



Under the direction of Riccardo Bocco and Ibrahim Saïd

## De/Colonising Palestine Contemporary Debates

---

### Chapter Twenty-Four

# Solidarities from Within the Zionist System: Assessing Present-day Israeli Activism for Palestinian Rights

Alice Baroni

---

Publisher: Graduate Institute Publications  
Place of publication: Genève  
Published on OpenEdition Books: 21 mai 2025  
Series: eLivres de l'Institut  
Digital ISBN: 978-2-940600-51-9



<https://books.openedition.org>

## DIGITAL REFERENCE

Baroni, Alice. "Solidarities from Within the Zionist System: Assessing Present-Day Israeli Activism for Palestinian Rights". *De/Colonising/Palestine*, edited by Riccardo Bocco and Ibrahim Saïd, Graduate Institute Publications, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.4000/13znj>.

---

This text was automatically generated on 22 mai 2025.



The PDF format is issued under the Creative Commons - Attribution - Pas d'Utilisation Commerciale - Pas de Modification 4.0 International - CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license unless otherwise stated.

## Chapter Twenty-Four

# Solidarities from Within the Zionist System: Assessing Present-day Israeli Activism for Palestinian Rights

---

Alice Baroni

The chapter provides a critical assessment of Jewish-Israeli civil society groups for Palestinian rights as of today and is based on extensive fieldwork in Isra-el-Palestine over the years 2018-2019. After having reviewed the groups' main features as compared to the past, the chapter asks what their action can tell us about the possibility of building solidarity and critique from within the institutional and discursive boundaries of the system they set out to redress. The chapter unravels the paradoxes and contradictions of Jewish-Israeli activism in its relationships to Palestinians, and eventually finds in the grey zone of impure political struggles some bases for a constructive rethinking of counter-hegemonic solidarity praxis in asymmetrical conditions.

---

*I would like to thank the editors and anonymous reviewers of this book for the comments made on previous versions of this chapter. Likewise, the chapter has benefited from discussions with Keith Krause, Jonathan Luke Austin, and with the activists who took the time to read it and give me their feedback. I am hugely grateful to all of them.  
This chapter was written in December 2020.*



## The Great March of Return

2019 | Light jet print mounted on matt diasec. 200 cm diameter. In the museum collection of The Arab World Institute in Paris, and the Contemporary Art Platform, Kuwait.

**Steve Sabella**, <https://stevesabella.space/pages/the-great-march-of-return>

## Introduction

Support for Palestinian rights from within Jewish-Israeli society has existed since the outset of the Israeli enterprise, with forms and framings that span widely across the spectrum of critique to Zionism (Greenstein 2014; Ehrlich 2003).<sup>1</sup> Yet, far from achieving even the mildest objectives of socio-political change, Jewish-Israeli activists have been receding both in numbers and in the extent of their critique. With a few hundred people at most able to mobilise across the whole country, even activists perceive themselves as “too few to mention.”<sup>2</sup> Long gone are the days when thousands of Israelis would march in the streets of Tel Aviv demanding an end to the occupation and to illegal settlements, confident they could create a milder version of Zionism. Even longer, the days when a tiny organisation of Israelis and Palestinians dared to expose a society inebriated by the victory of the 1967 war to the grim reality that that war was fought from the wrong side of history, that the entire Israeli enterprise was of a colonial nature, and that the only solution was to unite with Palestinians in a revolutionary struggle against Zionism.

Today, all this seems unthinkable. Since the Second Intifada, the barycenter of Israeli politics has shifted more and more to the right, and with it its social consensus. The consolidation in power of an alliance of right-wing nationalists, religious Zionists, and settler organisations has exacerbated the racist elements embryonically present in Zionist ideology, opening the door to the normalisation of the most aggressive attitudes towards the Palestinian issue (Jamal 2018; ICG 2009; Ram 2003; Pappé 2003). In everyday common sense, settlements are just ‘neighbourhoods,’ the Green Line is erased from the maps, and even ‘occupation’ has become a contested word. The political debate has shifted from considering the perks and pitfalls of ending the occupation to choosing between occupation and outright annexation, and in the 2019 elections left-leaning voters found themselves hoping for the victory of a hawkish former general. Liberal Zionist positions, which once occupied the centre of the socio-political spectrum, are perceived to be as treacherous and alien as anti-Zionist ones, and ‘leftist’ has become an insult. In this situation, those Israelis who publicly uphold any alternative solution to the current occupation-versus-annexation deadlock face a number of obstacles. Politically

<sup>1</sup> Throughout the chapter, I use the terms *Jewish-Israelis* and ‘Israelis’ interchangeably to refer to those who belong to the Jewish majority in Israel. While the hyphenated term is more correct because it accounts for the fact that Israeli society is composed by many nationalities, among which a Palestinian minority, the use of ‘Israeli’ only is widely accepted because it reflects the fact that Jewish-Israelis are the sole referents of Israeli (ethno)democratic laws, collective traditions, myths, and narratives. Similarly, when I refer to ‘Palestinians’ I include in the term indiscriminately Palestinian citizens of Israel, residents of Jerusalem, and inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza, as well as Palestinian refugees in other countries, to account for the fact that despite different juridical statuses, they share the same historical and cultural relation to the land of historic Palestine, and are subjected in Israel to the same framework of denial of rights and discriminatory perceptions.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Boycott from Within activist (Tel Aviv, March 2019).

delegitimised as a ‘fifth column’ of foreign pro-Palestinian interests, they have a hard time finding political allies and an audience to mobilise. Legally obstructed by a set of laws designed to constrain their possibility for action and critique, they struggle to reach even minimal goals. Socially rejected, and often violently so, due to public shaming campaigns orchestrated by mainstream media and right-wing organisations, they strive to sustain their engagement, and the few who succeed are subject to isolation and burn-out (HRDF 2019; Zonszein 2018).<sup>3</sup>

This situation demands asking what is left, today, of the Israeli ‘Left’ in Jewish-Israeli civil society. Are there still people daring to propose alternative visions for the future of Israel-Palestine, and what do these alternatives look like? How do activists adapt their discourses and strategies to survive and find an audience for their claims? Does this audience still comprise the Israeli public, or has it been replaced by an international one? Is anti-Zionism still an option, or has it been replaced by the far fuzzier framework of ‘post-Zionism’? And, most importantly, do these activists still represent a relevant ally for their Palestinian counterparts – if they ever have?

Based on six months of fieldwork in Israel-Palestine (2018-2019) and on the analysis of relevant documents and news items (2017-2020), this chapter provides a critical assessment of the full spectrum of Jewish-Israeli activism in support for Palestinian rights as of today. By reviewing the political stances and strategies adopted by different groups, the chapter seeks to clarify how such groups construct their critique as compared to the past, how they select and translate Palestinian demands in the process, and whether they contribute to or hinder structural political change within the Israeli system.

The theoretical discussion hinges upon two distinct analytical issues, both of which are exemplified by Jewish-Israeli activism and its relationship to Palestinians. The first is the issue of how to effectively challenge hegemonic ideas and practices in society. From Gramsci onwards, studies of hegemony and counter-hegemony have distinguished between two different modes of critique: one that operates ‘within’ hegemony, with the aim of achieving incremental changes through an engagement with the discursive and institutional tools of the status quo; and another one that operates ‘outside’ hegemony, in the belief that a total break with the existing order is the only way to achieve structural change (Gramsci 1975; Mouffe 2013; Maney, Woherle, and Coy 2005).<sup>4</sup> Each mode is associated with specific advantages and risks that make some combination of the two at once very common and inherently

<sup>3</sup> Organisations such as NGO Monitor, Academia Monitor, Im Tirzu, and Regavim generally operate by delegitimising anti-occupation activists in the public arena by framing their activities as violent and opposed to Israeli interests.

<sup>4</sup> The two modes of hegemonic critique have been referred to in various ways, such as ‘reform’ vs. ‘revolution,’ ‘engagement’ vs. ‘withdrawal’ (Mouffe 2013), ‘critique within’ vs. ‘withdrawal from’ (Weizman 2013), and ‘harness’ vs. ‘challenge’ (Maney, Woherle, and Coy 2005).

contradictory. In particular, critique occurring ‘within’ hegemony is generally perceived as more effective because it is more easily intelligible to its audience of reference, and capable of being channelled through the existing institutional and legal frameworks. For the same reasons, however, it is also subject to the risk of co-optation, leading to what Gramsci has termed a “passive revolution”: small-scale demands for change can be incorporated in the system, which neutralises their subversive potential and uses them to reconfirm its authority and legitimacy (Gramsci 1975; Mouffe 1979). In contrast, critique ‘outside’ hegemony has better chances of maintaining its radical potential, but at the same time struggles to realise it due to the fact of being placed at the margins of political and social arenas, when not entirely outside. The latter is especially the case in “strengthened hegemonies” like the Israeli one, in which consent to hegemonic ideas and practices is deeply internalised and pervasive across society (Maney, Woherle, and Coy 2005; Weizman 2013).

The second analytical issue is that of solidarity action – which by definition is targeted at an oppressed group different from one’s own (Bartky 2002, 163-164; Passy 2001, 6-7) – and of how to deal with it when it comes not just from a position of privilege, as is often the case, but from within the very system that perpetrates the oppression.<sup>5</sup> This particular condition entails, by its nature, specific advantages as well as inherent problems, and for this it has been defined as “paradoxical” (Scholz 2008, 151-187). By virtue of being members of the oppressive society, the ‘privileged’ have access to its institutions and common sense, which they can use as tools in the struggle for the ‘oppressed.’ At the same time, however, the very fact of relying on an asymmetry of power risks perpetuating it in the dynamics of solidarity action (Koopman 2011; Coy 2011; Marx and Useem 1971). Moreover, for the fact of being directed at groups other than one’s own, solidarity action entails the risks of romanticising one’s effort while objectifying the political subjects at which the action is targeted, de-politicising their demands (Passy and Giugni 2001; Keck and Sikkink 1998).

Scholarship on Jewish-Israeli activism for Palestinian rights has often shunned a full engagement with these issues, praising activists’ efforts to persist in particularly hostile conditions while overlooking its inherent problems (see, e.g., Cohen 2019; Lamarche 2013). In contrast, studies that have put these issues at their core – such as critical and settler colonial perspectives – have tended to entirely dismiss as complicit any action that does not presuppose a diagnosis of the Israeli-Palestinian issue as colonial (see, e.g., Turner 2015; Svirsky 2012; Hussein 2011; Omer 2013; Todorova 2014). This chapter eschews both positions and seeks to dissect the features and dynamics of Jewish-Israeli activism as one where a certain “complicity” with the hegemonic system is to

<sup>5</sup> This issue has been treated also under the rubric of “majority involvement in minority movements” (Marx and Useem 1971; Buhlungu 2006) and has been addressed across feminist and decolonial approaches (see, e.g., Scholz 2008; Bartky 2002; Alcoff 1998; Bailey 1998; hooks 1990; Memmi 1957).

some extent unavoidable (Wright 2018). Such a focus does not imply an apologetic stance: the inherent problems and historical failures of Israeli solidarity are at the core of the analysis. And yet, it is precisely in some instances of these compromised struggles that the chapter finds some bases for rethinking the possibilities of radical critique 'from within.' In this sense, and notwithstanding the specificities of the case at hand, this study of Jewish-Israeli activism contributes to a deeper understanding of dynamics of solidarity and resistance, and one that links them up with the possibility of emergence of novel counter-hegemonic praxes in far-from-perfect conditions.

