



GETTING BY THE OCCUPATION: How Violence Became Normal during the Second Palestinian Intifada

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The second Palestinian intifada against Israeli occupation that began in September of 2000 saw Palestinian towns and cities repeatedly invaded and shelled by Israeli forces.¹ As of March 2008, more than 4,600 Palestinians have been killed as a result of Israeli actions.² Although many Palestinians in the West Bank tell me their lives have returned to some level of calm regularity,³ the first three years of the uprising was a period of constant disruption and uncertainty. Checkpoints and roadblocks appeared and were moved without notice or predictability,⁴ the gates in the separation barrier Israeli is building around and through West Bank lands were closed and opened on an uncertain schedule (see Cook 2003), missiles and gunfire rained from the sky and neighboring Israeli settlements, F-16s flew low, rattling windows and bombing police stations, bulldozers uprooted olive groves and destroyed houses (Hass 2006; B'Tselem 2004), Palestinians' luxurious villas were shot up and set afire, their radio and TV transmitters were rendered inoperable, Israeli snipers hid on rooftops and jeeps circled through the towns enforcing curfews and arresting young men,⁵ and Palestinian cultural centers and government ministries were ransacked and defiled (Hass 2002). During the April–June 2002 incursions, Israel's "Operation Defensive Shield" caused an estimated \$342 million in material damage (Le More 2005). As in many conflicts, cities were not just the environment in which attacks occurred, they were often the explicit target, along with the governmental and security infrastructure that they house (Graham 2004a; Gregory 2003).

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A long history of war and targeted cities is told along the thoroughfares of Palestinian towns, large and small. Down the length of one of the main roads into Ramallah, the cultural (and de facto political) capital of the West Bank, street signs bearing the names of martyrs⁶ or the massacres that created them stood as commemorative markers.⁷ Similarly named streets exist in other cities across the occupied territories, from Gaza in the south to Jenin in the north. These proper street names are rarely, if ever, referred to in common parlance, however. If the signs themselves added to the aura of orderly city geography created when the Palestinian Authority (PA) took over civil affairs in West Bank towns after the 1993 signing of the Oslo Accords (see Textbox), more than ten years later, after the large Israeli military incursions of 2002, these signs, crushed and uprooted by Israeli tanks, became a synecdochic statement on the Palestinian government's crippled status.

The first *intifada* (Arabic, "shaking off") against the occupation began in 1987.¹ Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip had begun in 1967, and for Palestinians it meant military rule, and a lack of civil, political, and human rights. Home demolitions, detention without trial of political prisoners, torture, and extensive land confiscations characterized Israel's occupation. Israel built hundreds of settlements throughout the Occupied Territories, erected on land confiscated from Palestinians.

The *intifada* was a popular response to these drastic pressures. It was a widespread popular uprising consisting of grassroots mobilization of all sectors of Palestinian society, including women, youth, and the elderly, who engaged in public demonstrations and non-violent civil disobedience. Simply surviving and staying on the land also became a nationalist value. Through the promotion of national products and the local economy, for example, women's popular committees extended their traditional domestic activities into practices that helped sustain the uprising. Popular committees, with members recruited from all social strata, encouraged home gardening and ran sewing cooperatives as part of a strategy of *sumud* (steadfastness), thus enabling women to help support their families during a time of economic hardship when many male breadwinners were imprisoned or otherwise unable to work.

The first *intifada* also became an effort to demonstrate to the world Palestinians' brutalized existence in a David and Goliath battle. Images of Palestinian youth confronting armed Israeli soldiers with stones helped raise awareness that the Israeli occupation was not benevolent, as had been the state's claim.

As the *intifada* wound down, negotiations in Oslo resulted in the Israel–PLO Declaration of Principles of 1993. It established that Israel would withdraw from the Gaza Strip and Jericho, with additional withdrawals from further unspecified areas of the West Bank during what was to be a five-year interim period. In the years after the agreement, often referred to as the Oslo period, the PLO formed the Palestinian Authority (PA), which had limited "self-governing" powers in the areas from which Israeli forces were redeployed. All

the major issues of the conflict were left unresolved, however, including how much territory Israel would cede, the future of the Israeli settlements, water rights, the refugee problem, and the status of Jerusalem.

There were many delays in the negotiations process due to Israel's reluctance to relinquish control over the occupied territories, and periodic outbursts of violence by Palestinian opponents of the Oslo process.

During the protracted interim period, Israel increased and expanded the settlements in the occupied territories. Today, 440,000 Israeli settlers live in the West Bank (including those in East Jerusalem), in contravention of international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits an occupying power from transferring citizens from its own territory to the occupied territory. According to the Israeli organization Settlement Watch, the area that settlements officially dominate constitutes over 40 percent of the West Bank. By the time final status negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians got underway in mid-2000, four years late, the PA was in direct or partial control of some 40 percent of the West Bank and 65 percent of the Gaza Strip, including Palestinian population centers. The Palestinian areas were surrounded by Israeli-controlled territory, including airspace and water, with entry and exit also controlled by Israel.

The flawed "peace process" initiated at Oslo, combined with the daily frustrations and humiliations inflicted on Palestinians in the occupied territories, converged to ignite a second intifada beginning in late September 2000. This intifada initially consisted of demonstrations and clashes across the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which were largely targeted at Israeli checkpoints. As in the previous intifada, Palestinians threw stones at Israeli forces, who responded with rubber-coated steel bullets and live ammunition.

The clashes escalated to more armed confrontations between Israeli forces and Palestinian police and other gunmen. Israel responded to Palestinian small arms fire with tank shells and artillery, including the shelling of civilian neighborhoods in the West Bank and Gaza. The conflict's escalation saw Palestinian suicide attacks against Israeli civilians, settlers and soldiers, and Israeli assassinations of suspected militants and bystanders. Israel set up checkpoints and roadblocks cutting off free flow of movement between Palestinian areas. A period of massive invasions into Palestinian areas began in 2002, one result of which was the destruction of all but two Palestinian ministries, numerous police stations, and the total or partial destruction of 65 NGOs.

To date, over 4,600 Palestinians (among them 940 children) and over 1,000 Israelis (including 129 children and 326 security force personnel) have been killed since September 2000.

This sketch of the occupation, first intifada, Oslo Accords, and failure of Oslo gives a sense of the long history of ebbs and flows of violence through which Palestinians have lived. These rhythms of violence and of calm, of disruptions and expectations, and memories of past violence are part of what people were responding to during the second intifada.

NOTE

1. Portions of this textbox are adapted from Beinín and Hajjar n.d.

But straight or bent, they never had much bearing on the way in which residents figured place, located themselves, or gave directions to others. What resonated more with people's daily deictic references was the new martyr geography that the second intifada had imposed. Certain streets came to be referred to as "Martyrs' Passing," "Martyrs' Street," and "Martyr Square," now covered in commemorative martyr posters, marking those locations that were famous for clashes or notable for how many people were killed in the area.⁸ These unofficial labels became the official locations that even journalists referred to in their daily descriptions of yesterday's deaths. Recent real-life (and death) events were more important than any official marker and formed the most relevant base by which people organized their lives. Neither Israel's bombardments and invasions, nor the PA's inability to thwart them, defined how Palestinians oriented themselves in space and time. New places became landmarks with sedimented meanings, meanings that were continually dislodged and reconfigured throughout the years of the uprising. This article explores the spatial and social practices by which reorientation and adaptation to violence occurred in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) during the second intifada.⁹

The political and social significance of cultural practices whereby violence is routinized cannot be reduced to a claim that they shift the balance of the conflict in one direction or another. How can we acknowledge the power of violence in Israel's colonial project in the occupied territories without either assuming it to be all-determining of Palestinian experience, or championing every act of Palestinian survival to be heroic resistance?¹⁰ Memorialization that occurs in storytelling, in visual culture, in the naming of places and moving through spaces is one way in which violence becomes routine. When a variety of forms of violence are being mobilized to encourage, if not force, people to leave, the deflection of these measures through adaptation and just getting by becomes crucial.¹¹

Palestinians sometimes called these practices "sumud," a nationalistically inflected form of stoicism. In these conditions where the routine and assumptions of daily life are physically disrupted, purposefully and as part of the political program of Israeli colonialism, everyday life in Palestine—in its everydayness—is itself partly the result of concerted, collective production. There is something beyond political motives and awareness that inspire the incorporation of disorder into a quotidian order, however. The necessities of survival, and the physical and psychological capacities that people have to learn and adapt to sustain themselves in changing circumstances also feed into a kind of agency that is no doubt quite

prevalent in situations of ongoing violence, but that scholars have yet to adequately explore.

