Advocating for Palestine in Canada

Histories, Movements, Action

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Fernwood Publishing
Halifax & Winnipeg

Development editing: Fiona Jeffries
Copyediting: Alicia Hibbert
Cover design: Evan Marnoch
Text design: Brenda Conroy
eBook: tikaebooks.com
Printed and bound in Canada

Published by Fernwood Publishing
32 Oceanvista Lane, Black Point, Nova Scotia, B0J 1B0
and 748 Broadway Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3G 0X3

www.fernwoodpublishing.ca

Fernwood Publishing Company Limited gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Canada, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism under the Manitoba Publishers Marketing Assistance Program and the Province of Manitoba, through the Book Publishing Tax Credit, for our publishing program. We are pleased to work in partnership with the Province of Nova Scotia to develop and promote our creative industries for the benefit of all Nova Scotians.

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication
Title: Advocating for Palestine in Canada : histories, movements, action / edited by Emily Regan Wills, Jeremy Wildeman, Michael Bueckert and Nadia Abu-Zahra ; foreword by Libby Davies.
Names: Wills, Emily Regan, editor. | Wildeman, Jeremy, editor. | Bueckert, Michael, editor. | Abu-Zahra, Nadia, 1976- editor. | Davies, Libby, writer of foreword.
Identifiers: Canadiana (print) 20210259477 | Canadiana (ebook) 20210262281 | ISBN 9781773634760 (softcover) | ISBN 9781773634906 (EPUB) | ISBN 9781773634913 (PDF)
Subjects: LCSH: Arab-Israeli conflict—Foreign public opinion, Canadian. | LCSH: Palestine—Foreign public opinion, Canadian. | LCSH: Canada—Foreign relations—Palestine. | LCSH: Palestine—Foreign relations—Canada. | LCSH: Palestine—Press coverage—Canada. | LCSH: Arab-Israeli conflict—Press coverage—Canada. | LCSH: Public opinion—Canada. | LCSH: Palestinian Arabs—Civil rights.
Classification: LCC FC244.P19 A38 2021 | DDC 327.7105694—dc23

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To the seen and the unseen advocates struggling for a better world.

Foreword

Libby Davies

The movement for Palestinian human rights and self-determination has had its ups and downs in Canada, as outlined in this book, but overall, I have always seen it as a steady progression forward, a movement growing in strength and breadth despite formidable obstacles and challenges. Deeply committed activists from many diverse backgrounds have managed, remarkably, to maintain a level of activism and public awareness that has defied the odds, inspiring hope and possibility. The same has not always been the case in the political arena. I was elected as a member of parliament (MP) in 1997 until I left in 2015. During those eighteen years on the Hill, I was keenly involved in working for Palestinian recognition and rights. It was an experience in the latter years that sometimes left me in despair and turmoil, so different from my first years on the Hill, which had made me feel immensely positive about the work and interest of my fellow MPs on this critical issue.

If you talk to most activists today about their Palestine work, they will likely have personal stories about how hard it was, and still is in many ways, to crack the wall of silence and inaction on Palestine in the political sphere. It is a striking contrast to the incredible activism taking place in the community, on campuses, at faith centres and in the labour movement. This book addresses some of the challenges faced by the movement, what has been learned and what work is still to be done. The elephant in the room remains the sparse action, if not silence, from the elected, who on so many other issues are willing to speak out with aptitude and force and conviction. It bears examining why, on this issue, it has been so challenging to make them speak up.

I recall that in my earliest days on Parliament Hill there were many events on the Middle East — cultural, political and educational — that amplified the voices in the community and brought them into the halls of Parliament. This built a sense of solidarity and connectedness, as well as the idea that MPs could be strong allies and advocates for Palestine. I

worked with many groups to plan and host a variety of functions aimed at fostering awareness, understanding and action for Palestinians. Some of these events would garner a high participation rate of MPs from different parties who were eager to hear guest speakers such as Norman Finklestein, Jeff Halper, Robert Fisk, Salman Abu Sita and Nahla Abdo. The events were engaging and informative, fostering dialogue and understanding. MPs heard about the human conditions in the occupied territories, the right of return, house demolitions, the wall, the assembly of road networks connecting settlements and the historical context. Often MPs would bring greetings from their political party, and local community members could openly engage with MPs. None of this seemed extraordinary at the time. After all, Parliament is meant to be the epitome of broad public discourse and exchange of views and the place for questioning Canada's role in the world. Most MPs belong to one or several international friendship associations and groups, and on many an evening it was not unusual to see competing events taking place, where MPs would dash from one event to another to be seen and noted. At a formal governmental level, Canada chaired the Refugee Working Group, which was part of multi-lateral Middle East peace process and seemed open to dialogue on issues like the right of return for Palestine refugees.