The first section maps the spectrum of present-day Jewish-Israeli activism. After having clarified the reasons for including a wide diversity of groups in the analysis, the section classifies them according to their political framings, forms of organisation, and modes of action. The second section takes a genealogical perspective to identify the main trajectories that have characterised the evolution of Jewish-Israeli activism over time in relation to the changes happening in Israeli society and in the relationship with Palestinians. The conclusive section takes stock of the limitations of present-day Jewish-Israeli activism as those typical of forms of critique and solidarity happening 'from within' oppressive systems, and assesses their potential for contributing to structural change in the direction of more equality.

## Mapping the field of Jewish-Israeli activism

Mapping the field of Jewish-Israeli activism for Palestinian rights is complex due to the wide diversity of organisational forms, modes of action, and political framings. Instead of focusing on a specific portion of this field, the present analysis considers support for Palestinian rights in its broadest sense: from punctual pragmatic interventions to broad political projects, from actions that are driven by a genuine concern for empowering Palestinians to others whose main concern is to preserve a Jewish Israeli state. The reason for including such seemingly incompatible types of activism is twofold.

The first reason has to do with the fact that Palestinian demands for rights are different and, as such, entail different responses. While the general direction is the achievement of full rights (social, political, civil, economic) in the whole territory of Israel-Palestine, the emphasis on which ones to achieve first varies depending on a number of factors. Different Palestinian legal statuses (second-class citizens of Israel, residents of Jerusalem, occupied subjects of the West Bank, ghettoised inhabitants of Gaza, or refugees in the diaspora) entail different degrees of discrimination and structural violence. As such, priorities vary between the achievement of short-term or long-term objectives and between the achievement of better integration within Israel or of Palestinian independence (or of any other political arrangement in between). Finally,

Palestinian activists have diverging ideas on what role Israelis should (or should not) play in their struggle, and of how partnerships should be carried out. This divisiveness engenders a situation in which acting in support of Palestinian rights can mean many different things, which need to be considered in their entirety in order to reconstruct the full spectrum of critique within Israeli society.

The second reason is that considering the full spectrum of Israeli activism is the only way that allows accounting for the interconnections between activists and groups that may appear very distant in terms of their political positions and forms of action. The small number of people involved and the generally short life cycle of organisations and collectives make it so that groups are tied together by genealogical links and by members who, floating across different groups, carry with them ideas and experiences learned on other terrains. Taking this aspect into account is crucial because, as we will see in the rest of the chapter, it is one of the most salient features of current Jewish-Israeli activism.

**Figure 1. Map of present-day Israeli groups advocating for Palestinian rights.**

		Jewish-Israeli activism for Palestinian rights									
<b>Institutional means:</b>											
Monitoring and legal action		ACRI	MW	Gisha	HaMoked	PCATI	NCF	Yesh Din	HRDF		
Research, info and advocacy	(Malad)		BTS	KN	ES	B'Tselem	WP	+972		ActiveStills	
Dialogue and understanding	(Roots)		CFP			Ir Amim				Zochrot	
Marches and campaigns	(CIS) (WWP)		PN	ALFA		Standing Together		CWP		ODSC	
Humanitarian support			R2R	PHRI		Born Equal		Psychoactive			
Questioning the military			Yesh Gvul			New Profile		Mesarvot			
<b>Direct action means:</b>	<b>Lib-Zionist framing</b>										<b>Anti-Zionist framing</b>
Physical interposition				RHR	ED	ATL	To'ayush	FJ		JSM	
Symbolic interposition			Tag Meir			WIB	AFE			De-Colonizer	RS
BDS										BFW	(Self-exiled activists)

Formal groups; *informal groups*; (groups excluded from the analysis)

Source: **author**.

The remainder of the section maps the field of Israeli activism along three dimensions: the framing of critique (from liberal Zionist to anti-Zionist), the forms of organisation (formal or informal), and the modes of action (institutional or direct). *Figure 1* offers a graphic representation of the field. As the section will show, while providing useful classification tools, such categories also prove limiting in accounting for the complexities of the reality on the

ground. As such, they will be problematised and critically engaged along the way, as well as in the coming section.<sup>6</sup>

## The framing of critique: Liberal Zionism, anti-Zionism... and the rest

If most of the activists considered here are perceived as 'radical' or 'pro-Palestinian' in current Israeli society, the extent of their critique of the status quo varies widely, and with it the solution they envisage and the Palestinian demands they choose to support. They are typically classified, both in the literature and in the self-identification of activists, according to their positioning towards Zionism, the hegemonic political ideology in Israel and that which underlies the structural relations with Palestinians at the political and societal level (Sternhell 1999; Kimmerling 2001; Yiftachel 2006; Natanel 2016). According to this classification, Israeli activism for Palestinian rights is divided into two main camps: a liberal Zionist one, also termed the 'peace' camp, and an anti-Zionist one, also termed the 'decolonization' camp (Turner 2015; Weizman 2013; Svirsky 2012; Honig-Parnass 2011; Todorova 2014). As the names suggest, the two camps are respectively associated with critiques 'within' hegemony (which attempt to ameliorate it) and critiques 'outside' hegemony (which opt for its outright rejection).

Liberal-Zionist activism is exemplified by NGOs such as Peace Now, Combatants for Peace, Breaking the Silence, Yesh Gvul, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, Tag Meir, and Machsom Watch. These groups generally blame the expansionist and aggressive versions of Zionism for the current situation of injustice, and advocate for Israel's retreat to its 1967 borders and for the maintenance within them of a 'Jewish democracy.' As such, liberal Zionist groups mostly focus their work against the occupation and settlement enterprise and for the protection of Palestinian human rights within Israel.<sup>7</sup> Liberal Zionist positions represent the majority, in terms of numbers, of Jewish-Israeli activism. While not spared from political attacks and smear campaigns from right-wing groups and mainstream media, they enjoy some visibility in

<sup>6</sup> Note that the groups cited do not aim to offer an exhaustive picture of present-day Israeli activist groups, but rather to illustrate the different forms, strategies, and political visions present in current Israeli activism. To this aim, the discussion includes also groups that count Palestinians among their members (although their views will not be examined), groups that treat Palestinian rights along with other rights in Israeli society (e.g. minority rights, socio-economic rights, environmental rights), and groups that have an international and Jewish-international membership along with an Israeli one. The most notable of these groups, the collective All That's Left, is composed of self-identified "diaspora Jews," mostly coming from the US and Europe, who came to Israel for various reasons and ended up staying several years or even permanently, sometimes undertaking Israeli citizenship.

<sup>7</sup> It is worth noting that there are also groups that, while defining themselves as 'pro-peace,' fail to oppose or even name the occupation and the settlement enterprise (Women Wage Peace), groups that explicitly defend them (Friends of Roots), and groups that frame their being against the occupation solely in terms of a need to secure the Israeli state (Commanders for Israeli Security, Molad). Because Palestinians are such a marginal factor in their actions, these groups are not included in the present analysis. They are nonetheless represented, in parentheses, in Figure 1 to give an idea of the full extent of the 'peace' camp in Israeli society.

Israeli political debate and can still mobilise, or at least elicit the sympathy of, a portion of Israeli society. At the same time, however, they are harshly criticised by those on their left for making overly moderate demands that end up reinforcing rather than challenging Zionist discourse and the structural system of injustices towards Palestinians. For example, the critique goes, by placing Israeli blame on the occupation and the settlers, they end up absolving the state and society on issues at the heart of Palestinian demands, such as the acknowledgment of the Nakba, the right of return of refugees, and the achievement of full equality within Israeli society—issues that are never addressed by these groups because they would jeopardise the Jewish character of the state. Moreover, by selectively opposing only the most aggressive forms of military violence, they implicitly sanction as legitimate all those forms of violence that are considered defensive.<sup>8</sup> Finally, by adopting a vocabulary of ‘democracy’ with reference to Israel and of ‘conflict’ with reference to the structural relationship with Palestinians, they convey an image of the situation that conceals the inherently ‘ethnocratic’ character of the Jewish state (Yiftachel 2006) and the structural asymmetry between a colonial power and a colonised people (Turner 2015; Honig-Parnass 2011; Younis 2019).<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the framing of these groups often reveals that their main concern is not for Palestinian rights *per se* but for the survival of Israel as a Jewish state, which requires keeping an appearance of democracy. This is why, in the opinion of some critics, these groups even represent the main ‘enemy’ in the struggle for Palestinian rights, a far more insidious one than settlers and right-wing extremists.<sup>10</sup>

In contrast, anti-Zionist activism fully opposes Zionism as an inherently racist and discriminatory project. The Israeli occupation and settlement of the West Bank and the internal discrimination towards Palestinians are not seen as an antithesis to Zionism, but as a logical step in the creation of a purified Jewish state on the whole of ‘Greater Israel.’ The Israeli-Palestinian issue is framed not as a conflict between two rival nationalisms, but as a settler colonial situation that created the present regime of apartheid. While there is no agreement on a single best solution to overcome it, the spectrum of Palestinian rights considered is much broader: next to the end of occupation and settlement, anti-Zionist groups envisage the achievement of full political and civil equality, support Palestinian self-determination, and the right of return of refugees. Activists reject any identification with Zionism (and sometimes with the state of Israel itself, preferring to call themselves ‘Palestinian Jews’), and envision

<sup>8</sup> For example, groups such as Yesh Gvul, Breaking the Silence, and Machsom Watch frame their action as against “wars of choice,” the “unnecessary oppression” of Palestinians in the territories, and the “inhumane conditions” at the checkpoints, but advocate for a strong military and for the maintenance of control over Palestinian rights (see respective websites).

<sup>9</sup> Most of the liberal-Zionist groups mentioned use the term ‘democracy’ in reference to Israel, while Combatants for Peace and Tag Meir in particular emphasise the symmetry of a situation of conflict in which the two rival nationalities are involved and co-responsible for the deterioration of the situation (see respective websites).

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Boycott from Within activist (Jaffa, July 2018).

a process of decolonisation ('de-Zionisation') of Israeli society and ethos.<sup>11</sup> Unsurprisingly, anti-Zionist groups represent a small minority of Jewish-Israeli activism, exemplified by informal collectives such as Return Solidarity, Boycott from Within, the One Democratic State Campaign, the photographers' collective ActiveStills, and NGOs such as Zochrot and De-Coloniser. Counter-hegemonic *par excellence*, these groups are in a better position to elicit the respect of their Palestinian counterparts, but are largely placed outside the margins of acceptable political discourse in Israel. Consequently, their actions rarely mobilise more than a few dozen participants and are ignored or viciously attacked by mainstream media and political actors in Israel.