“Ta`wwudna”—we’ve gotten used to it—was the constant refrain of the second intifada. Although Palestinians sometimes consider their adaptation to the violence of occupation to be a form of political resistance, it was not always so intentionally signified. In demonstrating the ways in which the ongoing disruptions caused by the intifada and Israel’s harsh military responses to it became the everyday, this paper argues that the occupation in its most violent guise did not control the processes of subjectification in Palestine. The kind of agency expressed by most Palestinians was neither military resistance to occupation (Jad 2002; Tamari and Hammami 2001; cf. Abu-Lughod 1990), nor organized resistance to the prevailing political power of the PA or social norms of nationalism. The kind of agency entailed in practices whereby people manage, get by, and adapt was simply “getting used to it.”¹²

GETTING BY AND GOING AROUND

Sometimes getting by really means “just going around”: around checkpoints, over roadblocks, and slipping by soldiers. As the second intifada wore on, the number of road closures and checkpoints increased, including “flying checkpoints,” which are temporary and erratically placed. Movement of people and goods was severely restricted, with drastic effects on the Palestinian economy. Curtailed freedom of movement was a major prong of Israeli occupation policy. Although the Israeli government’s professed reason for these checkpoints and curfews was Israeli security, the very arbitrary nature of the blocks, and the randomness with which they were enforced led most people to understand that they were primarily a means of collective punishment, a way to stifle Palestinian economic activity and social coherence.¹³ Travel between towns and villages throughout the West Bank became a physical, and in some ways psychological, challenge. Getting from here to there was an endurance test. My field notes recounting a journey via public transportation between two West Bank towns, from Ramallah, a central urban area, to Qalqilya in the north on the border with Israel’s Green Line, gives some sense of the daily obstacles of occupation and how people surmounted them.

I traveled in a shared taxi via the Birzeit road, past a knot of sleepy villages with the Dr. Seuss name of Qura al-Durra, followed by a tangle of winding roads. We encountered at least two thoroughfares that the Israelis had blocked off, but, as most Palestinian drivers do if no Israeli tank is in sight, our chauffeur

managed to find alternate routes. We ultimately detoured southeast past Jericho, in order to reach the northwest West Bank town of Qalqilya. This detour through blocked-off, checkpoint-filled paths made it feel as if we really were traveling to the “moon,” the Canaanite’s name for the place. The roads curving through the middle of the hills were too much for one young passenger’s stomach, and the boy vomited in the back seat throughout most of the journey.

Two hours after leaving Ramallah, an hour longer than a visit through Nablus had required just a week earlier, the bluffs of that city came into view. Soldiers waved us through one checkpoint with no stop. Although it is not always completely clear what a soldier’s lackadaisical hand-wave might mean—come up, stop, hurry up, go through—which can make movement through a checkpoint nerve-rackingly uncertain, this time the soldier’s sweeping gesture urged us past. Eventually, as our car approached another blocked-off road leading into the town, a stream of travelers returning in the opposite direction presented us with the now universally understood sign language of people living under a checkpoint-filled occupation. A quick twist of a hand from our driver describes a question mark in the air posing the query, “What’s going on?” A back and forth swipe of fingers pointed downwards replies, “The road is closed,” which is usually followed by a spinning index finger, telling the interlocutor (intergesticulator?) to turn around, there’s no way through. And so, we turned around and traveled a back road through the village of Deir Al-Sharaf.

Although in this case no soldiers were apparent, many circumnavigations are stealthier, and more dangerous affairs. Sometimes soldiers chase such artful dodgers, or shoot. A grade school teacher trying to get from Bethlehem to her school in a village some 10 kilometers away recounted her harrowing efforts ducking through a rain of stones that Israeli soldiers were throwing at the fleeing Palestinians. During one of the seemingly interminable waits standing at the Qalandya checkpoint outside Ramallah, I watched a group of about fifteen people, mostly men, a couple women, sitting on the ground, being held under Israeli guard. Apparently they had been caught walking across the *kassarat* [the name of that detour path]. As people so often commented, it was “ady” (normal).

I was eventually let off in Nablus, and found my way into a taxi bound for Qalqilya. After driving for about half an hour more we made it to a new dirt area. One could not call it a road, or even a path, really. It was more just a set

of wheel tracks forged by the hardiness of earlier drivers. This led us bouncing over a tractor trail through someone's field, dropping us off to face a five minute walk over a dirt mound, too high and irregular for the taxis to cross. I stumbled down the other side of the hill, in the midst of women carrying all manner of bags and children. This brought me to yet another group of cars, one of which would finally release me into Qalqilya's sedate center. Different from the two other bypass dirt paths I had to take getting in and out of the same town during a visit just a couple of weeks earlier, this was the detour *de jure*. And all for 30 NIS, the equivalent of more than 7 U.S. dollars. A hefty sum for people living on 2 dollars a day.

Any comment I might make to fellow travelers on the astonishing tangle of paths one had to take to get most anywhere would be met with a shrug of ascent to the bizarreness of the situation, and the rhetorical question, "Shu bidna nsawy?" [What else can we do?]. People had to work, shop, get their kids to school, see relatives. The question of getting on with their lives, despite all these obstacles and dangers, was for many not a question. Some people did stay home, or reduced their travel, of course. But the blocks-long lines at checkpoints and the streams of cars snaking detours through fields were themselves a reply to the problem, "Shu bidna nsawy?"

PREOCCUPATION WITH OCCUPATION

As most people persisted in trying to get where they were going, they became busy with the little details of movement: which road is open, how long of a walk is involved, can the car climb the mound of dirt, has a good citizen with a tractor moved the massive cement blocks, are the soldiers shooting today, or are they just throwing rocks. So many conversations began with a usually blasé recounting of the journey that brought the speaker to that exchange. Two staff members at the NGO where I spent much of my fieldwork traveled daily from Bethlehem to Ramallah. Every morning was peppered by the local staff's questions in passing, "Have Firas and Ahmed made it in?" And when they arrived, which they usually eventually did, their coworkers would be regaled with the tales of their adventure, or simply a factual recounting of where the checkpoints were that morning. So much time was spent talking about time: "How long we stood in line at the checkpoint. How long they took to inspect each car. How long they held us by the side of the road. How long they kept our identity cards. How long they went on break while we waited for the checkpoint to reopen." Nevertheless, most businesses, schools,

medical establishments, and NGOs did continue to function, and like the staff at the Ramallah NGO, most people continued at least trying to get by.