But that common, and in many ways comforting, scene began to change in the early 2000s, culminating with the election of Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper as Canada's prime minister in 2006. In tandem was a steady rise in the voices and lobby efforts by friends of Israel, making it clear that the public discourse and the openness of MPs to speak about the Middle East was about to dramatically change course. In the following years, an atmosphere of fear, censure and near-McCarthyism descended on the Hill like a shadow, with full effect. Attendance at events dwindled, and it was common to hear MPs say that even though they personally supported the issue of justice for Palestine, they were afraid to speak out for fear of being branded as antisemitic, or they may even face some level of censure from their party. It was a momentous downward slide. The Canada Palestine Parliamentary Friendship Association continued to exist, but only a mere handful of us remained active, and so we had to meet in someone's office to quietly confer about what we could do. If we did manage to organize an event and a guest speaker, we would be lucky to see a few faithful MPs attend. Fear is a powerful weapon. It shuts people down and debilitates open debate. We came to understand

that the political blocks and the climate of fear were real, and they did much damage to open discussion and support for Palestine.

The uncritical pro-Israel rhetoric of the government was sharpening in tone and frequency simultaneously with the growing power and presence of pro-Israel lobbyists. Their message was chillingly clear: dare to speak out, dare to act, and you will feel the negative impact both personally and politically for doing so. I look back now in astonishment that even introducing petitions to do with Israel or the Middle East (a profoundly basic parliamentary procedure and daily occurrence just after Question Period) became an act of defiance that generated questioning and possible censure. That is when it became clear to me that the actions and words of MPs were being closely monitored and tracked by outside Zionist groups who would report our apparent misdemeanour to the party leadership. Things got worse. Organized and sophisticated work by pro-Israel groups was underway to host meetings and official conferences of MPs, with the goal of establishing definitions of antisemitism that were designed to choke free speech and silence criticism of harmful Israeli policies. There was a powerful alliance of government interests and outside groups working closely together on these initiatives. Combatting antisemitism and advocating for the rights of Palestinians are not mutually exclusive, despite what the pro-Israel lobby would have us believe. Both need to be part of a basic social justice framework. I cannot recall any other geographic area on the globe where basic discussion was so subject to fear and reprisal.

The attack on the World Trade Centre in 2001, and the growth of Islamophobia which followed, fuelled the politically motivated drive of liberal governments, resulting in hyper and discriminatory federal legislation to curtail civil liberties under the guise of protecting the security of Canadians. Subsequent legislation from Conservative governments targeted Canadians of Arabic background or Muslim faith as suspect. Community organizations that had previously received government funding, such as Palestine House, for community-based services, and Kairos Canada, for foreign aid to Palestinians, suddenly faced charges of wrongdoing and the termination of their funding. The dark and toxic political environment on Parliament Hill was now evident in the community too.

Despite these daunting challenges, work and advocacy continued on and off the Hill. I recall sitting in the House of Commons with a couple of other colleagues for hours and hours, even into days, to ensure

that a unanimous consent motion could not be passed condemning the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement (BDS). It was a game of cat and mouse, for as long as one of us was present to deny unanimous consent, the supporters of such a motion could not sneak it through. A small group of senators too, particularly Pierre De Bané, Marcel Prud'Homme and Pierre Claude Nolin, all now deceased, showed great courage to support Palestinian rights and the work of the Parliamentary Friendship Association. And on the outside, Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) and Independent Jewish Voices (IJV) steadfastly kept up communication with MPs as much as they could to provide factual information, countering the growing anti-Palestinian propaganda and rhetoric.

Amazingly, a small group of MPs — three of us — visited the West Bank and Jerusalem in 2009, and two of us then continued to Gaza to witness the damage and destruction of Operation Cast Lead by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF). I recall so well that before we left, the Department of Foreign Affairs officials went to great lengths to tell us that if we "got into trouble" in Gaza they would do nothing to help us. Not that we anticipated any trouble, but it was a clear message that their usual policy of assisting MPs while travelling was off the table. Upon our return we tabled our report in Parliament, only to be met with hostility from pro-Israel MPs who wanted the report quashed. I also recall speaking in Parliament in dismay, responding to government initiatives to trash the Goldstone Report, the product of a UN fact-finding mission into human rights abuses during the 2008–09 Israeli assault on Gaza. "The Conservative attacks are reminiscent of McCarthyism and have no place in Canadian society," I had said. Unfortunately, my comments were not, even in hindsight, exaggerated.

The predominant perception in the Canadian Parliament during those years, as I detailed in my memoir *Outside In* (published in 2019), was that the Jewish community was of one mind when it came to supporting the policies of Israel and its occupation of Palestinian land and that no opposing view could be tolerated. Of course, this was not true then, and it certainly is not true today.

