

READING FOR PALESTINE

by Yoely Zentella

For over 10 years, I have researched the historical loss of land and place in el norte de Nuevo Mexico, northern New Mexico. This loss was a result of 19th century colonization, war and annexation into the American Union of the area now known as the Southwest which includes Nuevo Mexico. The Southwest was part of the northern territories of Mexico until 1848. My research has also included the impact of this historical loss on contemporary Hispano-Chicano populations in el norte.

The more I research, the more I find that the historical phenomena responsible for loss of land and place in Nuevo Mexico: Westward Expansion, the use of law to dispossess Mexicanos from their lands, illegal land seizures (many at gunpoint) and deadly violence against Mexicanos already living in these territories — is parallel to the violent occupation of Palestine and the displacement of Palestinians in the creation of Israel.

Placing the historical colonization and annexation of Nuevo Mexico side by side and within a universal context with the occupation of Palestine, one reaches a global understanding of the patterns of territorial expansion, their origins and consequences. Viewing specific international issues on such a level brings these issues out of isolation, encouraging each of us to understand the commonality we have with others facing parallel situations.

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They mirror our own struggles — whether they be racism, racial profiling, gentrification of our barrios, assaults on our indigenous and native languages, suppression of our histories and cultures, or the historical, systematic killing of our people including the killing of our children by law enforcement.

There are differing perspectives between alternative and mainstream media on the complex Palestinian issue and because of this, we can find ourselves either not knowing where to turn or sifting through numerous sources vying for our attention. As most of us live a fast-paced life combining work, education, family and activism — who has time to do the legwork? Sometimes, unfortunately, we settle for what the corporate, biased, conservative *tube* brings into our homes.

As a grassroots and academic writer I *stumble* onto information. In this process some sites have emerged, which I believe, are credible, possessing particular characteristics that I look for in news and information sources. For example I consider — the reputation of the site, and who supports or sponsors it. Do they keep archives? Do they document sources, particularly historical ones, used in creating news items, information, and materials? Lastly, do they let the *people* speak? Based on these observations, I would like to share with the readers of *La Voz* some sites with information on Palestine. These not only provide more balanced

reporting, but also offer educational materials, archives, book announcements, interviews, academic articles, and links to other sites. All are on the internet:

INSTITUTE OF PALESTINE STUDIES

www.palestine-studies.org



The Institute offers articles from their journals: *The Journal of Palestine Studies* and *The Jerusalem Quarterly* — to which one can subscribe. One can browse through current or past issues, free. Also available is a free e-newsletter with current topics on Palestine. Their gem is a bookstore that offers readers books with a sound foundation and analyses on Palestine. A must-read is *Before Their Diaspora: A Photographic History of the Palestinians 1876-1948*, by Walid Khalidi. Another is, *Prelude to Israel: An Analysis of Zionist Diplomacy 1897-1947* by Alan R. Taylor, published in 1970 by the Institute for Palestine Studies. Written simply and well-documented, minus academic jargon, it is nevertheless powerful.

IF AMERICANS KNEW

www.ifamericansknew.org



This site was founded by Alison Weir, American freelance journalist and author of *Against Our Better Judgment: How the U.S. Was Used to Create Israel*. The site contains reports on the current situation in Palestine and articles on related issues; two issues that are particularly striking for us in the U.S., are those on the killing of Rachel Corrie and the attack on the USS Liberty. Attacks by Israel on international peace workers include the 23 year old American, Rachel Corrie, who was crushed to death by an Israeli bulldozer operator in Gaza in 2003 where she was protesting the bulldozing of a Palestinian home. In 1967, the Israeli military attacked the USS Liberty, killing 34 American servicemen. An article which stood out for me, was, *Christian Evangelicals Increasingly Support Palestinian Human Rights* by Alison Weir. Having been both baffled and concerned about Latino evangelical support of Israel, the article offers a twist on the matter, shattering the belief that there is unconditional support of Israel by Latinos.

Weir's book, available through the site, is well-documented using government and academic documents, and media reports. It describes in simple language how the U.S. became involved in the support of Israel and narrates the Zionist plan to take Palestine before 1948. Weir's book along with Taylor's gives us a better understanding of what Zionism is, its ma-

nipulation of the British government and its lobbying in the U.S. — efforts that have spanned two world wars leading to the U.S. government’s support of Israel’s establishment on Palestinian land. Educational materials are also available.

THE LINK

www.ameu.org



The Link is a humble periodical published by Americans for Middle East Understanding (AMEU), an educational website. Each issue focuses on a critical topic, which as the site states, “is usually not covered in depth—if at all—in the mainstream press”. AMEU has several programs that include videos and teacher packets. The current issue of January/March, 2015, features Ilan Pappé, the widely respected Israeli historian now living and teaching in England that has been instrumental in exposing the occupation of Palestine for what it is. Link issues are archived going back to 1968.

PALESTINE LINK

www.palestinelink.eu



This new source I found describes itself as an initiative by Palestinians in the Netherlands, and a “genuine independent voice and a professional resource and service center”. The source advocates for Palestinian rights and promotes Palestinian interests. Its goal is to connect Palestine, its people and culture, to the outside world. The site is an open door for those interested in the real Palestine, not the hysterical, stereotyped, racist models exported by corporate media. It includes a historical chronology, 1919-1939 — *Resisting Zionist immigration and British occupation*.

What is impressive about this site is its link to the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music. This site shows the amazing efforts that young Palestinian musicians are making in refining their musical expertise and keeping performances alive despite the many obstacles that they are facing as Israel continues

to dispossess Palestinians from their ancestral homes, properties, and livelihoods.

MIDDLE EAST RESEARCH AND INFORMATION PROJECT (MERIP)

www.merip.org



MERIP, a non-governmental, non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C. established in 1971 are publishers of *Middle East Report*, a significant source of current news, perspectives and analysis from and about the Middle East, by Middle Eastern and Western correspondents. While the site and publication are not specific to Palestine, I include it because it provides clear background to the complex politics of the Middle East, which often overlap with Palestine, for example, the connection of Hamas to the Muslim Brotherhood. There are also *special publications* like the *Primer on Palestine, Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* that gives a comprehensive history from the 19th century, covering intifadas, and peace plan initiatives.

Middle East Report covers general and specific topics, some of which hit close to home. For example, the issue on *fuel and water*, published in the summer of 2014 included the issue of fracking which reminded me of the ongoing oil and gas designs that we in el norte continue to do battle with and which I see discussed in *La Voz*. One can subscribe to *Middle East Report* online or receive paper copies. Some archived articles are accessible for free. The *intervention* tab offers analyses on many topics with book announcements and a blog. A staple periodical, it has good reporting and photography.

Being informed and aware will help us wade through the biases, manipulations, and racial profiling that the Palestinian image is daily subjected to in mainstream media.

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Thank you to the following businesses for their generous donations at recent events. We encourage the Buena Gente of Esperanza and San Antonio to check out these establishments.