Does this spatialized subsumption of disruption constitute a form of resistance to Israel's efforts to put down the uprising? Does it have to? Given the recent apparent shift in Israel's political approach to Palestine, which some describe as a change "from conflict resolution to conflict management" in the midst of "creeping apartheid" (Yiftachel 2005), the adaptation by Palestinians to arbitrarily disordered space and spectacular destruction may represent some middle ground between quiescence and refusal, a ground that might sprout creative political potential. But as Israeli leaders "continue and feed the illusion of possible peace, while buttressing a 'politics of suspension,' placing the status of Palestinians . . . in a perpetual state of uncertainty" (Yiftachel 2005:128; also see Azoulay and Ophir 2005), Palestinians' adaptation may ultimately be a self-defeating form of accommodation. Or it may not. Because of this Israeli imposed politics of limbo, the "just getting by" *every day* that is itself a form of agency with no determinate political effect may be one that analysts of violence and conflict may have a hard time recognizing.¹⁴

The long-term debates in anthropology and history about the nature of power, agency and resistance have seen Foucault's assertions that power and resistance are everywhere superseded by an insistence that if power (and resistance) is everywhere then it can be nowhere when the definition of resistance is "expanded so broadly that it denies any other kind of life to the people doing the resisting" (Cooper 1994:1532).¹⁵ Despite the large volume of ink spilled on the subject, or perhaps because of it, there is no available term that captures the political significance of ways of being in situations of conflict that involve just getting by, managing to function, adapting. There is no convenient concept for describing the processes and stances that constitute neither outright confrontation nor submission, but that are still critical to political dynamics. Political turning points, what historians would categorize as an "event" (Sewell 1996), are usually defined by, and recognized through, some great conflagration, structural shift, violent outburst, or admitted surrender. But the processes of managing everyday survival, which can be equally influential to the movement of politics, are somewhat more nebulous and unobtrusive, especially when they occur in the shadow of much more spectacular battles and bloodshed.¹⁶ The concept of "getting by" captures the many small actions in which political potential might inhere, especially when conditions on the ground do not provide enough evidence "to link the potential with the dynamics of a political process" (Cooper 1994:1532).¹⁷

REBUILDING AND FIXING MEMORIES IN PLACE

Only historical understanding of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict as one animated by ideologies and practices of territorial nationalism and settler-military occupation allows us to grasp the significance of the surprisingly humdrum reality that persists in Palestine under belligerent military occupation. Palestinians are up against a long-standing, concerted effort to reduce their physical and political presence in what was the historic land of Palestine.

A fundamental part of the material and semantic battle that colonization of a contested territory enjoins is the removal of historiographic and material evidence of the colonized's past in that place. For example, Israeli archaeological practices in the Old City of Jerusalem since the 1967 occupation have resulted in material destruction of Islamic structures, yet another element of the Israeli state's design to legitimize the Jewish presence while denying that of any other (Abu El-Haj 2001:153–156; also see Piterberg 2001).¹⁸ As official Zionist discourse attempted to deny any meaningful presence of Arabs in Palestine at the time of Israel's establishment, Palestinian nationalism countered in the same terms.¹⁹ Memory preservation through stories and objects such as the keys and layout plans to refugees' former homes is of existential import. As is the creation of historical, genealogical ties to place through remembering the people who have died there. Historiographical efforts to retain evidence of Palestinians' connections to the land and their rightful presence in it continues to be a central nationalist practice.²⁰

Israeli military responses to the intifada have been a clear continuation of this strategy of erasure, this time with widespread assaults on Palestinian material infrastructure. The path of devastation plowed through cities from Bethlehem to Jenin and beyond during the spring 2002 Israeli invasions. Roads, schools, electricity, and water and telephone lines were destroyed (see also Hass 2002). In the Jenin refugee camp, some 400 families were made homeless when their shelters were completely demolished, and an additional 1,500 dwellings were damaged.²¹ As an indication of just how materially destructive Israel has been, during the intifada almost €1 billion has been disbursed to the occupied Palestinian territories, primarily from the European Union, Arab League states, and the United States.²²

There is much that has been said about what the geographic and demographic conditions in Palestine–Israel portend for any future political settlement (see, e.g., Falah 2005; Halper 2000; Kanaaneh 2002; Yiftachel 2005). Commentators have speculated on the “strategy of ‘urbicide’” that former Israeli Prime Minister

Ariel Sharon enacted in Jenin and elsewhere with the goal of denying “the Palestinian people their collective, individual and cultural rights to the city-based modernity long enjoyed by Israelis” (Graham 2002:642; also see Hass 2002). Others have criticized the role of architecture, archaeology, and urban planning in cementing Israeli control (Weizman 2004; Monk 2002; Ouroussoff 2006; Abu El-Haj 2001).

To be sure, there is more to be said about Israel’s territorial intentions and geographic strategies,²³ and the economic, social, and political goals guiding Israel’s geographic impositions (Halper 2000),²⁴ especially in light of the government’s on-going unilateralism, as exemplified in their 2005 withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.²⁵ Understandings from this other perspective, however, that of the people negotiating the barriers and constantly shifting landscape, can open up the intellectual space to consider the “radical reconstructions of received representations” (Harvey 2000:558). This is the site for potential human creativity and political innovation. Or the site of just getting by. The following section describes the ways in which commemoration of martyrs became another way in which occupied spaces were recoded and reincorporated into the everyday.

VISUAL SATURATION OF MARTYRDOM

Surviving during the intifada also entailed dealing with the fact of those who had not survived. Martyrs—depicted as live people, dead bodies, individual faces, spilled innards, humans, and heroes—were the recurrent object of representation throughout the most intensely violent first three years of the intifada. Their hyperrepresentation was part of what made martyrs and martyrdom simultaneously meaningful and ignorable. It was not only explicitly nationalist events and groups that performed the recollection of political death in Palestine. Like Allen Feldman’s informants in Northern Ireland who were “choking on historical memory” (2003:60), the Palestinian built and bombed out environment, its urban landscape, its calendrical observances and commemorative marches, became saturated with martyr memorialization. Everything from social clubs to militant cells was named after martyrs. People often introduced themselves with reference to martyred relatives, and parents became known as Father or Mother of the Martyr So-and-So.²⁶

Transformations in urban geography and its naming, as streets soon came to be referred to as “Martyrs’ Passing,” “Martyrs’ Street,” and the like, were part of the process by which violence and crisis became enfolded into the everyday. Public spaces—town centers, traffic roundabouts, shopping strips, mosques, and alleys—now covered in representations of death and martyrdom by posters and

graffiti, visually subsumed each individual death into the common stream of intifada martyrdom, thus producing a tedium of death and the unremarkable nature of violence.

Martyr posters were among the most ubiquitous forms of visible commemoration. It was not only this saturating presence, but the constellation of places marked by posters that contributed to the incorporation of violence into the everyday. Walls covered in martyr posters displayed the faces of men, women, and children superimposed on a collage of nationalist and sometimes religious symbols and text. Martyr posters and framed photographs were also hung in family sitting rooms, on doors of martyrs' families' houses, along the alley walls of refugee camps, in restaurants, inside shops, on cars, up hospital stairwells, and on light poles. Smaller postcard size copies of posters were often offered to local and international visitors, and larger versions were paraded in funeral marches and shown on TV. Martyr posters thus created a visual continuity between public and domestic space.

The prevalence of posters in public view in each West Bank town also created a symbolic continuity among the physically separated areas of the occupied territories. Each place paid tribute to their local losses, but the same kinds of violent events, and the form in which their victims were commemorated, were shared across the governorates of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This was a nation united through death. These labyrinths of martyr images framed the prosaic tasks and routines of everyday life. Posters were placed in the same line of vision as streetlights and advertisements. Parking one's car and shopping for one's family were activities peppered with memories of nationalist death, but only occasionally did it overwhelm the normalcy of the day's tasks.²⁷

A Palestinian film made during the first year of the intifada, *News Time*, captures something of this blend from a child's perspective. The semistaged documentary follows four young boys, all 11 or 12 years old. In one scene they are walking around on one of the boy's birthdays. The narrator announces: "We decided to celebrate Ramallah style. Walk until exhausted." One of the boys explains: "Ramallah is our town. We have nowhere else to go. We know every single alley in it." The boys are shown walking arm in arm. "When we were walking in Ramallah, we saw a poster of my classmate who died. He went to the checkpoint then he died." The martyr poster appears, and the boy continues: "Tha'er Da'oud. I know him. He was my friend. I used to buy chicken from where he worked." And the boys continue on their jaunt. The film as a whole offers a commentary on the way death had become familiar, and observes how people had gotten used to death and its reminders in



FIGURE 1. Martyr poster.

daily life. Throughout *News Time*, death is noted, violence is mentioned, and then people, including children, get on with it.