I am glad to say that the political environment with respect to the Middle East is improving these days, but it is still fragile and precarious. The courageous work that is being done in the community to foster education and factual discussion on this issue has been critical to sus-

taining links between the Palestine solidarity movement and individual MPs and political parties, creating more openness and comfort for MPs to speak out. There have been a number of organized visits for MPs to the occupied territories to see for themselves what is going on, separate from the regular visits organized by pro-Israel groups. In 2018, a multi-party delegation of eighteen MPs undertook an extensive visit to the West Bank. And on social media it is more common now to see MPs make statements in support of Palestinians and their rights. There are even instances where MPs and senators from different parties are willing to work together; for example, in May 2021, during Israel's latest assault on Gaza, twenty-four MPs and two senators from five political parties signed a joint letter calling for sanctions against Israel. It is also important to maintain pressure and encourage support within political parties themselves. Members can organize and bring forward resolutions at policy conventions to push their leadership to take a principled stance for Palestine. This was done successfully by grassroots members of the NDP in April 2021, adopting, by a significant majority, a resolution in support of a ban on trade with illegal settlements and an arms embargo on Israel. However, unless members and activists keep up the pressure, there is always a concern that the leadership may retreat to a more cautious and comfortable position.

Despite the gains made in recent years, MPs who speak out for Palestinian human rights still face unfounded charges of antisemitism and are often told they must be "balanced" in what they say. Balance is not an unworthy principle in general, but in this context, the idea of balance is promoted as a convenient political response to promote the notion that both sides are equal and both sides should have equal balance. Of course, this denies the history and reality of Israel's illegal occupation and its crushing of human rights. There are not two equal sides; there is an occupier and those who are occupied. In this context "balance" means upholding an unjust status quo.

This book clearly and forthrightly lays out the case for the growing strength of the pan-Canadian Palestinian solidarity movement and the need to make connections with people in elected office, especially at the federal level. It articulates the need for an honest and open discourse that must lead to Canadian actions in support of international law and human rights, whether at the UN, in the international community or within Canada.

Change is possible when we are engaged, when we build trust and when we create real space for debate. Our goal should be to continue to build the movement for Palestinian recognition, both inside the formal world of politics and within the broader public realm. To do so means understanding the barriers that exist and working hard to lobby and educate MPs both individually and (where possible) with political parties. It means working together with respect and in common purpose, even if there is some disagreement now and then.

We will always need to be vigilant and to push back on the censorship and political dogma that wants to shut down critical analysis and action. Parliamentarians must stand up to antisemitism and at the same time call for justice for Palestinians.

—Libby Davies, MP 1997–2015, author, *Outside In: A Political Memoir* (2019, Between the Lines)

Acknowledgements

This collection was inspired out of a Canada and Palestine Research Symposium held at the University of Ottawa in February 2019, which explored Canada's historical and contemporary relationship with Palestine and the Palestinian people. That symposium was co-organized by Professor Michael Lynk (University of Western Ontario), Professor Reem Bahdi (University of Windsor), Professor Nadia Abu-Zahra (University of Ottawa), Dr. Jeremy Wildeman (then University of Bath) and Omar Burgan (labour rights researcher). Many of this book's chapters were first presented at the Symposium, and this book's authors participated as panelists, speakers or moderators. To bring these writings to publication, we are grateful to all who provided support and, in particular, the CJPME Foundation and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

We would like to acknowledge the support of Fernwood Publishing for making this book possible, including the brilliant editorial team and anonymous peer reviewers and, notably, our assiduous, thoughtful acquisitions editor Dr. Fiona Jeffries. This is a unique volume because it offers a sampling of the experiences and diverse voices of scholars, journalists and activists on Turtle Island who have been advocating for decades for justice-promoting policies toward Palestine.

Acronyms

2SLGBTIQ — Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer
ADC — Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
ANC — African National Congress
ANSAR — Arab Network of Students
AP — Associated Press
ASA — Arab Students' Association
BDS — Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions
C-FAR — Citizens for Foreign Aid Reform
CAJ — Canadian Association of Journalists
CBC — Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CCPO — Coalition of Canadian-Palestinian Organizations
CIFTA — Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement
CIJA — Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs
CLC — Canadian Labour Congress
CJFE — Canadian Journalists for Free Expression
CJPME — Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East
CPCCA — Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism
CSAS — Canadian–South African Society
CUPE — Canadian Union of Public Employees
CUPW — Canadian Union of Postal Workers
EU — European Union
FPJQ — Quebec Federation of Professional Journalists
GUPS — General Union of Palestinian Students
HRC — HonestReporting Canada
HRTO — Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario
IAW — Israeli Apartheid Week
ICC — International Criminal Court
ICJ — International Court of Justice
ICRC — International Committee of the Red Cross
IHRA — International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance

IJV — Independent Jewish Voices Canada
JCPOA — Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
MEWA — Middle Eastern Women's Association
NACC — North American Coordinating Committee
NECEF — Near East Cultural and Educational Foundation
NDP — New Democratic Party
NGO — non-governmental organization
OAS — Organization of Arab Students
OCHA — United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OPIRG — Ontario Public Interest Research Group
OPT — Occupied Palestinian Territory
PA — Palestinian Authority
PACBI — Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel
PAN — Palestine Advocacy Network
PFLP — Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PLO — Palestine Liberation Organization
PSAC — Public Service Alliance of Canada
PSM — Palestine solidarity movement
QUAIA — Queers Against Israeli Apartheid
SAIA — Students Against Israeli Apartheid
SPHR — Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights
SWOT — Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threat Analysis
TTC — Toronto Transit Commission
UJA — United Jewish Appeal
UN — United Nations
UNGA — United Nations General Assembly
UNISPAL — United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine
UNRWA — United Nations Relief and Works Agency

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Introduction

Nadia Abu-Zahra, Emily Regan Wills, Jeremy Wildeman & Michael Bueckert

We are like the
wholeness of the sun
the light sinks
into the
earth.
– *From Turtle Island to Gaza*

Ojibwe and French-Canadian poet David Groulx writes of the shared experience of colonized peoples, extending this even further to the shared responsibilities of and toward all our relations (2019: 3.0). For many years, advocacy for and by colonized peoples has been mischaracterized as narrowly nationalist at best, and dangerously hostile at worst (Said 1979). Prejudices have dehumanized and discredited survivors' searches and struggles for dignity and justice (Maracle 2017).

When battling internal fear and insecurity, each of us is challenged to turn these toward motivation for solidarity with all others facing injustice, racism, colonialism and discrimination or marginalization of any kind. The personal struggle against fear can determine if we seek power and control over others or if we instead recognize not only our own fears but also the fears of others (Maté 2019; El-Bekai 2016; Jhally 1998 quoting Edward Said). This personal struggle is made even more difficult by efforts to divide and thereby weaken resistance to injustice (Choudry, Hanley and Shragge 2012). Solidarity cannot be presumed; it must be built (Desai 2021; Kelley 2019). This can be done through a shared vision or path, such as the one in the poem above.

This book is about those who have turned their inner fear into solidarity instead of control. It is about the highs and lows of these strug-

gles. Those who advocate for Palestine as allies all have something that brought them to that advocacy. And Palestinians who advocate as allies with others do so in recognition of a shared path. Building community and healing from inner fears are mutual activities. As activist Harsha Walia says, "For me, as for many others, social movement organizing has been healing and empowering precisely because *within it* and *through it* I have found a means to redeem and liberate myself from all the injustices, categories, and assumptions laid on me" (2013: 274).

This book also explores what brings people to advocacy for Palestine on Turtle Island and how such advocacy is contingent on challenging far-reaching systems of injustice and structural violence (Matuk, this volume; Nestel, this volume; Walia 2020; Galtung 1990, 1985, 1975, 1969, 1964). It also explores how advocacy for Palestine is a canary in the coal mine, an early sufferer of what is coming for others. Through navigating advocacy for Palestine on Turtle Island, we investigate the production of fear through structures of racist hierarchies (Alexander 1983) and, as its counter, the extraordinary and life-affirming responses that build solidarity and healing.

Turtle Island/Canada and Palestine/Israel

Fusheeyea Mitre Tabasharini was born in 1864 to an Arabic-speaking family on a mountaintop in the eastern stretches of the Mediterranean coastline (Leney 1996). But at the age of 30, she left to never return. The father of her four children had died and, rather than accept her inheritance, she chose to emigrate (Leney 1996). Travelling alone, her voyage took her to Algonquin territory on Turtle Island. She was rejoined by her children and taught them the ways of their new home. She spoke Algonquin. She never learned English or French and creatively foiled efforts by the Hudson Bay Company's men to harm or hinder her relations with First Nations (Leney 1996).

White settlers on Turtle Island would rename parts as "Canada" and the "United States." The sovereignty of Indigenous Nations, with constitutional confederacy agreements, records of treaties, and decision-making processes (Sabzalian 2019; Sabzalian and Shear 2018; Horn-Miller 2013), came under attack by those same colonial structures. The populations of First Nations, Métis and Inuit were decimated through physical attack, movement restrictions, kidnapping of adults and children, biological warfare and enforced starvation (Paul 2006; Daschuk

2013; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996). Ongoing settler-colonialism threatens Indigenous Nations on Turtle Island, as well as peoples elsewhere (McAdam [Saysewahum] 2015; Yellowhead Institute 2019). In the years between 2000 and 2020, the people of Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan, for instance, have been subject to invasions and bombardments by the Canadian military (Dobbin 2011; Engler 2013).

