Full Length Article

Beyond the contours of Zionist sovereignty: Decolonisation in Palestine's Unity Intifada

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A B S T R A C T

This article takes the May 2021 uprising in Palestine, known as the Unity Intifada, as a prism to map old and new political geographies between coloniser and freedom-fighter, whose significance extends beyond the temporal limits of the May event. The first part of the paper investigates the role of identity and cultural geographies in re-enforcing Jewish claims to sovereignty. It shows how the Zionist production of pink (sexed/gendered), red (racializing/indigenising) and green (environmental) markers, is used to draw the contours of settler legitimacy and intensifies when faced by growing indigenous rebellion. The second part addresses the decolonising possibilities engulfing the Unity Intifada. It examines the role of youth, including women and queer collectives, and how their actions invoke new political and material taxonomies beyond the liberal peace structure to which Palestine has succumbed since the Oslo agreements. Overall, the article advances the political geographies of decolonisation by challenging the maintenance of settler colonial violence within the popular, political, and intellectual imaginary of 'Israel/Palestine.' It does so by tracing the spatial and epistemic value of decolonisation theories that extend from interactions across indigenous, queer feminist, critical race, and eco-materialist debates.

1. Introduction

In May 2021 the world's attention turned to Palestine and its ongoing struggle with Zionist settler colonial violence. The plight of the small Jerusalemite neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah, its people's determination not to be removed from their homes, urged a Palestinian mass movement to mobilise various forms of resistance across historic Palestine, from the river to the sea. Street mobilisations, online campaigning—such as the #saveSheikhJarrah—triggered global solidarity with Palestinian struggle against forceful dispossession. Pivotal to the May uprising—also known as the Unity Intifada—is the sense of unity it has revived across the fragmentated Palestinian polity, from Gaza and Jerusalem to Lydd and Hebron. Categories, such as West banker/East-Jerusalemites/48-Arabs/Gazan, reflect Zionist spatio-temporal boundaries used to keep Palestinians within their colonially crafted reserves, quelling any chances for large scale mobilising and revolt. These boundaries are also produced, as Salamanca and others argue (2012), in scholarly accounts that have failed to understand Palestine and its struggle against Zionism within the analytical framework of settler

colonialism. To situate Palestine within the settler colonial analytic means to understand the nature of Zionist inflicted Nakba in relation to indigenous positionality and struggle for decolonisation (Barakat, 2018). This article takes the Palestine May uprising as a prism to map old and new political geographies between coloniser and freedom-fighter extending beyond the temporal limits of the May event. Nakba is a structure not an event (Wolfe, 2006). The Zionist response to the May uprising unleashed forms of violence whose goal is to substitute the native's presence while normalising the ongoing encroachment on Palestinian land.

The first part of this article discusses how the Zionist production of identity markers along pink (sexed/gendered), red (racializing/indigenising) and green (environmental) contours, is used to reinforce settler legitimacy and intensifies when faced by growing indigenous rebellion. The indigenous struggle for freedom and decolonisation constructs 'time as succession and presences of traces' (Guillaume & Huysmans, 2019, p. 288). That is, the Palestinian May uprising elicits past *and* future decolonial decolonising possibilities within the locus of 'duration as a mode of continuity as well as heterogeneity' (Grosz, 2001, p. 111). To

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situate indigenous resistance ala *the future* (Estes, 2019) is to excavate 'the space-time of the new,' where historicity enfolds the non-exhaustive possibilities of the logic of invention, as opposed to the logic of identity or self-containment (Grosz, 2001). The second part of this article addresses the new language and methods of decolonisation engulfing the Unity Intifada. It examines the role of youth, including women and queer collectives, showing how their actions invoke new political and material taxonomies beyond the liberal peace structure to which Palestinian elites have succumbed since the Oslo agreements. Overall, the article advances Palestine's centrality to the political geographies of decolonisation (Daigle & Ramírez, 2019), challenging the maintenance of settler colonial violence within the popular, political, and intellectual imaginary of 'Israel/Palestine.' It does so by tracing the spatial and epistemic value of decolonisation theories that extend from interactions across indigenous, queer feminist, critical race, and eco-materialist debates.

1.1. Methodological framework

Investigating the Unity Intifada's role in the unfolding dynamics of indigenous resistance and settler legitimacy is the core question guiding this article's methodological approach. The temporal framework of May–December 2021 served to identify primary data about the nature of the political events, as well as activist and (non)governmental-led praxes and analyses pertaining to the Uprising. These sources ground the two main sections of this article. I proceeded by carrying out a content analysis of newspaper reports (Palestinian and Arab: Ra'y AlYoum, Electronic Intifada, Mondoweiss, Middle East Eye, The New Arab; Israeli: Haaretz, Jerusalem Post, Ynetnews, The Times of Israel), activist digital accounts (Al Kurd Instagram; Araro Tweets, almoultaqa YouTube channel) and non-governmental website content (alQaws, Indigenous Bridges). This allowed me to identify textual information and categorise it systematically, as subthemes, across the two major sections. Additionally, given the role played by social media in circulating activist online campaigns and commentary about the Uprising, a digital ethnographic component shaped the methodological approach of the article. Not only did this method help direct the selection of primary sources that 'capture how self-identity is formed, structured and expressed on digitally based platforms,' (Kaur-Gill and Dutta, 2017: 3) but it also aligns with the epistemic base of decolonising research (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012), recognising the author's own positionality as Palestinian. Indeed, the majority of the discussion across the two sections emerges from the author's political and scholarly engagement within decolonial feminist and activist online spaces, in Palestine[1] and beyond,[2] which responded to the Unity Intifada's plight. The aim of advancing the sovereignty of indigenous knowledge, therefore, is at the heart of this article's methodological approach (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). Secondary scholarly material helped to enforce the arguments made in each sub-section as well as expand into new (sub)themes, guiding an engagement with other primary sources, including (non)governmental content: i.e., the Blair Institute, the Jewish National fund, Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael, Stand with US; and international newspaper reports (i.e., The Guardian, CNBCNEWS), which exceed the Unity Intifada's temporal framework. For example, while the Israeli singer Alene's participation in the 2021 Eurovision cotest served to identify pinkwashing within the scope of the May event, secondary analysis on homonationalism and settler-indigenization expanded an engagement with other past examples (Dana International and Barzilai) of Jewish claims to sovereignty. Furthermore, the sub-themes identified within the second section of the article, via the decolonisation conceptual framework, guided the validation—through a data triangulation process—of the sources and

analytical directions of the first section. For example, the emerging subtheme '*Reviving Our Ancestors' Ways*' brought me to engage, in the first section, with the greenwashing sub-theme. Overall, while indigenous resistance is placed thematically in the second[3] section of the article, decolonisation—in its empirical and theoretical dimensions—remains the guiding lens used to delineate the contours of Zionist sovereignty arising *in reaction* to indigenous-led movements.

