

September 2019

Occupation: Neoliberalism's Role in Palestinian Apartheid

Devyn Johnson
devyncj15@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.shu.edu/locus>

Recommended Citation

Johnson, Devyn (2019) "Occupation: Neoliberalism's Role in Palestinian Apartheid," *Locus: The Seton Hall Journal of Undergraduate Research*: Vol. 2 , Article 3.
Available at: <https://scholarship.shu.edu/locus/vol2/iss1/3>

Occupation: Neoliberalism's Role in Palestinian Apartheid

Devyn Johnson
Seton Hall University

Abstract

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict remains one of the most contentious political topics in our world today. Although violence has been spewed from both sides, imbalance is demonstrated in power structures used to maintain occupation by the state of Israel. Using the concept of Neoliberalism, this paper seeks to explain the motives behind state political and economic practices that subdue the Palestinian public and control the narrative of its actions. As attributes of neoliberalism such as privatization, wealth inequality, and security are considered acceptable by society, this paper also examines how injustices that exist under these attributes are ignored or denied, and created a prison-like society in the OPT (Occupied Palestinian Territories). By using neoliberalism as a lens for analysis, we seek to better explain how the elaborate system of the occupation was crafted, normalized and continues to operate with little to no interference.

Palestine is dying. This is an unspoken truth that many refuse to acknowledge, claiming that the issue is too complex for any unbiased analysis. Those of the Abrahamic faiths view Israel with religious significance; Palestine then becomes an ugly distraction from the beauty of faith and miracles. What has Israel done to always be victor? What has Palestine done to always be worthy of destruction? Maybe some men are weak, and some men are evil. Or perhaps there is something simpler at work. Political theorist Hannah

Arendt discusses the concept of the banality of evil in connection to the Eichmann Trials, explaining the idea as the recognition that one, ordinary people are capable of terrible deeds, and two, everyday acts can become evil if they are perceived as normal and acceptable by the general public. This, however, does not excuse the evil that is created and as was affirmed in Eichmann's trial, all individuals are accountable for their own actions. The circumstances are no different in Israel and Palestine; violence enacted by the State of Israel in the various forms it takes in occupation - is normalized. Through different mechanisms of state violence, suppression, surveillance, and control, the banality of evil continues to override regard for basic human rights.

1. Before Occupation

Between 1917 and 1947 it was understood at all levels of Jewish administration that the population in Palestine needed to be "transferred" in order for more European Jews to immigrate in. Palestinians were not the first or last indigenous group to experience this multifaceted destruction of culture. For further comparison, one need only juxtapose Palestinian treatment to the treatment of indigenous peoples in the United States: from the forced migration of peoples, to corralling whole tribes onto reservations, to subjecting indigenous children to abuse in "Indian Schools" where they were stripped of all their cultural signifiers and forced to assimilate into the colonizer's society.

These common factors speak to the generalized goal of colonialism: to replace a living society with one after the image of the colonizer. If this is true, there is no space where any colonial acts cannot be considered violent. The price of creating something new always comes at the cost of destroying what has existed before.

Once the idea of transferring Palestinians from their land was firmly planted throughout the Zionist leadership, it was only a matter of time before severe action was taken. Things came to a head in 1948 and culminated in the ethnic cleansing of Palestine, called by Palestinians the Nakba, or Catastrophe. Many in the West and in Israel call it the Arab Israeli-War of 1948. Before 1948, when the UN General Assembly voted to partition Palestine in order to establish the state of Israel, no Palestinians were given an opportunity to speak, and 55% of their land was given to Israel, with an additional 23% eventually being gained through Israeli force. There was no agreement to go to war, no struggle between powers for contested resources; this “catastrophe” bears the mark of colonialist genocide through and through.

The Nakba and the 6 Day War both offer proof of ethnic cleansing on massive scales, not only in murder and destruction of property but in scare tactics used to push people out and then legislation passed to ban refugee reentry. Ethnic cleansing is defined by the UN as “rendering an area ethnically homogeneous by using force or intimidation to remove from a given area persons of another ethnic or religious group.” The main goal of the Zionist forces on the ground was to destroy Palestinian villages in order to encourage the inhabitants to flee so that they could seize the land. In the language of military orders there was much talk of “cleansing” and “clearing”; Palestinian villages became essentially enemy bases that needed to be destroyed and evacuated in order to ensure the creation of the State of Israel. “In a period of less than seven weeks leading up to Israel’s creation and the Arab-Israeli war, 200 Palestinian villages were occupied and their inhabitants expelled.” At its end,

this ethnic cleansing mission was hardened in the legal ban of refugee return to the now occupied Israeli territory. The whole ordeal was then repeated during the 1967 6 Day War; although under more international scrutiny, Israeli forces managed to expel 300,000 more Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank. By the end of 1970 the majority of the Palestinian population was forced to flee, with those who were left forced to live under military rule in the now occupied territories or to live as minority citizens in the new state of Israel.

