

"All the Consent  
That's Fit to Manufacture"

# The New York Crimes

Late Edition  
Today End the Genocide in Gaza  
Tomorrow End the Occupation  
Always Free Palestine, from the  
River to the Sea

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## STOP THE PRESSES! FREE PALESTINE!

### BOYCOTT! DIVEST! UNSUBSCRIBE!

By THE NEW YORK WAR CRIMES

Every issue of *The New York Times* starts with that promise that it contains "All the News That's Fit to Print."

That is a lie twice over. First, far from "all," the paper hardly prints any of the news that's fit to print, electing instead to spread disinformation by omission. Second, their "news" is often not news, but barefaced propaganda for imperial barbarism. We say that *The Times* is a weapon of US imperialism. We say that by propagating Israel's lies in that imperialism, *The New York Times* is waging war on the people of Gaza.

Those who believe in a free Palestine have long refused to buy products from American companies that make weapons for Israel. For exactly the same reason, we refuse all the offerings of *The New York Times*. We do not share their articles or listen to their podcasts. We do not cook their recipes or read their newsletters. We do not play their silly little games.

The most popular product manufactured at *The Times* is the fantasy of its own singular importance. When they promise "All the News That's Fit to Print," what they really mean is that they decide, hand in hand with their imperial paymasters, what counts as newsworthy. We're not buying it. We urge our comrades and colleagues alike to divest from the notion that *The Times* either deserves or bestows merit. We are calling it what it is: state-run media.

What is it that *The Times* won't print? Here, in the sixth edition of *The New York (War) Crimes*, we print what they can't or won't. Palestinian writers — young and old, alive and martyred, writing from Gaza and from New York — fill these pages with their stories, their poems, their political analyses, their truths.

This paper is free of charge, but it comes with demands. If you subscribe to *The Times*, unsubscribe. If you read *The Times*, stop. Write the editors an email telling them why you're boycotting, divesting, and unsubscribing, using one of the templates available at our new website, [newyorkwarcrimes.com](http://newyorkwarcrimes.com).



"Palestinians sit in front of their destroyed homes east of the city of Khan Yunis," writes photographer Mohammed Zaanoun, whose images we are honored to print here. Amidst the destruction wrought by the Zionist forces in Gaza, the indomitable steadfastness of the Palestinian people continues to provide a beacon to all free people of the world.



### Why Does The Times Own a Stolen House?

#### A Palestinian Writer Returns Home

By GHADA KARMI

In this excerpt from her book *Return*, the writer and physician Ghada Karmi describes visiting her childhood home in Jerusalem, which was confiscated by the Zionist state in the 1948 Nakba. The house is now "owned" by The New York Times as a residence for its Jerusalem bureau chief after it was acquired by Thomas Friedman in the early 1980s.

Crossing from the (Arab) east to the (Israeli) west of the city was a short car drive, but it might as well have been a journey to another country. The old dividing line that had separated the two parts of Jerusalem until 1967 had physically vanished, yet for most people it was still there, especially for Israelis, who did not like to cross it towards the Arab side even though it no longer existed on the map. But for me, Jerusalem was an undivided city where our old house still stood as testimony to Jerusalem's Arab past — no matter what artifice Israel had later imposed on it.

A week earlier I had received a surprising invitation to visit *The New York Times* bureau chief, Steven Erlanger, in his apartment in West



Karmi outside her family home, stolen by Zionist forces in 1948 and currently "owned" by *The New York Times*.

Jerusalem. I had not met him before, nor would I have expected to. The newspaper he worked for was not known for its sympathy with the Palestinians or their cause, and I did not imagine its Israel correspondent would have felt otherwise. Erlanger had written to me out of the blue, having somehow obtained my contact details, to tell me that he believed he was living in the flat above what had been my old home. He had identified it, he said, from reading my mem-

### Poetry from Gaza: Nadine Murtaja

I am Nadine Murtaja, I am 21 years old. I am a dentistry student, but the war prevented me from completing my studies due to the destruction of universities by the Israeli occupation. I have been practicing my hobby, which is writing, since I was 16 years old. My goal in life is to strive to live it by all means and to defend the Palestinian cause until my last breath in this life.

وان لم اختنق من الموت فسأختنق  
بالدخان الذي يحمل ذكريات  
وصرخات وأثار عوائل منذ سنين،  
دخان قد أعلن بदन سجل مدني  
جديد داخل قبر مشوه ..

أصبحت أخاف العد، أخاف أن  
تدور الأرقام في رأسي فأبدأ في عد  
النجوم وأخطي مرة أخرى حين أدرك  
بأنها زناة أخرى قد سلمت أرواحا  
الى المثنوى الأخير ..

حتى حين رأيت أمي ضوءاً شديداً  
البياض الخبثي بحنو كم هي نجمة  
لامعة

حتى رحل الضوء سارقاً أصواتاً.  
أخرى من الشارع

Translation by Fatema

### THE EPIC OF THE GOAT AND THE WOLF

By GHASSAN KANAFANI

In Kanafani's final essay, published just months before he was assassinated by Mossad agents along with his 17-year-old niece in Beirut, and appearing here for the first time in English translation, the Palestinian author and revolutionary describes the maddening experience of reading the Western media and its "reporting" on Palestine.



Arabs must be made of different stuff than what foreigners are made of — especially different stuff than what Israelis are made of. David Elazar was very polite when he announced his regret over civilian casualties during the Israeli air raids on Lebanon, "Because this is something that cannot be avoided." In fact, though, this phrase is an extension of the widely used Israeli slogan that "A good Arab is a dead Arab."

I'm one of the people who hasn't been able to read stories or write literature for the past week. Instead, I've spent the whole time busy reading the newspapers, the reports of the Israeli attacks, the orations from the masters of diplomatic language in the halls of the UN Security Council. But it's become clear to me — as is the case for at least 120 million Arabs — that the historical work of literature most relevant to our situation is the short story we learned as children about the goat and the wolf: how the miserable goat was polluting the stream's water and making it muddy for the polite wolf, even though the goat was drinking from a spot downstream from the strategic location where the wolf had stationed itself. This has been the case at least since the occupation of 1967!

I read the newspapers and their commentaries following the first Lod Airport incident, then after the second Lod Airport incident, then the ensuing Israeli attacks. I folded up the papers, exploding with anger, for this stupid world could not be any stupider. Millions of years from the Stone Age and the Golden Rule remains correct: he who has the biggest stone,

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### Live like a porcupine, fight like a flea

By BASIL AL ARRAJ

This translation was first published by the Palestinian Youth Movement to mark the first anniversary of the assassination of the revolutionary writer Basel Al Araj, killed at the hands of a Zionist/Sulta collaboration. As the translators note, "Al-Araj was perhaps one of the most critical contemporary minds serving the resistance."