FLATTENED OUT SPACE AND TIME

Formally, in the standard regularity of their design, posters implied the homogeneity of martyrdom as a general category, and the democracy of death. The poster designs generally included a montage consisting of a photo portrait of the person who was killed, the logo and name of their political party affiliation or the poster's sponsor, and any of various nationalist symbols, such as the al-Aqsa dome, the black and white checkered pattern of the Palestinian *kuffiyah*, the national colors, as well as text from the Qur'an. The date of death, residence, and promises to not forget the martyr were also typical elements of poster design. (See martyr posters, Figures 1–3.) With each new death, fresh posters were pasted over the tattered remains of older ones, proclaiming with a Qur'anic verse that the martyr is not dead, but lives on: "Do not regard those who have died for the sake of God as being deceased, for they live on and will receive their reward from God."²⁸

Posters were a blanketing feature of the intifada cityscape. As representations of death, no more what Barthes would call a "punctum" in either the visual culture



FIGURE 2. Martyr poster.

or quotidian routine under occupation, the posters formed a visual backdrop that mirrored the emotional tenor of mundane life that made death “normal” (*ady*) during the uprising. Just as with each new invasion, explosion, and death, Palestinians shrugged their shoulders and said, “we’re used to it,” and “it’s normal,” the predictable repetitiveness of the posters, visually subsuming each individual death into the common stream of intifada martyrdom, only added to their normalcy.



FIGURE 3. Martyr poster.

The routinizing effect of the poster was also apparent in its relation to notions of national historical time and the place of unique events and individual deaths within it. Beyond the edges of each poster, there is always another poster. Together they create a kaleidoscope of simulacra, each martyr face reflecting and reiterating that of another. They do not tell a linear narrative history, but capture instance after

instance collapsed into one generic moment—martyrdom—that has been made meaningful by nationalist symbols and values, the person and the sacrifice they represent. The wallpaper aspect of the posters was an effect of their multiplicity and constancy of appearance. The flatness and regularity of form groups together into one super symbol what was a series of moments of death and people who have passed through it. Although the faces may change every week as the violence continues, those differences are just a small turn of the kaleidoscope's wheel. Individual deaths are only temporarily noted events, quickly subsumed into the broader genre of martyrdom. Perhaps there is a distinction in the refraction of colors, the angles of the shapes contract or widen a few degrees, but the general form of faces on faces of death remains.

Through the sheer number of martyr posters and their mimetic reproduction, as well as through other images produced on TV and in human rights publications, a kind of presentist nonhistorical notion of time is being expressed in these visual forms. The aesthetic forms of martyr representations effected a constant reminder of a decontextualized, dehistoricized, nationalized present. In the intifada-montage sequences that were broadcast as fillers between news programs on television, for example, images from the first intifada (1987–93) and from 1948 (the Nakba) were interspersed into footage from clashes of the current intifada.²⁹ Pictures from the first intifada were used as illustrations in reports on the second, just as posters of young people martyred during the first intifada were redisplayed during commemorative events during the second. In this nonlinear, nondiscursive practiced poetic mode of image creation a historical consciousness, and rhetorical argument, is enacted (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:158–159). The commonly repeated observation that “we are living an ongoing Nakba” was not just a figure of speech. It was an expression of an experience of time, of a sense of the history and expected future that made violence unsurprising.

Walking through the alleys of a Bethlehem refugee camp, a guide pointed out the graffiti painting on the house of a family that had lost two sons. Israeli forces killed one son during the second intifada, and the other son during “the prisoner’s intifada” in 1998. Painted on the house were three candles, the first two with the names of the brothers written underneath, and the third labeled with question marks, asking the question, “Who is next?” Ongoing catastrophe was the norm and the predicted.

Although nationalist commemorations fill a significant portion of the Palestinian national calendar (Martyr’s Day, Nakba Day), new memorializations appeared in numerous forms each day. Walk through any town in the West Bank, and

martyr representations are everywhere. Martyr posters framing the faces of dead women, men, and children are pasted on any surface. Some are torn or partially covered over, with each new wave of Israeli attacks reflected in a fresh layer of posters.

Look up from these eye level commemorations and you may see a looming banner announcing the martyrdom of a famous political personality or person whose death was remarkable in some way. One such sign depicting the assassinated PFLP leader Abu 'Ali Mustafa hung in Ramallah for a time, streaming from the highest billboard.³⁰ Other banners, like those of Ayat al-Ikhris, a young female suicide bomber, were hung from the third floor of office buildings in the center of town; smaller versions were pasted on the hoods of cars that became mobile memorials sometimes festooned with wreaths of flowers and handwritten signs.³¹

Immediately after the assassination of PFLP head Abu 'Ali Mustafa, graffiti appeared across walls throughout the town of Ramallah promising the revenge for his death that would come at the hands of the "Abu 'Ali Mustafa Brigades," a newly named cell. The memorial ceremony that the PFLP organized on the 40th day after Israel assassinated its leader wrapped this man's death in a cocoon of national significance, extending his memory and presence even further. Salih Ra'fat, the General Secretary of FIDA (Democratic Union of Palestine), constructed Abu 'Ali's significance in a poetic eulogy:

"My brother, comrade, my dear friend. You left us physically but you are still alive in us and among us. Your precious spirit flutters above our heads. Every day we see you in every moment, in our society, in the progress of the popular marches and martyr funerals. We hear your voice that is so fundamentally true around the Minara [the central square in Ramallah], in festivals and celebrations. We meet you always in our visits to the families of martyrs and the injured in hospitals."

In speeches like these, in funeral-march slogans, in memorial graffiti and posters, the martyr is addressed directly, and in so doing, his or her sustained presence is pragmatically enacted. Space and life are filled with the density of remembered death.

MARTYRDOM IN AND OUT OF SIGHT

Commemorative images often appeared in surprising places, surprising to me at least, precisely because they were *not* special or sacred, and because they were *not* surprising to others. Representations of martyrdom were circulated

in rituals such as funerals, martyr posters were carried in funeral processions, ceremonies that, to an extent, marked themselves off from the routine of the everyday. But such rituals themselves became a near daily occurrence. Martyr images also filled mundane spaces, including restaurants, schools, shops, homes, and they covered commonplace implements, from keychains and T-shirts, to cars and school notebooks. For example, the family of a martyr in Jenin painted the entire back interior wall of their restaurant with a portrait of the young man. His somber, bespectacled face framed in bright plastic flowers watched over patrons as they ate. The mural, an enlarged copy of the young man's martyr poster, was labeled with his name, a description of him as "the hero of Qassam"—a reference to the Islamic political party Hamas's 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades that are its military wing—and the location of his suicide operation. The Palestinian women I was lunching with admired the plastic flowers hung around the portrait and the decorative stenciling along the restaurant's walls as they ate beneath the portrait's gaze. That the huge face of a dead man overlooking their meal was not perceived to be surprising by my Palestinian companions indicates how normal representations of death had become, and is an example of *how* death itself becomes normal. Both the supersaturation of public and private space with representations of death and the mixture of representations of death with banal contexts imparted that banality to death.

Others turned their shops into generalized memorials. A photocopy shop in Bethlehem, for example, was wallpapered from ceiling to floor entirely with martyr posters and calendars bearing the faces of the dead. Although this small, dark space saturated with reminders of death seemed claustrophobic to me, when I remarked on it to the friend I was with, she said she had not even noticed. Such photos were part of the landscape, an unremarkable element of the visual habitus. Although each face was different, unique to the person it represented, the overwhelming presence of "martyrs"—a generalized category—as part of the backdrop of life lessened not only the individuality of each dead person, but also the significance of the posters themselves.