2. Pink, red and green: the contours of settler sovereignty

In October 2020, the Israeli magistrate's court of Jerusalem ruled to evict twelve Palestinian families from the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood and hand over their homes to Jewish Israeli settlers (Yousef and Thabet, 2021). While Zionist settler expansion over Palestinian land is hardly a new occurrence, the plight of Sheikh Jarrah's twenty-eight families captures the continuity of native forceful exiling (Hammami, 2012). It stretches from 1948, the year that marked Israel's establishment and dispossession of native Palestinians—among them those who took refuge in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood—up to this moment of ongoing Judaization of Palestinian[4] and other Arab land.[5] As mobilisations against forceful expulsion started to build up during the month of Ramadan, violent repression from Zionist colonial forces intensified, both within Sheikh Jarrah and Damascus gate. Protestors were brutally beaten and, in some cases, killed; also, within the Al-Aqsa compound, where rubber bullets, sound bombs, and gas canisters were fired at Palestinian worshipers (Aljazeera, 2021a, 2021b). The upsurge in Zionist brute force against activists and residents of Sheikh Jarrah led the resistance factions in the besieged Gaza Strip, ranging from Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) armed wing to Hamas and other military wings of Palestinian factions,[6] to engage in retaliation by firing rockets into Israel. While the sound of rocket sirens in Jerusalem forced Israeli settlers to call off and divert the route of their 'Flag March'[7] from going through Damascus gate and the old city of Jerusalem, heavy bombardment of the Gaza Strip continued for over ten days, inflicting the tragic loss of over 260 lives and between 140 and 180 million dollars' worth of damage to Palestinian housing, health, and educational infrastructure alone (World Bank, 2021).

It was as the bombs were dropping on besieged Gaza, devastating entire families and amounting to war crimes,[8] that Israel took part in the annual international song competition, Eurovision. Israeli participation in such events unveils a cultural site for Zionist pinkwashing, delineating a sexed/gendered self that reifies the logic of settler colonial domination. The country's 2021 representation through the figure of a Jewish Ethiopian woman, Eden Alene, reveals how race plays a defining role in settlers' (subjects and state) efforts at indigenising colonial settlement. I

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[1] Workshop with alQaws.

[2] Workshop on 'Palestine as a feminist and decolonial issue' see: https://twitter.com/KohlJournal/status/1396745358269583366/photo/1.

[3] It was the author's choice to end the article with the idea and the power of decolonisation, rather than settler supremacy.

[4] Similar dispossessions are taking place in other areas in East Jerusalem, such as Batn al Hawa and Silwan, and also in area C within the West Bank, such as Masafir Yatta, and areas within historic Palestine, such as Naqab's unrecognised villages.

[5] In December 2021, Israel approved the expansion of settlements in the occupied Golan Heights of Syria.

[6] It is crucial to challenge the common assumption, particularly within Western media and political discourse, that Hamas is the only group that engages in armed resistance and the firing of rockets from Gaza. In the aftermath of the latest Israeli war on the Gaza strip, a huge rally was organised by Palestine's largest socialist movement, the PFLP. The rally's spokesperson, Jamil Muzhir, a top PFLP official in Gaza, made a statement commending the 'tough resisters of the PFLP's armed wing, Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades, along with the armed wings of all Palestinian political groups' (Palestine Chronicle, 2021).

[7] The march was held in celebration of the anniversary of Zionist conquest of Jerusalem in 1967, known in Hebrew as *yom yerushalem* (Jerusalem Day).

[8] The UN human rights chief, Michelle Bachelet, declared that Israel's recent aggression may constitute 'war crimes' (Aljazeera, 2021a, 2021b).

read Alene's 2021 Eurovision contest participation as an attempt to neutralise Zionism's mounting crisis during times of growing confrontation with the indigene's resistance via the crafting of 'an alternate (hi) story.' This Zionist self-indigenising narrative, which also activates forms of cultural exchange with Indigenous nations and their plight elsewhere, further intertwines redwashing and greenwashing efforts.

2.1. Feminist/queer settler vibes

Predating Alene's participation was Netta Barzilai's win of the 2018 Eurovision contest with the song 'Toy,' whose feminist LGBTQ vibes (Cook, 2019) invoked the celebration of Israel as a place that shares the progressive liberal values of Europe. Israel has been at the core of embodying attributes of 'European identity' (Ayoub and Paternotte, 2014) as they link to feminist and LGBTQ issues. Dana International's victory in 1998 marked the first transgender win in the history of the competition (Barlow, 2018) and Tel Aviv's hosting of the event in 2019 'promises feminist anthems and sequins' that would make it 'the queerest' of all (Alled, 2019). Upon winning, Barzilai not only thanked the audience for 'accepting difference amongst us' but also declared: 'next year in Jerusalem!' in reference to the hosting of the event in her country's alleged capital (Haaretz, 2018). While her words bear religious connotations of Jewish redemption through messianic longing for Jerusalem,[9] Benjamin Netanyahu hailed her as the country's 'best ambassador,' especially as her victory followed the US recognition of the city as Israel's capital (Haaretz, 2018). It further coincided with the Zionist celebration of Jerusalem day, marking the conquest of the city in 1967.

Settler violence is a formative factor in the Israeli feminist and queer self who is heavily invested in the promulgation of Israel's pink image.[10] Both Barzilai and Dana celebrate and promote Israeli pride parades and the progressive queer feminist values they embody. The former's embrace of the Israeli flag and announcement of love for her country accompanies anti-BDS[11] statements such as 'When you boycott light, you spread darkness' (Times of Israel, 2019). Dana's promotional videos of the Eurovision event, exemplifying Tel Aviv ala queer flamboyance and rainbow feathers (TelAvivJaffa Municipality, 2019), must be read in concert with her role in promoting *Aliyah* (Hebrew for 'Ascent'), referencing Jewish immigration and settlement in 'Israel,' for the World Zionist Organisation (Israel Hayom, 2021). Barzilai and Dana exemplify settler feminism and/or homonationalism (Alqaisiya, 2022), encapsulating the centrality of violence in the formative process of modern queer and feminist subjects within settler colonial contexts, such as US, Canada, and by extension the Zionist entity. To read settler sovereignty as constitutive of the cultural production of queer feminist modernity is to challenge dominant analytical frameworks of 'cultural diplomacy' and its evaluative methodical premise concerning the enhancement of a state's cultural advocacy strategy (Cull, 2008). Analysing Israel's participation in Eurovision within such a framework invokes an evaluative critique of the state's 'reactive' and/or 'cheap' diplomacy efforts, while encouraging more 'strategic' policies aimed at countering legitimization of the state's opposing forces (i.e., Palestinian cultural boycott of Israel) (Kiel, 2020, p. 974). Such a framework not only obscures the

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[9] The phrase 'Next Year in Jerusalem' is traditionally sung by Jews during the holiday of *Yom Kippur* to signify the hope for a messianic future and the rebuilding of its temple (see Alperin, 2022).