In the year 1895 the psychologist Baldwin coined the term "Social Accommodation," to describe the social balance (of a biological or physical accommodation) created as a form of negotiating with the surrounding environment. Social accommodation is defined as a social process aiming to minimize or avoid conflict. It's a social adjustment process that stops conflict between groups, by way of temporary or permanent consolidation of peaceful interaction.

The psychological aspects of social accommodation indicate individual or collective behavior that aims to reconcile conflict through avoiding aspects of negativity or animosity. This could happen through material (economic), social or psychological compensations to a section of a minority group. Sociologists differentiate between accommodation and adaptation which is defined as the adaptation to natural or organically existing conditions.

Accommodation could also take different forms; it may be voluntary or forced. It could also happen through arbitration, conflict resolution or endurance. Later Ernst Haeckel used the concept of "the ecology" to indicate the relation between humans and the organic or non-organic environment. Ecology became the science that studies the interrelationship of organisms and their environments.

I can't tell why and when this relationship started between the Palestinian (I use it here broadly to include the Levantine and not just mandate Palestine) and the porcupine. Was the

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### "A Continuous Series of Insults to Our Understanding"

#### Rashid Khalidi on The New York Times as state media and the manufacturing of consent

Rashid Khalidi is the Edward Said professor of Modern Arab Studies at Columbia University and a historian of Palestine, whose books include *The Hundred Years War on Palestine* and *Palestinian Identity*. We spoke to him in his office about his encounters with *The Times* as a reader, writer, historian and critic.

Perhaps we can just start off very generally by asking how you would characterize *The New York Times* as an institution?

It's the gray lady. It's the newspaper of record. It takes itself extremely seriously. It is relied upon by vast numbers of people. And it is, as far as my own concerns go — which is to say the Middle East — a thoroughly unreliable and extremely noxious agent. And has been for a very, very long time.

You grew up in New York. And you're Palestinian. *The Times* is a New York institution that has, for some reason, global reach. What was your first encounter with the paper early on?

"It takes itself extremely seriously... and it is a thoroughly noxious agent."

I've been reading it since I was a kid. My father worked at the UN and dealt with what was happening in the Middle East. So that was the dinner table discussion. And *The Times* coverage was always being discussed when I was a child and teenager. So, I've been aware of them since the 50s or 60s, and I've been aware of the enormous divergence between their coverage and what we knew was actually happening on the ground — because we had family there, because we knew Arabic and could listen to broadcasts but also from UN observers, from reports to the Security Council. My father was actually sitting there listening to the reports — from the Syrian

frontier, say, or about a massacre in Jordan. And the divergence was blatant to us between that and *The New York Times* coverage of the Suez War, or the 1967 war or the more minor incidents.

Do you remember the first of those specific incidents with *The Times'* coverage? Or one that stands out from those early years?

I don't actually have a memory of the first. It was a continuous series of insults to our understanding. You know, we knew what was going on, and they were not telling and not narrating what was actually going on. They were narrating a version which tended to be driven by Israel or by the State Department or the White House or the Pentagon. You had an American-Israeli or Israeli-American version of events, whether in the Security Council or on the ground. There's been change at *The Times* in many ways, but the perspective of power — whether it's our government or whether it's the Israeli government — tends to dominate *The Times* in its coverage and its opinion pages as well.

You've written for them on occasion, too. What's your experience been like?

Like extracting an impacted wisdom tooth. My most enjoyable experience in this regard was with a recent op-ed where after struggling with the editor over what I wanted to say it went to the fact checker and proofreader. I got two queries, one about American weapons deliveries to Israel, in which the fact checker said American weapons were not delivered to Israel until 1973. And I went back to my editor and I listed for him by weapons type — from the A-4 Skyhawk to the F-4 Phantom to the HAWK anti-aircraft missile — the major weapon systems that were delivered to Israel starting in the early 60s, a decade before 1973. And I said, "This man is making up facts, you take him off this story, or I'm pulling my piece. I will not deal with fantasists who are putting out some kind of nonsense propaganda in the guise of fact checking."

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Once you've unsubscribed from *The Times*, visit our new website for a full dossier on the manufacturing of consent.

## The New York Crimes

Founded in 1851—173 years of mendacity

### MASTHEAD OF MALEFACTORS

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**MEREDITH KOPIT LEVIEN**  
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## Khalidi on the New York Times

from page 1

You got it through.

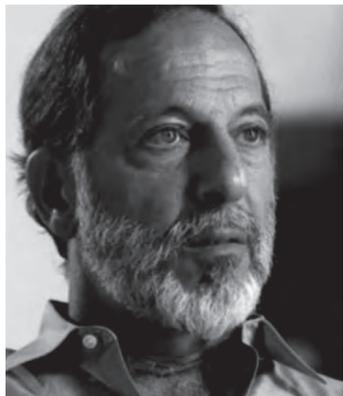
Yeah, it was published.

I suppose one dilemma is that The New York Times offers this enormous platform. We can't deny that it has this extraordinary reach which no other papers have. And yet we find ourselves in this position of asking what we do now. Do we boycott? Do we refuse to write? Is it even fair to ask that of, say, Palestinians who might be offered a space to write? We're calling for a subscriber boycott. And many have refused labor. Nan Goldin recently refused to give them her photographs, after she was contracted to do so. We are refusing to give quotes. I don't know if you have thoughts on this question.

Since October 7, especially after a week or two of their coverage, I got so angry at them I didn't want to speak to anybody from *The Times*. I didn't want anything to do with them. I cannot contribute in any way to what they're doing — I mean, they're apologists for genocide. I mean, "People Killed When Aid Convoy Was Mobbed," or whatever the headline was? Everybody who was killed was killed because of the shooting. Whether truck drivers ran over people fleeing the shooting or whether they were shot down by the Israelis, as multiple hospital reports say, this was a result of the Israeli army shooting people. This has not been reported in *The New York Times* or NPR or the BBC. This is malfeasance.

The New York Times also has this ability to set the way that those other outlets — respectable, liberal outlets like NPR, like the BBC, like the Washington Post — cover these issues.

I've noticed that. I get interviewed a lot. And



"There's no criticism," says Khalidi. "There's no pushback whatsoever."

quite frequently, I am asked questions that are clearly a result of the producers and the editors reading *The New York Times* that morning. I mean, the questions are directly taken from whatever *The New York Times* has chosen to print that very morning. And it is pervasive. You don't find that with any other medium. I don't find that the BBC drives the way other news organizations cover things. I don't find that with NPR or *The Washington Post* or *The Wall Street Journal*. I mean, occasionally a story will do that — a specific, breaking story of importance — but it's systematic with *The Times*. So, it plays a central role in the whole news cycle, driving so much of the coverage.