In this introduction and this book's conclusion, we use the term Turtle Island and Indigenous place names when referring to the lands and waters, and prioritize Indigenous sovereignty and futures (Maracle 2017). We recognize that the term Turtle Island is not universal among Indigenous Nations, yet is also widely used, and is our recognition, as settlers, of ongoing dispossession as well as sovereignty of Indigenous Nations (Coburn and Moore 2021). In this book, we use the term Canada to refer to advocacy engaging with the settler-colonial state and in communities of predominantly settlers. We also acknowledge that, with few exceptions, advocacy for Palestine on Turtle Island has not used Indigenous place names, and that until recently, and including in the chapters in this book, this continues to be the case. We are still in the midst of a struggle to educate ourselves. We do recognize that many persons refuse the exclusive binary conceptual form "settler/Indigenous" with the idea that human mobility is possible without being settlers (Sharma 2020a, 2020b; Pete 2018; Sharma and Wright 2008). While welcoming "innovative radical possibilities of relationality" (Desai 2021: 14), and opposing "nationalist, racist politics of anti-mobility" (Sharma 2020b), we opt nevertheless to explicitly acknowledge the complicity with ongoing settler-colonialism, even if not a conscious aim, of newcomers or arrivants to Turtle Island (following the lead of Walia 2013 quoted above; see also Aikau et al. 2015; Byrd 2011; Razack 2015; Fujikane and Okamura 2008; Lawrence and Dua 2005; Thobani 2007).

Much has changed since the days when Tabasharini embarked on her months-long canoe journeys. She passed away on February 12, 1947. Nine months later, without any authority or jurisdiction to do so, the United Nations partitioned Palestine (Cattan 1973). Canada — particularly settlers from Britain — played a leading role (Kaplan 2009; Engler 2010). Close to one and a half million Palestinians were stripped of citizenship when members of the international community ceased to recognize their sovereignty (Abu-Zahra and Kay 2012). Today, ongoing

settler-colonialism in Palestine threatens over 13 million Palestinians, as well as other nations. Tabasharini's homeland of Lebanon, for instance, was subject to Israeli military invasion in 1982 and months-long bombardment that displaced a quarter of the country's population in 2006 (Amnesty International 2006).

The irony of persecution is that, whether it emerges from fear or profit-seeking, it will invariably be justified as a form of protection. The language of defence, refuge, and even aid is put to the service of settler-colonialism, injustice, and systemic oppression (Gilroy 2006). Persecution is undeniable, but when does the survivor become the perpetrator? More importantly, when does the perpetrator awaken to the suffering they cause, and work to end it? When does the processing of fear result in solidarity instead of further harm?

The authors in this book examine moments of solidarity and the persecution that they face as they engage in that solidarity work. Universities, unions, faith groups and anti-imperialist and other left-wing movements have been major sites for organizing for Palestine, and advocates for Palestine have been able to find connections between the causes and ethics that motivate those spaces and claims for justice for Palestinians. The growth of these forms of solidarity shows the challenges of advocacy for Palestine, but it also shows the way that Palestinian liberation can be best understood as a part of a broader project of liberation from all forms of systemic injustice.

Building Solidarity and Healing

> From Palestine to Turtle Island, there is no justice on stolen land. —Students Against Israeli Apartheid (Nazzal Hamadeh, this volume)

Advocacy for Palestine on Turtle Island is "an anti-racist movement that challenges the violence of all forms of racism" (Nazzal Hamadeh, this volume). The resonance of the situation of Palestine and Palestinians is felt by so many on Turtle Island (Woodley, this volume). They include countless Jewish Canadians who feel alienated from part or all of the Zionist narrative that dominates Jewish community institutions on Turtle Island (Ralph, this volume); Québec sovereigntists who identify with Palestinians as a community denied sovereignty; critics of settler Canadian development assistance and foreign aid policy who

are sceptical of policies towards Palestine/Israel; faith groups with community and spiritual ties in Nazareth, Al-Quds/Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Al-Khalil/Hebron, Haifa and throughout the region; anti-racist, anti-oppression and anti-colonial movements that perceive the same police and military tactics enacted against themselves as against Palestinians; and progressives and anti-militarists of all backgrounds who are critical of the globalized Israeli military-industrial complex and its link to global militarism. These connections present opportunities for greater advocacy and for Palestine to appear differently in the international collective imagination.