Palestine’s status as a state in the international community remains contested, with some states, mainly in the Global South, recognizing statehood, and others refusing recognition. Israel on the other hand, despite several rulings by the UN and the International Court of Justice (one of which will be explained below) decrying the unlawful nature of the occupation, continues to be recognized as a state. One of many reasons for this, is the existence of the so-called Fateful Triangle. The “Fateful Triangle” refers to the economic, political, social, and military relationship between Israel, Palestine, and the U.S. American popular opinion about Israel and Palestine is influenced by a supposed shared experience with terrorism and, as is evident in the U.S.’s own foreign policy, security and protection from terrorism are constantly used to legitimize Israel’s occupation. In the face of terrorism and public fear, every act is justified and explained away; allegiances are made between political and corporate forces who fight terrorism for “the good of the public.”

Both states utilize neoliberal policies of privatization and security to influence the masses. For example, international security companies such as G4S, which is the third largest private company in the world, play a role in maintaining occupation in Israel as well as private prisons in the United States, and surveillance at the U.S./Mexico border. In this example we can see not only the far reach of neoliberalism, but the depth of the relationship between the U.S. and Israel, and their dedication to distancing themselves from the prison

process while also being the primary force behind it. Through this increase in privatization and interconnectedness between surveillance and control systems it is evident that neoliberalism is increasingly changing the way systems of inequality are allowed to operate.

2. Neoliberalism as a Framing Analysis

Neoliberalism is a fairly new concept in political theory and is, unfortunately, as abstract as it is evasive. When neoliberalism is discussed it is important to look at it not, as its name suggests, as a new form of political theory different from liberalism, but as a *continuation* of this trend of liberalism with a focus that has adapted to a changing world. Tracing liberalism back to its earliest forefathers, Locke, Smith, and Montesquieu, it was originally a political theory that emphasized the newest goals of the state: to safeguard a constitutional democracy, protect the liberties of the people, and ensure that the market was allowed to flourish without much state intervention. As modern liberalism developed out of classical liberalism all the main tenets seemed to stay the same except for involvement of the state in economic affairs. Under modern liberalism it became clear that although capitalism preached the benevolence of the invisible hand, there came a time where *laissez-faire* could no longer exist while also fulfilling the role of safeguarding the liberties of the people. While continuing to intervene in the market for the purpose of regulation and protection of the consumer from corporations, modern liberalism posits that the state has a duty to provide services and goods that citizens are unable to provide for themselves. This idea contributes to liberal tenets of democracy and freedom that would otherwise be infringed upon if the state did not assist when it was needed. These concepts of classical and modern liberalism combine to form a general understanding of liberalism that is against unrestricted capitalism, emphasizes individual liberty, supports democratic state rule, and favors consti-

tutional checks on the government. With this definition of liberalism explained, it is easier to see neoliberalism as a continuation of this line of political thought. Thorson and Lie of the University of Oslo synthesize literature on neoliberalism and come to the following definition: “Neoliberalism is. . . a loosely demarcated set of political beliefs which most prominently and prototypically include the conviction that the only legitimate purpose of the state is to safeguard individual, especially commercial liberty, as well as strong private property rights.” Based on this definition, it is easy to see why some theorists see neoliberalism as an attempt to return to a *laissez faire* form of governance. Others still see a more treacherous work in process, one which emphasizes the marketization of every individual and every service, prioritizing and substituting monetary value for human rights.

There is some debate about why neoliberalism occurred in the manner that it did. After the western world saw that liberalism was no longer enough to combat the various economic crises that hit in the 70s, neoliberalism situated itself as the new governing program. Leaders like Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan came onto the scene and immortalized what would come to be known as neoliberalism with hallmark features such as, “crushing trade unions, deregulation, privatization, outsourcing, and competition in public services.” Economist David Henry believes that neoliberalism was the inevitable next step in the development of capitalism, with the ultimate goal of accumulating wealth from many facets. Before Henry, in 1974 Antonio Negri theorized that neoliberalism would come inevitably with the politicization of economics. In his view, as economic control came to be one of the most important aspects of political power, neoliberalism would naturally rise as a way for politicians to maintain their position while also ensuring they could retain wealth and influence economic sectors. Others like Gerard Dumenil and Dominique Levy define neoliberalism as a response to crises of the financial sector. They believe that neoliberalism

was created with the intention of correcting issues of profitability and inflation but instead, ended up causing more instability for consumers. Instead of restricting politicians from rewarding themselves with additional funds, neoliberalism actually creates loopholes through private companies where money is eventually filtered back into the same hands. In this scenario consumers are no match for the strength of the money-sharing relationship between corporations and politicians.