And it is, along with what government spokesmen say, a two-cylinder engine for manufacturing consent. One of the two cylinders is [National Security Council Spokesperson] Admiral Kirby. And then you have *The New York Times* pumping out nonsense: whatever it is that the Israeli military spokesman or Netanyahu's media person wants the story of the day to be. So, the International Court of Justice is meeting, and the rape story is released. Whatever is happening, a story gets released by Israel and fed to this outlet, such that this is the story that hits the front page — rather than whatever it is Israel wants to cover up.

I'm wondering what's to be done. They have this capacity to set the agenda; they have this prestige that they claim for themselves and that we — as readers, consumers, writers — continue to bestow on them even when we hate them. And we don't want to reform it; it's not reformable. The artist Avram Finkelstein describes how when ACT UP produced *The New York Crimes* in 1989, the purpose was to capture their voice and capture the space that they have in New York City and the US more generally. And it seems to me like that's something we're really struggling to do at this moment.

I don't know how one deals with these institutions of power. My sense is one of the great ways of doing so is satire. *The Onion* and the English magazine *Private Eye* pretend to be *The Daily Telegraph* or pretend to be *The New York*

*Times*. They report things in such a farcical way, while using their tone and trying to sound authoritative that it sends them up and makes them the object of ridicule that they should be for their malfeasance.

The other thing that I've noticed is that the editors are people in their fifties, sixties, and seventies, who grew up with the "miracle" of Israel's establishment and the "existential danger" Israel has always been in. This is their mindset. This is also when the president we're suffering from came to political consciousness. And these are the people who run *The New York Times*, who own *The New York Times*, who publish *The New York Times*, who edit *The New York Times*. They send the journalists out to find the stories and then decide what headline will be put on a piece and where it will be in the paper. Those are people who have a completely different worldview than the younger reporters in their twenties and their thirties, though of course, not everybody in their twenties and thirties is enlightened. But I don't know how you exploit that.

You've made a comparison a few times of *The New York Times* to *Pravda* — *The New York Pravda*. This is also coming out of your own research on Soviet Middle East policy and spending time reading Soviet state media.

My wife disagrees strongly with any use of the *Pravda* and *Izvestia* comparison. She says that everybody knew that *Pravda* simply reported what the Soviet government wanted it to report. It was the party line; it was the government line; there was no pretense of objectivity or reportage involved. "This was what we, who hold power in the Soviet Union, want you to think." And everybody knew that, there was no pretense.

The pretense that *The New York Times* is in any way separated from the centers of power is ludicrous. It simply reports mechanically whatever Admiral Kirby or [White House Press Secretary] Karine Jean-Pierre, or the other spokespersons for the state want reported. That is the story. There's no criticism. There's no context. There's no pushback. It is a mouthpiece for the state in a way that is similar to *Pravda* but with the difference that with *Pravda* there was no pretense. With *The Times* there's a pretense that this is "All The News That's Fit To Print." In fact, this is all the news the government wants you to know — which is what *Pravda* was, but here it's under this dressing of objectivity.

Of being reporting, not opinion.

Precisely. I mean there's no pushback whatsoever. And there's a partisan element here. They support the Democratic Party and they're cheerleaders for the president. It's not just power, it's that they want these contenders for power to be reinforced.

Do you think that's why they printed that cover in 2021 with the faces of children killed in Gaza — because it was during Trump's presidency, when they were going head-to-head with Trump?

That would explain it. It's this moment where they *imagine* themselves to be anti-state.

When Fox News runs exactly the same material — the State Department or the IDF line — American liberals might be critical. But when *The New York Times* does that, it totally shuts down people's ability to think. It makes them much more dangerous as an outlet.

One of the best examples of this came in the week after October 7, where all of the media, just like lemmings, followed the Biden and Israeli line, which were identical. They were just megaphones for this American-Israeli line, which is identical, especially for that first week or so. Now there's a slight, slight divergence...

Now the Israelis and the Americans play good cop, bad cop with each other. I've been very interested in this line they've been promoting that Biden is privately frustrated with Netanyahu. And of course, Biden is facing backlash and discontent, but of course he's not doing anything meaningful to impose limits on Israel.

That's what *The Times* won't tell you. *The Times* will tell you what Biden wants you to know, which is that his heart bleeds for the Palestinians. That he wishes he could do more. That privately, he's raging against Netanyahu. That he's called him an asshole. I read this all in *The New York Times* and that's how I know these things are "true." But the reality is, exactly as you say, that not one thing has been done — such as stopping the shipment of 120-millimeter tank-artillery ammunition or 185 Howitzer ammunition, or Hellfire missiles or anything else that's being dropped daily on the people of Gaza. That won't have changed.

This chatter about differences between Netanyahu and the president is the Democratic party line. It's how they tried to spin the Michigan primary results. Yes, the president is very worried. Yes, yes. The president is taking these concerns seriously. Yes, the president sent three flunkies out to Michigan to talk to Arab Americans. Blah, blah, blah. Meanwhile, the war goes on. The American-Israeli war goes on. ■

## "Their words were as dangerous as bullets"

Last November, Shuruq As'ad, a member of the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate, spoke to us about the challenges facing reporters in Gaza, how the news is produced, and the search for justice for the murder of Shireen Abu Akleh by the Israeli occupation. An extended version of this interview can be read in *The Nation*.

With almost everyone in Gaza currently displaced from their home, how are ordinary Gazans getting their news?

This is a very big challenge, and not just because of the displacement. You have around 66 media headquarters that have been bombed and 24 distribution networks that don't work anymore. And in case you're not familiar, most people in Gaza get their news from the radio because they don't have televisions at home. But now, with most of the radio stations bombed, we're looking for alternatives. For example, we're trying to figure out if we can do a joint venture with BBC to get some time on the airwaves.

How would you characterize the way that western, and especially US, outlets have covered what is happening in Gaza since October?

Mainstream American outlets, ones that call themselves very professional in journalism, became spokespeople for the IDF after October 7. They really bought the story of the Israeli army about what happened that day, and it was a lie. They did not even cover the bases of simple,

## Shuruq As'ad on journalism during genocide

ethical journalism to make sure the information they delivered was accurate, and instead bought the story that Palestinians killed children and cut heads and burned and raped without any evidence. This was shocking to me. I knew that these outlets were never really accurate or two-sided [when covering Palestine] but with this it was even more clear. I remember at one point CNN embedded with the IDF to investigate whether soldiers were based in Al-Shifa hospital, which is very strange to me as a journalist who looks for facts. If Palestinians were ever in their coverage, it was a soundbite from Hamas taken from social media, something to help the IDF say that we are criminals.