[10] Pinkwashing is rooted in Israeli branding campaigns involving Israeli state institutions, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Tourism, and the Tel Aviv Municipality, as well as Aguda, Israel's LGBT Task Force (Alqaisiya, 2022). The overall aim of such campaigning, which dates to the year 2010 (Michlin, 2010), is to confront the growing negative image of the Israeli state amounting to an 'assault on its legitimacy' (see Reut Institute, 2010).

[11] Palestinian led movement for Boycott Divestment and Sanctions against Israel.

colonial settler foundation of the state, but also reinforces settler state violence, perceived as 'strategic' political promotion of culture, against the indigene racialised Other, who is reduced to the analytical category of 'nonstate actors' (Kiel, 2020, p. 975). Remarkably, obscuring Zionism's racializing premise comes hand in hand with the state's own effort at advancing a self-racialised image that plays well with the settler's indigenising effort.

2.2. Indigenising Zionism

Race plays a crucial role in settler formations of sexed/gendered identifications. The latest participation of Eden Alene into the contest was hailed as the first Jewish Ethiopian representation of the country. Reporting on her emotional outburst upon qualifying for the contest finale with the song 'Set Me free,' an Israeli newspaper comments on the contestant being emotionally overwhelmed because '"we've been through so much," she says, in an apparent reference to the ongoing conflict with Gaza terror groups' (The Times of TheTimes of Israel, 2021). Indeed, Alene's emotional excitement for her country appears in a widely shared video and in other statements where she declares her gratitude for 'supporting us in those sensitive and complicated times for my country' before finally asserting: 'To have Israel on the world map in the most positive way possible and for that I am grateful and proud' (in Haaretz, 2021).

While Barzilai and Dana's participation mainly captured the pink image of Israeli society through the queer/feminist subject and/or lyrics, Alene's entry shows how racial identity functions as a signifier for ethnic Euro-Western multicultural diversity and democracy (Tobin, 2007). Israeli media celebrated her Jewish Ethiopian roots, before informally declaring that she served in the army and, in some instances, sharing videos of her singing at an 'Independence Day Torch Lighting Ceremony' or in military uniform, where she pays tribute to Ethiopian Jews and their journey to 'the land of Israel' (Book, 2021; Ynetnews, 2021). Eurovision, and by extension Euro-Western claims to multiculturalism, brings to life the neoliberal commodification of identity and cultural heritage, and links to more intricate forms of dispossession that must be situated in relation to the state's non-Jewish native Other. Moreover, by reading the cultural production of the racialised immigrant as a form of re-institution of settler sovereignty, this entails turning our attention to how Jewishness lays the premise to 'enabling settlers and neutralising migrants' (Veracini, 2015, p. 43).

The arrival of Jewish Ethiopians in the country dates to the 1980s covert mission, 'Operation Moses,' shared by the US Central Intelligence Agency, Mossad, and the Sudanese state, then followed by 'Operation Solomon' in 1991 when the Israeli government airlifted more than 14,000 Ethiopian Jews from Addis Ababa to Tel Aviv (Centre for Israel Education, 2022). There is no doubt that Ethiopian Jews are among otherised ethnic identities, i.e., Mizrahi Jews, classified as inferior to the Ashkenazi (White European) Zionist's primary self-definition. Indeed, the biopolitical administration of Ethiopian Jews goes as far as to inject women with the contraceptive Depo-Provera pill, and perfectly captures Zionism's premise of reproducing Jewishness ala White Europeanness (Abusneineh, 2021). Yet, the scholarly hyper focus on intra-Jewish community racism ignores the role played by Jewish settler-migrants in expanding Zionist territorial colonisation through Palestinian dispossession across varied geographies (Desille & Sa'di-Ibraheem, 2021). Not only do Jewish settlers, regardless of their ethnic identity, substantiate Israel's racial citizenship and immigration regime, privileging 'return' *only* for its Jewish subjects, but the racialised Jewish subjects themselves have become key participants in Israel's expansive settlement enterprise within the West Bank (Allegra & Maggor, 2022). Further, Mizrahim and Jewish Ethiopian settlements in areas within 'Israel proper,' such as Qiryat Gat, whose industrial and residential

expansion comes at the expense of the Palestinian dispossessed villages of alFaluja and Iraq alManshiya,[12] demonstrate how the life of Jewish subjects (racialised or not) is entangled with the death and dispossession of Zionism's ultimate Other, the Palestinian (Desille & Sa'di-Ibraheem, 2021).

Dominant scholarly analyses focusing on the 'cultural pluralism of immigrant' society, where Ethiopian Jews emerge to embody 'today's shifted and multi-sited identity constructs' (Anetebi-Yemeni, 2005, p. 241), reproduce the amnesia of settler colonialism. Settlers turn into 'migrants' and settler colonial society is construed ala 'pluralistic' and/or 'integrationist' taxonomies (Auerbach, 2011). One can go further to argue that the hailing of the racialised gendered migrant figure within the dimension of pluralism substantiates the reproduction of the Zionist self-indigenising narrative. Cultural figures, such as the Ethiopian Jew Ashger Araro (Blackjewishmagic, 2021), known as an activist and a social-media influencer, have come to embody the voice of a different Zionist story, as she declares in a passionate video entitled 'This is my Zionism' published in the aftermath of Zionist aggression on Gaza:

Hey this is me, the "Zionist Israeli, the white colonialist settler occupier." When you describe Zionism as this white imperialist idea you are actively deleting the history of black and brown Jews. You dismiss our stories, struggle, survival. You ignore the fact that the Zionist cause has built a safe home for Jews like us.

Araro, who graduated as a lieutenant paratrooper in the Israel military forces, uses storytelling (21see, 2020) as a method for advocating for Zionism, including within international platforms such as Stand With US.[13] Through storytelling, Araro (Ashger Araro, 2020) stands up against criticisms of the state of Israel, flagging them as anti-Semitic. The usage of storytelling captures the efforts of settler subjects to capitalise on Indigenous culture and methodology. Israel/i parading of Jewishness ala Indigeneity demonstrates what J Kehaulani Kauanui identifies as Zionist redwashing (Indian Country Today, 2013). While the figure of Araro presents how tropes of ethnic diversity have played into Zionist claims to being a movement for Indigenous rights and plight, the self-identified 'Indigenous activist' of Atreet Violet Shmuel exudes the role of spirituality in shaping her story of 'return' to the land of milk and honey (Alder, 2015).