Regardless of its exact starting point, neoliberalism must be understood as a global policy that can only thrive based on the way that capitalism operates internationally. If, as was theorized earlier, neoliberalism is a reaction to the market and how it grows, it cannot be identifiable as a Western or American problem. As long as capitalism persists, neoliberalism will continue its reach to every aspect of world society, although it is hard to say whether there currently remains any part of society untouched by neoliberalism.

In his book *Surveillance in the Time of Insecurity* Torin Monahan describes the function of neoliberalism as “a market rationality that colonizes most spheres of public life and transforms their function to prioritize economic gain over all other measures of quality or success.” There is a clear line that can be drawn from this definition of neoliberalism to its application today. The cost of healthcare, education, healthy food, access to technology, transportation, and security are all affected by the policies of neoliberalism. Instead of services that should be seen as human rights or at least services rendered accessible for most of the population, these social attributes are commodified, leaving room for inequality and injustice to flourish under the weight of monetary benefit. It is no coincidence that the supporters of neoliberal policy are usually wealthy politicians, the business elite, and corporations while those most affected are the most vulnerable members of the population.

In *Neoliberalism and Everyday Life* Raewyn Connell explains, “Wherever neoliberalism has

gained a grip, corporate managers and large owners of capital form a core element in neoliberal coalitions, always linking neoliberalism to the interests of capital and sometimes taking direct political power.” These coalitions are integral to the functioning of neoliberalism; they are what makes neoliberalism such a powerful and debilitating force. It is, although very disheartening, understandable that corporations and businesses are concerned primarily with the acquisition of wealth. What is more troubling is the way neoliberalism has thrived in political systems that are supposed to be about the preservation of democracy. Alliances between banks, corporations, and politicians are hidden from the public but it is generally the politicians who give face to the neoliberal policies all members benefit from. As members of the legislative body, politicians are able to complete the necessary policy rewrites that guarantee all participating parties receive what they want legally. As the goals of neoliberalism are achieved and wealth is accumulated it becomes harder and harder to separate truth from deceit. After all, those who benefit from neoliberalism benefit from keeping citizens blind to their operations.

In her newest book *Freedom is a Constant Struggle*, scholar, activist, and educator Angela Davis boldly states that the issue of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the most important social issue of our world today. As an activist, Davis has always stressed the importance of international liberation as the only way to address structures of racism, patriarchy, and economic injustice; if we are aware of oppression in any other space, we must take action, or our own struggles mean nothing. In her book, Davis connects the Palestinian struggle with the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States and the anti-Apartheid movement in South Africa. Of course oppression in any case calls for focus and attention but I believe Davis pinpoints the Palestinian struggle because of 1) its elaborate nature and 2) its secretiveness and simultaneously ostentatious

violation of human rights and basic dignity. When we unpack the intricacies of how Israeli occupation operates in Palestine it becomes even clearer how neoliberal policy specifically affects both the acts of occupation on the ground and perceptions of occupation from the outside.

3. Occupation and Statehood

“Occupation” refers to Israel’s outstanding presence, surveillance, and regulation of and in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, otherwise known as the State of Palestine. In order to maintain control of the Palestinian population as well as the resources and land area in Palestine, Israel has organized and maintained, since 1948, a strict system of regulation and security. After the Six-Day War in 1967, the international community was led to believe that occupation was only a temporary solution until peace processes were engaged over disputed land claims. Using various tactics from complete disregard to international law, to legal rewrites and court rulings, the state has established an intricate system of checkpoints, military bases, Israeli settler colonies, and surveillance systems that restrict Palestinian movement and keep control of Palestine in Israeli hands. As will be discussed later on, the aspects of security and regulation that define occupation have been heightened by the significant influence of neoliberalism. Privatization has enhanced the prison-like features of occupation and has made it easier for Israel to infringe on Palestinian rights with little to no responsibility. Impermanence is a trademark characteristic of occupation as well. “Israel continuously imposed temporary curfews and closures, set up temporary checkpoints and roadblocks, and continuously issued and revoked permits,” creating a system of temporariness that blinded Palestine and the international community to the intent of the Occupation. The defense of temporariness could be used to excuse any advancement in occupation that was seemingly arbitrary; if contested, it could be argued that the actions taken were only

for a transitory period until further steps could be taken. Thus we see that terminology has deep importance for the Palestinians; ‘occupation’ vs ‘colonization’ or ‘annexation’ is used to suggest to the world that the whole situation is in flux and that Israeli motives aren’t clear. Without a strict system of rules and laws displayed, it is hard to question what is happening on a day-to-day basis.