The most dangerous thing they do is depict this war as beginning on the 7th of October. When they reported on Ukraine, they used to go back in history, twenty or even one hundred years. They did not do this in Palestine. They did not refer to any political ground or history. They were misleading people, and their words were as dangerous as bullets. Their coverage helped lead to the shooting of three Palestinian students studying the US and the killing of a Palestinian-American child in Chicago.

There is one more point I want to make. We

have 8,000 Palestinians in prison. Those people are kidnapped, too, from their homes, brutally. More than 2,800 have not had a fair trial. We have children, women, old people — nobody even sees them, not the Red Cross or even their families. Why does no one talk about them? CNN went to visit Israeli hostages after they'd been released — in their homes, in their rooms with their books, surrounded by their friends — but they did no stories about Palestinians released, as if those children in prison at age 12 and 13 were not human beings with their own stories to tell.

More than a year and a half after her death, we still do not know the identity of the soldier who killed Shireen Abu Akleh in May 2022. How do you think about pursuing justice in other similar cases in a court of law that has repeatedly failed to bring the killers of Palestinian journalists to justice?

We are so disappointed that no justice was served in our colleague's case, after all the evidence and even after the UN said that Israel is responsible for her killing. We know that all the courts and human-rights organizations are usually under pressure from so many countries, especially the U.S. [in these cases]. But we cannot lose our faith. Human rights and international law — these have been grounds for us since the Nakba, tools that we refer to on our journey to freedom and an end to occupation. I really have faith that one day, we will be able to hold Israel responsible for the killing of Shireen, Yasser Murtaja, and others, even if it takes time. ■



The Karmis were expelled from their house in Qatamon during the Nakba of 1948. The upper stories were acquired by *The New York Times* in 1984, a purchase overseen by Jerusalem bureau chief — and genocide apologist extraordinaire — Thomas Friedman. It has housed *The Times*' Jerusalem bureau chief ever since

## Returning to Qatamon

from page 1

oir, in *Search of Fatima*, which had described my early years in that house.

I was intrigued, not least by an approach from such a source, and agreed to his invitation to visit and see for myself. Rami, a young Palestinian lawyer and the son of the doctor and his wife, who had been fellow guests at Maher's house in Beit Hanina, drove over from Ramallah to Jerusalem to take me to see him.

Before 1948 we had lived in a newly built area called Qatamon, north of the old German Colony, and at the time one of the more desirable suburbs of West Jerusalem. In those days it had been predominantly Christian, but many Muslim families such as ours lived there too, as well as a scattering of Jewish immigrants and other foreigners. Its detached stone villas, frequently surrounded by gardens, were much admired for their architecture and setting. After we and our neighbors were forced to leave in 1948, the Israeli government moved poor Jewish immigrant families into the vacated houses and the area underwent something of a decline. Some years later, however, it revived and became increasingly sought after by a well-to-do Israeli middle class which thought it was chic to live in old Arab houses because they had "character" and "features." Whether any of the new incumbents wondered about the Arab owners who had once lived in those houses was not talked about, but they reminded me of a similar aspiring class in English society, which also sought to live in Victorian or earlier historic houses with "period features."

Rami parked across the road from what had been our house. I got out and stood looking at it, the iron garden gate, the trees on either side, the steps leading up to the veranda with its mosaic floor, all still there. It was not the first time I had been back to see it after 1948. My first visit was in 1998, coinciding with Israel's fiftieth anniversary, when the American Jewish tenants who lived there then allowed me inside, although with much trepidation, and again in 2000 when the Israeli tenants who succeeded them did not. My daughter, who was a teenager then, had been with me on that visit, and it was she who went up to the closed gate and asked the man standing behind it, staring at her pugnaciously, if I could look around as I had lived there many years before. He was a stocky Orthodox Jew with sidelocks and skullcap. "No!" he had shouted in a fury. "Go away or I'll get someone out to you!"

To the side of the house was a flight of steps leading up to the second story, presumably the flat where Erlanger awaited us. When he opened the door, he turned out to be a civilized, pleasant-looking middle-aged man with brown hair and glasses. He welcomed us in and invited us to his veranda overlooking the garden. It was still light although swiftly darkening into dusk, as is the way in the Middle East once the sun has set. I asked him if he knew when the upper storey had been built, since the house we had left was a typical Palestinian villa with no second floor. He could only say that *The New York Times* had acquired the flat and started to place its bureau chiefs there sometime during the 1980s, and so it must already have been in existence at that time.

"You were right," I said. "The villa below was indeed our house."

The atmosphere was slightly awkward, and he looked ill at ease. I wondered if he had regretted inviting me to come.

"I thought so," he responded. "The description fitted so well. And by the way, your book was marvelous. I enjoyed it. It's good to meet you. And thank you, Rami, for bringing her." Rami smiled and nodded.

"Well, thank you for reading it," I said. "But I'm curious to know why you decided to get in touch. Was it just to confirm your suspicion about the house?"

"No, not just that," he said earnestly. "I found parts of the book fascinating, particularly the description of life here in the 1940s. Great stuff, and I wanted to meet and maybe show you your old house. You see, I know the people downstairs, they're really nice and we talked about you coming to visit. They'd be delighted to meet you. I want to take photos of you in the house that you can keep. Here," and he pointed to a large professional-looking camera on a table in the sitting room.

"Were you thinking of writing a piece about it for your paper?" I asked.

He looked taken aback. "No, no, the photos are for you, I thought you would want to have a memento of your old house."

"That's very kind, but have you thought of doing an article on this story?" I persisted. "It would be a bold step. I grant you, for your paper to agree. But it would make a refreshing change to present this story from the Palestinian side, don't you think?"

He cleared his throat. "That's not the idea at all. I simply wanted to have you get inside your old home, because I know that's not so easy for many Palestinians to do. I know how they get turned away when they try." The memory of the aggressive Orthodox Jew who had lived here before flashed through my mind. "So, there's a friendly family living in the house who're happy to let you in. You can look around for as long as you like." He made it sound like largesse from the current owners. "And we should go while it's still light."

"Thank you. It's an offer I won't refuse. But can I ask you another question?" He looked faintly alarmed. "You've read my book and identified this place as being my family home. You also know that we're no longer in it because of what happened in 1948. The fact that you're here, your newspaper's here, and your friends downstairs are here is because we're not here, if you see what I mean. I know you didn't need my book to tell you that. But it gave you the story again from a personal, human angle, how it felt to have to leave this house and the details of what happened here."

He nodded, waiting for me to continue. "So, knowing what you know, seeing me right here in front of you, and Rami too whose parents were dislocated from their homes in 1948 just as we were, I wanted to ask how that makes you feel about Israel now."