DEATH AND VIOLENCE RECOLLECTED AND REPLACED

Palestinians pass through their own mazes of geography, memory, pictures, narrative, and silence on a daily basis. So many intense events have happened to people living under occupation, distinct memories and narrations of death and crises can emerge randomly in the flow of everyday life, blending into and out of the background of the prosaic. A walk or drive with anyone who lived in the occupied

territories is often accompanied by recollections about incidents that happened at particular locations along the path: “This is where I was shot. . . . This is where the soldiers stopped me. . . . This is where that 40-year-old mother of three was killed.” As a friend in Bethlehem accompanied me to visit a martyr cemetery, he pointed to the low hills, a mile or so away, and reminisced about the first intifada. “This is about where my brother was shot in the foot,” pointing to our path. “That hill over there is how far he ran, bleeding, to get away from the soldiers. . . .” Place, history, and social, political, and personal identity appear and recede into the background, the tellable or hidden, the rarely forgotten and often mentioned, adding individual and cultural meaning to the histories of places like these (cf. Stewart 1996:148, 156).

But stories sometimes needed time to emerge. It was only after several months of working with Dia’, my guide, transcriptionist, self-appointed political analyst, and friend, that he finally told me how he was injured during the first intifada.³² It was while walking around “The Clock Minara,” a small traffic circle in downtown Ramallah, that he told me his story. It was a path we had walked slowly many times before, me trying to effect a leisurely pace as he shuffled along on a lame leg, his gait made more awkward by the paralyzed arm he kept folded across his stomach. Dia’ recounted the details of the incident that ended in his injury, after being shot by an occupation soldier. The story concluded with his description of being in a coma for several months, in hospital for a year, and then in rehabilitation, all the while with a bullet lodged in his head. It was for this reason, his second chance at life after a near-death experience, he said, that he focused on staying so busy, helping anyone he could. The next time I walked with Dia’ and his girlfriend, Nadia, we passed the same spot, and the movie-like image I had conjured during Dia’'s first telling of his narrative ran through my mind. I asked Nadia if she had heard this story, and she nodded yes. In response to my question about the aftereffects of Dia’'s experience and this place, Dia’ and Nadia confirmed that passing by this spot often sparked this event in their minds, and henceforth, in mine as well. Nadia tried to avoid passing by at all. That spot had gathered a new intensity, a new meaning for the shared memory it provoked.³³

The fact that Dia’ had not recounted his violent experiences to me earlier was not a result of some Piercian quality of the “firstness” of the “Real” of violence (cf. Daniel 1996), which would suggest the possibility of some space, time, event, object or experience that is precultural and outside the realm of the social and narrated.³⁴ Stories of violence and place-inspired recollections of violent events were a regular, if occasional, part of social life, absolutely available to narration

and representation. During the second intifada, violence and the memory of death were palpable, sometimes oppressive and suffocating, often ignored.

And so it was in the Jenin Hospital. The hospital had been renamed “The Martyr Khalil Suleiman Memorial Hospital” for Dr. Suleiman, head of Jenin’s emergency medical services, shortly after he was killed on March 4, 2002, while attempting to retrieve the injured during an Israeli invasion of the town. (As the hospital director explained the commemorative name, “It is to remember a person, a national hero, who sacrificed to save others.”) When I visited, the stairwells, barely lit and crowded with patients and families because the downed electricity had left elevators inoperable, were papered over in martyr posters. The dark, cavernous hallways were likewise bedecked. As was the room of the patient I talked with, a laborer who had survived a shooting attack on his car by Israeli soldiers. The cousin who was riding with him did not survive, and as the patient recounted the events, he gazed tearfully up at the photo of his dead relative, now enshrined in a martyr poster in his hospital room. In the poster composition, the image of that dead man was placed next to the portrait photo of yet another person from the same family who also had been killed during the intifada. As the patient gave his affidavit to a human rights worker, he was interrupted by the sounds of the funeral procession following the dead man’s body from the hospital to the local cemetery. Most of his visitors left the room to join the mourners. The injured man offered a soda to me and the human rights worker, as a memorial gesture in the name of his martyred relative. Layer on layer of recollected death assaulted all one’s senses: from the hospital name, the building’s martyr poster wallpaper, to the room’s reminders of the family’s victims, from the sounds of the funeral, the small memorial gift, to the man’s close brush with his own death, witnessing the murder of his relative, and his own injury. And yet, at the end of our conversation, he shrugged and asked rhetorically, “What can we do? This is our life.” And the human rights researcher, matter of fact in his recording of testimony and filling out of forms, shrugged at me as well saying, “This is normal.” No longer marked off with the intensity of an “event,” except at particular moments, death and violence forms part of the “totalitarian overcoding of social life” (Hardt and Negri 2000:113) that is typical of moments of high nationalism. Death and its memory are everywhere, and thus, nowhere in particular.

OVERLOOKING VIOLENCE

Just as the strictures and discipline of urban planning are evaded and re-created in the everyday practices of walking, naming, and narrating (de Certeau 1984),

the antidisziplin of the occupation, those efforts to disrupt daily life, terrorize a population into submission, and quell the uprising through Israel's version of "shock and awe," were likewise skirted and shrugged off through Palestinians' unrelenting resignification of urban space.

Walking through the streets of Jenin in the summer of 2002 (two months after the month-long Israeli incursion that destroyed part of Jenin refugee camp), my guide, Denise, noticed a martyr poster torn up and on the ground. "Isn't that a shame," she clucked in disapproval. Whether it was by accident or intent, this disrespectful discarding of a martyr poster was rare to see. It was also rare to see someone really study a poster. It was usually only when I asked about a particular individual that someone would look. Martyr posters were part of the background. Death and violence were normal. And when impending danger poked through the routine of daily affairs, many did what they could to force it back.

As Denise and I left an interview in town, we heard a bit of shooting. Our interlocutor warned us to be careful. As we walked home, I thought—or felt—that there was a palpable sense of panic in the streets. People were walking fast, driving fast. Pedestrians were looking into the sky. Despite the nervousness I had expressed, Denise wanted me to stop and get a newspaper, to stop again and get the band-aids I had said I needed. She was purposely trying to linger a bit outside, when all I wanted to do was get off the streets. She remarked on the strange behavior of the people. As we passed an ambulance parked in the center of town (which is what paramedics did when Israeli incursions were expected), Denise stopped a passer-by to ask him what was going on. He said excitedly that an Israeli helicopter was shooting at people in the streets! Denise dismissed this entirely as utter nonsense. In response to my concern, she explained that if there was shooting at this street we would have heard it. I was not particularly comforted by this logic. We walked on and passed another of her friends. He laughed, and told us that the path we should take is to the right, pointing us on a detour around something we should surely avoid. He was making fun of the rising sense of collective distress around. Denise asked him what was going on, and mentioned that people said there was shooting in town. He dismissed that and said that some people had gotten into a fight; that is all it was. Denise believed this proved her nonchalance appropriate, and we continued homeward. As we passed by the corner shop, the owner was closing up early, putting all his wares inside. Someone laughed at him "So you're locking up too?" chiding him for his overly cautious behavior.

He brushed them off. Then walking farther on we ran into Denise's cousin, who lived in a village not far out of Jenin. He was walking very fast and looked concerned. She wanted to know what his problem was. "There's not so much to be worried about," she insisted. He pointed to the line of people trying to get taxis out of town, indicating a contrary opinion. He suggested she bring her family to his house, as it was safer there. She agreed that maybe it was safer there. Knowing her I said, "but you won't go." Her reply: "Of course not. Either something happens here or there. What's the difference. . . ."

Such was her refusal to let the occupation budge her out of the routine tasks of her day. In effect, Denise was thumbing her nose at the occupation when she went up to the roof of her house to watch the shooting, while recounting with pride the other occasions on which she had repeated this brave performance. Palestinians in some contexts lived through violence, and intentionally confronted it as a means of *sumud* (stoicism, staying power). They also sometimes lived through it with no nationalist value attached, simply getting by as an everyday embodied, material practice. Clearly, as the above account reveals, not everyone adopted such a consistently—and insistently—blasé stance as Denise. But daily life was a continual improvisation for everyone, and for everyone it required navigating safety zones and dangers, which were threats to physical well-being just as much as to personal, and national, pride.