In addition, violations of rights to freedom of movement, freedom from arbitrary arrest, etc. can be legitimized by the fact that Israel supports the Palestinian economy and the healthcare systems to some degree. In the early days of occupation, Israel provided financial assistance for farmers, helped to vaccinate livestock, increase plant production in the region, and offered subsidies and loans for farming machinery. Vocational courses and privately funded programs were introduced to teach new, more profitable practices to Palestinians in various fields of work and to encourage women to involve themselves in the workplace. These efforts to provide economic success were granted in order to keep the people in line and discourage them from thinking nationalistically or from gaining support outside. Onlookers of the Palestinian crisis see Israel here as the benevolent state, who has selflessly assisted Palestine economically and socially. For Palestinians, the small allowances and freedoms from Israel are given conditionally with a thinly veiled warning of what will happen if they do not remain complicit in their own oppression.

Israel is a state made by Jews for all Jews. It is no doubt, extremely interesting when that fact comes into conflict with the reality of what is required of a state. According to international law, statehood is derived from a state having “a permanent population, defined territory, government, and a capacity to form relations with other states.” Furthermore, recognition of statehood is determined in one of two ways: these requirements for statehood are fulfilled, or this state is recognized by others as legitimate. Outside of these lawful requirements a state has a responsi-

bility to ensure the safety and well-being of all of its citizens. In the unique case of Israel and Palestine a conundrum of statehood and responsibility is created. As a self-identified state for all the Jews of the world Israel, as former Prime Minister Shamir once said, ‘cannot exist long like any other state whose main interest is to insure the welfare of its citizens.’ Ultimately, the state upholds its promise to all members of the Jewish faith first before anyone else. Israeli law makes a specific distinction between nationality and citizenship stating that while technically all people born and living in the state of Israel are citizens, only Jews are considered nationals “because the whole purpose of political Zionism is a state for the Jewish nation.” The self-imposed title of a Jewish democracy highlights the Israeli need to maintain the ideological and religious origins of its country above all else.

Israel has also constantly used legislation and the existence of Jewish only organizations to further the mission of an apartheid state. Private organizations- a trademark tool of the neoliberal agenda- such as the Jewish National Fund (JNF), Israel Lands Administration (ILA), and the World Zionist Organization (WZO) for example were sold Palestinian land by the government, but because they are private organizations, they have no obligation to fairly distribute land to all citizens. Organizations like these, which exist for the promotion of the Zionist state can promote rampant inequality with almost no repercussions. Abuses and rights violations that would be considered illegal if committed by the state itself, are instead handed over to Zionist organizations who will do anything to support the success of Jewish citizens in the Jewish state. Land disenfranchisement is one of the primary ways that Israel has maintained its ongoing apartheid within the state. Palestinians, after having almost no rights to their land, are treated as secondary citizens deemed as potential “demographic threats” to the state.

4. Neoliberalism under Occupation

4.1. Privatization of Security/Surveillance

Immediately following the start of occupation, Israel began the tedious process of collecting information and data concerning all aspects of Palestinian life. This includes everything from average household income to which crops were planted during planting season and what forms of entertainment were most popular. But, as author Neve Gordon points out, “the rapid establishment of such an extensive surveillance apparatus. . . raises the question of whether Israel ever had the intention of withdrawing from the OT [Occupied Territories] or conceived the occupation as temporary.” In the neoliberal world we live in, it is common for states to spend exorbitant amounts of money for surveillance and thus for security. But it is uniquely interesting that a state like Israel, who claims that occupation is only temporary would invest so much in surveying a population outside of its state. Not only has surveillance worked to covertly monitor Palestinian communication and action, it has overtly served as a scare tactic as military bases have been strategically placed surrounding Palestinian villages. In addition, Israel’s surveillance protocol has been notorious for recruiting Palestinians to serve as spies for them in exchange for economic or law favors. For example if a Palestinian was accused of a crime or taken by an Israeli officer and imprisoned they might be offered the opportunity to serve as a human surveillance apparatus for Israel in exchange for freedom or lighter sentencing. In both cases Israel uses the physical presence of surveillance in the community to monitor Palestine life and to influence Palestinian action or inaction.

For the sake of security and surveillance too, it is evident that terrorism has been used as a scapegoat for much of the violence perpetrated by the Israeli state. The label of terrorism has been used since the 1970s to denote any Palestinian who might be in support or a member of organi-

zations like PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) or more recently, Hamas. This no doubt wreaks havoc on the ground as any person who is accused or suspected of being a supposed anti-Israel organization can be arrested and imprisoned by Israeli law. Israel maintains that it is “morally and legally justified in any action against them [suspected members] on the basis of self-defense and national security.” . The same “ticking-time bomb” hypothetical where the possibility of terror is stronger than anything else, so force must be used in every scenario just in case – is used as justification for torture of suspected Palestinian terrorists. This heightened security status is classic of neoliberalism. When the primary function of a state turns from preservation of the citizen (making sure the needs of every citizen are met) to protection of the citizen (placing safety as the most important need and forcing all others to become secondary), “Security threats are constantly mobilized in absolute terms, such that they seemingly necessitate the suspension of the law, direct masculine action, and the reduction of people to mere bodies that can be manipulated by the state.” The entire act of occupation is justified by the state of Israel on these very grounds. When the International Court of Justice was tasked with answering the question of whether or not it was illegal for Israel to build a barrier that would separate them from the Occupied Territories and Palestine, the basis of the Israeli defense was that the Wall was a justified response to Palestinian terrorism. Despite this claim the Court did rule that the barrier was illegal because it violates Palestinian’s right to freedom of movement, but this seemed to have no effect on the status of the Wall in real time.