Narrating her story of Aliyah from Boston to Jerusalem, Shmuel recounts her journey from the 'punk-rock' life of America to embracing the Jewish religion that led her to come to Israel 'on a Taglit-Birthright[14] trip and cancel [ed] the return flight' (Alder, 2015). Shmuel's arrival and settling into Israel not only happened through an educational platform[15] that reduces Judaism to Zionist indigenising project in Palestine, but also marks the birth of another cultural platform where Shmuel herself propagates the indigenous narrative of the Jewish state. Shmuel is co-director of an organisation called *Indigenous Bridges*, which is dedicated 'to the advancement of Indigenous communities globally' (Indigenous Bridges, 2022). The organisation's home page maintains that it was launched 'in 2016 by Native American and Diaspora Jewish/Israeli leaders, entrepreneurs, educators, artists and activists,'

and identifies its goal as that of 'forging international solidarity, cooperation, and partnerships between local and diaspora Indigenous communities' (Indigenous Bridges, 2022). What is most striking about the webpage of the organisation is the lack of detail regarding the claimed support—whether political or economic—that has been provided for Indigenous communities. At the same time, one cannot fail to notice the official statement on the organisation's blog page regarding the May 2021 events, designated as 'the current Arab/Israeli conflict':

We reject genocidal colonialism and oppression. And for that reason, we support Jewish and Israeli self-defense [sic] against Arab colonialist aggression and terrorism […] Jews are Indigenous to the land of Israel (also known as Judea); whereas Arabs are obviously Indigenous to the Arabian Peninsula and arrived as colonialist settlers. (Indigenous Bridges, 2022).

The sense of affinity that the statement relays between Jewish Israelis and Indigenous people is further emphasised in a recent publication about the organisation in the *Jerusalem Post,* where 'inter-tribal solidarity' is meant to 'fly in the face of many of the common theories supported by radical left-wing thinkers and anti-Israel activists' where instances of joint protests between First Nations and Palestinians against the state of Israel carries 'a lot of impact':

It presents a false narrative that portrays Arabs as indigenous to the Levant, and Jews as colonists—painting the Palestinian case, which is a very recent one, as part of a totally different process that began with the discovery of the New World (Hacohen, 2020).

Indigenous Bridges incarnates a cultural site that promulgates an indigeneity narrative by 'drawing parallels between [Israel and First Nations] respective claims to indigeneity, legacies of genocide (evoking the Jewish holocaust), and ongoing adversity regarding threats to 'cultural extinction' (Indian Country, 2013). Most significantly, a political goal underpins this redwashing strategy; that is, to refute any Arab/Palestinian claims to the land and the premise of potential solidarity between Palestine and First Nations. Such discourses not only fabricate history to Judaize Palestine, but they also reproduce the very settler colonial geography of 'discovering the New World,' as stated above. In doing so, they tokenise indigeneity to re-instantiate settler colonialism in both Palestine and the Turtle Island contexts.

The racist and condescending ascription of indigenous difficulties under COVID-19 to their 'culture of close-knit families living together' (Hacohen, 2020), is accompanied by the silencing of history when flagging statements, such as 'the Navajos do not have electricity and 30% do not have running water' (Hacohen, 2020). The silence around past and ongoing structural violence within the US settler colonial context is not unintentional, rather it works well with the need to steer clear of any political criticism of the state that has been Israel's best ally for decades.[16] This also explains why the kind of initiatives conducted by the organisation remain rather vague, particularly when pertaining to claims around supporting the Indigenous in their plight around food and water sovereignty. Instead, hyper-emphasis is paid to Israel's role in aiding communities during the pandemic through the simple provision of FPP2 masks (Indigenous Bridges, 2022). Further posturing of Israel's rescuer role is upheld in relation to its modern technological advances in the fields of 'agricultural innovation' and 'water technology' (Hacohen, 2020). Israel's 'fantastic reputation for agriculture,' which is being communicated to delegations of indigenous people in North America and in the MENA region (i.e., Kurds), reflects the key role agriculture holds for 'native people as they have a singular relationship to their land' (Hacohen, 2020). At this juncture, I turn my attention to the role of greenwashing in animating the Zionist self-indigenising narrative.

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[12] Palestinian refugees continue to be denied their right of return to this date.

[13] The Israeli government heavily funds this US-based organisation to disseminate *hasbara* (public diplomacy for the Israeli government) through 'citizen activism,' whose goal is to mobilise young people in Israel, the US and Britain to stand up for Israel and Jewish people. (See Bazz, 2015; StandWithUs, 2022). The organisation is also a prominent site of Israeli pinkwashing, depicting Palestinians as homophobe terrorists and Israel as a gay haven.

[14] *Taglit* is Hebrew for discovery. In its official website, birthright.org, Israel boasts of having facilitated more than 75,000 trips into the country.

[15] Birthright Israel Foundation is 'the largest educational tourism organisation in the world' whose purpose is to 'ensure the future of the Jewish people by strengthening Jewish identity, Jewish communities, and connection with Israel via a trip to Israel for most Jewish young adults from around the world' (Jewish Federation of Madison, 2022).

[16] Since WWII, Israel has been the largest cumulative recipient of US military aid. In 2016, the US pledged to provide $38 billion in military aid to Israel (Congressional Research Service, 2022).

2.3. *Blooming the desert*

In a recent report published by *The Tony Blair Institute for Global Change*, and entitled 'How Israel Became a World Leader in Agriculture and Water,' its director, Blair himself, writes:

I have come to see first-hand just how much Israel has to offer others from its experience in "making the desert bloom"—building a thriving agriculture sector under conditions of considerable adversity (Abraham et al., 2019).

Israel's 'making the desert bloom' rhetoric, coined by its first prime minister David Ben Gurion, emanates from Zionist early settlers' 'civilizing and modernising' mission of the land seen as *terra nullius* (Gasteyer & Flora, 2000). Jewish pioneer settlers bore the idea of transforming a people and a land whose replacement enabled it to bestow Jewishness on 'a place in the modern family of nations' (Chaim Weizmann in Said, 1979, p. 13). Israel's green model within 'an arid region' is at the heart of its successful environmental story, as the Israeli minister of environmental protection stressed again during Israel's participation in the 2020 Expo Dubai (Ministry of Environmental Protection, 2021).

For instance, the Jewish National Fund has been instrumental in celebrating and promoting Israel's ecological and environmental progress around the world by encouraging tree planting and educational tours of the country (Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael, 2019). Yet, JNF's ecological work has enabled settler colonial Judaization, stretching from East Jerusalem neighbourhoods, such as Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan, to the Naqab in the south. JNF's attitude to the 'environment' entwines the crafting of an imaginative settler geography (Gregory, 1995) whereby greening and modernising corroborates settler overtaking of Palestinian lands and homes. Ongoing dispossession of Palestinian Bedouin communities in the Naqab, classified as unrecognised, has been dubbed as JNF's mission in 'turning the Desert green' through combatting desertification, afforestation, and developing water resources[17] in the barren desert (Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael, 2019). This revitalisation of the South project aims to bring 50,000 new Jewish residents to the area because there is a need to 'build so that they will come' (JNF-USA, 2022 a, b). Crucially, JNF's role in turning over Palestinian properties in East Jerusalem to settler bodies, such as Elad, reveals the entanglement of settler greening landscape with the discursive re-invention of a 'messianic' geography (Busbridge, 2020). Indeed, the inscription of the 'ecological' into the 'messianic,' is shown through the various biblical quotations, including 'will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert' (Isiah 43:19),[18] that are widely shared on the JNF-KKL website.