Now, the distinction between liberal Zionist and anti-Zionist positions is a helpful theoretical tool insofar as it allows shedding light on the respective problems of critiques 'within' or 'outside' hegemony. However, the neat demarcation between two opposite ideological camps is too simplistic to allow for a full understanding of the reality of Israeli activism. Next to the conscious and explicit adherence to certain ideologies, other factors need to be considered that make liberal Zionism and anti-Zionism less a binary categorisation and more the extremes of a continuum. To begin with, participation in, or rejection of, hegemonic structures involve not just political statements but all the micro-practices of political and everyday life; for this reason, 'pure' positions are unlikely, even at the two extremes. In a society such as the Israeli one, where every quotidian act is either directly or indirectly associated with dispossession and denial of rights over Palestinians, avoiding any participation in the structures of Zionism is impossible. However many efforts activists make to reject their duties and privileges as Jewish nationals, they will still embody those privileges and re-enact Zionism through their very existence.<sup>12</sup> Following this reasoning, the only option left in order to be completely coherent is leaving the country and relinquishing Israeli citizenship in an act of protest—something that, indeed, many activists have done in the past decade.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, sometimes activists who still define themselves as Zionists – because they retain an emotional and identity attachment to what Zionism means to them – find themselves fighting daily to break physical and intersectional barriers to full equality, thus de facto eroding from within the hierarchies and antagonisms established by Zionism.<sup>14</sup>

Besides the fact that each extreme involves greater complexities than the term suggests, there is also the fact that a number of individuals and groups

<sup>11</sup> Interviews with activists (Jaffa, July 2018; Jerusalem, May and November 2019; Beer Sheva, May 2019; Tel Aviv, May 2019).

<sup>12</sup> According to one activist, this is the greater strength of the Zionist project: the fact that it can incorporate its antithesis, thus making being an "anti-Zionist Israeli a contradiction in terms" (interview with former member of HaMoked, Jerusalem, November 2019). For an exploration into the dilemmas of anti-Zionist Israeli activists at a personal level see, e.g., Lamarche (2013) and Wright (2018).

<sup>13</sup> Self-exiled activists that continue their activism from abroad are included in Figure 1 at the far end of the anti-Zionist spectrum, but in parentheses because they no longer belong to Jewish-Israeli society.

<sup>14</sup> Participant observation of Ta'ayush activities (South Hebron Hills, March-December 2019).

– indeed, the majority – stand in between these two extremes, preferring not to undertake a clear position towards Zionism. Many of them frame their actions around moral and humanist values rather than around geopolitical analyses.<sup>15</sup> Often, political framings are relegated to the background and priority is given to be active and present on the ground, however needed.<sup>16</sup> This lack of explicit engagement with Zionism is often dismissed, from anti-Zionist perspectives, as a form of docility towards or even outright complicity with the system. While this is partly true, this lack of engagement arguably represents the single most defining feature of present Jewish-Israeli activism, and as such demands a deeper examination of the reasons actors give for it. Some of these reasons are tactical. When it comes to NGOs, the need to be able to operate without being ostracised at the legal level sometimes has the effect of taming the level of critique, as will be more thoroughly explained throughout the chapter.<sup>17</sup> The deteriorating political situation additionally affects tactical choices also among informal collectives that can usually afford more radical critiques. With the need for action at its highest and the number of people willing to act at its lowest, many feel overwhelmed by responsibility and refuse to “spend time and energy in endless political talks.”<sup>18</sup> Moreover, in such a situation, being able to mobilise people is of paramount importance: choosing a vocabulary of generic human rights and opposition to violence is presented as a rational choice insofar as it can mobilise those who do not identify with specific or radical political stances.<sup>19</sup>

Other reasons have to do with activists’ identification with political views and analyses. Anti-imperialist political worldviews prominent in the movements of the 1960s and 1970s have lost their grasp, and in face of a worsening political scenario many activists have lost hope in the possibility of radical change. To remain active despite of these circumstances, activists have thus turned to focusing on small acts that have higher chances of success in the short term.<sup>20</sup> Secondly, it is important to keep in mind that in Israeli society embracing anti-Zionism, and the analytical framework of settler colonialism it presupposes, is not only a matter of political ideology but also involves deep identity issues. Accepting that Israel is a settler colonial state, something which has become current in political analyses and movements for Palestinian

<sup>15</sup> Interviews with members of Ta’ayush (Jerusalem, November 2019) and Engaged Dharma (Jerusalem, December 2019); participant observation of demonstrations and talks organised by Ir Amim and Free Jerusalem (November and December 2019); stated aims of Physicians for Human Rights Israel (website, ‘About’), Human Rights Defenders Fund (HRDF, 2019), and the Imbala collective (website, ‘Manifesto’).

<sup>16</sup> Interview with members of Ta’ayush (Jerusalem, May and November 2019), Ir Amim (Jerusalem, November and December 2019), and Free Jerusalem (Jerusalem, November and December 2019).

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Emek Shaveh member (Jerusalem, May 2019) and with Kerem Navot member (Jerusalem, July 2018).

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Ir Amim member (Jerusalem, December 2019).

<sup>19</sup> Interviews with member of Free Jerusalem (Jerusalem, November 2019) and Engaged Dharma (Jerusalem, December 2019).

<sup>20</sup> Interviews with former member of Matzpen (Jerusalem, November 2019) and with member of Ta’ayush (Jerusalem, May 2019).

rights worldwide, entails Jewish-Israelis accepting that they are, in the present, ‘the coloniser.’<sup>21</sup> This leaves those who want to act for justice in the ‘impossible’ existential position identified long ago by Memmi (1957): that of having to disown the society in which they were born and accept to be marginal if not alien to the one they acknowledge instead. This is made all the more difficult by the fact that Zionism is not only a political ideology, but a powerful collective identity in which everyone is socialised, and which ties together feelings of victimisation and trauma with a promise of safety and rebirth in the (Jewish) state of Israel (Natanel 2016).

Torn between a liberal Zionism that has disattended all hopes for change, and an anti-Zionism that would leave them ‘orphaned’ from any alternative system of meaning (Lamarche 2013, 115), many Israelis choose to suspend their self-definition in relation to Zionism. When confronted with the question, some choose the term ‘non-Zionist,’ others ‘post-Zionist,’ a form of self-identification increasingly common among Israeli activists. Such terms generally combine the acknowledgment of the legitimacy of Zionism as a historical project as long as Jews were faced with existential threats, and the realisation that the present situation requires redefining Jewish relations with Israel in a way that can allow for the creation of a just society.<sup>22</sup> In this sense post-Zionism, far from identifying a clear challenge to Zionism (Nimni 2003), lumps together a host of different stances that have in common a liminal position. Such a position entails, in the words of Edward Said, a “profound contradiction, bordering on schizophrenia”—for, having established the colonial and undemocratic character of Israel, it is nonetheless reluctant to draw the inevitable consequences and reject Zionism entirely (Said 2003, 200). As such, it represents only a step in the process of re-articulating the triad Israeliness-Jewishness-Zionism, and one that can lead in many possible directions.

## The organisational forms of solidarity: NGOs and grassroots collectives

The term ‘activist’ is used in this chapter, and consistent with my interlocutors’ self-perceptions, to refer to people who engage in solidarity in very different forms: voluntary participants of grassroots movements and campaigns, as the term usually indicates, but also members (paid or not) of NGOs and other formally registered associations. Social movement literature associates each of these forms with different types of engagement with the institutions and prevalent discourses in which movements occur, types that once again fit with the distinction between ‘within’ and ‘outside’ modes of hegemonic critique (Della Porta and Diani 2006; Gamson 1990; McCarthy and

<sup>21</sup> Interviews with member of Kerem Navot (Jerusalem, July 2018) and with former member of Tarabut (Tel Aviv, December 2019).

<sup>22</sup> Interview with members of All that’s Left (Jerusalem, December 2019) and Ta’ayush (Jerusalem, May 2019).

Zald 1987; Skocpol 2003; Lindgren 1987). In particular, formal groups, by virtue of their regulated links with state authorities and funding organisations, rely on stable and relatively large economic flows to channel their demands via the political and legal tools offered by the state, in a way that arguably leads to increased effectiveness in achieving their objectives. At the same time, dependency on funding mechanisms and the need to look for political opportunities within state-provided channels can lead them to opt for less confrontational critiques, in a way that potentially ‘tames’ the radical demands of their bases (Piven and Cloward 1977; Kriesi 1996). In contrast, informal groups (who are not accountable to their funders or the state, but just to their members) can operate with less concern for the perceived acceptability of their claims and for the legality of their means. As such, they are usually seen as able to provide more radical forms of critique to the status quo. In turn, their loose structures and limited resources, as well as the perceived radicality of their claims, can reduce informal groups’ capacities to generate political impact (Della Porta and Diani 2006).

This distinction holds true for much Israeli activism for Palestinian rights. The largest and most famous NGOs, such as Peace Now, Combatants for Peace, Breaking the Silence, and B’Tselem, have traditionally settled on critiques that avoid challenging the Zionist ‘golden standards’ (i.e., Israel as a Jewish State, 1967 borders, Israeli-Palestinian issue as one of conflict between competing nationalisms). The many organisations acting pre-eminently on legal grounds, such as Yesh Din, HaMoked, Gisha, and Emek Shaveh, prioritise their ability to get funding and succeed in legal proceedings, and try their best to avoid giving the state reasons to prosecute them.<sup>23</sup> If we add the fact that a set of recent laws further limited the space for action of left-wing NGOs,<sup>24</sup> then it is not surprising to see that, in the present context, radical critiques of the status quo are more likely to come from grassroots collectives. The most famous of these are probably Anarchists Against The Wall (AATW) – which has been the subject of many an academic study and is now disbanded (Gordon 2010; Gordon and Grietzer 2013; Weizman 2013, 2017; Todorova 2014, 2019) – and Ta’ayush, born around the same time during the Second Intifada and still active. Younger collectives such as Return Solidarity, Free Jerusalem, and Boycott from Within, also defy the discursive and legal boundaries set by the Israeli

<sup>23</sup> Interview with members of Yesh Din and Emek Shaveh (Jerusalem, April 2019).

<sup>24</sup> Examples include the so called ‘NGO law,’ which compels NGOs that receive more than 50 percent of their funding from foreign governments to disclose the fact publicly and visibly (yet, the law does not apply to right-wing groups for alleged reasons of security); the ‘anti-boycott law,’ which criminalises Israeli citizens who openly support the boycott of Israeli products; the ‘Nakba law,’ which forbids commemorations of the Nakba if alongside those of Israeli Independence Day; and a number of laws targeting specific organisations, such as the so called ‘Breaking the Silence Law’ (aimed at preventing the organisation from speaking in schools), and the ‘B’Tselem Law’ (forbidding citizens from doing their national service with the organisation—proposed but not passed). For a full list of the laws and their *iter*, see ACRI website.

state by illegally crossing borders, confronting the sacralised institution of the military, and advancing unpopular demands for full equality.

Yet, some groups also exist that reverse the dichotomy. The NGO Zochrot, for example, is notorious for having explicitly challenged the most important taboos of Zionism over its years of operation. For many years, it has critiqued the Zionist narrative that portrays 'Palestine before Israel' as an uninhabited desert, informing the public of the flourishing cities and villages that were destroyed and replaced by Israeli settlements. More recently, it has challenged the Zionist dogma of a Jewish society by bringing into public debate the right of return of Palestinian refugees, and its possible practical implementations.<sup>25</sup>

Further complexifying the supposed divide between 'moderate' NGOs and 'radical' grassroots collectives is the fact that both entities are quite enmeshed in the practice of Israeli activism. Moreover, the present scenario of direct attack by the state on left-wing NGOs has engendered a mix of responses, not all of which are going in the direction of taming their critique. These aspects will be further explored in this chapter's second section.