ZAHQAN: GETTING FED UP

Although violence and political conflict can impart to events and memories new intensities, existential valences, and feelings of desperation, such sensibilities coexist with boredom, the normal, and the banality of violence. For, in the midst of traumatic, deadly daily events, and beyond the bravado and "sumud" that made up the normative sentiments of Palestinian nationalism, it was boredom and *zahaq* (a state of being fed up and frustrated) that came to be a dominant "political ethos" (Jenkins and Valient 1994).

Being fed up (*zahqan*) became a kind of national emotion, one that was expressed in a variety of contexts. When I asked a friend, who was sounding tired and unhappy over the phone, how he was doing in Gaza, he replied: "I'm taking exams, but doing just OK. It's hard to concentrate. All last night I was going from balcony to book and back and forth. I'm zahqan." Israeli missiles had destroyed the Palestinian Preventive Security headquarters the night before, visible from my friend's balcony. He was restless, tired, tired of being distracted.

As one acquaintance put it two years into the uprising, “We used to say we were fed up (*zahqan*), then disgusted (*qarfan*), then there was boredom (*malal*), now we don’t know what we are . . .” Most people did not regularly walk in martyr funerals, for example, either because they were unconvinced of the importance of such demonstrations, or, according to most people I talked with, they were simply too exhausted and fed up with the ever-present death and destruction. A former political prisoner told me, even as we marched in a funeral procession, “People have gotten used to this, all the martyrs. Every day there are more. They feel bored. Every day it’s another martyr. I came out of prison and all I’ve done is go to funerals.” As another interlocutor said—ironically after telling me all the reasons of solidarity and social commitment that led him to walk in yet another martyr funeral—his proficient English more than adequate to his sardonic manner, “Same shit, different day.” The excessive force (Falk 2000) with which Israel reacted to the second intifada was enacted through strategies aimed at making “the life of Palestinians into hell” until they leave (as *Arabic News* reported Israeli Minister of Labor Shlomo Bin Azri as saying in May 2001 [Graham 2002]). Adaptation to hell was thus existentially crucial.

This adaptation occurred through responses to violence—or, nonresponse—as well as through the narration of those responses. When I asked a friend about what sounded to me like an increase in gunfire in the neighborhood, and more machine gun fire especially, she responded nonchalantly, “Oh, there’s something.” When I mentioned it to my neighboring landlord, he responded, “Oh, a little. At night.” He waved me off when I mentioned that it was going on during the day too. Eventually, the shooting became unremarkable to me as well. On another occasion, while sitting in a director’s office at an NGO, a string of gunshots punctuated the air. I exchanged vaguely worried glances with others in the room. When another round went off, the director remarked that it might have been gunfire at a martyr’s funeral. When the shooting continued a bit, we got up to look out the window. We saw nothing, the shooting stopped, and we continued our conversation. Later, a neighbor pointed out my transformation, saying, “You’ve become like us. You’re used to it. Maybe at first people are afraid, and then, you just get used to it.”

The fact that people had gotten used to the violence was itself an occasional topic of conversation, which highlights the fact that this adaptation was not the same as acceptance. As the same neighbor explained to me: “Israelis don’t understand the Palestinians, who can live in a state of problems pretty much indefinitely. Not that problems are *part* of their life, like with you, Lori. You *have* problems, and that’s part of your life. And there is something else beyond that. But for us,

problems *are* our life.” His final rhetorical question pointed to the spatial incorporation of problems into the everyday: “Does anywhere else have checkpoints like this?”

CONCLUSION: THE CONTRAPUNTAL RHYTHMS OF LIVING THROUGH COLONIAL VIOLENCE

In Foucault’s notion of discipline, what he considered to be the “general formula of domination” in the modern era (1995:137), power is a matter of gestures and mannerisms of the body, its comportment in space and regulation through time, and is produced within the body, beneath consciousness, as it is processed by state institutions and carried with precision in the home and workplace. Modern military occupation and colonialism, however, are congeries of forms of discipline, domination, and brute force. The social and spatial instabilities that result from physical violence make any particularly precise organization of the body through space impossible, which is the antidiscipline of the occupation.³⁵ Even as these Israeli military strategies continue to terrorize, kill, and destroy, in however a hobbled fashion Palestinians persist not only walking, naming and narrating the swirl of events stirring up their cities and lives, they also simply “get used to it.”³⁶ This happens, in part, through the production of particular forms of social space through memorializing practices. It also happens in the ways people physically navigate through space and narrate their experiences of violence.

Although Israel overwhelmingly controls the material production of space through their monopoly on the force and technology involved in the creation of physical settings, Palestinians’ adaptation to and rejection of their effects are in many ways beyond the control of those who dominate and destroy buildings, olive groves, and roads. Spatial configurations, transformations of physical environments, and social relations are, after all, “both reciprocal and dialectical” (Harvey 2000:557). It is this kind of geographical knowledge, of the “heterotopic” everyday, what Hetherington describes as “spaces of alternate ordering” (Harvey 2000:539) that disturb and undermine “received forms of sense and meaning” (Harvey 2000:539), and especially people’s experiences of it, which can help us understand politics, subjectivity, and the mutual constitution of affect, memory and space as they contribute to political and cultural identities under conditions of violence.

Edward Said (1994) has called for a contrapuntal reading of colonial history, one that takes account of multiple and intermingling voices, of that which is forcibly excluded from privileged narratives. Staccato and legato, then, might be

the musical metaphors most appropriate for an interpretation of ongoing violent colonial conflict. Such an approach acknowledges the drama, spectacle, and intensity of violence, along with the ways in which the sharp edges of brief, pointed, jarring eruptions of violence are continually smoothed over, flattened out and tied back into the cultural “web of meanings.” This is not to banalize violence, downplay suffering, nor to discount pain, or eliminate a sense of “the extreme,” but rather to show how and why Palestinians sometimes do.

“Getting used to” violence is an embodied social practice that is continual, and continually emerging into narrative and receding from ideational signification. This tense oscillation between the meaningful and the banal was the perhaps ironic effect of the intensity of both Israeli violence and Palestinian nationalist responses to it.³⁷ These were the conditions that produced a kind of agency of “the everyday”—an analytic category that includes “an embodied and somewhat automatic ‘knowledge’ that functions like peripheral vision, not studied contemplation, a knowledge that is imageric and sensate rather than ideational . . . a knowledge that lies as much in the objects and spaces of observation as in the body and mind of the observer” (Taussig 1991:147).³⁸ The process of taming violence, of reincorporating the extreme and existential into the ordinary and even predictable, largely happens in this nondiscursive realm. It occurs in moving through spaces, in vision and through bodies, in silences and shrugs. It is expressed in the capacity to stop noticing, or at least stop noticing all the time.³⁹

There is much that is unique about the contours of violence and how those who are subject to it react in a colonial situation that is also one of long-term military occupation. Most colonizing powers throughout history, which did not fall under the category of military occupation, have sought not only to claim rule over land, commodities, and workers. Regimes of knowledge (Cohn 1996), medical and scientific practice (Vaughan 1991), as well as architectural reconstruction (Mitchell 1991) also defined for both the colonized and colonizer what were “proper” relations of intimacy (Stoler 2002), appropriate modes of dress and gendered behavior (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997), and productive ways of laboring in and looking at the world. Colonial projects were also self-understood as civilizing missions, intent on changing subjectivities, reshaping parameters of correct personhood, in part through the inculcation of new (capitalist, Christian) value systems. Likewise, these physical, spatial, subjectifying colonial processes were met by, and in turn shaped by, the many ways in which the colonized reappropriated and resignified, and sometimes resisted colonialism.

Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem, however, although constitutive and enabling of Israel's colonial expansion, is markedly unconcerned with instilling in Palestinians a new sense of morality, for example, or in imposing an appreciation for free market capitalism. To the contrary, the occupation is distinctly not about creating subject-citizens or incorporating Palestinians into the Israeli body politic.⁴⁰ Israel is not interested in retooling Palestinians as subjects to fit their market and labor needs, or implementing any other ideological scheme. Instead, the occupation is implemented through technological prowess, military expertise, brute force, and overwhelming physical control. This in turn partially shapes the response of Palestinians living under this regime. Palestinians thus respond by denying the point—and by that I mean both the goal, and the pointiness, the shock, the disturbance of the everyday—of the occupation's violence.