Upon evictions of Palestinians from places like Silwan, former Israeli prime minister Naftali Bennet declared that 'in the city of David, which used to be called Silwan, there is now a Jewish majority, this means that the city of David will always be part of Israel, and this is a historic event' (Hasson, 2018). JNF's enabling of settler sovereignty over the territorial landscape they covet materialises through laws, such as absentee property law. Critical scholarly accounts, situating Zionist land and water grabbing within 'a new colonialism' framework, are useful because they shed light on the inequitable foundations found in instances like the draining of Hula Lake, which accompanied the dispossession of Palestinians in the area (Gasteyer et al., 2012). They nonetheless remain apologetic for the 'productive potential' of external investment in land through 'the application of modern technology'

(Gasteyer et al., 2012: 465). To situate an analysis of productivity and modern green technology within the genocidal premise of settler colonialism requires considering waste ala human *and* nature as an 'intrinsic characteristic of value' (Kadri, 2019). Doing so means accounting for how the sphere of production within a settler colonial order always, and already, entails simultaneous wasting of indigenes and environments, unveiling the genocide-ecocide nexus of capitalism and colonialism (Crook et al., 2018).

The Palestinian plight in the face of settler colonial wasting logic across various geographies became a precursor of the Unity Intifada, which, as the following aims to show, was the catalyst for new language and methods for decolonisation.

3. From under the rubble, we rise

The Unity Intifada catalyst for a movement of decolonisation in ways that capture Haunani-Kay Trask's definition of the term as 'the collective resistance to colonialism, including cultural assertions, efforts toward self-determination, and armed struggle' (1999: 251). The Uprising signalled a moment of transformation and breaking away from the Oslo peace structure to which the Palestinian leadership has succumbed since the late 1990s. In doing so, it encapsulates a commitment to what Winona Wheeler identifies as the need for:

developing a critical consciousness about the cause(s) of our oppression, the distortion of history, our own collaboration, and the degrees to which we have internalized colonialist ideas and practices. Decolonization requires auto-criticism, self-reflection, and a rejection of victimage. Decolonization is about empowerment—a belief that situations can be transformed, a belief and trust in our own peoples' values and abilities, and a willingness to make change. It is about transforming negative reactionary energy into the more positive rebuilding energy needed in our communities (Cited in Wilson, 2004:14).

The Uprising reflects the crucial role played by a new young generation in bringing forth new methods for empowerment and resistance. In what follows I identify three aspects that illuminate how decolonisation, as moved forward by the Unity Intifada, entails a process of indigenous resurgence beyond settler and neo-colonial structures that perpetuate Palestinian Nakba.

3.1. *First: mobilising a new vocabulary*

The mobilising of a new vocabulary centring indigenous resistance is one of the main characteristics of the Unity Intifada. Decolonisation for Waziyatawin Angela Wilson entails first and foremost the will to fully understand the conditions of one's oppression, otherwise 'we are in danger of being incapacitated in our dealings with the colonialist regimes and perpetuating a form of neocolonialism among ourselves' (Wilson, 2004.). On 18 May 2021, young activists issued 'The Manifesto of Dignity and Hope,' whose aim is to 'tell a story of justice and of the truth that no level of Israeli colonial repression can erase' (Open Letter, 2021). At the heart of this story lies the need to revive the struggle in the face of 'racist settler colonialism in Palestine' imposing fragmentation, isolation, and a system of imprisonment that has led to 'quietude and defeatism' (Open Letter, 2021). This new story enfolds the political aspiration to break away from the current 'Oslo prison' and its comprador elite class that re-colonised Palestine internally:

The brave generations to come will have been raised, once again, on the fundamental principle of our unity. It will stand in the face of all the elites working to deepen and entrench the divisions in and between our communities (Open Letter, 2021.)

Through the Unity Intifada, Palestinian youth put forward a new vocabulary for the struggle, one which breaks the reconciliatory politics of state building the Palestinian political establishment has endorsed

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[17] See Turning the desert Green: https://www.kkl-jnf.org/forestry-and-ecology/afforestation-in-israel/turning-the-desert-green/; Combatting desertification: https://www.kkl-jnf.org/forestry-and-ecology/combating-desertification/.

[18] For more details on the project and its website, see 'Developing the Negev' at: https://www.kkl-jnf.org/people-and-environment/community-development/negev/.

since the signing of the Oslo Accords. On 18 May 2021, the Dignity strike was launched across the totality of Palestine, recalling a longer history of collective action against Nakba, such as the general strike of the 1936 revolt and the 1967 Land Day strikes. This was paired with wide-spread demonstrations across several cities, and confrontations with Israeli soldiers at barriers, which were met with live ammunition, rubber bullets, and tear gas. Palestinian protests within 'Israel proper'—including Akka, Haifa Lydd—were also attacked by armed Israeli settler mobs, lynching Palestinians, raiding, and burning their homes while chanting death to Arabs (Kopty, 2021). In Lydd, a young Palestinian man, Musa Hassuna, was shot to death by a group of Jewish Israelis who belong to 'Garin Torani' (meaning: biblical seeds), a Zionist group within the city carrying the goal of 'Judaising Lydd' (Buxbaum, 2021). Not only did the Israeli judicial system fail to bring punishment on Hassuna's killers (Honenu, 2021), but the deputy Mayor of Lydd declared in a council meeting, that hundreds of 'volunteers,' from 'Judea and Samaria' and Jerusalem settlement councils, would be coming to protect Lydd from Arabs, alongside its police force, warning Arabs to stay in their homes (MiddleEastEye, 2021). Settler institutions, including state officials, army, and police, and everyday Jewish citizens—from Yakub's entitled 'stealing' of Al-Kurd's house in Sheikh Jarrah (Muna.Kurd15, 2021) to young couples 'fighting a war' for the Jewish presence in Lydd (Abramowitz, 2010)—came together to draw the boundary between the dispossessed and the dispossessor. Yet, Palestinian marchers declared in one voice: 'after night comes day. From under the rubble we rise, from under the destruction we are born' (Subuh, 2021).