## **The modalities of activism: Institutional and direct actions**

All of these groups carry out their support for Palestinian rights through a variety of means, which can be classified following the distinction between institutional and direct actions (Benjamin 2003; Carter 1973). Such classification overlaps to some extent with the distinction above between formal and informal groups, insofar as formal groups tend by nature to use pre-eminently institutional means, and informal ones to resort to direct forms of action. Although this distinction is also blurred in practice by the fact that solidarity on the ground usually involves a combination of types, it is nonetheless useful for identifying the different kinds of privilege Israelis mobilise in their support to Palestinian demands.

Indeed, all acts of solidarity involve a mix between political "claim-making" and "pragmatic" assistance (Giugni 2001, 236; Farmer 2005, 146) insofar as they combine the provision of goods (whether material or immaterial) that respond to the immediate needs of the targeted population, while simultaneously grounding such provision in a critique of the system that generates those needs (Passy 2001, 7; Scholz 2006, 194). Where acts of solidarity differ is in the type of channels they mobilise and in what type of privilege they put to use in doing so. Institutional actions seek to achieve change by appealing to institutions such as the parliament, the courts, the army, or international bodies, such

<sup>25</sup> Zochrot website; participant observations to Zochrot activities (Tel Aviv, March 2019, May 2019, November 2019); interviews with Zochrot members (Jerusalem, July 2018; Tel Aviv, November 2019).

as the United Nations.<sup>26</sup> Direct actions, in contrast, seek change directly through the very action they carry out (e.g., the various types of boycott). Direct action, in other words, is “prefigurative”: “what is desired must also be involved in the method of reaching that aim” (Benjamin 2003, 20).

In the case at hand, institutional methods rely on the privileged access to state institutions (courts, universities, media, etc.) and infrastructure (medical facilities, roads, checkpoints, etc.) Israeli citizens of Jewish nationality have, either by law or *de facto*, compared to Palestinians living in Israel and, to a greater extent, in the West Bank and Gaza. Instead, direct action methods exploit the increased intrinsic value ascribed to Jewish-Israeli subjectivities as “bodies that count” or “grievable bodies,” in contrast to dehumanised, and therefore “ungrievable,” Palestinian bodies (Hammami 2016; see also Lentin 2016; Lloyd 2012; Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2014).<sup>27</sup> This embodied privilege has a specifically *bodily* element and a more *symbolic* one, each differently emphasised in different types of actions. The former is emphasised in actions that draw their effectiveness from the physical presence of Jewish-Israelis next to Palestinians, be it in confrontational circumstances (such as evictions, arrests, and demonstrations) or daily activities (such as harvesting, shepherding, or walking to school) that become defiant in the context of Israeli settler colonialism. In these circumstances, the mere presence of Israeli civilians works as a deterrent to the violence of the police and the army because “activists are intelligible to soldiers: they share the same ontological ground and therefore have shared normative scripts. Activists invoke this shared ground in their interactions with soldiers who are then forced to affirm those norms – a process of reminding and recognising that is impossible for Palestinians to invoke” (Hammami 2016, 177). The embodied privilege of Jewish-Israelis is also mobilised in a way that exploits the increased visibility and legitimacy they enjoy – both in their local context and at the international level – as Israelis, Jews, and white/Western subjects. Having Israeli activists endorsing Palestinian demands and grievances in public talks and campaigns has also the important effect of undercutting accusations that such claims are anti-Israeli and antisemitic, thus directly rewriting Zionist narratives and ‘chains of equivalence’ (Laclau and Mouffe, 2014).

Let us now turn to briefly reviewing the types of action most commonly employed by Israeli activists (see Figure 1 for a summary). Among institutional methods, the most common is legal action against human rights abuses perpetrated against Palestinians. Legal action usually involves a combination of

<sup>26</sup> Protests, marches, and campaigns are included in this category since they are aimed at impressing the electorate, and thus indirectly the parliament.

<sup>27</sup> For the original use of the terms ‘bodies that count’ and ‘grievable bodies’ see, respectively, Hyndman (2007) and Butler (2009). For analyses on the Palestinian condition as dehumanized settler colonial subject see, for example, Veracini (2015) and Salamanca et al. (2012). Note that, differently from the previous case, the same reasoning on the use of embodied privilege can be applied to Israeli and international activists.

individual assistance and pressure on the Israeli legal system through petitions and advocacy, and is carried out by a number of individual lawyers and organisations with specific geographic or issue-based foci (e.g., Gisha, HaMoked, the Human Rights Defenders Fund, the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel, and Yesh Din). A second institutional method is the gathering and dissemination of information aimed at raising awareness among Israeli and international publics about the systematic injustices perpetrated against Palestinians (e.g., B'Tselem, Breaking the Silence, Kerem Navot, Emek Shaveh, ActiveStills, +972 Magazine). A third method is the sensibilisation of Israeli publics to Palestinian grievances via means that engage peoples' sensitivities and emotions, such as ceremonies, cultural events, tours, and even phone apps.<sup>28</sup> A fourth method is the use of traditional social movement instruments such as marches (e.g., Peace Now, Coalition of Women for Peace) and political campaigns (e.g., the One Democratic State Campaign, A Land For All), which however are less popular than in the past due to their decreasing mobilisation capacity. A fifth method is the provision of humanitarian support and empowerment to Palestinians particularly targeted by the occupation, through medical (e.g., Physicians for Human Rights – Israel), technical (e.g., Road to Recovery), or psychological assistance (e.g., PsychoActive, Born Equal). A last method is to question the Israeli army and support the practice of conscientious objection (e.g., Yesh Gvul, New Profile, Mesarvot). While not strictly of solidarity, this last type of action does open important spaces of criticism towards an institution largely responsible for socialising the Israeli public to the dehumanisation of Palestinians.<sup>29</sup>

On the direct action side, a method that has become routine in the practice of Israeli activists is accompanying Palestinian civilians in the West Bank (e.g., Ta'ayush, Rabbis for Human Rights, Engaged Dharma, All That's Left, International Solidarity Movement) and East Jerusalem (e.g., Free Jerusalem) throughout political demonstrations or daily activities.<sup>30</sup> This practice, which is also referred to as interposition, is aimed at deterring the potential violence of the police, the army, or the settlers, by exploiting the embodied privilege of Israeli Jewish nationals.<sup>31</sup> A second method, which I term *symbolic* interposition, is the participation of Israelis in various mediatised instances in which Palestinians denounce Israeli violations. These actions are aimed at attracting media attention by exploiting the higher legitimacy with which Jewish-Israelis

<sup>28</sup> Examples are the Alternative Memorial Day organised by Combatants for Peace, the annual film festival organized by Zochrot, the tours and workshops organized by Zochrot and Ir Amim, the activities organized yearly by De-Colonizer on Israeli Independence Day, and the iNakba app created by Zochrot. Interview with members of Combatants for Peace (Tel Aviv, December 2019), Zochrot (Tel Aviv, November 2019), and De-Colonizer (Tel Aviv, May 2019). See also respective websites and, specifically on the actions of Zochrot and De-Colonizer, Merza-Bronstein and Bronstein-Aparicio (2018). As an example of an action of De-Colonizer on Israeli Independence Day, see De-Colonizer 2016.

<sup>29</sup> This was a recurrent element in interviews with activists (2018-2019).

<sup>30</sup> See, for e.g., Ta'ayush website and blog, as well as Shulman (2007, 2018).

<sup>31</sup> On the practice of interposition see also Mahony and Eguren (1997).

are regarded as opposed to Palestinians. They include vigils (e.g., Tag Meir, Women in Black), demonstrations along Palestinian ones (e.g., Return Solidarity), and international talks and conferences (e.g., One Democratic State Campaign).<sup>32</sup> A last means of direct action is carrying out (and advocating for) the economic, cultural, and academic boycott of Israel as long as it violates the fundamental rights of Palestinian as defined by the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement (e.g. Boycott from Within).<sup>33</sup> This type of action is uncommon among Israeli activists due to its association with antisemitism in Israeli political discourse, and has been recently criminalised with the so-called ‘anti-Boycott law.’<sup>34</sup>

## Trajectories: Past, present, and future of Jewish-Israeli activism

Having mapped the actors and forms of present-day Jewish-Israeli activism, this section takes a genealogical perspective to reflect on the main changes that characterise it compared to the past. The section identifies four interdependent trajectories: *contraction*, *convergence*, *isolation*, and *de-ideologisation*. While highlighting why such developments have been seen as setbacks compared to the more widespread, organised, and unified activism of the past (1960s-1990s), the reflection moves beyond a nostalgic assessment of ‘what could have been and yet is not’ of Jewish-Israeli activism to also emphasise the potentialities opened for new avenues for change in the present context.

### Contraction: From movements to networks

The deterioration of the prospects for a just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian issue in the past two decades has led to the disengagement of large sectors of Israeli society from demanding social and political change. The shift to the right of Israeli politics, and the attacks that have followed on those who support Palestinian rights, have further inhibited Israeli activists’ capacity for critical action, in what has been called in mediatic debate a “chilling effect” (HRDF 2019). The result has been a marked contraction in the field of Jewish-Israeli

<sup>32</sup> Interviews with members of Women in Black (Jerusalem, November 2019), One Democratic State Campaign (Jerusalem, May 2019) and participant observation of demonstrations organised by Return Solidarity (Gaza border, 3 May 2019). See also respective websites.

<sup>33</sup> See the BDS Movement website and Barghouti (2011, 2014). While partly aimed at redirecting public opinion, this action does not classify as institutional because it seeks change preeminently through the change of habits of individuals, with little reliance on institutions and state authorities (Morrison 2015). Moreover, this action overlaps partially with the previous one insofar as it relies for its impact on the specific symbolic value of Israelis calling for boycotting their own institutions.

<sup>34</sup> Opposition to the BDS movement motivated by its alleged antisemitism was manifested in a few interviews, mostly with liberal-Zionist activists (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, 2019).

activism, in terms of both the number of people involved and the radicality of criticism proposed. There no longer exist big movements able to mobilise thousands of people at a time, as was the case for Peace Now or the mobilisations against the invasion of Lebanon in the 1980s. Anti-Zionist positions, once regrouped in entities such as the Israeli Socialist Organization (Matzpen) and the Alternative Information Center (AIC), are relegated to a minority that lacks an agreement on political frameworks of analysis and proposed solutions. The last campaign able to mobilise thousands of participants was held in the 2010s against Palestinian house evictions in Sheikh Jarrah, but it disintegrated after a few years precisely under the impossibility of reconciling the contradictions between the stances of Palestinians, radical Zionist, and liberal Zionist activists – as we will see more thoroughly in the rest of the section.