Clearly he had not anticipated any of this. After a pause, he said he was aware of how difficult matters must have been in 1948, but that was in the past and things had moved on since then. He had not answered my question and I felt it was important for him to do so, even though it must have seemed ungracious to respond in that way to the kindness he was

perhaps doing me by inviting me to see my old house. But there was an underlying smugness about him which I found irritating.

"What I'm really asking you is if you feel comfortable being in a country which came into being like that? Which had to get rid of people like me and take their place to build its state? Which keeps me from returning, from getting my house back? I mean, you can see the result: You're physically occupying a house which belonged to other people. And you feel nothing about that?"

"Look, these things are difficult. They're not black and white. You have to remember history's important here. Some things aren't either right or wrong." I pressed him further to answer my question and not to evade it, to examine the contradictions in his position. But no matter how hard I tried, he remained evasive, sticking to his line that it wasn't that simple, historical reality could not be ignored, and the like. Should I have expected anything else from him, a man employed by *The New York Times*, whose line on the Middle East was consistently pro-Israel? Yet Erlanger struck me as one of a type I was familiar with and usually liked, cultivated New York Jews with refined tastes and good minds, descendants of Eastern European immigrants who came to America in the early years of the twentieth century; they were frequently liberal, left-leaning or radical about many political issues, and so should have been capable of understanding the Palestinian situation.

Meeting Erlanger, who had taken the unusual step of reading my book, an account unmistakably written from the Palestinian point of view, and a person I found to be congenial and civilized, led me to imagine that he might have been one of that minority of Jews whose first-hand experiences had made them question the whole Zionist enterprise. But nothing in his responses to my probing suggested anything like that had happened, although he remained courteous and pleasant. There was no more to be said, and we went down to the ground floor, where his friends came out to greet us.

They were agreeable, liberal Israelis, whose origins, like Erlanger's, most likely lay in Eastern Europe. They welcomed me into the house solicitously, as if I had some disability which made me especially fragile. Retiring tactfully, they left me to see the rooms inside on my own. I felt like a cross between a tourist and a prospective house buyer, and I wished I had not come. Nevertheless, I forced myself to look around, but all I could think of were the many alien people who had lived in these rooms after us, and how each one erased more and more of our presence there.

Outside once more, I let Erlanger take photographs as he had proposed. He took a great many of these and did so with such enthusiasm that I was tempted to think it might have been a form of recompense for his earlier prevarications. But nevertheless it had been a kind act, and, I think, well meant. I never saw him again for the rest of my stay in Palestine. We didn't move in the same circles, and he made no further contact beyond that occasion. If my visit had meant anything to him it didn't show in his subsequent pieces for *The New York Times*. ■

# Dispatches from Gaza...

Even amidst the genocide perpetrated against them by the Zionist regime, the voices of Palestinians in Gaza continue to be heard — if you listen. These dispatches from Gaza are drawn from writings collected and translated by the Passages Through Genocide project. Read the full archive online at [gazapassages.com](http://gazapassages.com)



Before he was martyred in an Israeli airstrike on November 1, 2023, the photographer Majd Arandas had devoted himself to capturing life in Gaza in all its forms, its joy as well as its suffering. Here, boys play on the beach near Gaza City.

## Nour Swirki

Nour Swirki is a journalist from Gaza and the mother of Aliaa and Jamal. She and her family were displaced to the southern part of the strip. Despite this displacement, she continues to cover the war news for several media platforms.

### October 19, 2023, 9:19 am

Every morning I wake up, I look at the ceiling. This is not the ceiling of my house, nor are these my windows, with a bunch of laundry hanging from them. To my right and to my left my family and I are sleeping in a row next to each other. But who are these people around us? How has the world brought us together to sleep in the same place when we've not known each other for seconds.

Each day I wake up with the hope that it's a nightmare and that I will open my eyes in my bedroom and call my daughter Alia, so she heats up the milk and I can make Nescafe and drink it next to my plants, which might have died now, having been left alone at home. Every morning I think that all the news... and the loved ones, who passed, that we'll find them again, waiting for us. Every morning, oh god, I make sure what day and date it is... Time has stopped inside me since the morning of October 7 and I don't want for time to have passed after that moment. Every morning, oh god, the gate to hell opens inside me... God, my heart hurts.

### October 20, 2023, 9:06 am

Good morning, you wretched planet. It is the fifteenth day. My back pain has not left me since yesterday... I sleep on a mattress that I share with my son, without a pillow, and I share a blanket with two others. And this is what all the mothers do here. It feels like a sort of luxury after having slept on the floor at the school we took shelter in. A very dirty floor, with all the world's diseases on each of its tiles. People stepping over me and I look up at feet and hear some apologizing and others not giving my body, which is lying on the ground, any importance.

Our day starts at six in the morning, on account of — until yesterday — there having been three babies; the youngest is three weeks and is called Salem; a baby-girl, called Karmel, not older than two months; and Kareem, who is six-months old. This morning, god blessed us all with a new baby, who will be the son of all the mothers in the shelter, and his name is Nidal... we try to create a private space for the mother and her son and we wait for them to arrive under the barrage fire and the air raids...

### October 25, 2023, 9:05 am

I miss my house a lot a lot.

### October 29, 2023, 9:19 am

After communications were cut... Thank god we're ok, we're alive... Yesterday the clocks went back and it was the first day of winter time. We would have missed the first hour of work and our kids would have gotten confused with

the timetable at school, but none of that happened. We've missed a whole lifetime in the last 21 days. Israel did not set the clock back 60 minutes, it set it back half a century at least. It destroyed our beloved country. It killed our loved ones. It cut us off from the world, under fire and intense bombardment. Yesterday, at least 500 people were martyred.

### November 1, 2023, 10:09 pm

Today Aliaa says to me: "Mom, is it possible that our house is still alive?"

Yes, by god, we miss our house. We are a family of five: a mother, a father, a daughter, a son, and a house.

### November 5, 2023, 10:56 am

Every time I read of people we know who passed, or I see pictures of people mourning their loved ones, pictures of the corpses and the children and the destruction... I feel dizzy, as if I'm falling from the millionth floor to the ground. I start sweating and I literally lose my breath.

Maybe we don't have time to be sad and we don't have time to cry, but our bodies are reacting in a confusing and confused way. We're still trying to live and resist any loss in this terrifying situation, but until when will we manage to hold on. I don't know, I really don't know... Oh savior, save us.

### November 5, 2023, 5:27 pm

It was the usual time I go home from work, I was talking to Fono. And as usual, Salem was taking me home. We got close to where I'm temporarily staying as a displaced person, when the road suddenly stopped being visible and there was the smell of gunpowder... I started shouting at Salem, don't continue driving, they might bomb again and the ambulances would come in behind us... Salem has strong nerves, he drove behind the ambulances, saying to me, the kids are there we have to see them... I don't know if it was two minutes or more until I saw the building and I told him "There, the building is still there, it's ok it's ok." He dropped me off and continued driving with the ambulances...

