

THE INDIGENOUS



ANTI-COLONIAL

A PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE TRADITION AND
A WORLD BEYOND SETTLER COLONIALISM

LINDA TABAR

The Indigenous Anti-Colonial



BUY

The Indigenous Anti-Colonial

*A Palestinian Resistance Tradition
and a World Beyond Settler Colonialism*

LINDA TABAR

DUKE

UNIVERSITY
PRESS

Duke University Press Durham and London 2026

© 2026 DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS. All rights reserved.
Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper ∞
Typeset in Garamond Premier Pro by Westchester Publishing Services

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Tabar, Linda author

Title: The indigenous anti-colonial : a Palestinian resistance tradition
and a World beyond settler colonialism / Linda Tabar.

Other titles: Palestinian resistance tradition and a World beyond
settler colonialism

Description: Durham : Duke University Press, 2026. |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2026016029 (print)

LCCN 2026016030 (ebook)

ISBN 9781478039389 paperback

ISBN 9781478034469 hardcover

ISBN 9781478063025 ebook

Subjects: LCSH: Settler colonialism—Palestine | Decolonization—
Palestine | Jews—Palestine—History | Social movements—Palestine |
Imperialism | Zionism | Jewish-Arab relations | Palestine—History—
Autonomy and independence movements | Palestine—Emigration and
immigration

Classification: LCC DS126 .T155 2026 (print) | LCC DS126 (ebook)

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2026016029>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2026016030>

Cover based on a design by Nadia Quadmani.

Illustration: Shajarat Habb/Berry Tree from Tirazain.com.

DUKE
UNIVERSITY
PRESS

For Therese and Badie Tabar

DUKE

**UNIVERSITY
PRESS**

Contents

Acknowledgments	ix
Introduction: The Indigenous Anti-Colonial A Palestinian Radical Tradition	i
1. Empty(ing) Palestine Race, Rights, and Indigenous Dispossession	31
2. Native Ways of Seeing The Anti-Colonial Radical Imagination	61
3. The PLO and Internationalism Indigenous Visions of Liberation	91
4. Abandoning Liberation for a State The Oslo Accords and Disciplining the Indigenous Anti-Colonial	121
5. Reassembling Life Through Dismemberment Anti-Colonial Lives in Jenin Refugee Camp	147
6. Practicing Return Imagining Liberation on and with the Land	181
Epilogue: Gaza What Settler Colonialism Does Not Understand and Cannot Extinguish	213
Notes	221
References	229
Index	255

DUKE

UNIVERSITY
PRESS

Acknowledgments

This book is the product of years of research and a lifetime of learning from and with my people. I hope the story that I have recorded here does justice to Palestinian brilliance, defiance, and refusal to be limited by what others say is possible—especially settler colonizers. I have been observing these aspects of Palestine throughout my life in the stories entrusted to me by elders, including the stories of the secret ways people found ways to return to Palestine after the Nakba. I have witnessed it in the lives of my beloved parents, Therese and Badie Tabar, who—no matter what, or how much we lost—insisted on embracing life and living fully on their terms. My thanks go to my dearest mother, who is no longer with us, amid a long journey that has been punctured by repeated displacements, but who still visits me in my dreams and lives on through us; and my dear father, who remains rebellious and defiant.

I would like to thank all the individuals in Jenin refugee camp who shared their stories with me over the years and took me into their lives. I especially thank Um and Abu Anton and their family; Um Zayid; and other towering figures who come from families that have been struggling for Palestine long before 1948. I want to acknowledge all of the Palestinian friends, comrades, and knowledge keepers who helped me see the layers and depth of our world—layers to which we are beholden and that we carry forward. Among them, I would like to thank May Jayyusi, who took me in as a young researcher many years ago in my first research position in Palestine. The hours of conversations in May's office with her and my dear friend Areej shaped me. May also made sure to provide me with the initial funding that enabled me to start my doctoral studies, for which I am grateful.

A postdoctoral fellowship from the Social Sciences and Research Council of Canada at the Women and Gender Studies Institute at the University of

Toronto provided me with the space to begin to think about this project. Working at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut—with Diana Aldrete, Anida Ali, Christina Heatherton, Donna Marcano, Seth Markle, and Vijay Prashad—was pivotal to my intellectual growth and ignited the fire that I hope they will see in this text. I would like to acknowledge all the incredible students of color whom I taught at Trinity, which made that period the most exciting teaching I have yet to experience. A fellowship from the Palestinian American Research Center allowed me to immerse myself in community practices and to conduct interviews and research for this book on my return to Palestine. Samera Esmeir invited me to the University of California–Berkeley to present the overarching ideas of this book and hosted me while I was there. This propelled my thinking and helped crystallize the larger claims of the book. I am grateful to Samera for her friendship and her deep insights.

This book would not have been possible without the love and support of my sisters, Jackie and Vivian, and our brother Jack. I especially want to thank Viv for never tiring of listening, talking through ideas, inspiring me to carry on, and challenging me to see the bigger picture. I want to thank my aunt, Nabila Abu Jaber, who is no longer with us, and my cousin, Mimi Abu Jaber, who always took me in and kept me going.

I am grateful to the friends and kindred spirits who supported and sustained me in different ways along the way, including Yazid Anani, Samia el Botmeh, Reem el Botmeh, Chandni Desai, Areej Hijazi, Lena Meari, Sarah Pailthroe, Nidal Rafa, Melanie Richter-Montpetit, Hoda Rouhana, Mariam Shahin, and Faiz Sheikh.

I want to express my deep gratitude to Leila Farsakh and Craig Willse, who each stepped in at different periods and without whom this book may not have been completed. They each read the manuscript in its entirety more than once, and provided invaluable feedback and advice throughout this process; Leila kept pushing me forward, and Craig helped me see beyond my limits to the full potential of what this work could be.

I want to thank all those who read earlier drafts in whole or in part and offered insightful comments and feedback, including Chandni Desai, Ilana Feldman, J. Kehaulani Kauanui, Sudipta Kaviraj, and Melanie Richter-Montpetit. I would like to thank Robert Warrior for the support he extended to me, reminding me that sometimes academe can be a place in which we momentarily find home, despite everything. I am indebted to Sudipta Kaviraj for identifying a path for us that I was only able to understand years later. I would also like to thank Jade Brooks, who initially contacted me and got me started on this book project. I am grateful to Elizabeth Ault, my editor at Duke University Press,

who saw this project through to the end; her support and direction throughout and particularly in the final stages made all the difference. Many thanks also to Malek Mufreh, who worked with me as a research assistant.

Finally, this book draws its inspiration from the endurance and resistance of my people: Palestinian lives and futures, and what settler colonizers cannot understand or take away from us.

DUKE

UNIVERSITY
PRESS

Introduction

The Indigenous Anti-Colonial: A Palestinian Radical Tradition

As I write, Israel is carrying out a genocide in Gaza.¹ Since October 8, 2023, Palestinians have been starved, bombed in their homes, bombed as they flee, and relentlessly pursued in so-called safe zones.² Israeli settler colonialism's pursuit of the annihilation of Palestinian life and presence in Gaza, broadcast in real time, has exposed a world in which Palestinians' humanity has been rendered unthinkable—a world in which Palestinians have not been allowed to exist as the Indigenous people who belong to the entirety of the land of historic Palestine. For many in the West, Palestinians have been conditionally allowed to be human as long as they remain passive, accepting their consignment to a slow death and their subordination to Zionist settlers; they cannot be anti-colonial subjects seeking freedom (Esmeir 2023; Kattoura and Maher 2023; Omar 2023; Alikhan 2024). For Zionist settlers, the very presence of Palestinians on their land has always been a problem. The Zionist colonial enterprise has sought what it is now pursuing: the eradication of Native existence on the land.