In parallel to this contraction, however, recent years have witnessed a proliferation of groups and organisations that sprouted to respond to the ever-increasing problems faced by Palestinians, and to the new challenges faced by Israeli activists and human rights organisations. A new configuration of Jewish-Israeli solidarity has emerged, where the big, all-encompassing movements of the past have been replaced by a network of smaller organisations that coordinate with each other in their actions. New groups are characterised by an increasing specialisation – be it by issue, geographical focus, modes of actions, or political aims. This ‘division of labour’ has allowed the diversification of Jewish-Israeli solidarity strategies, with different groups appealing to different audiences (more or less radical) and seeking different kinds of results (short-term and practical, or long-term and political). At the same time, the interconnections woven between such groups, whether by the fact of a partially overlapping membership or by voluntary coordination, has engendered a certain synergy across their operations. This synergy is observed at different levels. At a more practical level, NGOs represent a job market that, against the tide of ostracism towards pro-Palestinian political opinions, allows activists the time and margins of manoeuvre necessary to keep doing activism while being able to sustain themselves economically. An example of this kind of interaction can be observed in Jerusalem between the NGO Ir Amim and the collective Free Jerusalem, and in Tel Aviv between the NGO Zochrot and the collectives De-Coloniser and Return Solidarity. Here, many members of the collectives are also employed by the NGOs, and have highlighted the freedom of expression and action they enjoy thanks to their employers, as well as the strategic fact of a flow of information and resources that runs in both directions between the different organisations.<sup>35</sup>

At a more strategic level, NGOs and collectives increasingly combine their approaches to critique ‘within’ and ‘outside’ hegemonic structures in a way that has the potential to circumvent the limitations of each approach and to capitalise

<sup>35</sup>Interviews with members of Free Jerusalem and Ir Amim (Jerusalem, December 2019).

instead on their respective advantages. In particular, NGOs can mobilise their greater resources to provide activists with logistical support, information, and legal protection in case of attacks. On the other hand, collectives can use their positioning outside hegemonic constraints to frame actions in the direction of a more radical critique of the status quo, which can eventually contain the risk of hegemonic co-optation of such actions (Mouffe 2013). For example, such a synergy has come to exist in the South Hebron Hills between Ta'ayush, Breaking the Silence, and Yesh Din – groups that, as we have seen, are very different in form, modality, and political framing. Thanks to its continued presence on the ground, Ta'ayush provides first-hand information and evidence of abuses for Yesh Din to act upon through legal assistance and court petitions. Through this kind of action, legal results can sometimes be obtained, but they are rarely implemented by the army. In that case, Ta'ayush can, through direct action, expose the routinized practice of not applying the law, thus belying the Israeli pretense of rule of law in the occupied territories. In turn, thanks to its institutional means and relative legitimacy among the Israeli liberal Left, Breaking the Silence provides technical support and increased visibility to such direct actions.<sup>36</sup> In another example, groups like Return Solidarity, which due to their radical politics cannot mobilise large numbers of people and are usually ignored by mainstream media, resort to All that's Left network of activists for participants, and to the ActiveStills pool of photojournalists to give visibility to their actions. Finally, concerning boycott actions, an NGO like Who Profits can invest personnel and resources into in-depth research on the involvement of states and corporations in occupation practices, but it cannot publicly promote their boycott, divestment, or sanctions due to the 'anti-boycott law.' Instead, it can pass this information onto groups such as BFW, who can be vocal on boycott thanks to their informal status (and at their own individual risk).<sup>37</sup>

Synergies between NGOs and activist collectives, however, do not always work in this direction. Indeed, the opposite also happens. It has been noted how in some cases NGOs rely on the human resources of collectives as a terrain for recruitment, while activists, overwhelmed by the need to be on the ground, delegate the task of political framing and analysis to NGOs.<sup>38</sup> This scenario clearly reverses the potential for such a network to operate towards a more radical critique, and risks instead extending the trap of co-optation to informal collectives as well. To push networks towards the former direction, and to reproduce and reinforce the models of synergy described above, it is important that formal and informal organisations acknowledge their respective roles and the importance of keeping them distinct, and work together to improve their combined action.

<sup>36</sup> Interviews with members of Free Jerusalem (Jerusalem, December 2019) and Ta'ayush (Jerusalem, November 2019).

<sup>37</sup> Interview with member of Boycott from Within (Tel Aviv, May 2019).

<sup>38</sup> Interview with member of Ir Amim (Jerusalem, December 2019). On this problematic intersection between the NGO sector and grassroots movements in Israel, see, e.g., Weisbein (2019).

## Convergence: De-politicisation of activism or radicalisation of NGOs?

The proliferation of NGOs mentioned earlier occurred also in consequence of the institutionalised framework for the ‘peace process’ launched with the Oslo Accords. Foreign funding flowed into Israel and the Palestinian Authority to encourage civil society institutions to work within such framework. As a result, not only new NGOs emerged from scratch, but already-existing informal collectives opted to convert into NGOs in what has been referred to as an “NGOization process” (Honig-Parnass and Haddad 2007). One of the most evident consequences of such a process has been a professionalisation of activism that has led in many cases, in Israel and even more in the Palestinian territories, to its depoliticisation (Haddad 2016). Activists “moved away from the streets and turned into NGO bureaucrats,” thus lowering the numbers of grassroots mobilisation.<sup>39</sup> At the same time, groups that used to have radical stances reviewed them in order to align with the objectives and constraints posed by their donors, in a way that greatly limited their criticism of both the Israeli state and the Palestinian Authority. Internally, the need to respond to a logic of budgetary rationalisation suppressed the non-hierarchy among members and hindered the spontaneity of their action.<sup>40</sup> This was the case, for example, of the Alternative Information Centre, a socialist-oriented collective that brought together anti-Zionist Israelis from Matzpen and Palestinians who identified with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. In the 1990s, some members of the centre chose to support the Oslo process, and eventually the whole group turned into an NGO (Honig-Parnass and Haddad 2007; see also Warschawski 2004; Machover 2012, 249-256). The internal disputes and splintering that followed resulted in the disappearance of the centre in its original form, and eventually in the termination of its Israeli section.<sup>41</sup>

As seen, however, the convergence between activism and NGOs has also happened in a different form: less in terms of a transformation of the former into the latter, and more in terms of a tying together of the two in a network. In this form, NGOs can be, instead of an alternative to activism, a structure of support allowing it to thrive and be more effective. Partly in consequence of this, in certain cases, it is indeed possible to observe the reverse process to the de-politicisation of activism highlighted above: that is, the politicisation, or radicalisation, of NGOs. This comes as a result of different factors. Firstly, some NGOs have realised that their cooperation with state institutions has often served not as a push towards policy reform but as a replacement of its functions of protection, which has ultimately absolved it from such responsibilities. Secondly, legal attacks on NGOs have reduced their possibilities to effectively

<sup>39</sup> Interview with a member of the Palestinian Popular Struggle Coordination Committees (Beit Sahour, October 2019).

<sup>40</sup> Interview with former member of the Alternative Information Center (Jerusalem, December 2019).

<sup>41</sup> The Palestinian section of the Alternative Information Centre still exists, but in the reduced form of a ‘resource center’ and cultural hub (see website).

use institutional means, while their de-legitimation in political discourse has pushed them to the margins of acceptability and closer to the space of radical grassroot movements. In this situation, the increasing interaction of NGOs with activist groups both results from and feeds into these processes, insofar as NGOs absorb information and strategies from such movements that can further their distancing from hegemonic discourses and institutions.

A case of politicisation that has made the news both in Israel and internationally is that of B'Tselem. After three decades of work of documenting human rights violations in the occupied territories and cooperating with the Israeli military to prompt and assist investigations, B'Tselem announced in 2016 that it would cease all such cooperation, having observed that such cooperation served as a “fig leaf to the occupation” (B'Tselem 2016). Such a stance, which has since then been reinforced as shown in further reports and declarations (e.g., B'Tselem 2019), has been interpreted by both sympathisers and opponents as the group’s shift from human rights work towards political advocacy, and as its “embrace of the radical fringe of Israeli politics” (Balanson 2017).

A similar process has recently involved recently the legal NGO Yesh Din. In June 2020, the organisation published a legal opinion authored by lawyer Michael Sfard, which concludes that “the crime against humanity of apartheid is being committed in the West Bank” (Yesh Din 2020, 57). While this claim does not sound ground-breaking to many, especially Palestinians, and has been criticised for remaining mostly concerned with the West Bank without extending to Israel as a whole, it still signals a shift in the organisation’s diagnosis of the Israeli-Palestinian issue from one of occupation to one of apartheid. As such, the report can be seen as one step along the liberal-Zionist-to-anti-Zionist spectrum, and one that can open the door to more radical criticism.

Finally, Breaking the Silence has also undergone a process of radicalisation, albeit in a less official way. An organisation that, due to its Zionist political framing, has always enjoyed a relative legitimacy among Israeli liberal publics, Breaking the Silence has since 2009 been targeted by a campaign of de-legitimation that has branded them as ‘liars,’ ‘traitors,’ and ‘enemies of the state.’<sup>42</sup> In the words of co-founder Yehuda Shaul: “We didn’t sign up to be the Israeli opposition, but now we are” (Zonszein 2019). As a consequence, the focus of their work has shifted from classrooms, conferences, and even the parliament, where they used to be invited, to the ground of the West Bank, where they work to expose the crimes of the occupation in close cooperation with Palestinian and Israeli activists. According to many of them, Breaking the Silence has since then become a valuable partner in the struggle, and has engaged in a political critique more radical than their official positions on Zionism and militarism.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Interview with member of Breaking the Silence (Jerusalem, May 2019). See also Zonszein (2019).

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Israeli activist from Jerusalem (Jerusalem, November 2019) and with Palestinian activist from Hebron (Hebron, December 2019). For a critical discussion of the role of Breaking the Silence, see also Weizman (2016) and Matar (2015).

The cases of B'Tselem, Yesh Din, and Breaking the Silence should not be taken as representative of a general trend towards the radicalisation of NGOs. Nevertheless, these marginal shifts show that the narrowing of the space of moderate critique in Israeli civil society does not necessarily lead to its silencing through the 'chilling effect,' but can push it in the opposite direction, towards a broader challenge of the political system as a whole.

## **Isolation: Between Israeli audiences and the international**

As we have seen, one of the challenges for current Jewish-Israeli activists is finding an audience for their claims in the Israeli context. Not only are Israeli state institutions increasingly deaf to their demands, but civil society's common sense resonates less and less with any stance perceived as pro-Palestinian. To this context of isolation, groups are responding in different ways.