Advocacy groups for Palestine include those founded in the 1960s and 1970s, like the Arab Palestine Association, Canadian-Arab Friendship Society, Canadian Arab Federation, all on Wendat, Anishinaabe and Hodinöhsö:niʾ territory (Toronto), and the Canada Palestine Association, in the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish) and Sel̓íl̓witulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations (Vancouver) (Labelle 2018: 174–75). In Miʾkmaʾki (Nova Scotia) and the territories of the Nehiyaw, Denesuliné, Nakota Sioux, Anishinaabe, Niitsitapi and Métis (Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario), academics and others of Palestinian origin became active in this period, sharing stories of dispossession in Palestine, including Canada's role in that dispossession. Some of those mobilizing were conscious of the colonialism of which they were part on Turtle Island. In the 1970s, for instance, the Canada Palestine Association was a member of the Third World People's Coalition alongside Indigenous and Black rights advocacy groups, and actively opposed Indigenous leader Leonard Peltier's extradition to the United States (where he remains imprisoned today) (Desai 2021; Kawas 2020).

Moments of extreme injustice prompted further mobilization. In the wake of Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, for example, Medical Aid for Palestine was established in Tio'tia:ke (Montréal), the National Council for Canadian Arab Relations and the Association of Arab Palestinian Canadians were founded in Algonquin territory (Ottawa), and the Near East Cultural and Educational Foundation (NECEF) was begun on Wendat, Anishinaabe and Hodinöhsö:niʾ territory (Toronto). As people on Turtle Island watched Palestinians rise up (in Arabic, the Intifada) in the years 1987–93 and suffer a debilitating "bone-breaking" policy by Israel (such as smashing their elbows with rocks), further organiza-

tions formed, like Palestine House, Canadian Friends of Sabeel and the Canadian-Palestinian Educational Exchange. Again, in the same way that Stó:lō author and poet Lee Maracle had read Palestinian Mahmoud Darwish's poetry in 1976, trust-based solidarity was consciously fostered by First Nations with Palestinians (Kawas 2020; Walia 2003): Kanien'kehá:ka and other Hodinöhsö:ni' Nations related in their resistance in the 1990s with Palestinians' steadfastness (*sumud* in Arabic) or "self-reliance strategies delinked from the settler state" and the unarmed Intifada (Desai 2021: 7, citing Hill 2009).

Some settler Canadians, including foresighted government officials, sought more just approaches to Palestine than the policies that prevailed from the early twentieth century to the present. A supporter of Palestinian sovereignty in the 1940s, Elizabeth P. MacCallum was Canada's leading government expert on the Middle East (Newport 2014). Three decades later, Special Representative of the Government of Canada Respecting the Middle East and North Africa Robert L. Stanfield penned a report that would influence Prime Ministers Joe Clark and Jean Chrétien, as well as Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy (Robinson 2021). Canada recognized the Palestinian right to self-determination in 1989 (with widespread approval among public opinion; Wildeman 2021) and lent support to a "peace process" in the 1990s through a Middle East Working Group made up of twenty Canadian civil society organizations, including some of those mentioned above (Kingston 2007: 124). While these government responses admittedly fit within larger patterns to subdue and divert resistance to colonialism (Said 1995; Giacaman and Lønning 1998), they also demonstrate the capacity of advocacy to alter dominant discourses and the actions of those occupying positions of power.

Even though the heady years of 1993–2000 are mostly associated with international euphoria for peace in Palestine/Israel, the realities were far different: it was a period when Palestinian children and adults were shot, maimed or kidnapped and tortured in Israel's prison complex (Cook, Hanieh and Kay 2004) and colonization and movement restrictions intensified to a stranglehold (Abu-Zahra and Kay 2012). On Turtle Island, isolated voices spoke out, like Gaza-based psychologist Eyad El-Sarraj and James Graff, philosophy professor and co-founder of NECEF, in venues like the North American Coordinating Committee (NACC) for the United Nations Non-Governmental Organizations' Forum on Palestine. The forum was a consortium of labour, faith-based, feminist and civil

rights groups and research institutes like the Centre d'études arabes pour le développement (United Nations 1994).

The voices of Graff and El-Sarraj were illuminating of a remarkable characteristic in much advocacy for Palestine on Turtle Island: both individuals spoke in support of healthy relations and justice, even when that meant criticizing those in power on Turtle Island and Palestine. In the 1994 UN NGO Forum on Palestine, El-Sarraj spoke of "60,000 Palestinian children in Gaza, below the age of 15 … suffering from some emotional problems that were the direct result of trauma at the hands of Israeli soldiers" (United Nations 1994). Over the subsequent two years, El-Sarraj was kidnapped three times, tortured and held for prolonged periods in solitary confinement by the Palestinian Authority (Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders 2021). Graff, meanwhile, spoke forcefully and tirelessly in El-Sarraj's support at subsequent UN NGO Forum meetings. Graff and El-Sarraj's worked to build solidarity and healing, "to break the cycle of violence that was being perpetuated from generation to generation" (United Nations 1994). They, as well as many others involved in advocacy for Palestine on Turtle Island, embodied Nazzal Hamadeh's (this volume) notion of "an anti-racist movement that challenges the violence of all forms of racism."