The story told in *The Indigenous Anti-Colonial* cannot be thought about through these frameworks. It is a record of how Palestinians have always been living in the fullness of their humanity despite settler colonial attempts to eradicate them. This is the story of a resistance tradition and the lives it comprises, which refuse to stop being Palestinian. It is a tradition that refuses to comply with Zionist settler colonialism and its demand that Palestinians submit so that European settlers can solidify their claims to stolen land. This is a life and an anti-colonial tradition that by definition has always been defying these ends, finding ways to sustain anti-colonial resistance across dispossession and against a system that requires their absence and disappearance.

I began this research interested in the ways that, in the context of the Oslo Accords, Palestinian memory became associated with an excess—with something

that exceeded Zionist settler colonialism and its efforts to shrink Palestine, both conceptually and physically. Whether through attempts to reduce Palestine to the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, or through a colonial temporal framework that begins with the Israeli occupation of these territories in 1967, erasing the foundational events of the Nakba of 1948, these efforts are part of a longer process of erasure.³ Since the formation of the Zionist settler enterprise in 1897, settler colonial attempts to “erase Palestinian presence on the land” have been accompanied by attempts to erase the very “records of that presence” (Seikaly 2015, 9). This has extended from the wholesale seizure of Palestinian books and documents in 1948 (Aburawa 2010) to the continued destruction of Palestinian archives (Harlow 1987; Hass 2002).

While much of the written and physical records have been destroyed, so much is also quietly retained. Often the main records to survive settler colonialism are the oral knowledges and memories that are folded into Indigenous lives and passed on to one another. Where physical archives have been decimated, memories stand in as a different record, one carried with Indigenous bodies, housed in other registers. Yet as I conducted interviews for this research, memory became less of an object of analysis. This work is not an oral history per se.⁴ Rather, memory became a method that allowed me to access a more complex picture beneath the surface. I began to see transgressive patterns of anti-colonial lives that preserve prior histories, ties to land, and erased realities—stitching them back into bodies, reconnecting the dispossessed to their land. These anti-colonial lives ensure that Indigenous realities endure across erasure, death, and temporal distances and are made alive again. This equips Palestinians with a conceptual map that allows them to see through ruins. Here Palestinians do not see from within settler colonial impositions. Indigenous presence is maintained, and a world continues to be seen and known despite obliteration. I was able to apprehend these dynamics, and the more granular way Palestinians navigate a system set on their elimination, through what I call a living archive. In this living archive, the transmission of memory and knowledges over time not only constitutes an alternative record of history and lives but encompasses embodied ways of knowing a world and different schemas of being. Memory is one way that I piece together the anti-colonial tradition detailed in this book against the erasures of settler colonialism. I also draw on other archives; specifically, I rely on the documents and records of the liberation movement. Thus, *The Indigenous Anti-Colonial* participates in broadening our understanding of what counts as archives and knowledges in world politics (Trouillot 1995; Howe 2002; Alexander 2005; Grovogui 2006; Million 2011; L. B. Simpson 2011; Hartman 2019; Sharpe 2023).

I trace a longer resistance tradition in which Palestinians refuse to stop or abate in the face of settler colonialism; instead, they seek ways to traverse, overcome, and undo its power. This resistance tradition is exemplified by the phenomenon of Palestinians captives literally making their way through prison walls, such as the act of self-liberation that took place in September 2021 when six Palestinian political prisoners freed themselves from an Israeli colonial prison by carving an escape route through the earth (M.K. 2021). It is also evident in the routine ways in which Palestinian captives transcend the walls of the colonial prison by smuggling sperm out so that life can surge outward (Ftouni 2024).

This book connects these and other transcendent moments as part of what I call the Indigenous anti-colonial, an unbroken radical tradition of resistance in Palestine made up of anti-colonial lives who remain defiant and undeterred and a tradition of resistance in which Palestinians engaged in struggle are also producers of their own theories of liberation. This tradition must be understood as an ignored yet intrinsic part of global political thought, situated alongside other traditions from Indigenous survivance and resurgence (Alfred 2005b; Vizenor 2009; A. Simpson 2014; Kauanui 2016; L. B. Simpson 2017) to Black fugitivity (Hesse 2014; Harney and Moten 2013; Bey 2017). To be clear, this is not about an attempt to return to a precolonial past. This resistance tradition seeks a liberation that can fully free life from overlapping forms of domination. It recognizes that freedom is not possible within a system that was founded on Indigenous dispossession and understands that a system built on the destruction of Indigenous lives will not free them. This Palestinian resistance tradition seeks alternative, more humane structures and systems that will invest in life.

The Indigenous Anti-Colonial is devoted to tracing the myriad forms of this resistance tradition. This introduction proceeds by providing an analytical framework that anchors the arguments and claims made in this book. It begins by outlining the overlapping erasures and absences against which the book seeks to recover this resistance tradition. I then turn to explicate the three dimensions of the Indigenous anti-colonial; I analytically distinguish each for the purposes of conceptual clarity, but in practice they are enmeshed and reinforce one another. These dimensions consist of (1) *anti-colonial lives* who refuse to relinquish their world and their land; these lives buttress (2) *a resistance tradition* that does not yield to settler colonialism or seek recognition from it; and this resistance tradition produces (3) its *own imaginaries and practices of liberation* that seek a world beyond settler colonialism and seek alternative models and conditions for freedom. I then discuss the scales of these imaginaries of liberation, which are produced at the levels of the national, the international, and the everyday. Finally,

the introduction turns to the methodology used to recompose these lives and this unbroken trajectory of resistance against settler colonialism and its destruction of Indigenous archives and worlds.

The analysis presented in *The Indigenous Anti-Colonial* sheds new light on the longevity, lineages, and continuities of radical traditions despite their forced interruptions. It claims new grounds for hope, drawn from the perseverance of people engaged in struggle, and the specific ways that Palestinians refuse to give in to settler colonialism. Against the claims of “the end of history” thesis (Fukuyama 1989) and its attempts to inculcate the sense that there is no alternative to the violence of racial capitalism and imperialism, this work records a Palestinian anti-colonial radical tradition that has not stopped envisioning and pursuing liberation—thereby insisting *and demonstrating* that another world is possible. Moreover, within the current moment, as the liberal West supports the genocide that Israeli settler colonialism is carrying out against the Palestinian people, this book takes us to visions of liberation and alternative futures that seek to create “livable lives” (Maynard 2022b, 10) and worlds beyond settler colonialism, capitalism, and white supremacy. Thinking with these Palestinian visions is crucial for our collective lives and futures in these bleak times. This book thus intervenes in this global moment by putting unexplored Palestinian conceptions of Indigenous liberation at the center of conversations on where we go from here. It brings the focus back to Palestinian definitions of liberated futures, particularly those put forward by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and the challenge that this poses to settlers to abandon Zionism, heed the call for decolonization, and become accountable to the Indigenous people and history that the settlers have sought to eradicate. Furthermore, this work gives new impetus to ongoing conversations about how anti-colonial aspirations for a different international order carry on in the present, deepening our understanding of the history of this internationalist Palestinian anti-colonial radical tradition.