The marchers' defiant spirit conjured the legacy of 'non-obedience'[19] that the late Basil Al-Araj, known as the engaged intellectual, summoned through his activist work. Al Araj, persecuted by the Palestinian National Authority police regime until he was finally killed in a 2017 Israeli military raid, embodied the power of a rising Palestinian Youth *Hirak* (movement), which the May events further unveiled. Palestinian rebels employed resistance tools and tactics, reflecting the power of integration and cooperation between various geographical locations; what Basil calls *iltiham sha'bi* and *ishtibak maydani* (popular unity and field engagement), prominent during the First Intifada (Al Araj, 2018, p. 54). Throughout the Unity Intifada, rebels attacked and burnt police cars in Ramla, Yafa, Lydd, Haifa and Akka; disrupted the railway between Lydd and Tel Aviv; attacked army vehicles and clashed with soldiers at various barriers across the West Bank; cut power supplies to West Bank settlements. Meanwhile, the resistance in Gaza targeted multiple infrastructure sites in Tel Aviv, leading to cancellation of international flights into Ben Gurion Airport (crimethInc., 2021). Gazan demonstrators flocked to the border between Gaza and Israel, launching incendiary kites and balloons. Protestors from Lebanon and Jordan stormed into the northern and eastern frontiers, sabotaging fences, and clashing with soldiers and borderline police (Trew, 2021). Standing at the heart of the uprising was the element of 'surprise' it prompted as it proliferated across all fronts (Al Araj, 2018, p. 55), triggering settler fear of what were now 'Arab rioters' (Lynfield, 2021). The malleability and proliferation of resistance when it expanded beyond the 'meeting point' with the settler army at the frontier, resonates with a Red Nation uprising that is bent on destroying 'bordertowns,' and the forms of relations they exemplify between savagery and civilisation:

> there is no objectively innocent spatial form in a settler world that we might just call it a "town," rather there is only the spatial expression of the settler borders violence and police [...] every settler town is a bordertown because every native person on the land that the settler desires, whether in the city or the reservation, represents and embodies the ongoing failure of the settler project (Estes et al., 2021: 8).

With the uprising proliferating across multiple geographies,

everywhere became a frontier as the native rose from the ashes of the settler world to announce their return and call for an end to their Nakba. Furthermore, the new story that was being scripted by the young, eloquently and unapologetically responding to international biases with their occupier, was one of unwavering defiance in the face of international media and political discourse on Palestine.[20] In November 2021, Muhammad Al Kurd addressed the United Nations:

> I do not care whom this terminology offends. Colonial is the correct way of referring to a state whose … whose nation-state law enshrines "Jewish settlement" as a "national value … to encourage and promote." The appetite for Palestinian lands—without Palestinians—has not abated for over seven decades. I know because I live it. I have no faith in the Israeli judicial system; it is a part of the settler-colonial state, built by settlers for settlers. Nor do I expect any of the international governments who have been deeply complicit in Israel's colonial enterprise to intervene on our behalf (Doha Debates, 2021).

Al-Kurd's speech and cynicism towards the international community and its complicity in Israel's settler colonial project, particularly the US, marked a noticeable departure from the address of the late Yasser Arafat to the same platform in 1974. Arafat's speech came in the form of repeated appeals to the international community to maintain 'the olive branch,' which later carved the way to a fully-fledged diplomacy track with Israel, culminating in the Oslo agreement. Arafat's speech was also shrewd, giving emphasis to the potential role of the US in endorsing the Palestinian cause; he pleaded with the American people to recall George Washington's plea for freedom along with Abraham Lincoln as 'champion of the destitute and the wretched, and Woodrow Wilson, whose doctrine of Fourteen Points remains subscribed to and venerated by our people' (al-bab, 2018). Finally, when making the difference between the revolutionary and the terrorist, he drew on various struggles, starting with 'the American people in their struggle for liberation from the British colonialist' (al-bab, 2018). While the speech had used the terminology of colonialism and racism to define Zionist encroachment on Palestine, the likening of the Palestinian struggle to that of the American revolution not only contradicted Palestine's revolutionary plight, but also normalised the colonial settler logic of both Zionist *and* American entities. In a 2004 interview, Arafat reflected on the achievement of having prevented Israel from wiping out Palestinians by declaring 'we are not red Indians' (El Amrani, 2004).

The normalisation of Indian extinction does not merely enfold the racist undertone of refusing to see the continuity of the native presence and politics of refusal (Simpson, 2014). More crucially, Arafat's statement animates the politics of recognition, normalising settler states in Palestine *and* Turtle Island. In doing so, it glosses over the significance of indigenous resistance, bent on countering settler violence in the guise of peace while striving for a new political vocabulary and material strategies beyond settler colonial and imperial hegemonies. Such resistance instructs forms of solidarity that are driven neither by identity tokenism nor by the logic of historical reductionism (Olwan, 2015). Rather, they animate an 'inter/nationalism' rooted in an ethos and political commitment for decolonisation across/against borders (Salaita, 2016). Arafat's omission not only watered down the 1970s action in anti-imperialism and decolonial solidarity, which was happening between the PLO and native activists from Turtle Island; it also obscured how these solidarities continue to animate the present, through actions like First Nations rallying against the Trump Plan, and Palestinians standing with the Wet'suwet'en plight in the face of Canada's Coastal GasLink pipeline construction, as well as with the North Dakota NoDAPL movement (see Desai, 2021; Estes, 2019). These omissions reify Zionism's indigenising narrative, discussed above, and reveal the limits of

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[19] He writes: 'The biggest insult against a martyr would be to say that he was obedient, submissive and polite in the face of his killer' (in Hassan, 2017).

[20] Muhammad Al Kurd's response to CNN presenter's 'inaccurate and biased' framing of the issue in Sheikh Jarrah is one example (muhammadalkurd, 2021).

the PLO's statist project undertaken via the Oslo peace structure.

3.2. Second: queer feminist epistemologies of decolonisation

The Unity Intifada demonstrated the crucial role Palestinian women and queer collectives play in mobilising epistemologies for decolonisation against hetero-patriarchal structures sustaining colonial conquest of bodies and lands. Grassroots collectives, such as *alQaws for Sexual and Gender Diversity* and the *Tal'at* women's march, are examples of a feminist queer praxis expanding beyond the liberal focus on individuals' identity. They instead centre the goals of the indigene's liberation where 'the fight against patriarchy and sexual oppression is intertwined with the fight against capitalism and settler colonialism' (alQaws, 2021a). As Israel was promoting for its Gay Pride event in late June 2021, alQaws issued its 'No Pride without Dignity' statement in which they explained how pinkwashing works hand in hand with settler colonial violence:

> Zionists flooded our social media networks with statements such as "try to organize a pride parade in Gaza." Such statements are characteristic of pinkwashing, and they are used to delegitimize Palestinian anti-colonial uprising. These statements fit within a larger context of structural racism in which Israel is portrayed as enlightened, and a proponent of gay rights, while Palestinians, especially those in Gaza, are uniformly described as anti-gay and therefore deserving of murder and expulsion from our land (alQaws, 2021b).