One is to adjust their claims and strategies to increase the possibility of being heard by Israeli audiences. Many groups have toned down their claims in the hope of appearing more legitimate. In some cases, this has been done through distancing members considered to be too radical. For instance, the Physicians for Human Rights – Israel has relegated co-founder Ruchama Marton to marginal roles due to her support for the BDS movement and her explicit anti-Zionist position (Marton 2017). In other cases, groups have shifted towards liberal-Zionist positions. A famous case in the past decade has been that of the Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity Movement (SJSM). Born as a spontaneous mobilisation of Israeli activists supporting Palestinians targeted by house evictions in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah, the group progressively attracted also moderate sectors of Israeli society that were outraged by the differential application of Israeli laws on absentee properties.<sup>44</sup> Instead of standing by the full support of Palestinian demands, the group became progressively more liberal Zionist in order to not upset its new base: demonstrations moved away from the neighbourhood and into West Jerusalem, Israeli flags replaced Palestinian ones, Hebrew language took the lead over Arabic, and Palestinian demands were intentionally mistranslated in order to make them more palatable to Israeli audiences.<sup>45</sup> Eventually, many Palestinian and Israeli activists left the movement for what was perceived as a betrayal of its original nature, and shortly afterwards the movement as such dissolved.<sup>46</sup>

Other groups, such as Free Jerusalem and All that's Left, maintain a more radical position compared to the cases above, but seek to attract larger audiences by framing their stance as against the occupation (as opposed to against

---

<sup>44</sup>Interview with former SJSM member (Tel Aviv, May 2019). On the issue of eviction and the differential application of absentee laws, see Ziv (2018).

<sup>45</sup>Interview with Molad member (Jerusalem, December 2019). See also Hassan (2011) and Dana (2010).

<sup>46</sup>Those who were perceived as the self-appointed leaders of its new moderate version eventually founded the think-tank Molad, while its original members kept demonstrating in solidarity with Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah to this day, and coalesced into other Jerusalemite collectives, most notably Free Jerusalem.

apartheid or colonialism).<sup>47</sup> Others, such as Zochrot and De-Coloniser, make a point of raising very contested issues such as the Nakba and the right of return, but do so in a way that tries to bypass the automatised rejection of such topics. By engaging Israelis in practical and emotional ways, rather than presenting them outright with competing narratives, such groups hope to spark individual reflection on taken-for-granted assumptions (Merza-Bronstein and Bronstein-Aparicio 2018). Activists have noted how it is not rare that the people so introduced to activism will radicalise after having experienced first-hand the gravity of the situation. In this logic, moderate groups appear to serve not necessarily as “gatekeepers” that dictate the boundaries of legitimate critique, but on the contrary as “gateways” that can multiply entry points to more radical forms of action (Landy 2011, 109-112).

Finally, there are groups emphasising the need to connect pro-Palestinian stances with other demands for change that are perceived as less contested in Israeli society, with the aim of re-articulating the Palestinian issue as part of broader concerns for equality. Connections are made either with other socio-economically marginalised sectors of society (such as Mizrahi and Ethiopian Jews) or with LGBTQ, feminist, environmental, and animal-rights struggles. However, such connections have much lower grasp than they used to in the past. Disenfranchised Israeli Jews increasingly adopt right-wing anti-Palestinian positions in an attempt to benefit from some of the privileges associated with being Jewish.<sup>48</sup> The latter type of connection had its golden age in the 1990s and 2000s in Tel Aviv, and had an important role in forming the activists that started joining Palestinian demonstrations in the West Bank during the Second Intifada.<sup>49</sup> While some of these networks are kept alive in present activist groups, much of the ‘Tel Aviv scene’ has retreated away from Palestinian concerns and continued to focus solely on the more consensual and rewarding struggles for animal rights, the environment, or LGBTQ rights.<sup>50</sup> To this contributes the fact that the strategy of connecting struggles has often had the opposite effect than what was hoped for: instead of legitimising Palestinian claims, they have delegitimised those who have taken a pro-Palestinian stance, making them outcasts in their own sectors of operation.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Free Jerusalem member (Jerusalem, December 2019) and with All that’s Left member (Jerusalem, May 2019).

<sup>48</sup> Groups from the past that made an explicit connection between the Mizrahi and the Palestinian issue are Tarabut, disbanded in recent years, and the Mizrahi Black Panthers, disbanded in the 1970s after a short period of activity. Today, work of this kind is attempted by the group Standing Together and by the youth sections of the communist party Hadash. On the Mizrahi issue in relation to Zionism, see Kimmerling (2001), Ehrlich (2003), and Smoooha (2008); in relation to Palestinian solidarity see, for example, Shenhav (2002) and Chetrit (2000).

<sup>49</sup> Interview with former member of Anarchists Against the Wall (Jerusalem, November 2019). Examples of such past groups are One Struggle and Black Laundry.

<sup>50</sup> A particularly exemplificatory trajectory is that of the group One Struggle: originally centered on the connection between all kinds of oppressions in the context of the occupation, the group progressively abandoned pro-Palestinian concerns and focused entirely on animal rights ones, taking the name ‘Animals’ (interview with former member of Anarchists Against the Wall, Jerusalem, November 2019).

<sup>51</sup> Interview with member of Human Rights Defenders Fund (Tel Aviv, May 2019).

The variously adaptive approaches adopted by such groups do not necessarily imply that they consider Israeli society to be the main locus of change on the Israeli-Palestinian issue. In fact, many activists among these groups underscore their pessimism regarding this possibility and are more inclined to believe that structural change will come from “external circumstances.”<sup>52</sup> Nonetheless, they insist on the importance of “not giving up” on Israeli audiences in view of the future role they can play in the reconstruction of a decolonised Israeli ethos.

Other groups have instead reacted to the disillusionment of bringing change within Israeli society by shifting more and more towards audiences other than the Israeli one. In the aforementioned cases of *Breaking the Silence* and *B’Tselem*, part of the response to the narrowing space for action in Israel was turning to international audiences. *Breaking the Silence* has been investing more in talks and educational projects abroad, while *B’Tselem* has been addressing international bodies to demand international intervention against Israeli crimes.<sup>53</sup>

A similar disillusionment with changing Israeli society has led many direct-action activists to turn away from it, instead focusing on solidarity action on the ground with Palestinians combined with appeals to international civil society. An exemplary case is that of *Anarchists Against the Wall*: frustrated by years of ineffective struggles, activists in the group have either turned to focusing mostly on advocating for the international boycott of Israel, or have moved abroad entirely, in the belief that support for Palestinian rights is better served by acting in countries where public opinion has better chance of being shifted.<sup>54</sup>

## **De-ideologisation: From political worldviews to political praxis?**

As we have seen, compared to a past marked by few but prominent highly ideological groups such as *Matzpen* or political platforms such as *Peace Now*, present Jewish-Israeli solidarity groups invest much less in the political framing of their actions. This is due to a variety of reasons, ranging from the lack of time and energy to dedicate to political reasoning, to the decreasing faith in its potential to be a factor of change, to the specific challenges of detaching ideology from identity in Israeli society. As noted by older generations of activists, who look at the new ones with disappointment, this absence of a political framing disconnects solidarity actions from systemic critiques, and can even serve the Zionist project as a whole. In the words of a former member of *Matzpen*, present movements

---

<sup>52</sup> Interview with former member of *Anarchists Against the Wall* (Tel Aviv, May 2019).

<sup>53</sup> Interview with board members of *Breaking the Silence* (Jerusalem, May 2019) and *B’Tselem* (Jerusalem, May 2019). See also *El-Ad* (2016, 2018) and *B’Tselem* (2016).

<sup>54</sup> Interview with former member of *Anarchists Against the Wall* (Tel Aviv, March 2019), and with member of *Boycott from Within* (Tel Aviv, May 2019).

don't say that the whole project is wrong, that it is a project of displacing a whole nation and create a racist, apartheid society. They focus on a localized kind of harm – the harm to the people living in the West Bank, or in Issawiya. Framed like this, the logical response is to help the harmed, the weak, as you would help a kid crossing the street... They choose to do it in this way because it is undisputable (and I agree that helping the weak is indisputably right!), but it's a small part of the story and it's not so bad in the eyes of the establishment either. There is someone who is correcting its mistakes, helping the victim [the system] makes in the pursuit of some bigger ideals that are not questioned in themselves. It is even proud of them, 'see, these are the good Jews helping the weak'! It is in this sense that they are, in a way, part of the project. (interview, Jerusalem, November 2019)

According to another prominent figure of Matzpen, Moshe Machover, the shift from revolutionary socialism to what he terms an “ethno-patriotic peace activism” – referring to the increased weight Jewish humanitarian values have gained over socialist principles – has deep consequences on the relationship between activists from the oppressive and oppressed groups, and on the possibility to build a joint struggle:

Of course, the shift from revolutionary socialism to the peace activism of an ethno-patriot involves a significant change in perspective and attitude. [...] Joint action, genuine comradeship, and personal friendship between socialists belonging to oppressed and oppressing national groups is not only possible but in fact fairly common, because they share a common socialist outlook and an overriding internationalist commitment, and regard their respective national identities as a matter of mere accident of birth rather than of positive active choice. But where this common overriding commitment to socialist internationalism is lacking, matters are quite different. A person who actively embraces Jewishness as a primary identity and a Palestinian nationalist are not equal partners in a common struggle. The former, even if s/he is anti-Zionist, can at best extend solidarity and support to the latter, but must refrain from offering any programmatic opinion and advice, lest it be interpreted as a colonialist patronizing the colonized. The two remain politically separated by the Border [...] even when trying to bridge it. And in such circumstances “an intimacy in personal relations that does away with ethnic or religious belonging, and which one can call friendship, is almost impossible to achieve.” (Machover 2012, 219)

Similar to critiques of non-explicitly anti-Zionist positions, the limitation of this kind of reasoning is that it focuses on political representations as equivalent to actual political practice, as if a “common overriding commitment to socialist internationalism” could erase the different experiences and status of colonisers and colonised. Instead, as studies of the biopolitical have established, power works through bodies, affects, and the quotidian fabric of social interactions. As such, resistance to it lies (also) in the creation of new subjectivities, practices, and relationships that can subvert hegemonic hierarchies and articulations (see, e.g., Sabsay 2016).

With this in mind, the apparent setbacks of present Israeli activism in terms of political framing can be seen in a different light. The focus on pragmatism and concrete action, albeit happening in an ideological ‘void,’ has brought

Israeli activists in closer contact with Palestinians than ever before. The locus of direct action, which in the past was mostly Israeli cities, has decidedly shifted to the West Bank since the 2000s (Lamarche 2013; Sfar 2020). Israeli activists have “gone to the other side” to offer their support to Palestinians, in a border-crossing that is not only physical but often entails a “fundamental switch of perspective in the perception of the conflict” (Lamarche 2013, 82). The fact of Israelis and Palestinians standing together in the face of military and settler violence does not by itself erase the asymmetry of their positions, but can lead to learn from experience what that asymmetry entails – what privilege means – at the political as well as the interpersonal level. This practice of daily, “unheroic” resistance (Shulman 2018) can provide the breeding ground for new subjectivities, and as such for counterhegemony in a more biopolitical sense. This was testified by the many activists who reflected on how engaging on the ground and over time along with Palestinians led them to develop increasingly sophisticated understandings of the systemic situation of injustice and of their role in it.<sup>55</sup>

Now, the extent of this “revolutionary praxis” (Gramsci 1975) should not be overestimated. The type of engagement discussed here concerns a small minority of the already small portion of Israelis engaged in solidarity. Moreover, the risk of inadvertently reproducing embodied relations of power and asymmetry still exists. It is manifested, for instance, whenever Israeli activists condition their practical support to the respect of guidelines and principles on the part of Palestinians, thus *de facto* assuming a leading role in the struggle (see, e.g., Hassan 2011; Younis 2019). Exemplary of this is the question of non-violence. Condemning Palestinian violent resistance, even when such violence is minimal compared to that used by the Israeli state, is very common among the Israeli Left (Owen 2020; Gordon 2018), and not absent also among those who engage in the radical praxis described above. Some Ta’ayush activists, for instance, admitted how they have occasionally withdrawn their participation from situations where young Palestinians would throw stones at the soldiers, in the hope that this could “educate them to non-violence.”<sup>56</sup> This attitude shows a form of paternalism that reproduces a colonial type of encounter, and stands in stark contrast with the group’s commitment to support Palestinians in their struggle “not uncritically, but unconditionally.”<sup>57</sup>

Notwithstanding these limitations, the fact remains that some solid and profound partnerships have been built in the West Bank in recent years. One particular episode during my fieldwork struck me as embodying the contradictions of such relationships: the ‘United in Struggle’ Popular Resistance Conference, organised by Palestinian popular committees and resistance

<sup>55</sup> Interview with Free Jerusalem activist (Jerusalem, December 2019) and Engaged Dharma activist (Jerusalem, December 2019). See also Shulman (2018).