Healthy Relations and Advocacy

> Understanding the world through a Relationship Framework … we don't see ourselves, our communities, or our species as inherently superior to any other, but rather see our roles and responsibilities to each other as inherent to enjoying our life experiences. (Amadahy 2010, quoted in Walia 2012)

While the late 1990s were slower years in advocacy for Palestine, not least because of the diversion of resources and public and government attention to bolstering the "peace process," they were also important years to strengthen ties between decolonial movements on Turtle Island. The fruits of these efforts became evident in the year 2000 and after. With exceptions like El-Sarraj and Graff, few had analyzed the Oslo peace accords of the early 1990s and the peace process to understand that these were not about peace but rather about furthering colonialism (Said 1995, 1993; Giacaman and Lønning 1998). In September 2000, when Israeli soldiers stormed the holy site of Dome of the Rock and

the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, and when Israeli tanks bulldozed homes, people, and a swath of a refugee camp, many on Turtle Island were stunned and horrified. With deadly movement restrictions and international strategies of silencing (like those described in Mastracci, this volume), people on Turtle Island heard stulted news reports of rising death counts and incursions into the most private of Palestinian spaces. Students on university campuses across Turtle Island mobilized, along with some of the groups that had engaged in advocacy for Palestine over the previous four decades (Husseini, this volume). They built stronger alliances, issued public statements, held countless coalition-building and educational events, challenged dominant discourses, and took time to build healthy relations and spaces.

In 2002, several hundred protestors managed to cancel a speech by Benjamin Netanyahu, then a former Israeli prime minister, at Concordia University on Kanien'kehá:ka territory (Mallal and Addelman 2004). In the same year and region, Rachad Antonius, a professor of sociology at the Université de Québec à Montréal organized a visit to Palestine for a former Canadian justice minister serving as director of the organization Rights and Democracy. In 2004 at York University on Wendat, Anishinaabe and Hodinöhsö:ni' territory, Jewish-Canadian activist for Palestinian human rights, Dan Freeman-Maloy, was suspended for three years after leading a protest over Israel's treatment of the Palestinian people (Spurr 2004). The sudden punishment appeared disproportionate and procedures to contradict university policy. A lawsuit, against both the university and its president, ultimately went up to the Court of Appeal for Ontario and was refused to be heard by the Supreme Court. In the end, the parties came to a mutually satisfactory out-of-court settlement in 2007 and Freeman-Maloy was able to graduate. Activism at these and other universities culminated in the founding of Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW), in part to mobilize support for a worldwide Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign (Nazzal Hamadeh, this volume). IAW was "used as a model in developing Indigenous Sovereignty Week" (Desai 2021: 8).

The years 2000 and after witnessed the founding of Al-Awda, the Palestine Right to Return Coalition, the Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid, the Toronto Palestine Film Festival, Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East, Students Against Israeli Apartheid, Students for Justice in Palestine, Students for Palestinian Human

Rights, Palestine Solidarity Collective, Faculty for Palestine, Labour for Palestine, University of Toronto Divest, Palestinian Youth Movement, Independent Jewish Voices, Just Peace Advocates, the Palestine Advocacy Network and the Palestinian Canadian Academics and Artists Network, among others. The first annual conference of Al-Awda was held in June 2003, on Wendat, Anishinaabe and Hodinöhsö:ni' territory (Toronto). In subsequent years, advocates for Palestine — Palestinian or otherwise — would support Kanien'kehá:ka at Kenhtè:ke (Bay of Quinte) (including in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en), Kanonhstaton, Kanehsatà:ke and Kahnawà:ke (Ontario and Québec), Anishinaabe at Asubpeeschoseewagong (Grassy Narrows), Mitchikanibikok Inik (Barriere Lake), Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (Big Trout Lake), the Secwepemc Nation at Skwelkwek'welt (Sun Peaks Resort) and Idle No More (Keefer, this volume; Desai 2021, Kilibarda 2009; Krebs and Olwan 2012; Walia 2003).

Strengthening relations toward long-term support is an ongoing activity that "means not just being present for blockades or in moments of crisis" (Walia 2012). While this has yet to be evidenced on a large scale, small steps are being made to expand connections between Palestine and Turtle Island through, for instance, learning exchanges and cultural engagement. In 2003, an educational initiative named Project Hope was founded by one of our co-editors to support international volunteers to Palestine from Turtle Island. By 2018, over 1,500 volunteer educators had lived and worked in the Palestinian city of Nablus, and tens of thousands of youth had benefitted from education programming.