That feeling and those two minutes were like a lifetime. No nerves and no comprehension... thank God.

### November 7, 2023, 11:25 am

I miss the house. I miss Gaza. No one is better off than anyone else... the loved one and the stranger console each other with words of patience... and sometimes a word can make a difference when you despair. Keep checking on each other. All of our circumstances changed. And hopefully we won't change. We're all living

the worst experience of our lives. We all know it's a difficult time... so difficult, oh God... can you hear us!

### November 8, 2023, 12:05 pm

The first time I traveled — I was quite old like most Gazans, who are deprived of this joy — the hotel smelled like peaches... and since that time, I perfume my house with peaches and every time I do this I say to Salem: "God, just like the smell of travel." To the extent that he started saying — every time I perfume the house: "Do you know what your mother is going to say? the smell of travel!" and laughs at me. At the place of our refuge, on account of how many people there are, we used air freshener, which happened to smell like peaches... and from that moment, it started reminding me of the toilet of refugees...

The simplest things, connected to our happy memories, are also being destroyed... maybe this seems trivial to those outside reading it... But our hearts break from the smallest and simplest details.

### November 11, 2023, 8:25 pm

I didn't do anything today. I didn't work. I went out and bought a few super normal things... food and some substitutes. The whole thing took us an hour walking and going to five shops to get only some of the things we need. The shops are very, very empty. I spent my day here in this place that I still don't know what to call, but I'm certainly not going to call it my "house" or "home." My house and home are there in Gaza. I spent the day holding my mobile phone looking at photos. Sometimes I laugh and sometimes I feel as though my heart is on fire...

I keep saying, God, if it wasn't for these photos, I'd have thought everything in my life was a dream. As if it was a previous life without any proof of it having ever existed. I call my friends and we are silly with each other. We all know this situation is too much for us to handle and we all want to go back. I keep asking them: "Are we going back?" And we all don't know and the nicest answer was "our story is long, but we'll go back." My only concern is going back...

I see photo of the army and tanks in places like Aljundi, Albahr, Alrimal, Alsina'a. I don't know when this war is going to end and when we will go back! I know that I love my house and I love Gaza. I've been saying this for a long time and people laugh at me. Every time I travel and I come back with tears in my eyes at the border crossing, because I've missed it, they tell me, you're crazy, what do you love about Gaza, immigrate. But I love it so much to the extent that my heart does not fathom... I feel as though there is something missing from my soul.

I miss you, my house. I miss you, Gaza. ■

## Noor Aldeen Hajjaj

Noor Aldeen Hajjaj is a writer from al-Shuja'iyya, Gaza. His novel, *Wings That Do Not Fly*, was published in 2021 and his first play, *The Grey Ones*, was performed on stage in 2022. He was killed in an Israeli massacre in al-Shuja'iyya on 2nd December 2023.

### October 16, 2023

Diaries of displacement in Southern Gaza. On the other side of death, destruction, and fear.

I fall asleep at four and wake up a minute later to find that it's past six. I go to the bakery, where there's a long human line standing waiting, and after three-and-a-half hours more than the amount of sleep I've had, my turn arrives. I'm told I can't take more than one bundle of bread. I try to explain my situation, but he doesn't listen. I tell him we've been displaced, we're staying with a family here, together there are seventy of us, including children, and two bundles of bread won't be enough, so he says I can go back and stand in line again if I want more. I take the bread, mutter a prayer, and leave.

I arrive at the house after half an hour's walk, and they tell me they need water. I take the jerry can, walk to the water filtration station, and join a queue longer than the last one. Three hours later, it's my turn. I go back to the house after a long day and we tell the kids one glass of water will have to do; don't waste it. I put my body down on the sofa to rest a little, then they tell me it's nearly dinner time and they want bread and food from the supermarket — so I return for more queueing and more waiting and more non-existent basic humanity.

In the evening, I promise them I'll go back to the house in al-Shuja'iyya in the morning, but ten minutes later we redivide the available space so as to make the most of every inch where a child or adult might sleep — even the passages and the entryway — and cover the floor of the tiny flat with thirty bodies. We make sure the women and children have all got room, then distribute ourselves out, two sleeping on the couch and two staying awake in case something happens, God forbid, so they can quickly wake everyone else up, not that that's necessary, because after fifteen minutes to half an hour of sleep, we will all wake up anyway to the sound of heavy bombing, and the children will cry until their mothers put them back to sleep... And so on until day breaks and the cycle begins again.

### November 1, 2023

Good evening, world.

Internet and phone connections were cut off last night, and what I once considered impossible suddenly became reality, but under different conditions. The postman can't make his rounds amid the bombing and destruction, and in any case the newspapers he carries will bear the same headline each day: "Gaza is being exterminated. Life sets each evening and does not rise again the next day." Maybe tomorrow's edition will contain the news of my death.

This is what was on my mind the moment communications were disconnected and we found ourselves cut off from the world, and the world cut off from us and what was happening to us. The bombing became more intense and we placed our hands on our hearts because this was what we feared and here it was, getting closer — we were going to die in silence without the world knowing anything, to the point we couldn't even record our last moments or shout out our last words.

I live in a small neighborhood called al-Shuja'iyya, which is on the eastern edge of Gaza City. Every night, the sound of the explosions is constant — explosions of different kinds, coming from different directions — and with every explosion that rocks our house and our hearts, we hold on tight to one another, knowing that at some point there'll be an explosion we won't hear because it will have already blown us up.

This is why I'm writing now; it might be my

last message that makes it out to the free world, flying with the doves of peace to tell them that we love life, or at least what life we have managed to live; in Gaza all paths before us are blocked, and instead we're just one tweet or breaking news story away from death.

Anyway, I'll begin.

My name is Noor Aldeen Hajjaj, I am a Palestinian writer, I am twenty-seven years old and I have many dreams.

I am not a number and I do not consent to my death being passing news. Say, too, that I love life, happiness, freedom, children's laughter, the sea, coffee, writing, Fairuz, everything that is joyful — though these things will all disappear in the space of a moment.

One of my dreams is for my books and my writings to travel the world, for my pen to have wings that no unstamped passport or visa rejection can hold back.

Another dream of mine is to have a small family, to have a little son who looks like me and to tell him a bedtime story as I rock him in my arms.

My greatest dream is that my country will have peace, that children will smile more brightly than the sun, that we will plant flowers in every place a bomb once fell, that we will trace out our freedom on every wall that has been destroyed. That war will finally leave us alone, so we can for once live our lives.

Noor Aldeen Hajjaj  
Gaza, Palestine, 28/10/23

### November 2, 2023

Today I went for a little walk around the city — or rather, what remains of it.