Beyond Absence and Erasure

This book, therefore, is about the anti-colonial thought and the resistance tradition of a people whose experiences of modernity have been inseparable from dispossession. I set out to retrieve these anti-colonial intellectual and political histories against two sets of absences: the immediate erasures of the settler colony, and the broader absences within international theory, in which Indigenous knowledges are still often not considered valid (L. B. Simpson 2017, 31) and anti-colonial thought continues to be ignored. The analysis presented in this book moves beyond simply critiquing Eurocentrism to address these omissions. Drawing on

analytics from both Indigenous and Black studies, this work uncovers a story that cannot be thought about in Eurocentric and settler colonial frameworks.

In investigating this anti-colonial tradition, this study *centers Palestinian anti-colonial life and thought in its complexities and its modalities of survivance*. Utilizing (primarily North American-based) Indigenous studies to illuminate these realities, focusing on the work of Indigenous scholars in Turtle Island, I contend that Indigenous studies is important to Palestine studies and that conversations between the two fields are necessary for a number of reasons.

First, both Palestinians and other Indigenous peoples have endured and continue to resist settler colonial eradication. They share the distinct experience of looking out on a land that has often been disfigured beyond recognition or obliterated by settler colonialism and now stands in the place of where their world once stood. Starting with these specificities, scholars within both fields help us to conceptualize a distinct type of anti-colonial agency, one that begins from a place of prior freedom and an earlier sovereignty. It does not simply seek to restore a set of rights but remains committed to these realities.

Second, both Palestine and Indigenous peoples are engaged in ongoing struggles for decolonization to liberate land and life. Unlike postcolonial studies, which focuses on colonial legacies, scholars within both fields are committed to the struggles of their communities within the ongoing realities of settler colonialism and to shifting critical theory in ways that prioritize “matters of liberation” (Salaita 2016, xi), Indigenous sovereignty, and alternative futures.

The Indigenous Anti-Colonial, therefore, is part of a growing dialogue between Palestinian and Indigenous studies (Salaita 2006; Krebs and Olwan 2012; Kauanui 2014; Tabar and Desai 2017; Barakat 2018; Estes 2019; Amara and Hawari 2019; Tatour 2019; Elia 2023; “Red Nation Podcast” 2024; Starblanket and Stark 2025), and it engages Black studies and the Black radical tradition (Gilroy 1993; Robinson 2000; Hesse 2002; Kelley 2002; McKittrick 2006; Thomas 2015; A. Y. Davis 2016). I am calling this an Indigenous anti-colonial radical tradition because I maintain that this tradition is not just anti-colonial but also distinctly Indigenous—that is, shaped by an overlooked sense of Palestinian indigeneity. This is evident in the nature of this trajectory of resistance—the way it holds on to what preceded settler colonialism and maintains an unbroken relationship to the land. It is also apparent in the imaginaries of liberation examined in this book, including the PLO’s program of liberation, which was predicated on the restoration of Indigenous sovereignty, and the everyday ways Palestinians enact visions of decolonization that are informed by prior Indigenous histories and ties to the land. It is also apparent in the Palestinian internationalist consciousness detailed in this study, which centers settler colonialism in its understandings of global power and solidarity. In examining

this anti-colonial tradition, the purpose of this book is not to trace the discursive origins or history of Palestinian articulations of indigeneity. I agree with Brenna Bhandar and Rafeef Zaidah (2016), who emphasize that Palestinians take it for granted that it “is *their* land” and that they are Indigenous to this territory, irrespective of the language used to express this relationship. One of the contributions of this book is that it documents this often-ignored sense of indigeneity. It redirects attention to the unexplored ways in which Palestinian anti-colonial thought and imaginaries of liberation are uniquely imprinted and shaped by Palestinian indigeneity, their relationship to the land, and the world they built with it.

The story told in *The Indigenous Anti-Colonial* is about an anti-colonialism that does not follow the trajectory of European nationalism. It is the story of a Palestinian anti-colonialism that did not adopt the trappings of sovereignty (Erakat 2019) or embrace the official Palestinian leadership’s state-centered strategy. After three decades of that leadership’s pursuit of this strategy, the Palestinian liberation struggle is at an impasse and facing a crisis. The signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 was the culmination of the Palestinian leadership’s abandonment of the goals of liberation and its pursuit of a state on a fraction of Palestinian land. This shift began in 1974 with the adoption of the PLO’s provisional political program, which introduced an unprecedented shift toward a focus on a state, away from the original emphasis on the liberation of the land and the dismantling of Zionist settler colonialism (Farsakh 2021). This shift is attributed to the mainstream forces of the PLO having pursued a strategy of “conformity” (Suleiman 2001, 94), acquiescing to US imperialist and Israeli settler colonial dictates (R. Khalidi 1990; Muslih 1990; Said 2000c), whereby this leadership began to appease power and seek a state, aspiring for recognition and inclusion in the Western nation-state structures (Massad 1997; Y. Sayigh 1997b; Eid 2007; R. Khalidi 2007).

Throughout the years of “peacemaking,” Israel settler colonialism aggressively colonized Palestinian land and accelerated its efforts to concentrate the Palestinian people within isolated enclosures on parcels of their lands (Giacaman and Lonning 1999; Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2015; Farsakh 2016a; Haddad 2016; Hanieh 2016; Salamanca 2016; Tabar 2016; Meari 2017; Puar 2017; Tartir 2018). Alongside these transformations, the PLO—the umbrella organization established to represent Palestinian national liberation parties and their armed wings—was gradually co-opted by the Palestinian Authority. As discussed in chapter 4, the latter was created by the Oslo Accords to serve as a security subcontractor for Israel. A wide body of Palestinian literature is currently looking for a way beyond the current crisis (Farsakh 2021), including exploring alternative frameworks for liberation (Gassner 2000; Massad 2002; Ibrahim 2005; Barghouti 2011; Farsakh 2011; Abunimah 2014). *The Indigenous Anti-Colonial* speaks to this current

impasse by giving voice to a broader set of histories. It recovers and investigates a radical tradition that did not give up liberation for a state and sheds light on how Palestinians have always imagined freedom from Zionist settler colonialism in ways that have also sought to dismantle overlapping systems of domination, nationally and beyond borders.

As I outline in chapter 1, Zionist settler colonialism was officially established in Europe in 1897 at the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland. The Zionist project to establish a settler colony in Palestine was based on the racist settler myth that Palestine was “a land without a people.” Fully aware of the Indigenous Palestinian society, the Zionist enterprise mobilized Jewish settlers on the claim that “the country was ‘empty’” (Skinner 2014). In other words, the physical emptying of Palestine was predicated on a prior conceptual and ontological erasure of the Palestinian people’s existence (Masalha 2012). In both Zionist settler colonial and earlier European colonial representations of Palestine, Palestinians were invariably absent (Nassar 2003, 149). Based on a sense of European superiority, Zionist settler colonialism claimed that Palestinians did not exist or depicted them as “irrelevant” and “not worth considering” as a people (Said 1992, 15, 71).