4.2. Checkpoints and Private Prisons

Checkpoints and roadblocks are another way that Israel controls Palestine physically and psychologically. These tools are used to stop the flow of movement of people and goods which is detrimental for Palestinian livelihood and economic

strength. “Within a year of the Oslo Accords Israel established at least fifty-six permanent military road blocks along its borders” while impermanent checkpoints have been scattered about throughout the West Bank and Gaza. The purpose of the inner checkpoints has never been clearly articulated but again the same blanket defense of security has been used to explain it away when questioned. B’Tselem, one Israeli human rights organization, has found that between 1996 and 2005 at least 30 Palestinians died due to receiving delayed hospital access after being detained at a checkpoint. Author Yehedit Keshur writes, “Checkpoints are not about security... their true purpose is three-fold: collective punishment, visible military control of the civilian population, and the disruption of territorial continuity that makes any prospect of a viable Palestinian state impossible.”

While the checkpoints restrict physical movement they also serve as places where Israeli soldiers can humiliate and harass Palestinians with no warning and at any moment. Passengers may be forced to stay in the heat for hours, their travel permits might be confiscated, and they might even be subjected to brutal attacks for no reason. In a firsthand recount of what she saw at checkpoints, Nina Mayorek recalls how almost every Palestinian is regarded as a potential terrorist. “A pregnant woman is a suspect. An ambulance bringing a sick person... there is no limit to the creativity of the soldiers... you can make them jump rope, you can beat them. Make them undress and stand for hours in the cold... they also chase elderly women with children... a witness told us how soldiers spilled the contents of school bags of 6-year-old girls...” It is clear that checkpoints have no real purpose other than creating opportunities for abuse and creating terror and the feeling, in Palestinians, of always being wrong. The impermanence of these barriers is hard to challenge and the invisible line that marks the end of Palestine and the beginning of Israel exists as a reminder to Palestinians that their belongingness is always in question, always temporary.

This tactic of causing terror for the supposed aim of stopping terrorism is also very visible in the mass incarceration of Palestinians. Israel frequently and often unjustly uses imprisonment and arrest as a way to control the Palestinian population and curtail any possible dissent. Through disciplinary actions such as administrative detention, where a person can be arbitrarily arrested and imprisoned for up to 6 months without trial, ambiguity and vagueness are repurposed to make any action deemed by Israel as possibly terroristic as a punishable offense. According to B'Tselem, by the end of March 2018, 431 Palestinians were being held in administrative detention in Israel Prison Services (IPS) facilities. In a popular case that has received international outcry, Palestinian teenager Ahed Tamimi was arrested and detained in December of 2017 after a video of her slapping and kicking an Israeli soldier went viral. Since her arrest (in the middle of the night), Tamimi has remained in prison and her lawyer has complained of sexual abuse and taunting she has been subjected to by Israeli soldiers. It is suspected the state of Israel is using her as an example, as her family has been a symbol of Palestinian resistance for many generations. Ahed is one of many minors under the age of 18 who have been detained and arbitrarily arrested by Israeli forces. "Since 1967, every Israeli soldier has had the right to detain any Palestinian person if the soldier has grounds for suspicion that the detainee may have committed a security offense... persons may be detained for eighteen days without a charge and without access to a lawyer." Although the entire period of arrest may last as long as the state allows it to, this specific period of time can be used to interrogate and torture detained individuals to get a forced confession by any means necessary. Once confessions are received they cannot be appealed, meaning that despite confessing under duress, any admissions can be used against the individual with no possibility of redaction.

Of course, neoliberalism has also infiltrated the inner workings of the prison and checkpoint

system. The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement has pointed to the security company G4S as one of the primary investors of the occupation. G4S is one of many private companies that works with the Israeli state to continue occupation and is complicit in the human rights abuses and violations perpetrated on behalf of the government. In addition to providing full body scanners at several internal checkpoints, metal detectors, and ankle bracelets, they provides security personnel, and security equipment to businesses and the Israeli government. G4S is also a major supplier of security for the IPS facilities as well as other detention and torture facilities in Israel, the U.S. and internationally. As Monahan explains, "U.S. Government agencies actively partner with the security industry to propagate fear of terrorist attacks and cultivate a desire for prevention through technological means... it is fundamentally about the realigning of national security interests with the profit motives of private companies." The same is true internationally: governments and organizations, are ultimately required to overly stress security which would then require them to be in allegiance with companies who could provide the tools for achieving said security. But it should be noted here that any allegiance between governments and private security firms promotes the idea of a police state; if all goals can be translated into the need for a state to protect its citizens, most other needs or violation of rights become secondary. Policing then becomes the primary means of essentially, protecting the public from itself.

