Palestine and the local urban developments—a field of inquiry closely associated with the field of politics of recognition whose liberal foundations and orientations have come under the severe scrutiny of Palestine Studies scholars. Critical perspectives on international law expanded the study of Palestine beyond the deconstruction of Zionism or the reframing of Israel's nature and its policies. This enabled a scholarly critique, and not just a political one, on the disastrous outcomes of the Oslo accord and the unfolding realities in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.⁵⁸

Palestine Studies has also developed a healthy relationship with Gender Studies and more specifically decolonial feminist theory and ethnography.⁵⁹ Gender as an object of inquiry was already a major topic of research in the wake of the First *Intifada*. Hence it is not new by any standard—its present phase is just a continued and more expansive effort in the same direction.

Gender Studies appears both as part of an independent area of focused research and as a crucial aspect of inquires with other focuses in mind. From the role of gender in the Nakba, to its impact on the national resistance, refugee life and the right of return, up to struggles against the twin oppression of patriarchy and Zionism, this is an ever growing part of Palestine Studies.⁶⁰ The incredibly rich feminist literature within Palestine Studies is closely associated with debates and discussion of the evergreen topic of the role of feminist theories and approaches in Middle Eastern Studies. One of the leading voices in this discussion is the Palestinian scholar

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58. See, e.g., Chiara De Cesari, *Heritage Between Resistance and Government in Palestine*, 49 INT'L J. MIDDLE E. STUD. 747 (2017); Raja Khalid & Sobhi Samour, *Neoliberalism and the Contradictions of the Palestinian Authority's State-Building Programme*, in DECOLONIZING PALESTINIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY 179, 179–99 (Mandy Turner & Omar Shweiki eds., 2014).
59. See, e.g., JULIE M. PETEET, GENDER IN CRISIS: WOMEN AND THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT (1991). Two recent examples of the new wave of Palestine studies are Christopher Harker, Dareen Sayyad & Reema Shebeitat, *The Gender of Debt and Space: Notes From Ramallah-Al Bireh, Palestine*, 98 GEOFORUM 277 (2019), and SOPHIE RICHTER-DEVROE, WOMEN'S POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN PALESTINE: PEACEBUILDING, RESISTANCE, AND SURVIVAL (2018).
60. See, e.g., Hania A.M. Nashef, *Suppressed Nakba Memories in Palestinian Female Narrative*, 24 INTERVENTIONS: INT'L J. POSTCOLONIAL STUD. 567 (2022); Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Abeer Otman, & Rasmieyhn R. Abdelnabi, *Secret Penetrabilities: Embodied Coloniality, Gendered Violence, and the Racialized Policing of Affects*, 22 STUD. GENDER & SEXUALITY 266 (2021).

Lila Abu-Lughod, among others, indicating how closely are the debates in the area studies linked to Palestine Studies.⁶¹

Through its intellectual with Gender Studies, another intriguing debate has emerged regarding the place of LGBTQ Studies within Palestine Studies. The substance of the debate strives to determine whether queer theory, in particular, is a decolonial praxis which is relevant to Palestine or not. This debate goes on in the pages of the *Journal of Palestine Studies* and other venues.⁶²

There is a similar dialectical relationship between Biopolitics Studies and the way it fed back to the more abstract and general questions associated with this attempt to understand the role our bodies play in relationship with the cultural, economic, social, and political realities we live in.⁶³ Even for those less-trained and conversant in this kind of post structuralist field of inquiry, the relationship between one's body and its engagement with occupation and colonization cries out. This is the power of the Palestine case study—it forces otherwise quite particular and challenging discursive modes of discussion to become (if even for a moment) more accessible to audiences outside of the academy. For example, this occurred with Gayatri Spivak whose very sophisticated style became incredibly accessible when she explained her understanding of suicide bombers:

Suicidal resistance is a message inscribed in the body when no other means will get through. It is both execution and mourning, for both self and other, where you die with me for the same cause, no matter which side you are on . . .⁶⁴

In the field itself, one of the more profound, and contentious, manifestations of biopolitics are the case studies of the hunger strikers⁶⁵ on the one hand and, on the other, the young Palestinians involved in daily resistance in the Occupied Territories, who quite often pay with their lives in the struggle for liberation.