I saw how its colors have contracted into one single color. Where did this gray come from, this gray that has the power to impose itself upon all the colors we know, if not bearing tons of explosives?

I walked across vast amounts of rubble, trying to tread carefully, as if in a minefield, so as to avoid every spot where children had sketched out dreams upon memories.

I wasn't afraid of touching frayed electrical cables in the street; they were just hangman's nooses, witnesses to all this destruction.

I saw mountains of shrouds being carried on a truck to the last and only safe place on earth.

There are no funeral processions in which martyrs are carried upon shoulders to their final resting place, because their entire families — martyrs just like them — accompany them to the grave.

Perhaps the last wish they made before the bombs fell was the same we all make: if we are to die, then let us die together. We don't want to give death the chance to leave one of us alone, grieving for the rest of his or her life over the life that the others should have lived.

I passed by a school for displaced children, and my heart bled to see how humanity can be violated, how our basic needs can be stripped down such that we end up haggling over a gallon of water or a paracetamol.

Other people are walking in all four directions searching for a bundle of bread, or somewhere to charge the batteries of the torch they use at night, or water that's safe to drink, or other basic necessities that aren't available any more.

All this was just in the course of a short walk, no more than thirty minutes, which took me up and down a few nearby streets. Most of the houses hadn't survived the strikes that hit their roofs, and had fallen to the ground, collapsing on top of their inhabitants.

God, the scale of the catastrophe. Words and images cannot come close to conveying it. We can't bear all this any more...

We're so tired. Please God let this be over sooner, and not later. ■



Majd Arandas took this image of his grandmother Bahja Arandas's thobe as part of the series "My Grandmother" (2022). Each area of Palestine has its own style of traditional embroidery, or *tatreez*. As Bahja Arandas explained to her grandson, "Palestinian women knew where they lived by their embroidered dresses that distinguish each city from the other."

# Al Arraj

from page 1

animosity due to interest in hunting it for its delicious meat, and the myths about its healing properties including for male fertility? Or was it simply because porcupines were damaging to farmers and their agricultural crops?

The porcupine is a rodent mammal and is very similar to hedgehogs but is bigger and has multiple names. In *fusha* Arabic it's called Al Shayham and its scientific name is *Hystrix indica*. Its body is covered with spikes 10 - 35 cm long (4 to a little over 13 inches) used for self-defense. It weighs 4 to 16 kilograms (9 to 35lbs) and I do recommend trying out its meat.

Porcupines are night animals that live underground in a relatively large hole that connect to a network of tunnels, where it also creates rest spots. The porcupine uses various techniques to get in and out of its hole, making the animal seem paranoid, or, as we call it in Palestine, it has a "high sense of security."

A scientist named Prater is one of the most renowned scientists that studied porcupines. The porcupines that live in our region are fully vegetarian, mostly eating the colocynth plant known for its bitterness, which is why it is not recommended to hunt porcupines with guns, if bullets hit the liver or the spleen it makes its meat very bitter.

The porcupine has a significant presence in the Palestinian popular memory and folk stories. Palestinians told endless stories about the porcupine, they describe it as a strange creature; it cries and wails like humans, it has hopes and wishes. It is said that it is like humans in that if it gets upset it aims its spikes on its predators to hit them. It only wanders around at night; lonely and solely contemplating, getting attracted to smells, to fruits, and roots. The porcupine is quiet and isolated. Though it can wail, it is lonely; its pain is deep, but its grudge is deeper still — just as it is with its hunter.

When hunting, the first lesson to learn is to observe the prey's behavior closely. Palestinians studied the porcupine closely and learned everything about it (I went out on two hunting trips on which we were very lucky but we did not share our kill with anyone). The hunter needs to learn how to adapt (not to accommodate) with the life and behaviors of its prey to be able to hunt it. But what happened is that the Palestinian took on the porcupine's behaviors completely, including when in danger, becoming a porcupine himself.

One Eid-al-Adha my family slaughtered five sheep, and I took part in the event; I helped in skinning and cutting of the meat. Unfortunately, the sheep had fleas and I got some on me. I tried really hard to catch them and kill them but it was exhausting, it made me paranoid. I was only able to get rid of them by taking a bath where my battle with the fleas was terminated through combing my body with hot water and soap.

The flea is a tiny flightless insect of the Siphonaptera order, mostly living as a parasite on other animals, mostly mammals. It's about 1 to 4 mm. (0.04 to 0.16 inches). It normally moves through a pair of long back legs and stings its host causing itchy red spots.

The flea has fascinating fighting strategies and techniques; it stings, jumps and stings again avoiding hands or feet trying to stomp it. It does not kill its host (meaning it does not kill the entire functions of a host dog for example), what it does is exhaust its host and consume its blood, causing constant disturbance, eventually preventing the host from being able to rest. It makes the host nervous and demoralized. For that to happen, fleas need to procreate, so what begins as a regional infection becomes a more comprehensive problem when the flea procreates, stinging more areas that are more proximate.

Mao Zedong says: the enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue. His theorizing on guerilla warfare can be described as a flea war.

The conundrum of "how would a nation that is not industrial win over an industrial nation" was solved by Mao. Engels saw that nations that are able to provide capital are more likely to defeat its enemies. Meaning that economic power has the final word in battles because it provides the capital to manufacture arms. Mao's solution however was to emphasize non-physical (or non-material) elements. Powerful states with powerful armies often focus on material power; arms, administrative issues, the military, but according to Katzenbach, Mao emphasized time, space (ground), and the will. What that means is to avoid large battles leaving ground in favor of time (trading space/ground with time) using time to build up will, that is the essence of asymmetrical war and guerilla war.



Now if we're to go back to animals for our comparison, we see that the guerilla fights its wars like fleas causing the enemy damage similar to what the host experiences when attacked by fleas. A huge area to defend, a small enemy (the fleas) spread out everywhere, fast and hard to capture. If the battle lasts long enough to exhaust the host then it will fail in the battle due to its weakness while unable to locate the flea(s).

Robert Taber explains it "In practice, the dog does not die of anemia. He merely becomes too weakened - in military terms, over-extended; in political terms, too unpopular; in economic terms, too expensive - to defend himself. At this point, the flea, having multiplied to a veritable plague of fleas through long series of small victories, each drawing its drop of blood..."

Live like a porcupine, fight like a flea. ■



The painter Fathi Ghaben was born in Gaza in 1947, where he lived and worked to create his iconic images of Palestinian self-determination. He died on February 25, 2024 after being denied permission by Israel to leave the Gaza Strip to seek medical treatment.

## A fable of power by Kanafani

from page 1

who carries the thickest rod, he who is the most vicious thug—is the one with Right on his side!