<sup>56</sup> Interview with member of Ta’ayush (Jerusalem, November 2019). See also Shulman (2018).

<sup>57</sup> Interview with member of Ta’ayush (Jerusalem, November 2019).

networks in October 2019. The conference was aimed at strategizing the international joint struggle with Palestinians, and ended with a direct action against a newly established settlement. Many of the limitations mentioned above emerged, with Israeli activists (privately) expressing disappointment towards their partners' tactical choices, and Palestinian activists refraining from publicly acknowledging the very presence of Israeli activists, preferring to refer to 'internationals' only. And yet, in contrast with this, Israeli and Palestinian activists were acting towards each other in a way that showed profound trust and mutual respect, not only during the unfolding of the action, but also in the moments of rest that preceded and followed it. In these moments, years and even decades of relationships showed their legacy, with activists recalling episodes from the past, talking about common friends who died or left the struggle, relating intimately over political discussions and jokes that revealed not just political relations, but—maybe—even something similar to the 'friendships' that Machover saw as impossible to achieve.

## **Conclusion: Limitations and potentials for change 'from within'**

This chapter has offered an assessment of present-day Jewish-Israeli activism for Palestinian rights. First, it has mapped its full spectrum by classifying the main groups according to their political framings, organisational forms, and modes of action. Then, it has identified the main developments that distinguish present-day activism from that of the past in terms of a contraction in numbers, a convergence between grassroots collectives and NGOs, the isolation vis-à-vis the Israeli public, and a de-ideologisation of political framings.

The picture that emerges is that of an activism that blurs binary categorisations of groups as working either fully 'within' or fully 'outside' the constraints of Zionism, legal and discursive. If such pure dichotomies have arguably never existed in a context in which Zionism is less an ideology than a daily practice, the hostile political scenario of the past twenty years has made compromises and pragmatic engagements more common than they were before. Both the structural and the contingent conditions of Jewish-Israeli activism engender a situation in which even radical activists are faced with the paralyzing dilemma of either working with the system to meet small-scale changes, or refusing to do so and postponing solidarity action to an indefinite future when systemic change will have been brought from the outside (see, e.g., Sfarid 2018). In front of this dilemma, an increasing number of activists chooses not to choose between one or the other option, accepting the political compromises that come from reaching out to Israeli publics, cooperating with politically distant groups, or suspending their stance towards Zionism. This attitude is showing, so far,

different consequences. On the one side, there are groups which have tamed their critiques and moderated their actions in order to continue to operate in the present political context. On the other, there are groups and individuals for which seeking new forms of engagement has led to a progressive radicalisation.

This way to 'make do' with the present structural conditions (and one's own role in them) was well captured by an activist who told me: "Nothing here is black or white, everything is about compromise. The world of NGOs is not all bad and the world of activism is not all pure. And for sure, whatever we do, we cannot shed our privilege. The best we can do is to learn how to use it so as to perpetrate it the least."<sup>58</sup>

Indeed, if there is something hopeful about Jewish-Israeli activism, and something that can serve as an example to others elsewhere struggling with similar constraints, it lies in the ways activists are experimenting to navigate this space and deal with the contradictions it entails. As this chapter has shown, this has led some activists to an engagement that is at once reflexive and relational, rooted in a praxis of day-to-day interaction with their Palestinian partners: an engagement that has allowed them to develop a sophisticated awareness of their embeddedness in power and of possible ways to subvert it. It is this process that carries potential, not only for the development of a 'good practice' of solidarity from within, but for the cultivation through struggle of truly counterhegemonic and decolonial subjectivities among the privileged.

## References

- Alcoff, Linda Martín. 1998. "What should white people do?" *Hypatia* 13, no. 3: 6-26.
- B'Tselem. 2016. "The Occupation's Fig Leaf. Israel's Military Law Enforcement System as a Whitewash Mechanism." Report, May 2016. Available at: [https://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/201605\\_occupations\\_fig\\_leaf](https://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/201605_occupations_fig_leaf).
- B'Tselem. 2019. "Fake Justice: The Responsibility of Israel's High Court Justices Bear for the Demolition of Palestinian Homes and the Dispossession of Palestinians." Report, February 2019. Available at: [https://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/201902\\_fake\\_justice](https://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/201902_fake_justice).
- Bailey, Alison. 1998. "Locating traitorous identities: toward a view of privilege-cognizant White character." *Hypatia* 13, no. 3: 27-42.
- Balanson, Naftali. 2017. "B'Tselem Must Take Responsibility for the Consequences of Its Actions." *The Tower*, February 22, 2017. Available at: <http://www.thetower.org/4600-btselem-must-take-responsibility-for-the-consequences-of-its-actions/>.

<sup>58</sup>Interview with Free Jerusalem activist (Jerusalem, November 2019).

- Barghouti, Omar. 2011. BDS: Boycott, divestment, sanctions: The global struggle for Palestinian rights. Haymarket Books.
- Barghouti, Omar. 2014. "Opting for justice: the critical role of anti-colonial Israelis in the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement." *Settler Colonial Studies* 4, no. 4: 407-412.
- Bartky, Sandra Lee. 2002. *Sympathy and solidarity: And other essays*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Merza-Bronstein, Eléonore, and Eitan Bronstein-Aparicio. 2018. *Nakba. Pour la Reconnaissance de la Tragédie Palestinienne en Israël*. Omniscience.
- Buhlungu, Sakhela. 2006. "Rebels without a Cause of Their Own? The contradictory location of white officials in black unions in South Africa, 1973–94." *Current Sociology* 54, no. 3: 427-451.
- Butler, Judith. 2009. *Frames of war: When is life grievable?* Verso Books.
- Carter, April. 1973. *Direct action and liberal democracy*. Routledge.
- Chetrit, Sami Shalom. 2000. "Mizrahi politics in Israel: Between integration and alternative." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 29, no. 4: 51-65.
- Cohen, Hillel. 2013. "Joint Israeli-Palestinian Political Activity in Jerusalem: Characteristics and Challenges." In *Locating Urban Conflicts: Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Everyday*, edited by Wendy Pullan and Britt Baillie, 132-150. Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Cohen, Samy. 2019. *Doves Among Hawks: Struggles of the Israeli Peace Movements*. Oxford University Press.
- Coy, Patrick. 2011. "The Privilege Problematic in International Nonviolent Accompaniment's Early Decades." *Journal of Religion, Conflict, and Peace* 4, no. 2.
- Dana, Joseph. 2010. "In this struggle for liberation, is 'solidarity' the right word?" *+972 Magazine*, September 21, 2010. Available at: <https://www.972mag.com/what-is-in-a-name-solidarity-and-the-joint-struggle-in-israelpalestine/>.
- De-Colonizer. 2016. "Would you bear the Nakba on Israeli Independence Day?" *YouTube*, posted on July 14, 2016. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdkSnUegJV4>.
- Della Porta, Donatella, and Mario Diani. 2006. *Social movements: An introduction*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Ehrlich, Avishai. 2003. "Zionism, Anti-Zionism, Post-Zionism." In *The Challenge of Post-Zionism: Alternatives to Israeli Fundamentalist Politics*, edited by Ephraim Nimni, 63-97. Zed Books.
- El-Ad, Hagai. 2016. "B'Tselem Head: Why I Spoke Against the Occupation at the UN." *Haaretz*, October 16, 2016. Available at: <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-why-i-spoke-against-the-occupation-at-the-un-1.5450069>.

- El-Ad, Hagai. 2018. "Hagai El-Ad's address at the United Nations Security Council, 18 Oct. 2018." *B'Tselem*, October 18, 2018. Available at: [https://www.btselem.org/settlements/20181018\\_security\\_council\\_address](https://www.btselem.org/settlements/20181018_security_council_address).
- Farmer, Paul. 2004. *Pathologies of power: Health, human rights, and the new war on the poor*. University of California Press.
- Franks, Benjamin. 2003. "Direct action ethic." *Anarchist Studies* 1: 13-41.
- Gamson, William. 1990. *The Strategy of Social Protest*. Wadsworth.
- Giugni, Marco. "Concluding Remarks. Conceptual Distinctions for the Study of Political Altruism." In *Political Altruism? Solidarity Movements in International Perspective*, edited by Florence Passy and Marco Giugni, 235-244. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Gordon, Neve. 2018. "Gaza's Passover massacre" *Al Jazeera*, April 1, 2018. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/gaza-passover-massacre-180401075721153.html>.
- Gordon, Uri. 2010. "Against the wall: anarchist mobilization in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict." *Peace & Change* 35, no. 3: 412-433.
- Gordon, Uri, and Ohal Grietzer, eds. 2013. *Anarchists Against the Wall: direct action and solidarity with the Palestinian popular struggle*. AK Press.
- Gramsci, Antonio. 1975. *Quaderni del Carcere*. Curated by Istituto Gramsci and Valerio Giarratana. Einaudi.
- Greenstein, Ran. 2014. *Zionism and its discontents: a century of radical dissent in Israel/Palestine*. Pluto Press.
- Haddad, Toufic. 2016. *Palestine Ltd.: Neoliberalism and nationalism in the occupied territory*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Hammami, Rema. 2016. "Precarious politics: The activism of 'bodies that count' (aligning with those that don't) in Palestine's colonial frontier." In *Vulnerability in resistance*, edited by Judith Butler, Zeynep Gambetti, and Leticia Sabsay, 167-190. Duke University Press.
- Hassan, Budour Youssef. 2011. "The sham solidarity of Israel's Zionist left." *Electronic Intifada*, July 28, 2011. Available at: <https://electronicintifada.net/content/sham-solidarity-israels-zionist-left/10213>.
- Honig-Parnass, Tikva, and Toufic Haddad, eds. 2007. *Between the Lines: Readings on Israel, the Palestinians, and the US "war on Terror."* Haymarket Books.
- Honig-Parnass, Tikva. 2011. *The False Prophets of Peace: Liberal Zionism and the Struggle for Palestine*. Haymarket Books.
- hooks, bell. 1990. *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*. South End Press, Boston.