Erasure, in its various forms, is intrinsic to settler colonialism’s logic of elimination (Wolfe 2006); in order to create a settler society on colonized Indigenous land, settler colonialism requires the “dissolution of native societies” (388). Settler societies, therefore, depend on the perpetual dispossession and absence of Indigenous peoples. In Palestine, the Zionist enterprise’s relentless drive to conquer Palestinian land—itself inseparable from the violent racialized and sexualized conquering of Palestinian bodies (Shalhoub-Kevorkian et al. 2014)—culminated in the dispossession and expulsion of two-thirds of Palestinians outside their homeland in 1948. After 1948, Israeli settler colonialism pursued the wholesale obliteration and seizure of Palestinian villages, property, and records. Efforts to create settler indigeneity entailed erasing “Arab Palestinian signifiers from the landscape” (Pappe 2018, 167). The enormity of this violence, and the scale of these efforts to systematically destroy and erase Palestinian presence and records, are not to be underestimated. Yet obliteration is also not the full story. There is a terrain where Palestinian presence and prior realities are sustained despite these settler colonial efforts to absent them.

This terrain houses Indigenous ontologies and anti-colonial intellectual histories, much of which remain marginalized and excluded from international knowledges and what is considered “theory.” In the case of Palestine, Eurocentric scholarship and the colonial perspectives that underlie it have long contributed to rendering Palestinian realities and intellectual histories absent, such that Palestinian historians have sought “to write the inhabitants of Palestine into history” (Doumani

1995, xi). This is compounded by the exclusionary nature of what counts as the archives and international knowledges in world politics. Siba Grovogui (2006, 4–6) maintains that a whole class of non-Western experiences, memories, understandings of international events, and intellectual trajectories have been left out of international knowledges and theory. This is particularly the case with anti-colonial thought. Even critical currents within international relations have “overlooked the histories and thought of anticolonial struggles” (Jones 2006, 12), despite a wide body of literature on how these struggles have sought to transform the colonial and racial capitalist structures of the international order (Gilroy 1993; Robinson 2000; Kelley 2002; Prashad 2007; Daulatzai 2012; Estes 2019; Getachew 2019).

Recovering the anti-colonial intellectual and political histories of a people whose enforced absence forms the grounds on which an entire system and a settler society depends is not a straightforward exercise. It requires methodological and conceptual shifts that challenge what constitutes an archive and what is regarded as theory within international knowledges. In setting out on this task, *The Indigenous Anti-Colonial* is not a part of the turn to settler colonial studies in scholarship on Palestine (Salamanca et al. 2012; Veracini 2013; Rouhana 2015; Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2015). Rather, I maintain that Palestinians have been using the settler colonial framework to make sense of the ongoing realities of Zionist invasion and colonial settlement for well over a hundred years. The turn to settler colonial studies is, as Eve Tuck puts it, a “turn to where we already were” (Tuck 2014). Moreover, one cannot see these Indigenous intellectual histories if one remains solely within the theoretical concerns of settler colonial studies (Warrior 2008; Bhandar and Ziadah 2016; Kauanui 2016; Barakat 2018).

The Indigenous Anti-Colonial starts from the primacy of Indigenous lives and is in dialogue with Indigenous studies and Black studies. These analytics are important for Palestine studies precisely because they allow one to tell a story about agency and resistance that is not captured in Eurocentric conceptual frameworks and settler colonial perspectives. Indigenous modes of survival and resistance do not conform to conventional grids or forms of life. Edward Said argues that, in reconstituting their lives amid recurring forms of dislocation and dispossession, Palestinians have created “new realities and relationships that neither fit simple categories nor conform to previously encountered forms” (1999, 5). Indigenous studies offers nuanced analytical tools that enable one to capture both these forms and the complexities of the trajectories and the modes of agency that exceed settler colonial frameworks—what Samera Esmeir maintains is a life that is neither coded in colonial law nor captured through its prisms (2014, 4).

To consider these forms of life and trajectories is not an ethnographic exercise. It is to think with a presence that refuses to disappear—one that expands

our imagination to see patterns of anti-colonial lives that ensure that prior Palestinian realities and ties to land endure through daily acts of devotion and hushed embodied transmissions. An artist from occupied Palestine that I interviewed described how his mother shared her memories of the former realities of Palestine like “secrets” that became etched into the fibers of their being, embedded in who they are and how they understand the world. But it does not stop there. These memories and former actualities transit through erasure; they are threaded through matter, physical remains, and imagined spaces. Reem and Majd Masri give visual form to this process in the artwork *Re-Narration*.⁵ Depicting how they are able to reinhabit a world through their father’s stories, they juxtapose photos over letters and memories that stand in for the faded images in the background. The artists capture the ways Palestinians reconstitute what was destroyed and continue to see and know their world through these mediums—and how they produce their own theories and imaginaries of liberation. This anti-colonial political imagination—one produced by a people who have been expelled, dispossessed, and continue to be denied their place in the world—challenges us to think with its unique, often unexpected and unconventional, forms.

Imaginaries of liberation are neither always readily apparent nor solely written down. Alternative visions of how the world should be are conveyed through practices and unannounced ways of living otherwise. They are also expressed in ways that often remain hidden, whether imagined through resistance cultures, or articulated in the coveted documents of the liberation struggle. In analyzing the ways Palestinians chart their presence through absence and erasure, this book is informed by Gerald Vizenor’s analysis of survivance and his notion of the trickster (2009, 5–6) and Katherine McKittrick’s analysis of Black female geographies (2006). I also draw on Leanne Betasamosake Simpson’s work on radical resurgence (2017) and Audra Simpson’s notion of refusal and the way the Mohawk Nation refuses to “stop *politically* being Iroquois” (2014, 7). My analysis of this Indigenous anti-colonial radical tradition is also informed by the works of Paul Gilroy, Robin Kelley, and Nick Estes. In doing so, however, this book does not simply draw on Indigenous studies and Black studies. The Palestinian anti-colonialism documented herein sheds new light on Indigenous modalities of survival and resistance. The analysis presented in this book offers new perspectives on how Indigenous ontologies and realities survive through ingenuity, defiance, a stubborn unruliness, and anti-colonial schemas of being that enable individuals to stretch Indigenous continuities across annihilation, such that a people know and live from their world despite its decimation. The Indigenous anti-colonial, therefore, deepens our understanding of how those who are

in *but not of* a system (Harney and Moten 2013; James 2022) sustain themselves beyond the reaches of power and forge pathways beyond systems of domination.

In emphasizing the indigeneity of this Palestinian radical tradition, *The Indigenous Anti-Colonial* challenges some of the occlusions and divisions within academic scholarship, including the rigid separation between Indigenous and Third World anti-colonial struggles. Specifically, this work opposes the way Indigenous agency, struggles, and contributions to critical theory have been ignored by scholarship like postcolonialism (Byrd 2011, xxxi–xxxiv). At the same time, it pushes against the idea that the transnational turn in anti-colonial scholarship necessarily ignores settler colonialism (Tuck and Yang 2012, 29) or that Indigenous struggles have been absent in these spaces dominated by Third World liberation struggles. The Palestinian radical tradition explored in this book furthers our understanding of anti-colonial thought, and it speaks directly to the specificities of Indigenous peoples’ struggles. This study offers new perspectives on how Indigenous people imagine liberation from settler colonialism and alternative futures that are based on their conceptions of land, life, and sovereignty. In doing so, it furthers possibilities for a comparative analysis of Indigenous anti-colonialisms, including their internationalist dimensions (Salaita 2016, xix), and invites further reflections on their overlooked contributions to world making.