ABSTRACT

The second Palestinian intifada against Israeli occupation, which began in September 2000, saw Palestinian areas repeatedly invaded and shelled by Israeli forces. A long history of war and targeted cities is told along the thoroughfares of Palestinian towns; memories of past battles and defeats inscribed in street signs recall massacres in places like Tel Al-Za'atar and Deir Yasin. But recent events were more important than any official marker and formed the most relevant base by which Palestinians organized their lives. Commemorative cultural production and basic acts of physically getting around that became central to the spatial and social practices by which reorientation and adaptation to violence occurred in the occupied Palestinian territories. This article analyzes the spatiotemporal, embodied, and symbolic aspects of the experience of violence, and the political significance of cultural practices whereby violence is routinized. Such an approach provides a lens onto the power of violence in Israel's colonial project in the occupied territories that neither necessitates an assumption that violence is all determining of Palestinian experience, nor a championing of every act of Palestinian survival as heroic resistance. Memorialization that occurs in storytelling, in visual culture, in the naming of places and moving through spaces is one way in which this happens. The concept of "getting by" captures the many spatial and commemorative forms by which Palestinians manage everyday survival. The kind of agency that is entailed in practices whereby people manage, get by, adapt, and the social significance of getting used to it may be somewhat nebulous and unobtrusive as it develops in the shadow of spectacular battles and bloodshed. I demonstrate that this routinization of violence in and of itself, the fact of getting by, just existing in an everyday way, is socially and politically significant in Palestine.

Keywords: space, violence, martyrdom, Palestine, intifada, commemoration, agency, everyday

NOTES

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1. This article is part of a larger project that examines the ways in which human rights and suffering mediate Palestinian politics, and is based on two years of fieldwork conducted primarily in the West Bank between November 2000 and January 2003.
2. In addition, more than 31,800 Palestinians have been injured as a result of Israeli actions and since September 29, 2000 (Palestine Red Crescent Society n.d.).
3. Although deaths caused by the occupation are not the only index of disruption, figures do provide some indication. Between November 3 and 30, 2004, 50 Palestinians were killed and at least 129 were injured (OCHA 2004), whereas between March 30 and May 3, 2005, eight Palestinians were killed and at least 183 injured. That is, although there was a decrease in number of deaths during the period of February–March 2005, the number of Palestinian injuries have increased (OCHA 2005). The situation in the Gaza Strip has been quite different, however, with residents there in general experiencing a higher level of violent Israeli incursions. The week beginning February 27, 2008 saw a major Israeli incursion into the Gaza Strip. As a result of Israeli military activities until March 3, 2008, 108 Palestinians were killed, including 54 unarmed civilians. The civilians killed included 26 children and 5 women. In addition, dozens have been injured, many seriously (Palestine Red Crescent Society 2008).
4. As of February 2008, OCHA identified 580 checkpoints and obstacles to Palestinian movement in the West Bank, a 54.3 percent increase over the 376 counted on August 1, 2005.
5. More than 9,000 Palestinians are held prisoner in Israel, the vast majority in facilities of the Israel Prisons Service, and a small number in IDF facilities. The figures are provided by Israeli government authorities (B'Tselem 2007).
6. It should be noted, here, that *martyr* refers to anyone who was deemed to have been killed as a result of the occupation, not exclusively stone throwers, suicide bombers, or militants. This includes children shot sitting in their classrooms, or people who died after being blocked from reaching hospital at checkpoints.
7. Thousands of Palestinians were killed in Tel Al-Za'atar, the Beirut refugee camp, inhabited by some 20,000 Palestinian refugees, when it was laid under siege in the summer of 1976 by several thousand Maronite militiamen. On April 9, 1948, 100 men, women, and children were killed in Deir Yassin when commandos of the Israeli Irgun and the Stern Gang attacked the village.
8. For a more in-depth discussion of martyr posters and other memorial practices, see Allen 2006a.
9. For a comparative analysis that frames similar spatial practices during the intifada in terms of displacement and confinement, see Kelly 2004.
10. In a January 29, 2007 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, South African lawyer John Dugard has characterized

- Israel's military occupation as a form of colonialism, apartheid, and foreign occupation (UN Reference: A/HRC/4/17. Available at <http://electronicintifada.net/artman/uploads/a-hrc-4-17.pdf>). For scholarly accounts of Zionism as a colonial project, see Shafir 1996 and Abu El-Haj 2001.
11. Some would specify these forms of violence as ethnic cleansing (Pappe 2006; cf. Blecher 2005). For another example of how “getting by” happens and is conceptualized in war conditions, see Hoffman 2007:406.
 12. Exploration of the reasons for and ways in which Palestinians have become “used to” violence could open the way to accusatory diagnoses of Palestinians’ social and psychological pathology, a verdict already encouraged by the past few years’ waves of news coverage asserting Palestinians’ “culture of death” and “culture of martyrdom.” Such mischaracterizations imply that a propensity to kill and be killed is an inherent feature of the social structure of Palestinian society and ontological makeup of Palestinian personhood. Confirming this stereotype, needless to say, is not my intention.
 13. For information on the humanitarian effects of closures, see the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (www.ochaopt.org). For more data on the forms and effects of checkpoints and other hindrances to free movement in the Territories, see (B’Tselem n.d.b). Also see BADIL 2003 and Hass 2002.
 14. It is useful here to consider Saba Mahmood’s critique of secular liberal and poststructural theory for its reduction of the notion of agency to “a binary model of subordination and subversion” because this approach “elides dimensions of human action whose ethical and political status does not map onto the logic of repression and resistance” (2005:14; also Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:236). Although her primary concern is with the tendency of feminist and progressive secular scholars to look for, expect, and foster resistance to norms and structures that reduce freedom or sustain gender inequality, Mahmood’s theoretical cautions are more broadly applicable. In her effort to locate agency within the specificity of particular contexts, she urges sensitivity to the question of how we can “analyze operations of power that construct different kinds of bodies, knowledges, and subjectivities whose trajectories do not follow the entelechy of liberatory politics” (Mahmood 2005:14). In other words, we must understand power, subject formation, and agency through the logic and discursive traditions in which they take place (Mahmood 2005:15).
 15. Although, as it must be conceded, resistance has long been an overplayed category in anthropological writing (Abu-Lughod 1990; Ortner 1995), the critique of it may have ended up being overdone as well. Resistance is still a relevant local concept and practice for people living under occupation and other forms of military, governmental, or economic and structural oppression.
 16. For more on how Palestinians manage economically, see Allen 2006b.
 17. The concept of getting by points to the structurally and militarily imposed powerlessness of Palestinians living under occupation. Rather than reify and valorize agency, I have focused on the normalization of violence that leads to adaptation and “getting by” as a way of describing a complicated sociopolitical field in which unequal kinds of political, and material, agency are available to different groups, individuals, and institutions. Without downplaying the actual political efforts and modes of resistance that great swaths of Palestinian society—from NGOs and political parties, to women spontaneously mobilized in street protest as well as militant groups—do in fact enact, what must be emphasized are the difficult structural conditions of Palestinians’ mere survival that makes many kinds of agency—and resistance—impossible. Nevertheless, Palestinians are reacting to, and dealing with, violent occupation every day in countless ways. Organized social movements, political parties, human rights activism, psychotherapy, crime, scholarship, literature, and music are all modalities through which Palestinians manage their lives under occupation, sometimes explicitly understood as political reactions, as resistance, and just as often not. Moving and making meaning in the spaces of violence, memorialization and the everyday are one more way of getting by.
 18. Israeli national museums likewise effect different levels of erasure, circumscribing Palestinian existence within ahistorical forms that can be more readily subsumed within the Israeli nation-state (Katriel 1997; Swedenburg 2003). The imposition of alien conceptions and configurations