It is evident through occupation that neoliberalism "now takes on an added disciplinary dimension with the simultaneous augmentation of security forces throughout societies." As the security structure of the occupation becomes more and more privatized we see a shift in responsibility and a decrease in state control of individual actors. When companies like G4S provide their own security personnel and contracted workers the Israeli authorities take no responsibility for any ac-

tions they commit even though orders may have come from them. Private police forces have free reign to use their power to enforce the law however they see fit, which means more chaos and terror for Palestinians. On the ground, the rules always seem to be changing and Palestinians are always in the wrong. “The private security industry in Israel is large and profitable. . . due to its extensive involvement and Israeli control and surveillance of the Palestinian people.” As long as private companies continue to profit, and that profit can be shared with the state of Israel, occupation will continue to flourish.

4.3. Use of Force: Land Confiscation, Settlements, and Demolition

As has been discussed previously, the confiscation of land has been used as a way to impose and maintain Israeli control as well as a more covert way of physically repopulating the land with Jewish residents. By the spring of 2000 the UN Commission on Human Rights found that since 1967, an estimated 60 percent of the land in the West Bank had been confiscated in addition to “a third of the Gaza Strip and a third of Palestinian land in Jerusalem.” Even during the Oslo peace process, land was continuously being taken and repurposed into access roads and illegal settlements. In addition to confiscating land, Israeli authorities routinely used housing bulldozing, sealing and demolition to continue their mission of colonizing the West Bank. Sealing is a related practice to bulldozing (with the same goal of expelling Palestinians), “in which windows are blocked with cement and cinder blocks and doors are hermetically sealed in order to deny persons access to all or part of their homes.” Various excuses and explanations have been giving for demolition ranging from lack of permits to punishment for security offenses. Ultimately, the goal has been to force Palestinians out, and to retain as much land mass as possible for Israel. After land demolition and confiscation the next phase in the colonization of Palestinian land is the creation of

illegal settlements. As of 2009, there are almost half a million illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and in East Jerusalem. In the aforementioned ruling by the International Court of Justice, Israeli settlements were considered illegal because they are created on territory that officially does not belong to Israel. Yet and still Israel continues to bypass international law, bulldozing houses, taking land, and effectively repopulating it with Jewish settlers fulfilling the mission of the World Zionist Organization’s ‘Master Plan’ to eventually incorporate the entire West Bank into Israeli territory. So far, they have been quite successful.

4.4. Policing and State Military Violence

When Palestinians however, resist or question this colonization process, the results are often violent. In the Jewish settlements, settlers continue to use violence against Palestinians and are rarely punished for it, as they are backed by the military and the Israeli government. The treatment of Palestinian lives “is characterized by contempt toward Palestinian complaints and leniency toward the offenders.” Law enforcement at all levels seems to only exist for the protection of Jewish lives and the severe policing of any Palestinian action. This can be seen on a day to day to basis with the random violence that can occur at any moment in and around checkpoints. “If soldiers feel provoked or threatened, they may respond with live fire, not infrequently with fatal results.” Soldiers, apparently, may feel threatened by anyone from a six-year-old girl to an injured old man and when violence occurs there is no repercussion for the soldier. The structures of occupation law and Zionist focus protect soldiers and further the mission of total Israeli control by literally beating Palestinians into submission. In addition to abuses by military personnel, the state also carries out various assassinations and unjustified shootings to regulate the population. Political assassinations of leaders in Palestinian liberation move-

ments such as Salah Shehadeh (leader of Hamas) and Abu Ali Mustafa (leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) were meant to silence all dissent and objections to occupation. The justifications for these murders were often terrorist claims or simple miscalculations of rocket fire. In addition, mass killings of civilians are often portrayed by the media as accidents and unforeseen casualties even if civilians are peacefully protesting.

Violence operates in Palestine much like it operates in the United States; whether by police force, military officials, or regular citizens, violence is meant to display who is in control and remind those who are not what will happen if they step out of line. Violence is used in tandem with privatization and security to enforce the status quo and fully back the governing body at whatever cost to the affected population. At the same time violence assists in the perpetration of control in the neoliberal state, neoliberalism's heightened focus on security and protection of the state claims the necessity of violence in order to insure that citizens (albeit certain citizens) are protected from whatever danger prompted violence. Even further, privatization leads to an outsourcing of individuals who can instigate or respond with violence and a more removed state responsibility and punishment.