Zev Schiff, an expert in Israeli military logic, says that Israel must acknowledge that Ali Taha, the *fedayee* who hijacked the Sabena plane, displayed unimaginable courage through this act. I asked myself that day if Zev Schiff would make that acknowledgment had the Sabena hijacking operation ended in success, or whether his question is in fact more like the ancient Arabic insult poems where the poet would compose 99 lines describing the bravery and strength of a lion in order to say in the 100th line that he'd killed it?

God granted me a month of patience, then this very logic came to describe the three *fedayeen* who stormed the Lod Airport as cowards! Praise be to God! I waited a little bit and—lo and behold—the very same fraudster extolls the "bravery" of the Israeli pilots sitting in their SkyHawks and Phantoms knowing that there isn't even a slingshot to bother them as they launch their 2500 ratl bombs on the clay and adobe houses of Deir el Achayer.

Through this all, the editors of the French paper *L'Express* were analyzing the resistance's attacks by saying that "The Orthodox sects in the Arab world have been influenced by Islam to the point where they allow themselves to perform acts of savagery against peaceable civilians sitting in peace and quiet atop occupied lands!"

So, I said to myself "Oh how far has the western mind sunk that it has become so corrupt and cowardly, isn't this talk like Hitler and Rosenberg and the likes of them?" *L'Express* itself didn't make a single mention of the rain of death that poured down on the defenseless villagers of the South [of Lebanon] and chose instead to describe this barbaric operation as a "military response."

### Radio London doesn't trouble the gentlemen's thoughts!

I then said to myself, "Perhaps *Time*, despite its bias, hasn't descended to the level of *L'Express* and the *Nouvel Observateur*." But then, when I started reading, I was greeted with the following lines: "Why must the Japanese kill Puerto Rican pilgrims simply because the Arabs hate Jews?" Strange! I said. Was the writer really incapable of at least saying "... simply because the Arabs and Jews hate each other?" — if, that is, false objectivity was what *Time* wanted...

And the next morning, I said "Perhaps Radio London is more reasonable..." but it turned out to be even more cursed. When it comes to English-language broadcast, it doesn't want to trouble the thoughts of the gentlemen living



in London: it didn't mention a thing, not even a single word, about the hundreds who died under bombs from Israeli planes during the attacks on South Lebanon.

So, I came back to *The New York Times*, *The Economist*, *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde*, *La Stampa*, and *Die Welt*. They all contained a single implicit slogan, one with a wide circulation these days: "The only good Arab is a dead Arab!" Yesterday, Radio London said quite plainly, "B-52 planes dropped 20 tons of bombs around the city of Hue" Just like that. Nothing more!

I said to myself, "Oh, you poor Arabs!" All that the Lod [airport] *fedayeen* did was each of them fired a hundred shots and threw one or two hand grenades in the space of two minutes, in the heart of occupied lands, in a strategic position, against an enemy who continues to give us a taste of death every second... This is called violence, savagery, barbarism, murder, slaughter, brutality... Whereas those two thousand tons — that is, millions of kilos of death — in less than five hours over an uncountable number of Vietnamese villages, those bombs with plastic (sic) shards that don't deign to kill until they've tortured their victims for two or three months... This collective crime whose aim is not liberation, but occupation, is given the name in the lexicon of newspapers and broadcasters of a "Strategic Raid".

### Planes, not fedayeen! Oh, you poor Arabs!

But if you had—instead of three *fedayeen*—three squadrons of B-52 strategic bombers, and—instead of a simple machine gun—enough

firepower for 2000 tons of bombs in a single hour, your way of thinking would be that of *L'Express*, *The New York Times*, and Radio London. And Waldheim, with his own intelligent way of thinking, would listen to it. But what a pity! What's to be done when the right way of thinking is stricken by polio and the false one is armed with a thousand kilos of muscle?

And after all this, Yosef Tekoah, Tel Aviv's representative to the Security Council, shows up and reproaches the world for not caring about "Jewish blood, as if it were of less value." History is replete with shamelessness, but not to this degree! Tekoah is, after all, the representative of a state whose officials say repeatedly and publicly to the entire world that they consider one Israeli the equivalent of one hundred Arabs. And they don't just say this, they also act accordingly: their calculators continue to drink the blood of the Southern villagers in order to amount to one killed or wounded during the bazooka attack on the Kiryat Shmona settlement.

So after reading all of this—and especially after scrutinizing the government's clever "responses" and taking in our cultural landscape—I realized that we had to revisit the story of the Goat, the Wolf, and the Stream. For it seems that some people have not grasped the story properly. From here on, and until our bodies burst with muscles ready for struggle, the literary impact represented by the story of the Goat and the Wolf remains our singular epic.

And all we hear now in the official statements of Arab leaders is bleating! ■

## SEARCHING FOR A PALESTINIAN AFTER

By GEORGE ABRAHAM

"PAST IS A FUTURE WE RETURN TO!"  
— Fargo Tbakhi

After the Nakba, there was the Nakba of Before:  
Nakba of earth  
less-split, Nakba of root-less hollow, Nakba of  
take and take  
-back. Nakba where 1948 was less a time than a  
state

of [ ]. And after, there was the Nakba of  
Naksa, the Nakba  
of Protective Edge and inescapable decade, the  
Nakba of tear  
gas, of Nabi Saleh, of Sheikh Jarrah. And after  
the Nakba

of dismembered starlight, of atom's split and  
DNA frag  
-ment, of bio-protocol as open-air prison, there  
was the Nakba  
of recursion of Gaza of Nakba of recursion of  
Gaza. And two

carcinogenic oceans later, there was the Nakba  
of the beforeless  
I. Of the entangled I. In that country, Nakba was  
the only mother  
we returned to. And when the Nakba of meta-  
phor. And when

the Nakba of fatherless breath. And when the  
slurred speech  
Nakba, when the backfired dendrite Nakba.  
And when the Nakba  
of sellout's handshake birthed the Nakba of  
American

Letters birthed failure of  $\epsilon$  and stopped glottal.  
And when body was Nakba  
of taa marbuuTa. Tonguetied,

from the Nakba of discourse and settler's  
chant, I emerged, a smiling creature, to nod  
through this hysteria of a light

-shorn language. And when the Nakba of heav-  
en's abandonment.  
And when the Nakba of Eden's singe. When, fun-  
eralless, the Nakba  
of Before, of BeforeBefore, happened inside of  
me, I didn't know

whose field to burn, whose hillside to abandon,  
whose wings to re-syntax  
after — yes, we flew towards after and were giv-  
en, instead, an impossible

beyond: Nakba of horizon's mourning, Nakba  
of unreachable of —  
of body النهر, of body البحر — body this one-sided  
light of a dying sun