The Indigenous Anti-Colonial Radical Tradition

Anti-Colonial Lives

To see beyond elimination and to apprehend the anti-colonial lives that refuse to stop being who they are amid recurring dispossession, it is essential to look beyond absences and the hegemony of written archives and to consider the power of what may not be immediately apparent. In the poem “We Shall Remain,” Tawfiq Zayyad (1970b) describes the anti-colonial lives that remain unwavering on their land:

Here, we shall remain
A wall on your chests.
We starve,
Go naked,
Sing songs
And fill the streets
.....
We breed rebellions
One after another. (65–66)

These lives are defiant and committed to their world. They maintain Palestinian presence, safeguard their ties to land, and uphold Indigenous lifeways in ways that cannot be comprehended by settler colonialism:

You may drink the sea;
We shall guard the shade
Of the olive tree and the fig,
.....
We squeeze the rock
To quench our thirst
And if we starve
We eat the dirt
And never depart (66).

Against what Gilroy (1993, 57) describes as the anti-discursive force of power, which robs the enslaved and the dispossessed of their personhood and a space for discursive acts, Palestinian modalities of survivance extend beyond both the discursive realm and the material plane. Much of this is carried out in hidden realms and everyday spaces of transmission. Palestinians reconstitute what was destroyed and maintain their own modes of presence through interconnected, embodied, physical, and immaterial realms. Here Palestinians live from an enduring sense of Indigenous presence (Kauanui 2016), through the dismemberment of settler colonialism.

Palestinian women are integral to this process. Symbolically associated with both the land and life, Indigenous women's bodies, sexualities, and reproductive roles are targeted by settler colonialism through racial and sexual forms of violence that further the conquering of the land (Krebs and Olwan 2012; Shalhoub-Kevorkian et al. 2014; A. Simpson 2016; Goeman 2017). In the recesses of daily life, Palestinian women, like other Native women, challenge the conditions of domination that structure their lives and perform crucial political labor, which ensures that Indigenous knowledges, former actualities, and social relations survive across land appropriation. This overlooked political work forms part of the scaffolding that undergirds anti-colonial lives and a resistance tradition that refuses to give in to settler colonialism.

In spaces where the former realities of Palestine are quietly passed on, Palestinian women are often the ones ensuring that prior forms of life and ties to land are reassembled, thereby enabling others to inhabit, embody, and carry these actualities with them, even if the latter have not lived these realities. This reconstitution happens in different ways. For example, a woman I interviewed in Jenin refugee camp (the focus of chapter 5) described how she kept the surviving

vestiges of the lives of the young men who were martyred defending the camp during the Israeli invasion of 2002. As I explain in that chapter, this woman created her own archive of the martyrs, compiling objects and personal effects that carry their scent and represent the remaining traces of their impact on this world. While some might dismiss her acts as romantic musings or hopeless nostalgia, I maintain that this example directs our attention to the multisensory forms of anti-colonial lives and the complex itineraries through which Indigenous ontologies are preserved, including those charted in realms beyond the visible. As this archivist threads the stories of the martyrs' lives into material remains, the sensory, and the corporeal, she offers a powerful model of how to use the seemingly fleeting and the ephemeral to form a web through which Indigenous lives and realities are maintained through erasures, disrupting the finality of death. Similar stories abound in the chapters of *The Indigenous Anti-Colonial*; powerful women orators relating narratives of martyrdom to rapt audiences time after time after time, or written accounts of how women's storytelling allows their audiences—often children—to see, taste, hear, and smell Palestinian places they have never been allowed to visit.

This reassembly makes that which has been extinguished come alive—it is a refusal of eradication that ensures that Indigenous presence lives on. The power of this reassembly is evident in destroyed villages like Iqrit, where Palestinians have enacted their own return, as I discuss at length in chapter 6. Through the memories of collective life on their land, which have been woven back into the lives of young returnees by their elders, the returnees to Iqrit see the contours of an obliterated world stretch out before them across what is now a haunting space of erasure. There is more at stake here than simply the power of stories. I am arguing that memories are not only embedded back into lives but continue to circulate and are brought together with physical artifacts, remains, matter, and immaterial spaces to produce a rich tapestry. In Iqrit, memories of a former world are transformed into physical form, as the youth build an architectural replica of the village. While place-based knowledges and philosophies of how to live with the land are re-created and passed on through guided walks and other land-based pedagogies. Through these practices a three-dimensional space is created, in which what has been destroyed survives, a world continues to be known against the violence of elimination, and a prior presence is preserved.

This recomposition of a world and ties to place, I am arguing, is the product of a radical consciousness that refuses to give up Indigenous life or to submit to settler colonialism. Instead, anti-colonial lives find ways to transit through the constrictions and impositions of settler sovereignty. In *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States*, Audra Simpson argues that

rather than seeking recognition from settler states, Indigenous refusal represents a strategy that “chooses to stay within . . . to assert a greater principle” of unvanquished Indigenous sovereignty (2014, 24). Thinking with this notion, I contend that Palestinian refusal is not simply a turning inward to reassert a prior Indigenous sovereignty. Rather, Palestinian refusal is an adamant and defiant movement outward, through settler colonialism. It is based on a consciousness that one Palestinian leader describes as a refusal “to coexist with settler colonialism,” and like the anti-colonial mode of being of *sumud* detailed by Lena Meari, it is a “refusal to surrender” to the settler colonial logics that penetrate “all aspects of Palestinians’ lives” (2014, 550).

Palestinians piece together what has been destroyed and preserve the remnants of their world through conduits that actively subvert the seemingly settled and permanent nature of settler sovereignty. To be, and to remain, is to resist. This type of oppositional form of being shapes an unruly anti-colonial subject that orients people toward living in quiet yet open forms of rebellions; it informs their movement outward through walls and other open forms of confrontation. In chapter 2, for example, I consider how Mahmoud Darwish and Emile Habiby’s documentation of the Nakba and its aftermath offer examples of how Palestinian writers have created anti-colonial schemas of being that transcend unbridgeable divides, undercut settler colonialism, and work through it. Habiby’s text disrupts the newly established settler state with a succession of Palestinians who stubbornly return to their land, irrespective of the borders imposed by foreign settlers. This mirrors the actual way Palestinians managed to return to their homes and lands in the immediate years after the Nakba (Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2016). Darwish’s account of this period equally refuses Zionist settler colonial sovereignty over Palestinian land, sea, and air. This refusal and persistent throwing off of settler colonialism continue today, and this forms the focus of chapter 6. In it, I follow Palestinians who have returned to the lands they were dispossessed of in 1948 and who put themselves back in destroyed villages, reclaiming these lands as Palestinian. These trajectories, I argue, are buttressed by a radical consciousness that does not give in. It refuses to accept settler colonial land appropriation and sovereignty as normal. Instead, Palestinians actively seek to evade, subvert, work around, and create pathways out of settler colonialism. This widens our understanding of agency and resistance; these individuals and the spaces of the everyday where they dwell, are by no means passive or apolitical. Instead, they should be understood as “powerful and productive sites towards power’s undoing” (Daulatzai 2012, xxv).

Through the defiant trajectories of anti-colonial lives, death and erasure are transformed into something that Palestinians reassemble and transit through.

This is not a process of unbecoming or an unmaking of the self. These practices are mediated by fierce commitment and a determination to return to the land and return to Falastin. This way of charting Indigenous presence across settler colonialism is a product of a consciousness that is committed to Indigenous life, committed to an earlier freedom, and animated by a radical love. Moreover, these anti-colonial lives are significant precisely in that they reveal how much Palestinians *do not see from within* settler colonial frameworks. These lives are not simply isolated individual formations. They should be understood as part of a longer trajectory of resistance that refuses to be integrated into settler colonialism, and in which Palestinians see from elsewhere, from their own enduring presence.