alQaws further reminds that the Tel Aviv pride takes place in the 'ethnically cleansed Palestinian city of Yaffa and its surrounding villages, and its success depends on the erasure of Palestinian lands, lives, and voices' (alQaws, 2021b). Finally, the statement asserted that the group's work aims to build spaces of work and solidarity, where pride is re-signified in relation to the indigene's struggle for dignity, ending their statement with the call to: 'Abolish Settler States, Liberate Indigenous Lands, Take Back Pride.' The Unity Intifada built on the cumulative work and long legacy of Palestinian women and queer indigeneity's plight, which is about land repatriation as well as the struggle to exist beyond the colonial governmental regime substantiated through the Oslo liberal peace structure. Since September 2019 Palestinian women marchers of Tal'at, who stepped out in the street to shout, 'No Free homeland without free women', have taken to situating their definition of emancipation in relation to a 'radical process of collective healing' and expansive vision for liberation whose definitive goal is the 'shattering of capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy all at once' (Marshood & Alsanah, 2020).

Both alQaws and Tal'at exemplify the work of indigenous queer feminist praxis that dares to challenge hegemonic Euro-western approaches on feminist and/or LGBTQ issues. In their 2019 campaigning for a boycott of Eurovision in Israel and Tel Aviv pride, alQaws and other anti-pinkwashing allies issued a statement to call on international visitors and spectators not to 'becomes accomplices to Israel's spectacle of cultural propaganda' (alQaws, 2020). Al-Khatib (2019) from the group argues that Eurovision's celebration of Israeli queerness and camp aesthetics, maintains and reproduces sexual and gendered politics perpetuating Israel's settler colonial project. Through working on re-building a de-fragmented feminist solidarity beyond the institutional parameters of the settler state (Israel) and the PNA-Oslo regime (Marshood & Alsanah, 2020), the Tal'at movement challenges neo-liberal feminist approaches as they proliferate into Palestine through Euro-Western gender mainstreaming programmes within the PNA regime. Instead, the Tal'at marchers invest in conjuring a decolonial cartography of Palestine where marchers from Haifa, Ramallah, and Gaza, reaching Lebanon, initiate forms of re-mappings and otherwise cartographies (Oslender, 2021) beyond the sexed/gendered/classed colonial order of the border security regime. Similarly, alQaws' work transgresses the NGO-ised neoliberal state building structure of Oslo Palestine by focusing instead on bringing activists together, from across historic Palestine and beyond, in the process of mobilising queerness, as 'a radical approach to

political mobilisation and decolonisation' (alQaws, 2020). Indigenous feminist and queer epistemologies challenge the global proliferation of pink contours seeking to reify the settler colonial present. In doing so, they advance a feminist decolonising epistemology (Arvin et al., 2013) that challenges socio-political structures sustaining the native's ongoing Nakba. Queer feminist work in Palestine not only challenges the hierarchy within which national priorities are construed, but, most importantly, it shows how within this hierarchisation we witness the recolonisation of native bodies and lands by comprador native elites (Alqaisiya, 2022). Palestinian queer feminist epistemologies carve the way for a radical self-determination that opens a life beyond the regimes, of Time, Space and Desire, maintaining colonised subjection on multiple scales (Alqaisiya, 2020).

3.3. Third: Reviving Our Ancestors' ways

In August 2021, two months into the Unity Intifada, massive wildfires consumed an area of pine forest in Jerusalem, putting Israeli firefighters to work for days (The New Arab, 2021). In the aftermath of putting out the fire, the view laid bare a long-hidden landscape unfolding the history of Palestinian terraced gardens. The terraced gardens widely known by their Palestinian makers as *salassil* (interlocking series) date back to thousands of years of indigenous farming and cultivation of the land through a system in balance with the socio-ecological environment around it. The terraced gardens emanate from the capacity of the Palestinian farmer (fallah) to assemble a distinctive typology of garden, which conceived space in its malleability rather than rigidity and abstraction. Abusaada explains:

> Each household maintained a garden or, more often, a series of gardens stretching vertically across multiple terraces, each hanging above the other. The canal system distributed the shared water resources to the gardens, with periodical access to each household according to a set cycle. The efficacy of the system of terrace gardening, therefore, rested on not only the social and ecological division of space, but also of time … With their construction, the terraced gardens turned into sites not only of agricultural cultivation but also of *loci* for social gatherings, practices, and rituals (Abusaada, 2021).

Jewish settler utilisation of European pine trees to replace Arab villages and their cultivated *salassil* of olives, figs, and grapevines, has been instrumental to the Zionist project of dispossession based on 'wholesale fabrication of history and geography' (Mansour, 2021). These trees, which the JNF has for over seventy years taken pride in planting, are known for their high degree of flammability and thus unsuitability for the land on which they have been imposed. Their burning, therefore, is indicative of the wasting logic that underpins settler colonial/indigene relations. It is in the face of ongoing Nakba that the indigene's determination for resistance emerges to halt further theft and wasting of its lands and ecologies.

As the May mobilisations grew in the streets and neighbourhoods of Jerusalem, villagers in the outskirts of Nablus were fiercely waging their fight against settlement expansion atop Jabal Sbeih. Resistance against settler theft of their land drew inspiration from Gaza's marches of return strategies. By throwing stones, burning tires, and launching campaigns of 'night confusion,' they confronted settlers' attacks and the army's bullets. Villagers, who have not been able to reach their olive trees since the beginning of settler activity in early May, fought determinedly until forcing settlers to evacuate by July. Beita's resistance has presented a successful example of popular mobilising, with Palestinian youth activists joining the side of farmers to help reaching land and harvest their olives through the Palestinian tradition of Faz'a (Patel, 2021).

Youth organising within the model of Faz'a challenges humanitarian volunteerism inherent to the neoliberal Oslo-NGO structure, which, as Al Araj (2018) argued profusely, is to be distinguished from our ancestor's ways of bonding together in the face of capitalist colonial

aggression. That is, rather than cementing the notion of lofty altruism that is now prominent within the liberal peace order, Faz'a reflects indigenous ways of life within an organically crafted model of social reciprocity and responsibility, which entailed the establishment of horizontal and inter-relational forms of social organising and belonging, standing in the face of Ottoman taxation and oppressive feudal systems and later the British mandate regime of land confiscation (Al Araj, 2018, pp. 38–41). Palestinian youth mobilise 'Faz'a campaigns,' for the purpose indicated in the name (from *yafz'a* meaning to rush), rushing together to help in olive picking and land cultivation for relatives and communities that are confronting settler and army violence on their lands, stretching from Beita, to Salfit, Burin and many other places (Watan News, 2022). In enabling Palestinian farmers access to their land, Faz'a campaigns revive a model of resistance that is animated by the refusal to forget our ancestors' ways of defying and confronting settler-colonial encroachment on the land. While the fires indicate an urgency to challenge the unethical wasteful relations settlers impose on earth, a new generation of Palestinians rise from under the rubble to revive a commitment to nature and life that shatters Ben Gurion's wishes for 'the old to die and the young to forget.'[21] Reflecting on Gaza's marches of return as they embody the indigene's reclamation of land and roots, Palestinian writer and one of founders of the Gaza great marches of return, Ahmad Abu Artima, asserts:

> While the occupation kills humans, nature was able to revive resistance. Marches of return brought forgotten places, located near the barbed wire where occupation soldiers are present, back to life. The simple act of movement towards a place where it is restricted meant that people were engaging in a new confrontation and bringing that place back to life (Almoultaqa, 2021: np)

Artima further reflects on how a refugee's 'Nostalgia for nature and the green scenery beyond the barbed wire made people in Gaza challenge their stillness' (Almoultaqa, 2021). Thus, the act of marching embodies not only a refugee's physical movement towards a denied home but also their appetite for life against 'the slow death' regime, since 'what lay beyond the barbed wire is the hope that we had to reclaim' (Almoultaqa, 2021). The marches, therefore, embody the refugee's 'living practices of return' which, as Salih and Corrie argue, 'underscore the novel human–nature entanglements and political claims the afterlife of nature sustains' (2021: 11). Refugee memories and return practices unravel at the site of cacti and vegetation whose resurgence amidst the village ruins, destroyed during the Nakba, captures Indigenous 'life-worlds' and their persistent operation beyond settler colonial extinction logics (Salih & Corry, 2021, p. 11). While refugee life-worlds are animated by an overwhelming sense of a collective and unifying national conscience, they also underscore the possibility of new forms of political imaginations beyond the modern European nation-state that indigenous local elites have reproduced as they extend colonisers' civilisational paradigms (Fanon, 1963). Abu Artima explains that the marches stemmed from 'what each person longed for' and thus:

> every person had the chance to lead and move around the way they wanted. People practiced self-rule, and all titles and unilateral sources of authority were completely dismissed amid this popular momentum (Almoultaqa, 2021).

The above reflection perfectly captures how indigene life-worlds invigorate a willingness to move beyond the spatio-temporal stillness that nation state and its barbed wire imposes on the world, dictating an oppressive structure of a settler vs. native. These life-worlds are not governed by a political reactionism working in the defence of 'tradition' and 'indigenization' that only extends the violent contours of settler

colonial and imperial sovereignty. Rather, they are fuelled by the plurality of imaginations and the infinite possibilities that each singular move can invoke in the search for humanity beyond 'the technique and style' of the colonial neoliberal governmentality order (Fanon, 1963, p. 311).

4. Conclusion: placing Palestine in geographies of decolonisation

In growing efforts to '*bring the decolonial to political geography*', geographers turn to settler colonial analytical lens to argue for decolonising approaches urging accountability to the indigene of the world and their struggle for self-determination (Naylor et al., 2018). This article has aimed to place Palestine at the centre of scholarly approaches to decolonisation as it proceeds from a critical understanding of the structural conditions of indigene elimination. The Unity Intifada advances an intellectual and political movement for decolonisation that helps translate the cultural, and geo-political conditions enabling the continuity of the settler colonial present. Zionism's pink, red, and green contours demonstrate the gendered, raced, and ecological tenets of Israel's naturalisation of settlement, enabling 'settlers' move towards innocence' (Tuck & Yang, 2021: 9). Drawing on an indigene-situated approach to decolonisation, decolonial geography literature breaks the silence on settler commodification of identities 'defining contemporary subject formation and spatial imaginaries that provoke cultural and physical elimination of Indigenous others' (Zaragocin, 2018, p. 204). While Barzilai and Dana's Eurovision wins capture a reaffirmation of settler sovereignty in the formative processes of internationally celebrated Israeli queer/feminist subjects, the figure of the racialised Jewish woman unveils an 'alter-story' to Zionism that is meant to fly in the face of its critics as 'white settler-colonial occupier' (Blackjewishmagic, 2021). The use of racial and spiritual gendered figures to uphold an indigenous positionality of the state and its rightful 'returnee' and/or 'desert bloomer' subject is crucial to contemplate in the present moment, when Human Rights reporting on 'Apartheid Israel' (see Amnesty International, 2022) neither questions the racist, settler-colonial foundation of the state, nor denies the rightfulness of its Jewishness.[22]

In other words, the political imperative of dismantling Zionism and its racist, settler colonial, and capitalist premise remains absent within the international human rights framework and its definition of justice. This, in fact, resonates with other indigeneity contexts, where demands for political sovereignty and land restitution continue to face serious limitations both within international legal (Shrinkhal, 2021) *and* 'metaphorical' intellectual terrain (Tuck & Yang, 2021). Palestinians, like their other indigenous allies, know very well the limitations of these frameworks and that is why they wage their uprising through the political taxonomies of refusal to settler states' essentialising and eliminatory logics of political and judicial legitimacy (Simpson, 2014). Decolonisation in the Unity Intifada presents an example of locally grounded forms of resistance to foster other possible worlds 'beyond hegemonic forms of nation-states, territory, sovereignty, citizenship' (Radcliffe & Radhuber, 2020: 10). Youth mobilising of critical self-consciousness in the face of Palestinian internal defeatism captures a departure from the 'chronopolitics' of recognition, which the Oslo regime catalysed, to enabling 'plural space-times' of 'epistemically distinct imaginations, practices and spaces' (Radcliffe & Radhuber, 2020: 10). 'Unity', therefore, underscores the power of the indigene's *iltiham shabi* across the variegated geo-temporalities of decolonisation. Palestinian feminist and queer collectives play an essential role in

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[21] A celebrated statement by Ben Gurion in which he assures his Zionist fellows that Palestinians will never come back to their homes (in Arab News, 2002).

[22] This is echoed in both Amnesty's secretary press conference statement and as a press release publication on the organisation's website: 'Amnesty International does not challenge Israel's desire to be a home for Jews. Similarly, it does not consider that Israel labelling itself a "Jewish state" indicates an intention to oppress and dominate' (see Amnesty International, 2022a, b).

advancing forms of social and geo-political re-mappings that connect 'multi-scalar analysis with gendered and sexual violence of the settler state' (Zaragocin, 2018, p. 204). Therefore, the Unity that the May Intifada underscores is one that is informed by the plurality of the indigene's genders, epistemologies and life-worlds that are tied to place. Acts of Faz'a conjoin with marchers dreaming of other possible worlds beyond the settler's wasteful relations of land and nature. To rebel against the barbed wire of the settler state, is to incite the set of imaginations, knowledges and bodies that confront the geo-political conditions of everyday dispossession which are naturalised under settler colonialism.

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