- HRDF, Human Rights Defenders Fund. 2019. "By All Means: The various ways Israel is targeting Human Rights Defenders." Report, February 2019. Available at: [http://hrdf.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/By-all-means\\_web.pdf](http://hrdf.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/By-all-means_web.pdf).
- Hussein, Cherine. 2011. *Countering an Illusion of Our Epoch: The Re-Emergence of the Single State Solution in Palestine/Israel*. PhD Thesis, University of Sussex.
- Hyndman, Jennifer. 2007. "Feminist geopolitics revisited: Body counts in Iraq." *The Professional Geographer* 59, no. 1: 35-46.
- ICG, International Crisis Group. 2009. "Israel's Religious Right and the Question of Settlements." *Middle East Report* N° 89.
- Jamal, Amal. 2018. "The Hegemony of Neo-Zionism and the Nationalizing State in Israel – The Meaning and Implications of the Nation-State Law." In *Defining Israel: The Jewish State, Democracy, and the Law*, edited by Simon Rabinovitch. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press: 159-182.
- Keck, Margaret E., and Kathryn Sikkink. 2014. *Activists beyond borders: Advocacy networks in international politics*. Cornell University Press.
- Kimmerling, Baruch. 2001. *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness: State, Society, and the Military*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Koopman, Sara. 2011. "Alter-geopolitics: Other securities are happening." *Geoforum* 42, no. 3: 274-284.
- Kriesi, Hanspeter. 1996. "The Organizational Structure of New Social Movements in a Political Context." In *Comparative Perspective on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framing*, edited by Doug McAdam, J. McCarthy, and M. N. Zald. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 152–84.
- Laclau, Ernesto, and Chantal Mouffe. 2014. *Hegemony and socialist strategy: Towards a radical democratic politics*. London, New York: Verso.
- Landy, David. 2012. *Jewish identity and Palestinian rights: Diaspora Jewish opposition to Israel*. Zed Books Ltd..
- Lamarche, Karine. 2018. *Militer contre son camp? Des Israéliens engagés aux côtés des Palestiniens*. Presses universitaires de France.
- Lentin, Ronit. 2016. "Palestine/Israel and State Criminality: Exception, Settler Colonialism and Racialization." *State Crime Journal* 5, no. 1: 32-50.
- Lindgren, Elaine H. 1987. "The Informal-Intermittent Organization: A Vehicle for Successful Citizen Protest." *Journal of Applied Behavioral Research*, 23, 397–412.
- Lloyd, David. 2012. "Settler colonialism and the state of exception: The example of Palestine/Israel." *Settler Colonial Studies* 2, no. 1: 59-80.

- Machover, Moshé. 2012. *Israelis and Palestinians: Conflict and resolution*. Haymarket Books.
- Mahony and Eguren. 1997. *Unarmed Bodyguards: International Accompaniment for the Protection of Human Rights*. Kumarian Press.
- Maney, Gregory M., Lynne M. Woehrle, and Patrick G. Coy. 2005. "Harnessing and challenging hegemony: The US peace movement after 9/11." *Sociological Perspectives* 48, no. 3: 357-381.
- Marton, Ruchama. 2017. "Distinguished Israeli Doctor Supports BDS." Interview by BDS National Committee. *BDS Movement*, October 5, 2017. Available at: <https://bdsmovement.net/news/distinguished-israeli-doctor-supports-bds>.
- Marx, Gary T., and Michael Useem. 1971. "Majority Involvement in Minority Movements: Civil Rights, Abolition, Untouchability." *Journal of Social Issues* 27, no. 1: 81-104.
- Matar, Haggai. 2015. "Why do so many Israelis hate Breaking the Silence?" *+972 Magazine*, December 14, 2015. Available at: <https://www.972mag.com/why-do-so-many-israelis-hate-breaking-the-silence/>.
- McCarthy, John D. and Mayer N. Zald. 1987. *Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory*. In *Social Movements in an Organizational Society*, edited by Mayer N. Zald and J. D. McCarthy,. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.
- Memmi, Albert. 1957. *Portrait du Colonisé. Portrait du Colonisateur*. Paris, Folio.
- Morrison, Suzanne. 2015. "The emergence of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement." In *Contentious Politics in the Middle East: popular resistance and marginalized activism beyond the Arab uprisings*, edited by Fawaz A. Gerges, 229-255. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mouffe, Chantal. 1979. "Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci." In *Gramsci and Marxist Theory*, edited by Chantal Mouffe. Routledge, pp. 168-204.
- Mouffe, Chantal. 2013. *Agonistics: Thinking the world politically*. Verso Books.
- Natanel, Katherine. 2016. *Sustaining Conflict: Apathy and Domination in Israel-Palestine*. University of California Press.
- Nimni, Ephraim. 2003. "Introduction." In *The challenge of post-Zionism: Alternatives to Israeli fundamentalist politics*, edited by Ephraim Nimni, 1-19. Zed Books.
- Omer, Atalia. 2013. *When peace is not enough: How the Israeli peace camp thinks about religion, nationalism, and justice*. University of Chicago Press.
- Owen, Dan. 2020. "Why the Israeli left's obsession with nonviolence reinforces the occupation" *+972 Magazine*, January 22, 2020. Available at: <https://www.972mag.com/nonviolence-obsession-reinforces-occupation/>.

- Passy, Florence. 2001. "Political Altruism and the Solidarity Movement: An Introduction." In *Political Altruism? Solidarity Movements in International Perspective*, edited by Florence Passy and Marco Giugni, 3-26. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Pappé, Ilan. 2003. "The square circle: The struggle for survival of traditional Zionism." In *The challenge of post-Zionism: Alternatives to Israeli fundamentalist politics*, edited by Ephraim Nimni, 42-62. Zed Books.
- Passy, Florence, and Marco Giugni, eds. 2001. *Political Altruism? Solidarity Movements in International Perspective*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Piven, Frances F. and Richard Cloward. 1977. *Poor People's Movements*. New York: Pantheon.
- Ram, Uri. 2003. "From Nation-State to Nation----State: Nation, History and Identity Struggles in Jewish Israel." In *The Challenge of Post-Zionism: Alternatives to Israeli Fundamentalist Politics*, edited by Ephraim Nimni, 20-41. Zed Books.
- Sabsay, Leticia. 2016. "Permeable bodies: Vulnerability, affective powers, hegemony." In *Vulnerability in resistance*, edited by Judith Butler, Zeynep Gambetti, and Leticia Sabsay, 278-302. Duke University Press.
- Said, Edward. 2003. "Appendix: New History, Old Ideas." In *The Challenge of Post-Zionism: Alternatives to Israeli Fundamentalist Politics*, edited by Ephraim Nimni, 197-201. Zed Books.
- Salamanca, Omar Jabary, Mezna Qato, Kareem Rabie, and Sobhi Samour. 2012. "Past is present: Settler colonialism in Palestine." *Settler Colonial Studies* 2, no. 1: 1-8.
- Scholz, Sally J. 2008. *Political solidarity*. Penn State Press.
- Sfard, Michael. 2018. *The Wall and the Gate: Israel, Palestine, and the Legal Battle for Human Rights*. Metropolitan Books.
- Sfard, Michael. 2020. "'An illegitimate regime': How a top rights group shed Israeli myths to recognize apartheid." *+972 Magazine*, July 9, 2020. Available at: [https://www.972mag.com/michael-sfard-yesh-din-apartheid/?fbclid=IwAR2hwvFMuZhkiStRyVlzEalhryk\\_729LTDe8EPwEXT4cUzaXH3EjG4MzO0Q](https://www.972mag.com/michael-sfard-yesh-din-apartheid/?fbclid=IwAR2hwvFMuZhkiStRyVlzEalhryk_729LTDe8EPwEXT4cUzaXH3EjG4MzO0Q).
- Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Nadera. 2014. "Human suffering in colonial contexts: Reflections from Palestine." *Settler Colonial Studies* 4, no. 3: 277-290.
- Shenhav, Yehouda. 2002. "Ethnicity and national memory: The World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries (WOJAC) in the context of the Palestinian national struggle." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 29, no. 1: 27-56.
- Shulman, David. 2007. *Dark hope: Working for peace in Israel and Palestine*. University of Chicago Press.

- Shulman, David. 2018. *Freedom and Despair: Notes from the South Hebron Hills*. University of Chicago Press.
- Skocpol, Theda. 2003. *Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management in American Civic Life*. Norman: Oklahoma University Press.
- Smootha, Sammy. 2008. "The mass immigrations to Israel: A comparison of the failure of the Mizrahi immigrants of the 1950s with the success of the Russian immigrants of the 1990s." *Journal of Israeli History* 27, no. 1: 1-27.
- Sternhell, Zeev. 1999. *The Founding Myths of Israel: Nationalism, Socialism, and the Making of the Jewish State*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Svirsky, Marcelo. 2013. *Arab-Jewish Activism in Israel-Palestine*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.
- Todorova, Teodora. 2014. *Reframing Israel-Palestine: critical Israeli responses to the Palestinian call for Just Peace*. PhD thesis, University of Nottingham.
- Todorova, Teodora. 2019. "Vulnerability as a politics of decolonial solidarity: the case of the Anarchists Against the Wall." *Identities*: 1-18.
- Turner, Mandy. 2015. "Creating a counterhegemonic praxis: Jewish-Israeli activists and the challenge to Zionism." *Conflict, security & development* 15, no. 5: 549-574.
- Veracini, Lorenzo. 2015. "What can settler colonial studies offer to an interpretation of the conflict in Israel–Palestine?" *Settler Colonial Studies* 5, no. 3: 268-271.
- Warschawski, Michel. 2004. *On the Border*. Translated by Levi Laub. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
- Weizman, Elian. 2013. *Hegemony, law, resistance: struggles against Zionism in the State of Israel*. PhD Thesis. SOAS, University of London.
- Weizman, Elian. 2016. "The Paradox of Breaking the Silence." *Jadaliyya*. Available at: <https://openresearch.lsbu.ac.uk/item/89172> (last accessed: 17.06.2020).
- Weizman, Elian. 2017. "Decolonising Israeli society? Resistance to Zionism as an educative practice." *Ethnicities* 17, no. 4: 574-597.
- Wright, Fiona. 2018. *The Israeli Radical Left: An Ethics of Complicity*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Yesh Din. 2020. "The Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the crime of apartheid: A legal opinion" *Yesh Din Position Paper*, June 2020. Available at: <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/files.yesh-din.org/Apartheid+2020/Apartheid+ENG.pdf>.
- Yiftachel, Oren. 2006. *Ethnocracy: Land and identity politics in Israel/Palestine*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

- Younis, Rami. 2019. "Let's stop talking about a false 'Jewish-Arab partnership'." *+972 Magazine*, April 17, 2019. Available at: <https://www.972mag.com/false-jewish-arab-partnership/>.
- Ziv, Oren. 2018. "After a decade, evictions set to return in Sheikh Jarrah." *+972 Magazine*, December 3, 2018. Available at: <https://www.972mag.com/after-a-decade-evictions-set-to-return-in-sheikh-jarrah/>.
- Zonszein, Mairav. 2019. "Breaking the Silence: Inside the Israeli Right's Campaign to Silence an Anti-Occupation Group." *The Intercept*, March 3, 2019. Available at: <https://theintercept.com/2019/03/03/breaking-the-silence-israel-idf/>.