5. Conclusion

Israeli control over Palestine is thorough: from settlements, surveillance, checkpoints, permits, and private prisons to political assassinations and U.S.-Israel comradery, an almost impenetrable physical and social barrier has been built around Palestine. Sequestered on their own land and alienated from the rest of the world, Palestine has suffered a lonely existence under Israel's occupation. Although occupation predates the formal conception of neoliberalism, its policies have since transformed the physical conditions and treatment of Palestinians in Israel and in the oc-

cupied territory. As security of the state is lauded as the most primary concern, protection, surveillance, and even violence have been used strategically to explain away every action as a necessary. Under neoliberalism this has meant privatization of various security apparatuses that can be used by the state to infringe upon Palestinian rights with no reciprocal state responsibility. To the rest of the world, these claims of necessity for security's sake are accepted and because of this, the realities of abuses and violations of Palestinian rights are completely hidden. Many news articles and reports in the U.S. especially restrict conversations about Israel and Palestine to discussions of terrorism and Palestinian violence, which only contributes to this narrative of the fearful Israeli state on the offense against an uncontrollable population. Without a concerted mass effort to reconstruct the current image of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the harrowing occupation will continue and Palestine will be erased from history.

5.1. Future Trends and Recommendations

There are several obstacles in the way of achieving the mass movement needed to free Palestine and reconfigure current misconceptions of the conflict. One, as we have explained, is the fear of the terrorist. Another is the fear of being labeled an anti-Semite, related to the fear of being racist. It is odd that we are more afraid of the label than the actual meaning of the word (which denotes hostility, oppression, and prejudice against Jews). Palestinians and Free Palestine supporters obviously have an inherently hostile relationship with the State of Israel. It would be unfair to ask them to love their oppressor, under whose hand they have suffered for so many generations. But it would also be unfair to simply label all anti-Israel sentiments as anti-Semitic and therefore not worthy of consideration. The Palestinian struggle isn't between Muslims and Jews or Muslims and Jews and Christians; it is against the state of Israel, who has used religion as a means to colonize Palestine,

and used a long history of pain to rally support for Israel and contempt or dismissal for the Palestinian cause. To compare anti-Semitism with anti-Israel movements does a grave disservice to Palestinians and their supporters, and automatically demonizes those who advocate for a Free Palestine. It must be recognized that this tendency to stop all discussion at the accusation of anti-Semitism not only masks real instances of anti-Jewish prejudice, but is also a propaganda tactic used by pro-Israelis and Zionists to keep the majority of the public from critiquing the occupation.

It can be argued that the question of acknowledging or denying what is happening in Palestine is not just a question of opinion, but one of moral reasoning. What one chooses to do or believe in has real ramifications. Drawing on insights from the American Civil Rights movement, the African American hero Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote in 1963, “Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co-workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation.” King’s words emphasize how in history, change was brought about by those determined to do what they understood to be necessary. At the time of his assassination, King was speaking out for worker’s rights, opposing the war in Vietnam, and pointing to capitalism as one of the three evils of American society. Very late in his life King understood what many of us have not yet been able to doing the right thing has never really meant doing the popular thing, but meant doing something. If this paper shed light on the facts regarding the plight of Palestinians systematically disenfranchised through various forms of state violence and control, then opinions on whether or not this is wrong or should continue is a decision left to the reader. I have argued that the lens of Neoliberalism helps explain why the Palestinian crisis is so potent yet easily ignored by everyone else.

In view of these considerations, what can be done? There are several organizations on the

ground in Israel and Palestine working to change current conditions under occupation. Adalah is an organization in Israel that addresses the legal rights of Palestinians in Israel, IDRID and ICAHD respectively focus on civil rights for displaced Palestinians in Israel and the end to house demolitions, and organizations like Zochrot are intent on making sure Israelis are educated to the truth about the history of Israel and Palestine. Internationally, the general consensus is that there needs to be a global campaign in support of Palestine and against Israel and occupation, much like there was during South African apartheid. Groups like National Students for Justice in Palestine have organized globally to promote the Palestinian cause and argue for boycotts and divestment from Israel and companies that help to support the occupation. BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) is a Palestinian led group that raises awareness about the conditions in Palestine and calls for boycotts, divestment, and sanctions in order to stop Israel in their goal of colonization. The goal for everyone on the opposition it seems, is an end to occupation; discussions abound about the how and the why and the where and if a two-state solution is feasible. But as White emphasizes, there can be no hypothesizing about statehood of Palestine without first the necessary acknowledgement of, and end to occupation. Whatever follows must be built on this understanding and with it justice will come too.