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61. Lila Abu-Lughod, *Orientalism and Middle East Feminist Studies*, 27 FEMINIST STUD. 101 (2001).
 62. Nadine Naber, Sa'ed Atshan, Nadia Awad, Maya Mikdashi, Sofian Merabet, Dorgham Abusalim & Nada Elia, *On Palestinian Studies and Queer Theory*, 47 J. PALESTINE STUD., Issue 187, Spring 2018, at 62.
 63. Ayat Hamdan, *Silent Displacement in Occupied Palestine: Hebron as a Case Study* (Nov. 2, 2019) (Ph.D thesis) (on file with the *UCLA Law Review*).
 64. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Terror: A Speech After 9/11*, 31 BOUNDARY 2, Summer 2004, at 81, 96.
 65. See ASHJAN AJOUR, RECLAIMING HUMANITY IN PALESTINIAN HUNGER STRIKES (2021); see also Malaka Shwaikh, *Engendering Hunger Strikes: Palestinian Women in Israeli Prisons*, 49 BRITISH J. MIDDLE E. STUD. 507 (2020).

In the pipeline of special series devoted to Palestine Studies there are additional monographs representing this connection between new ideas feeding human and social sciences and case studies of Palestine. One such series hosted by California University Press presents itself as series committed to the continued globalization of Palestine Studies within a series titled, *New Directions in Palestine Studies*, which promises many more monographs on such topics in the future. Each series discusses case studies from Palestine contextualized within a conceptual, theoretical, and at time comparative discussion that helps to explain better the case study and which ties back to the concepts, theories, or the other case studies and enriches them.⁶⁶ Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian's research on Palestine produced conceptual frameworks and terminology that are used on many other cases studies and are discussed in the more theoretical field. Concepts such as the "colonization of the senses," "unchildling," and "security theology" emanate from her work on Israeli bio-politics, translated into the treatment of children and dead bodies by Israel in East Jerusalem and becoming tools of expanding the analysis of the brutal colonization beyond its physical manifestations into the mental ones.⁶⁷

III. FOR THE FUTURE

The greatest challenge facing Palestine Studies is the need to find ways to better articulate the role of scholars and academia in the actual struggle for decolonization in Palestine. This is coupled with the challenge of finding more effective ways for scholars to practice and expand solidarity with those Palestinians facing daily destruction, as occurred in the last eleven months⁶⁸ since October 2023.

That is not to say that the fusion of scholarship and activism is new in the study of Palestine. From its inception, Palestine Studies has been an action-oriented discipline—much more than a knowledge project confined to an ivory tower. Students and scholars of Palestine are thinkers and activists, based on a shared belief that knowledge derives from and remains accountable to the real world outside the academia. This echoes the sources of Palestinian

66. *New Directions in Palestinian Studies*, UNIV. OF CAL. PRESS, <https://www.ucpress.edu/series/ndps/new-directions-in-palestinian-studies> [<https://perma.cc/Z6Q8-77FZ>].

67. Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Childhood: A Universalist Perspective for How Israel Is Using Child Arrest and Detention to Further Its Colonial Settler Project*, 12 INT'L J. APPLIED PSYCHOANALYTIC STUD. 223 (2015); see also Shalhoub-Kevorkian et al. *supra* note 60.

68. Eleven months as of September 2024, when the text of this Article was finalized.

intellectual life highlighted earlier, where noninstitutionalized ways of knowing, including storytelling, embodied memory, and artistic expression, are central to a field of study that seeks transformation. Put simply, Palestine Studies has always been about being in and acting upon the world.

Today, activism is integrated—and sometimes explicitly enshrined—in the mission statements of institutional centers, academic programs, and individual modules that focus on Palestine.⁶⁹ This close alignment requires scholars and educators to consider how their commitment to professionalism and scholarly expertise sits with an equal dedication to the Palestine cause.