In the years 2000–20, a Stó:lō former Chief joined the Freedom Flotilla (Kawas 2020; Jensen 2018), a Kanien'kehá:ka delegation travelled to Palestine, and "Indigenous land protectors wore kaffiyehs," flew Palestinian flags and participated in protests against the 2020 American "peace to prosperity" plan for Palestinian dispossession and repression (Desai 2021: 3–5, 7–8, 18). In 2004, the olive oil non-profit enterprise Zatoun was founded to further understanding of Palestinian culture and daily life; this was followed in 2009 by the establishment of Beit Zatoun (House of Olives) as a cultural centre, art gallery and community meeting space that hosted over 1,000 events. From Project Hope to Beit Zatoun, such initiatives became spaces for profounder mutual aid and support.

In each sector and sphere, this kind of mutual aid has continued to

expand. Artists of different backgrounds collaborate in exhibitions and creations. Palestinian lawyers and law professors on Turtle Island have joined forces to both seek justice in Palestine — launching major initiatives to focus on rehabilitation, fair treatment and professionalism among justices — and on Turtle Island, supporting Indigenous legal struggles and challenges, such as those related to Idle No More. Feminist, labour, faith-based, civil rights, migrant rights, 2SLGBTIQ and gender justice, academic and liberatory institutions and movements continue to build stronger coalitions despite severe repression. Independent Jewish Voices (IJV), for instance, unites some twenty-five to thirty broadly progressive Jewish, Jewish/Muslim, Jewish/Arab and Jewish/Palestinian groups and in 2009 became the first Jewish organization in the world to almost unanimously endorse the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign (Ralph 2021).

Labour unions on Turtle Island have strong ties with Palestinian labour unions, and these ties enable them to jointly organize worker-to-worker tours and maintain open lines of communication and mutual support. The Ontario wing of the Canadian Union of Public Employees in 2006 adopted a BDS position, followed by a growing number of labour councils and locals, as well as other national unions like the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), Confédération des syndicats nationaux, Unifor and the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC). The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Ontario university workers' committee — an extension in many ways of ongoing campus activism — proposed in 2009 to extend the campaign to boycott any joint work with Israeli institutions that carry out military research. In 2021, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) adopted a position in support of an arms embargo on Israel, a ban on trade with settlements, promoting divestment from Israeli military and security companies and other measures. The influence of healthy relations and advocacy among labour unions has extended to political parties and their members who learn about colonialism on Turtle Island and in Palestine. The Green and New Democratic political parties have been endorsed by their members to adopt policies in favour of sanctions on Israel, such as an arms embargo.

Healthy relations and advocacy become not only a means but also an end toward demonstrating alternatives to unjust systems and racist hierarchies. What draws advocates together is not only a shared struggle — as there are differences; the struggle on Turtle Island predates that of

Palestine by some four hundred years — but more importantly, a shared vision, like that of Groulx's poem or of the Relationship Framework suggested by Amadahy. In this book we cannot cover all the facets of collective visions for the future, or of advocacy for Palestine on Turtle Island. We can only present brief vignettes of the systems of injustice that prevail to date, some elements of visions of possible futures and case studies of various sectors like the media, non-profits and postsecondary education. Our key finding, though, is that in transforming fear into solidarity, in seeing ourselves as in relation to one another, we can build those futures in the present.

Conclusion

Taken altogether, we learn from the chapters in this book that structures of racist hierarchies undermine refuge, liberation and freedom not only for some, but for all. They do this by inverting the perpetrator and survivor, causing real harm and, inevitably due to our interconnectedness, harming everyone. No marginalized group responds in a monolithic way, and a more enlightening route to understanding solidarity is to witness the shared aspirations for the future and how those aspirations are made real through consciously forging and practising healthy relations and advocacy (Desai 2021; Kelley 2019):

> We must reach worlds where people live freely with respect and dignity, without fear and without injustice … We must grow visionaries … We must act with humility. We walk on paths chipped at for centuries before us. We live in a world where what we know sits like a pebble on the shore of an ocean of what we don't know. (Hussan 2013: 280–81, 283)

In this book we wanted to open opportunities for conversations that can break through some of the challenges that advocates for Palestine face on Turtle Island in broadening analysis of the movement. Even though settler-colonialism and racism are global phenomena that have shaped the nature of world politics, they remain difficult targets to name for activists in particular. At times, the particularities of repression against advocacy for Palestine and social justice crowd out a clear view of the bigger picture. Finding ways to elucidate the connections between experiences of settler-colonialism globally — and more importantly, to share

visions for the future — offers paths toward healthy relations and healing. This book holds a particular value for those of us on Turtle Island who are engaged in scholarship that aims towards transformation, and is a way of inviting our contributors, and you, into a dialogue to share thoughts, perspectives and visions.

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