References

Arendt, Hannah. “Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil.” *The New Yorker*. 16 Feb. 1963. <https://www.newyorker.com/contributors/hannah-arendt>.

Arendt, Hannah. “Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil.” *The New Yorker*. 16 Feb. 1963. [https://www.newyorker.com/contributors/hannah-](https://www.newyorker.com/contributors/hannah-arendt)

arendt.

BDS Movement. n.d. <https://bdsmovement.net/>.

B'Tselem. 2018. *Statistics on Administrative Detention*. May 6. Accessed May 13, 2018. https://www.btselem.org/administrative_detention/statistics.

B'Tselem. 2018. "Ahed and Nariman Tamimi remanded in custody as military prosecution requested," https://www.btselem.org/press_releases/20180117_ahed_and_nariman_tamimi_remand

Carroll, Karanja Keita. 2012. "An Introduction to African-Centered Sociology: Worldview, Epistemology, and Social Theory." *Critical Sociology* 257-270.

Connell, Raewyn. 2010. "Understanding Neoliberalism." In *Neoliberalism and Everyday Life*, by Susan Braedly and Meg Luxton, 22-36. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press .

Conrad, Joseph and Robert Hampson. *Heart of Darkness: With the Congo Diary*, London: Penguin Books. 1995.

Davis, Angela. 2016. *Freedom is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.

DPR (Division for Palestinian Rights). 1990. *The Origins and Evolution of the Palestine Problem 1917-1988*. Historical Study, New York: UNIS-PAL (United Nations).

Fanon, Frantz. 1961. "On Violence." In *Wretched of the Earth*. Paris: Grove Press, 1-52.

Farrell, Michelle. "The Ticking Bomb Scenario: Origins, Usages and the Contemporary Discourse." Chapter in *The Prohibition of Torture*

in Exceptional Circumstances, 82146. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. doi:10.1017/CBO9781139344326.004. Gordon, Neve. 2008. *Israel's Occupation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Keshet, Yehudit Kirstein. 2005. *Checkpoint Watch: Testimonies from Occupied Palestine*. London: St. Martin's Press.

King Jr., Martin Luther. 1963. "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," in *Why We Can't Wait*, (New York, Signet Classics, 1963), 85-112.

King Jr., Martin Luther. 1967. "Three Evils of Society," (speech, National Conference on New Politics, August 31, 1967) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8d-IYSM-08>

Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Territory. 2004. 131 (International Court of Justice, July 9).

Lie, Dag Einar Thorsen and Amund. 2009. *What is Neoliberalism?* Research Paper, Oslo: University of Oslo.

Mayorek, Nina. 2003. *Speech at "Peace Now" Demonstration*. Jerusalem, March 22.

Monahan, Torin. 2010. *Surveillance in the Time of Insecurity*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Monbiot, George. 2016. "Neoliberalism the ideology at the root of all our problems." *The Guardian*. April 15. Accessed 5 5, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/apr/15/neoliberalism-ideology-problem-george-monbiot>.

"The Montevideo Convention on Rights and Duties of States," in *International Law: Cases and Commentary*, ed. Mark W. Janis and John E. Noyes, 5th edition (American Casebook Series,

West Academic Publishing, 2014), 557-558.

Occupation 101: Voices of the Silenced Majority, dir. by Sufyan and Abdallah Omeish, (2006; MPI Home Video, 2014 dvd).

Palestinian BDS National Committee. 2017. *Global Security Company G4S deepens ties with Israeli apartheid*. July 27 . Accessed May 13, 2018. <https://bdsmovement.net/news/global-security-company-g4s-deepens-ties-israeli-apartheid-boycott-g4s>

Palestine Human Rights Campaign. 1986. "House Demolitions and Sealings as Practiced Against the Palestinians Living Under Military Occupation." Palestinian Human Rights Campaign, DataBase Center.

Qumsiyeh, Mazim B. 2004. *Sharing the Land of Canaan*. London: Pluto Books.

Rose, Susan D. 2016. *Carlise Indian Industrial School: Indigenous Histories, Memories, and Reclamations*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Rubenberg, Cheryl A. 2003. *The Palestinians: In Search of a Just Peace*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc.

Ryan, Alan. 1993. "Liberalism." In *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, by Robert E. Goodin and Phillip Pettit, 291-311. Oxford: Blackwell.

United Nations Security Council. 1994. *Final Report of the Commission of Experts Established Pursuant to United Nations Security Council Resolution 780*. United Nations Security Council.

White, Ben. 2009. *Israeli Apartheid: A Beginner's Guide*. London: Pluto Press.

Who Profits Research Center. 2016. *Private Security Companies and the Israeli Occupation*. Report, Tel-Aviv: Who Profits and NOVACT-International Institute for Non Violent Action. https://whoprofits.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/old/private_security_companies_final_for_web.pdf . 37-39.