As the director of the first ever Palestine studies program in the Global North, I can attest that dual allegiance to activism and scholarship enhances academic quality rather than impedes it. The courage to state one's political position and the desire to go beyond mere academic analysis have enormously enriched Palestine Studies and the fields it touches. Scholars of Palestine demonstrate a remarkable will to contribute to solutions which address the complex, interlocking problems faced by Palestinians across the world. From settler-colonial violence and authoritarianism, to climate change, health inequality, and food insecurity, researchers and educators are doing the work of critical analysis; at the same time, this energy is oriented toward a decolonial future. For some, the labor of prognosis, either forecasting or anticipating, reveals a desire to help produce an antidote to the political disunity that pervades the Palestinian national movement because of geographical fragmentation. For others, their future-work draws Palestine together with aligned struggles in which they are also active or invested—these visions might move us toward a renewed sense of the international.

Despite the clear rigor and innovation, this fusion of activism with academia opens Palestine Studies to criticism and attempts at suppression.⁷⁰ Warnings are issued, content is scrutinized, and speech is policed (ironically often in the name of “free speech”) with increasing regularity, from the United States to Germany, and of course in Palestine itself.⁷¹ In Britain, the

69. See, e.g., *The European Centre for Palestine Studies*, *supra* note 40.

70. See the case of Rabea Eghbariah's blocked article in the *Harvard Law Review*. Natasha Lennard, *Harvard Law Review Editors Vote to Kill Article About Genocide in Gaza*, THE INTERCEPT (Nov. 21, 2023, 10:25 PM), <https://theintercept.com/2023/11/21/harvard-law-review-gaza-israel/> [<https://perma.cc/2Q67-F7DF>].

71. See, e.g., Michael Arria, “No Evidence”: *GWU Investigation Clears Dr. Lara Sheehi of Antisemitism Allegations*, MONDOWEISS (Mar. 30, 2023), <https://mondoweiss.net/2023/03/no-evidence-gwu-investigation-clears-dr-lara-sheehi-of-antisemitism->

Prevent program (Prevent)⁷² is increasingly mobilized to silence debates and research on Palestine. Developed as a counterterrorism initiative that identifies those most vulnerable “to being drawn into extremism” prior to radicalization, Prevent empowers institutions and their employees to provide the police with information about activities, ideas, and identities. On university campuses, this has largely been interpreted as a move to challenge Islamic extremism. Yet over the past five years, centers, programs, courses, and individual scholars associated with Palestine Studies have come under increasing suspicion and control.⁷³ A similar attempt at regulation can be seen in the equation of criticism of Israel with Holocaust denial, made possible through the new International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition.⁷⁴

This assault is ongoing, targeting Palestinian researchers, educators, and organizers with a particular degree of ferocity. In January 2022, Shahd Abusalama, an associate lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University, was suspended from teaching based on views previously expressed on social media.⁷⁵ Abusalama’s efforts to contextualize a protest banner supporting the Palestinian cause were met with accusations of antisemitism, a formal

allegations [<https://perma.cc/A5NH-2Q7H>]. Repression of Palestine advocacy is prominent that entire organizations exist to monitor attempts to repress Palestinian advocates and provide legal support to those who are targeted. See, e.g., EUR. LEGAL SUPPORT CTR., <https://elsc.support> [<https://perma.cc/5TUF-USKU>].