A Resistance Tradition

Anti-colonial lives undergird a diffused resistance tradition that does not concede settler colonialism or seek inclusion and recognition. This long trajectory of resistance in Palestine emanates from a consciousness that is committed to a prior world and Palestinian futures. This resistance tradition continues even when the PLO is not actively functioning in the post-Oslo period because it is the manifestation of a shared anti-colonial consciousness, an enduring set of bonds and a devotion that is broader than any single political movement. The chapters of *The Indigenous Anti-Colonial* explore some of the differentiated ways this trajectory of resistance is enacted and sustained by different actors and forces beneath the surface, even as chapter 4 also explores what the political forces who adopted the Oslo Accords have tried to enact in the place of the Indigenous anti-colonial. In refocusing on Indigenous anti-colonial resistance, I invite readers to think about the liberation struggle from below—from the realities of people engaged in struggle.

The anti-colonial tradition, therefore, encompasses a broader array of actors, including everyday forms of anti-colonial lives; resistance communities putting themselves back on the land from which they were expelled; and revolutionary intellectuals, artists, and poets. Furthermore, these actors produce visions of liberation that challenge one to recognize the differentiated nature and forms of theory and anti-colonial thought, including the everyday way in which theories of liberation are enacted by people based on their own lived encounters with settler colonialism. The everyday spaces where these resistance practices take place are important in and of themselves. They are connected to but are not entirely dependent on an organized political force like the PLO. These sites serve as spaces where the struggle is not only sustained but also reinvigorated and produced in new forms that have the potential to feed into and

reshape the liberation movement's overall trajectories. The liberation struggle, therefore, is made up of a multiplicity of actors and nodes. It is always a work in process, and it is in a state of potential becoming, even when this is not visible on the surface.

By examining the Palestinian liberation struggle from below, this study advances our understanding of Indigenous struggles in two respects. First, the anti-colonial practices and the lives explored in this book make clear that there are other logics—Indigenous logics—beyond the settler colonial logic of elimination; the former are erased if one focuses exclusively on the latter. Palestinians thread their world through dismemberment, through spaces of eviction, and through barely visible traces and remains. In doing so, they demonstrate a tenacious capacity to engage in what Palestinian artist 'Asim Abu Shaqra describes as the ability to “flower out of death” (quoted in Boullata 2001, 76). Through complex anti-colonial schemas of being that work through a logic of transmutation (Vizenor 2009, 5–6), Palestinians ensure that Indigenous ontologies, and the prior sovereignty they signify, remain ever present (Moreton-Robinson 2015, 15). These patterns of anti-colonial lives are part of a resistance trajectory that refuses to succumb to settler colonialism while struggling for more comprehensive forms of liberation.

Second, by investigating the Palestinian struggle from this vantage point, *The Indigenous Anti-Colonial* charts a broader set of imaginaries and practices of liberation that are found within overlooked daily spaces of resistance as well as in the differentiated spaces of the Palestinian struggle. This anti-colonial radical imagination aspires for more abiding forms of freedom and seeks a different world. Its imaginaries of liberation are shaped by Indigenous Palestinian histories while extending outward to internationalist aspirations for a world without colonialism, capitalism, and white supremacy.

An Imagination and Practices of Liberation

The Indigenous anti-colonial, therefore, also encompasses an imagination and practices of liberation produced by the actors and forces who are engaged in this resistance tradition and carry it forward. These imaginaries of liberation are shaped by Palestinian indigeneity: They are informed by prior forms of collective life, living ties to the land, place-based knowledges, and an alternative normative worldview. They are also based on anti-colonial aspirations for liberation from overlapping systems of domination. For the Palestinian anti-colonial revolutionary and leftist thinker Ghassan Kanafani, Palestinian liberation is a quest to “make life worthy for a human being” (quoted in Kilpatrick 1978, 7). Similarly, George Habash, one of the founders of the Popular Front for the

Liberation of Palestine, maintains that a core objective of the Palestinian anti-colonial struggle is the realization of “an equitable life” outside the framework of capitalism (quoted in Fifth of June Society 1970, 9). These views exemplify a Palestinian anti-colonialism that strives for alternative systems and ways of organizing political and economic life that are genuinely liberatory and can end settler colonialism and overturn interlocking racialized and capitalist systems of domination, both on Palestinian land and beyond the borders of the nation-state. This anti-colonial radicalism seeks a freedom that can liberate life and is not determined by systems or an international order that rests on dispossession and racialized domination.

Partha Chatterjee (1997, 246) argues that in its efforts to negotiate European dominance, non-Western nationalism concedes European Enlightenment thought and its schematization of the world in the outer realms of the nation. He suggests, therefore, that non-Western nationalism is a derivative discourse that remains dominated by European nationalism (Chatterjee 1986). In contrast to this, I am arguing that the Indigenous anti-colonial radical tradition departs from European nationalism. It does not replicate and extend the Western model of sovereignty, based on a social contract between disembodied individuals, in which the state creates the conditions for individual liberty and liberal individualism. The Indigenous anti-colonial has its own political imagination; its visions of sovereignty, liberation, and ways of being exceed these dominant systems and call them into question. Historically, the nation-state and Westphalian sovereignty have not upheld the presence and rights of Indigenous peoples, including Palestinians. This starting point is important; in revealing a different set of historical realities, it lays the ground for an alternative account of non-Western nationalism, one in which traditions like the Indigenous anti-colonial seek alternative conditions for freedom.

*Racial Formations of Modernity, the Nation-State,
and Indigenous Dispossession*

Within the coconstitutive structural formations of settler colonialism, white supremacy, liberal capitalism, and heteropatriarchy, Indigenous peoples’ sovereign presence on their lands have been denied and violently negated. Racialized as inadequate for modern life and sovereignty over their lands, Indigenous people have thus been targeted for removal, and replacement, or violently assimilated into the settler order. Such violence neither constitutes a break from the norm nor is predicated on a suspension of the law, as suggested by “state of exception” perspectives (Agamben 1998). On the contrary, the violent appropriation of Indigenous lands and lives has been possible due to the entrenched racialized

hierarchies that undergird modern conceptions of the human. These hierarchies have been articulated through liberal universalism (Mehta 1997) and its colonial divisions of humanity (Lowe 2015, 6). Structured by these logics of white supremacy and its ordering of the human, liberal theories and principles have rationalized “settler [land] appropriation and removal” (11) and have been used to sanction racial and colonial violence.

Palestine must be understood within these entrenched dynamics. In chapter 1, I revisit the Zionist settler encroachment into Palestine in the early 1900s and locate it within the racialized formations of liberalism. I demonstrate that from the beginning of the Zionist invasion of Palestine, the nation-state and its liberal rights regime were used to authorize European Jewish settlers to forcibly settle Palestine and negate Indigenous Palestinian sovereignty and natural rights. Moreover, I maintain that within the nation-state and its liberal framework, it is racism and not rights that determines what qualifies as legitimate and valued life. Within these racialized conceptions of what constitutes valid life, Indigenous people like Palestinians have not been allowed to be who they are, in their humanity, on their land. This view is affirmed by Charles Mills (2003, 168), who maintains that in the colonies, the liberal social contract is a racial contract that excludes colonized peoples from personhood and rights.