- of space and time have always been a central feature of colonial projects, now an accepted truism, largely thanks to historical-anthropological studies of the Age of Empire (e.g., Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, 1997; Mitchell 1991). Indeed, the production and naming of land and its history has been revealed as a fundamental and ongoing feature of the Israeli settler-colonial mission in Palestine (Abu El-Haj 2001; Benvenisti 1996; LeVine 2005). The tremendous impact that the continuing construction of the separation barrier (Sorkin 2005), demolition of Palestinian houses, seizure of lands, and continuous expansion of illegal settlements (Le More 2005:91; B'Tselem 2002) have on Palestinian politics and daily life is well documented. For reports on land seizure and home demolition, see B'Tselem n.d.a.
19. Avi Shlaim's (2001) history of the early Israeli state clarifies the distinction between, on the one hand, popular and public discourse and, on the other hand, the Zionist leaders' actual awareness of the existence of Arabs as a problem that would have to be dealt with, mostly through use of an "iron wall" of overwhelming military force.
 20. Within Davis's (2002) larger discussion of how individual and collective memories are used to construct an image of the past, she examines the challenges of Palestinian historiography in the face of Israeli efforts to erase that past. For more on the vagaries and politics of memory in Palestine/Israel, see Bowman 2006 and Slyomovics 1998.
 21. United National News Service (2002). Estimated damage there totaled \$88 million. In addition, 23 Israeli soldiers and 59 Palestinians were killed. More recently, the UN Development Programme's Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP) estimated that the total cost of the damage to the infrastructure in the Gaza Strip for the period between June 28 and August 27, 2006 was around \$46 million. Available at: <http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/f45643a78fcb719852560f6005987ad/5b1c484b463edf00852571e1006b30d5!OpenDocument> (accessed March 30, 2008).
 22. UN Press Release 22 July 2002. (PAL/1927). "UNRWA-UAE Red Crescent Society Partnership Begins with \$27 Million Donation to Rebuild Jenin Camp." In general, the bulk of donor funding to the Palestinian territories has been "crisis funding," provided for emergency assistance, propping up the PA, and humanitarian relief aid, rather than long-term development of infrastructure. According to the European Union's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), annual donor disbursements doubled from €0.5 billion to €1 billion per year in 2001 and 2002. http://ec.europa.eu/echo/pdf_files/leaflets/palestinian_en.pdf (accessed March 30, 2008).
 23. Across the urban social sciences in general, work on the destruction of cities is a largely unexplored topic (Graham 2004b:168; Bishop and Clancey 2004:57-58).
 24. Also see reports by Foundation for Middle East Peace (www.fmep.org).
 25. Residents of the Gaza Strip have been almost entirely cut off from much of the outside world since then (Roy 2005). Condoleezza Rice's efforts in 2006 to ensure open crossings between Gaza and its markets never materialized. The UN reported that Gaza was losing at least \$500,000 a day in exports because of the border closures (UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East 2006).
 26. For a discussion of the ways in which representations of death and suffering produced in Palestinian media and human rights work also functioned to sustain national attachments, see Allen n.d.
 27. For a comparative treatment of the public commemoration of martyrdom, see Varzi 2006.
 28. "Wa laahasaban aladhin qutilu fi sabilillah amwatan, bel ahyā' 'and rabbihim yarzaqun" [an alternative translation, "Count not those who were killed in God's way as dead, but rather living with their Lord, by Him provided, rejoicing in the bounty that God has given them] (Sura 3:164).
 29. "Al-Nakba" (the Catastrophe) is the term Palestinians use to refer to the beginning of their dispossession in 1948, when some 750,000 Palestinians became refugees as a result of the establishment of the Israeli state (Morris 1987).
 30. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine is a relatively small, leftist faction.
 31. In Palestine, such attacks are usually referred to as "martyrdom operations" (*'amaliyat istish-hadiyya*) and the person who performs it is someone who has martyred themselves (*istish-hady/iya*).

32. Aside from public personalities and the dead, names of all interlocutors have been changed.
33. On the social function of landscape in narration and morality, see Basso 1996.
34. Violence is figured to be the “distinctly noneveryday” (Lefebvre 1997:37), the upsetting event to be rectified, that which is to be never forgotten so as to never happen again (Bauman 1989). This stance is part of what has kept political violence outside the purview of urban sociology until recently (Graham 2004a). But even those studies that refute such exceptionalizing theories of violence tend to focus on the typical nature of perpetrators, rather than victims. Stanley Milgram’s experimental studies of “obedience” are the most famous example. Also, see studies about the “ordinary persons” who become torturers (Allodi 1988; Conroy 2001) and perpetrators (e.g., Browning 1993). In other discussions of violence, scholars retreat to poststructural concepts that deny their own analytic power, such as “the sublime,” “the Real,” or to a notion of the body in pain that is prelinguistic and presocial (Daniel 1996; Scarry 1985; Taussig 1987). These approaches, and the controversies and debates that surround them, do not escape a kind of moralism, sometimes unspoken, often baldly asserted, which insists that certain violent actions and events are too extreme to deserve social analysis, or they are so horrific they exceed any discursive, analytic attempt to represent them. See Margold (1999) for a critique of academic and popular usage of categories such as the “culture of terror” and “culture of fear” in the work of Taussig and others. She usefully draws attention to the ways in which the “culture of terror/fear” trope so common in anthropologies of violence “implies that terror and fear are totalizing conditions that orchestrate all the rhythms of daily life,” thus evacuating analysis of the conditions under which people manage to strategize and mobilize in response to terror, rather than succumb to paralysis and fear (Margold 1999:64, 83).
35. At the same time, a form of “discipline,” which is not exactly analogous to that which Foucault has theorized, still functions in Israel’s military control of the occupied Palestinian territories. The West Bank and Gaza Strip are overwhelmingly controlled by military surveillance through the use of technology, including cameras and phone taps, a thick web of informants and collaborators, as well as through geographic organization, insofar as settlements and Israeli military camps are placed strategically over and outside Palestinian population centers, to enforce this “matrix of control” (Halper 2000).
36. Brute force is also part of how some Palestinians react to, and resist, occupation, tactics that likewise kill and disrupt the routines of Israeli daily life.
37. Allen (2006a) addresses this tension more specifically.
38. For discussions of the theoretical purchase of “the everyday” as an analytic concept, see Bourdieu 1977, de Certeau 1984, and Lefebvre 1991.
39. Jean-Klein (2001) provides a very different discussion of “the everyday” in Palestinian nationalism. Deploying a theoretically problematic division of “self” and “the nation,” her goal is to identify the ways in which nationalist meaning becomes part of everyday practice when “ordinary persons fashion *themselves* into nationalized subjects” (Jean-Klein 2001:84).
40. For a nuanced discussion of these issues as they pertain to Palestinians residing in the state of Israel, see Robinson 2005.

Editor’s Note: *Cultural Anthropology* has published a range of essays on Palestinians, the Palestinian territories, and continuing conflict in the region. See, for example, Rhoda Kanaaneh’s “We’ll Talk Later” (1995) and Ted Swedenburg’s “Occupational Hazards: Palestine Ethnography” (1989). For another account of “the everyday” within the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, see Eyal Ben-Ari’s “Masks and Soldiering: The Israeli Army and the Palestinian Uprising” (1989), which queries how Israeli “army reservists interrelate, reconcile their experiences of serving in the territories during the intifada (the Palestinian uprising) with living their ‘normal,’ everyday Israeli lives” (p. 373).

Cultural Anthropology has also published many essays that critically explicate dynamics and representations of violence. See, for example, Bruce Grant’s “The Good Russian Prisoner: Naturalizing Violence in the Caucasus Mountains” (2005), Gregory Starrett’s “Violence and the Rhetoric of Images” (2003), and Erik Mueggler’s “A Carceral Regime: Violence and Social Memory in Southwest China” (1998).

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