72. *Prevent*, COUNTER TERRORISM POLICING, <https://www.counterterrorism.police.uk/what-we-do/prevent> [<https://perma.cc/K3YH-8DBX>].
73. The monitoring goes as far as interfering with essay marking. See Isla-Rose Deans, *Leeds Grad Sues After University Fails Her for Not Criticizing Israel in Essay on Hamas’ Crime Against Palestinians*, THE MEDIALINE (Aug. 6, 2022), <https://themedialine.org/life-lines/leeds-grad-sues-after-university-fails-her-for-not-criticizing-israel-in-essay-on-hamas-crime-against-palestinians> [<https://perma.cc/5MTG-KAXQ>].
74. *Working Definition of Holocaust Denial and Distortion*, Int’l Holocaust Remembrance ALL., <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-holocaust-denial-and-distortion> [<https://perma.cc/ZH2G-WFGT>]. See also THE IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY: ACADEMIC REPRESSION AND SCHOLARLY DISSENT (Pia Chatterjee & Sunaina Maira eds., 2014).
75. With the help of the European Legal Support Centre (ELSC), trade unions, and an international campaign, Abusalama was cleared of the false charges in February 2022 and Sheffield Hallam dropped their investigation. See Catherine Chiniara Charrett, *How a Palestinian Academic Defeated a Campaign to Silence Her*, AL JAZEERA (Feb. 10, 2022), <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/2/10/how-a-palestinian-academic-defeated-a-campaign-to-silence-her> [<https://perma.cc/4RRM-SVN3>]. See also *The Case of Shahd Abusalama – a Palestinian Scholar Successfully Defeated Attempts to Silence Her*, EUR. LEGAL SUPPORT CTR. (Mar. 1, 2022), <https://elsc.support/news/the-case-of-shahd-abusalama-a-palestinian-scholar-successfully-defeated-attempts-to-silence-her> [<https://perma.cc/LK2C-R43D>].

investigation by her university, and a concerted smear campaign conducted by lobbyist groups along with right-wing media.⁷⁶

The official reaction in the Global North, and particularly in Britain and the United States, to the “war of swords” Israel inflicted on the Gaza Strip since October 7, 2023, brought new attempts to silence free academic discussion on Palestine. This time it was the students as activists who were targeted by university authorities, under pressure from the pro-Israel lobby. The pressure grew in the wake of Hamas’s assault on Israel on October 7 and Israel’s brutal retaliation. These events triggered a mass student movement of solidarity with the Palestinians and gelled into a movement of student encampments, first in the United States then at the world at large, demanding that their universities divest from Israel, and vowing to remain in the encampments until their universities met their demands. In some cases, the universities requested the police evict the students, and in other cases they agreed to some of their demands.⁷⁷ We do not yet know if the pressure will result in an expansion of the study and research of Palestine itself. Whether it does or not, it seems that those involved in Palestine Studies will continue to commit their intellectual vision, political will, and activism to decolonize the knowledge production on Palestine and continue to be part of the struggle for liberation and justice on the ground. Palestine Studies not only insists on a certain story of the past or an analysis of the present. It is also a belief that narration plays a role, modest as it might be, in confronting dehumanization and racism, connecting people and their struggles, and building a future in which knowledge serves the aims of justice and liberation.

CONCLUSION

Resting on the shoulders of Palestinian intellectual and scholarly efforts during the mandatory period, Palestine Studies evolved today into a recognized pathway in many Western universities. It is an activist-scholarly

76. See *The Case of Shahd Abusalama – a Palestinian Scholar Successfully Defeated Attempts to Silence Her*, *supra* note 75.

77. For discussion of the attacks on the students, see Jane Prinsley, *Terrified Jewish Students Flee Campus After Abuse From 100-Strong Mob*, JEWISH CHRON. (Mar. 7, 2024, 3:23 PM), <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk/terrified-jewish-students-flee-campus-after-abuse-from-100-strong-mob-fd24jtux> [<https://perma.cc/36ED-SZ8Q>]. For additional details on the brutal policy towards the student encampments in the United Kingdom, see Anti-Genocide Encampments Facing Police Brutality and Harassment, CAGE INT’L. (June 3, 2024), <https://www.cage.ngo/articles/anti-genocide-encampments-facing-police-brutality-and-harassment> [<https://perma.cc/3C8G-LFDG>].

enterprise that combines professional acumen with commitment to the struggle for justice in Palestine. It is a multidisciplinary effort that already produced many devoted rising scholars who hope to contribute to the articulation of a clear vision for the Palestinian liberation movement in the future and to deepen our knowledge of the past and present realities in Palestine and Israel.

Palestine Studies has also contributed to other disciplines as part of an intersectional academic network composing of Indigenous and subaltern studies focusing on decolonizing the production of knowledge and offering new genealogies for rectifying the distortions and erasures in the Western narratives about Palestinians.

Given the interest in Palestine in the wake of October 7, 2023, Palestine Studies will continue to be a model for how to fuse activism and scholarship for a conscientious rising generation of academics wishing not to remain in its ivory towers.