In chapter 1, I show that the formation of a new Jewish settler on Palestinian land in the late 1800s and early 1900s was contingent on a particular process of racialization whereby Palestinians were not simply depicted as inferior; their presence was dismissed as inconsequential, and their modes of life on land were disparaged as inadequate. Moreover, in Palestine, as in American and European colonies around the world, liberal rights and principles were structured by white supremacist conceptions of what qualifies as legitimate life and presence on the land. The racist notions that Palestinians do not count as fully human or qualify for natural rights were organized through liberal rights discourses that were enforced by the British colonial state, and backed up by its enforcement of private property rights in ways that deliberately aimed to break up Indigenous collective land holdings and presence on the land.⁶ Liberal rights, principles, and the legal instruments of the nation-state, each in different ways, served as tools that aided settler colonialism and created the conditions that made Indigenous dispossession possible.

This often overlooked history is crucial to understanding the specificities of anti-colonial radicalism and the way these political traditions often depart from European nationalism; they are neither simply seeking a state nor “solely nation builders” (Getachew 2019, 3). Rather, this radical anti-colonialism seeks more wide-reaching transformations. It is against this backdrop that the arc of

the Indigenous anti-colonial radical tradition and its pursuit of much more substantive transformations becomes intelligible. In its struggle for liberation from settler colonialism, the Indigenous anti-colonial overrides the Westphalian order, the nation-state, the liberal rights regime, and their conceptions of life with alternative futures. This form of anti-colonialism seeks alternative conditions for freedom, beyond the structures and systems that facilitated conquest and racial domination. In this respect, this Palestinian radical tradition does not think from the European doctrine of nationalism, which erases these histories; it thinks from its own realities. This radical tradition and its imaginaries of liberation seek a world beyond Zionist settler colonialism. It counters Western sovereignty, the nation-state order, and liberal conceptions of life. This anti-colonial radicalism creates visions of national liberation that are predicated on the restoration of Indigenous sovereignty, advances internationalist visions of a different world order, and produces distinct sociabilities and ways of being in the world. These imaginaries of liberation are forged across the national, international, and everyday spaces of the liberation struggle.

Imaginaries of Liberation

The National

Palestinian conceptions of national liberation have been informed by the people's indigeneity and ties to the land, creating alternative visions of sovereignty. In chapter 3, I rely on the original texts of the PLO to examine the organization's historic understanding of liberation, which centered on the land rather than rights. The political party Fateh described this as the "de-Zionisation" of the land (1967, 10), evoking a future without settler colonialism. Reexamining the PLO's program of the secular democratic state, I argue that in contrast to proponents of the one state today, the organization firmly opposed binationalism, as this would normalize Zionist constructions of settler nationality, along with the power and entitlements that stem from settler colonialism. The PLO's vision of a liberated future was predicated on Indigenous sovereignty. But this was not about a return to an idealized precolonial past; it was a transformative and future-oriented anti-colonial vision that opposed overlapping forms of domination.

Palestinians have a deep attachment to their land, and this relationship defines a way of life that predates the arrival of the Zionist settler enterprise. Palestinian historian Nur Masalha (2018, 10) traces this territorial-based consciousness and shows the continuity in Palestinian place-names that has existed over centuries

despite repeated foreign invasions, of which Zionism is the latest. During an Indigenous feminist delegation's visit to Palestine, a Palestinian representative of the municipality in al-Khalil (Hebron) described this relationship to the land as follows: "We are from this land. I am the color of this land. We keep the land as it is and treat the land like our child. This land ties us to our ancestors."⁷ This powerful statement of Indigenous rootedness in the land informs what I argue is a Palestinian insistence on Indigenous sovereignty and with it the liberation of the land and Palestinian life. This vision stresses the incommensurability of Native rights and their history of habituation on the land with settler claims that have been pursued through invasion and land theft.

Although the PLO did not use the terminology of indigeneity, its vision of a liberated Palestine was clearly informed by attachments shared across global Indigenous struggles. These struggles understand indigeneity as a political category as opposed to simply a marker of cultural identity. Indigeneity denotes a collective attachment "to particular land bases" (Salaita 2016, xiv) and a consciousness of shared histories of habituation on the land of those who "preceded settlement" (Kauanui 2018, 29). Therefore it is both associated with and signifies a prior and usurped sovereignty. This political concept of indigeneity has distinct implications for how I understand decolonization. First, it necessarily challenges the settler society and system built to negate this prior world (Alfred 2005b; Povinelli 2011; Tuck and Yang 2012; Coulthard 2013). Decolonization in this sense focuses on the return of Indigenous land and centers Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty. The settler colonial relationship cannot be adequately transformed through a liberal politics of recognition or liberal rights discourse (Coulthard 2014, 3). Second, as a political concept, indigeneity centers the differences between settler and Native and their structural locations within settler colonialism and the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous people, on which settlers depend. It proceeds based on an "ethic of incommensurability" (Tuck and Yang, 2012, 36) that unsettles settler innocence and claims of equivalence (Moreton-Robinson 2020). This emphasis on incommensurability disrupts colonial relations of domination and enables a movement toward relations based on accountability (Snelgrove et al. 2014, 23–26). This understanding of decolonization, and how it delineates alternative futures, is evident in the PLO's vision of liberation, its insistence on the restoration of Indigenous sovereignty, and the challenge it posed to settlers to embrace de-Zionization.

Unlike Western sovereignty, therefore, which emanates from the rights of individuals, the PLO's program for liberation fundamentally reimagined sovereignty through the prism of decolonization. In seeking to reestablish Palestinian life on the land, it also invited settlers to become a part of a liberated future,

on the condition that they give up Zionism and settler supremacy, becoming accountable to the land and people they have sought to supplant and erase. This radical vision of liberation challenged settlers to view Indigenous sovereignty not as a threat or a dissolution but as a process of becoming that invited settlers to embrace alternative political categories and overlapping notions of self, history, and affiliations—outside Zionist settler colonial domination and settler ways of being at the expense of the Native, including recovering overlapping nonsettler identities that had been erased by Zionism. This understanding of Indigenous sovereignty is not anchored in individual rights. It is rooted in decolonization, responsibility, and accountability. It emanates from Indigenous ontological relations to the land and imagines a liberated future that settlers can participate in if they give up settler supremacy and embrace nondomination.

In addition to this vision of national liberation, *The Indigenous Anti-Colonial* explores the way the Palestinian anti-colonial radical political imagination—articulated through text, resistance cultures, and everyday spaces of struggle—departs from romantic nationalism. In chapter 2, I investigate the nature of this radical imagination and the ways it neither adheres to a Western ideology of progress nor harks back to a pristine, idyllic past. On the contrary, this anti-colonial radical imagination dwells in ruins, dismembered spaces, and disrupted chronologies of erasures. It begins with the histories of Indigenous dispossession and racial domination that are persistently erased in Europe's teleology of progress. Like anti-colonial lives that remain committed to Indigenous life, this anti-colonial political imagination refuses to forget this violence. It offers a different chronology of modernity (Gilroy 1993, 197), one that starts from catastrophic ruptures and the destruction of a world by settler conquest. In doing so, this Indigenous anti-colonial radical imagination refuses to give up or give in. Within the very spaces decimated by settler colonialism it continues to remake life, creating rehearsals for a world after settler colonialism.

The process of reassembling lives and a world does not necessarily lead to a permanent sense of closure, however. The specter of annihilation continues to haunt any sense of recovery. This specter shatters linear narratives and propels thought elsewhere, beyond Eurocentric and colonial ideologies. In grappling with the dimensions of this catastrophic violence, the Indigenous anti-colonial radical imagination turns outward. As conveyed in the poetry, resistance cultures, and internationalist commitments of the Palestinian struggle, this radical imagination makes sense of Zionist settler colonialism by understanding Palestine in a longer continuum of European conquest, genocide, and racial terror. In other words, in trying to come to terms with the horrors of being driven from one's home and watching one's world destroyed, neither of which can be forgotten or

grieved, this Palestinian anti-colonial radical tradition looks beyond Palestine and identifies with other Indigenous and oppressed people's realities and struggles. It orients consciousness to a more expansive freedom and alternative social relations beyond prevailing systems of domination, whether in the everyday or in internationalist struggles for a different world order.

The International

When the PLO emerged in the late 1960s, Palestinians understood their struggle against Zionist settler colonialism as an intrinsic part of other anti-colonial and anti-racist struggles around the world. As I explore in chapter 3, these were internationalist movements, joining forces in a global rebellion against the dominant international order, opposing the interlocking systems of global capitalism, colonialism, and white supremacy. I use official documents and texts of the PLO to look back at this period. This material includes the political magazines published by the political parties and the PLO Research Center, as well as party congress reports, pamphlets, statements, press releases, basic political documents, and reports, which I compiled from a number of archives, including digital archives that are available online and original publications housed at Birzeit University. Through this political literature, I explore Palestinian imaginaries of liberation that were created in this period of dense ties between anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles.

The material I uncover, and the radical imagination I chart, challenges the claim that Indigenous perspectives and settler colonialism were absent in this transnational anti-colonial terrain. As I further demonstrate in chapter 3, Palestinians were not only theorizing settler colonialism based on their encounters with Zionism but also, as internationalists, were focusing on the way settler states like Israel were involved in maintaining a world order based on colonial and racial domination. At a time when Indigenous movements in North America were developing an Indigenous internationalism, forging ties with Third World anti-colonial struggles (Cobb 2014), and particularly Palestine (Estes 2019), from a different set of geographies, Palestinians were also linking Indigenous concerns to this internationalist sphere. Specifically, Palestinians tracked the way technologies of violence that were *settler colonial in origin* were shared between settler colonies in Palestine and South Africa and exported to Latin America, where these technologies were involved in the repression of other colonized, racialized, and subjugated peoples. These radicals maintained that settler colonialism, and the Zionist enterprise in particular, were detrimental to other marginalized and oppressed peoples and had to be opposed in their shared global struggle for an alternative world order. In theorizing settler colonialism outside the Americas

and Australasia, this Palestinian radical tradition focused on the differentiated nature of settler colonialism in Palestine and Africa. This tradition invites us to rethink settler colonialism in the Americas in relation to its formations in the Third World and to reconsider the reverberations of the violence of the settler colony on a global scale.

Chapter 3 sheds light on how this internationalist identification with other Indigenous and oppressed peoples around the world is expressed through a poetics that turns to Indigenous, colonized, and racialized people for solace and looks to them as fellow kin. These imaginaries of liberation move beyond strictly nationalist forms of identification. Relating to other oppressed peoples as comrades and kin in shared revolutionary struggles for global transformation, these imaginaries of liberation provide glimpses of a different world. They provide glimpses into anti-colonial ways of revealing to others outside settler colonial ideologies and the hierarchies of white supremacy. These alternative modes of identification are based on shared principles and a commitment to liberation.

The Everyday

Palestinian imaginaries of liberation are not simply theorized in the texts of the PLO or articulated by radical intellectuals. They are also produced in everyday spaces of survival and resistance. As agents of struggle, Palestinian individuals and communities also create different sociabilities, reimagine social life, and create signposts for decolonization that are based on their lived encounters with settler colonialism and their critiques of systems of power and domination. Nick Estes (2016) argues that Indigenous communities produce an “anti-colonial common sense” as they partake in daily forms of resistance on their land. Antonio Gramsci (1999, 630) explicates the concept of common sense by arguing that each class has “its own ‘common sense’ and its own ‘good sense,’ which are basically the most widespread conception of life and of man.” In everyday spaces of resistance, Palestinians create their own conceptions of freedom and theories of how life should be as they protect the land, resisting settler encroachment and land appropriation.

These imaginaries of liberation, therefore, have their own distinct forms. They are not written down and are not necessarily verbally expressed or named as such. Robin Kelley (2018) argues that “ordinary people produce their own tradition of understanding emancipation through the cultural matrix of their lives, their memories and social codes.” As I show in the chapters of this book, everyday anti-colonial theories and visions are conveyed through embodied practices and ways of living otherwise. These practices constitute veritable forms of theorizing in their own right; although they may not be announced or named as such, they allow for different social and political realities to be lived and imagined.

Moreover, as I demonstrate in chapters 5 and 6, these visions of liberation are also acted out and lived on and with the land. Here Palestinians create different ways of being in the world that are not translatable into settler colonial frameworks or Western ontologies. As shown in chapter 5, Palestinian women in Jenin refugee camp reconstitute life in and through the ruins by locating themselves in a web of relationalities that affirm the inherent worth of Palestinian life, and they see the indissoluble ties between Palestinians and their land stretch into the future. These ways of being are incommensurate with liberal sociability and its conception of abstract individuals. Palestinians re-create forms of life that are relational, responsible, and grounded in ethical relations to community and the land. These forms of life call forth different futures. Similarly, as shown in chapter 6, in spaces of land reclamation and defense, Palestinians maintain ways of living with the land that are based in Indigenous-normative worldviews. They create alternative forms of life and economies to settler colonialism and racial capitalism. These embodied visions of liberation map out anti-colonial and anti-capitalist futures in the present.

Methodology

The research for this book involved a lengthy process of excavation, sustained engagement with communities, and disparate research sites. Accessing the alternative archives and records of a people who continue to be subject to dispossession was a painstaking process that involved oral history interviews, ethnographic fieldwork, and research at multiple sites to obtain original texts and documents of the PLO. To overcome the absences and erasures caused by settler colonialism and its destruction of archives, I put all of these diverse sources into conversation. This excavation and collage allowed me to examine processes and ideas that I would not have been able to access otherwise.

Using these materials to tell a story about anti-colonial traditions and lives that is not intelligible within Eurocentric perspectives involved distinct methodological and conceptual approaches that reorient *where* and *how* one looks at things. To recover the intellectual and political histories of a people subject to ongoing dispossession and tell a broader story about international politics, I looked beyond official archives and state records as the sole repository of what counts as legitimate knowledges. Using the documents of the PLO, and anti-colonial records that are largely ignored in world politics, I center the subjugated perspectives of those not considered legitimate actors in official state archives, thereby giving voice to an anti-colonial freedom struggle, its understanding of international events, and its analysis of the world order. *The Indigenous Anti-Colonial*

insists on the validity of alternative archives, records, memories, and different knowledges and ways of knowing in world politics not merely as a corrective to help facilitate the retrieval of the histories of those who have been dispossessed and silenced. In using the texts of the liberation movement to piece together ideas and conduct a type of anti-colonial intellectual history, I also show that the PLO and other liberation forces have put forward alternative visions for the international order that are important for how we think about world politics and our planetary future. I have supplemented these documents with resistance art, which I use as an alternative record of the consciousness and visions of anti-colonial actors in a context where material cultures and other records have been seized or destroyed.

One of the main sources I rely on is memory. In doing so, I challenge social constructivist perspectives and their Eurocentric depiction of Indigenous memories as mere subjective narratives, fanciful stories, or “myths” (Mahuika 2019, 10) that are not recognized as valid knowledges or as part of an embodied system of knowing. Building on Indigenous studies’ literature on memory and oral traditions (Shoemaker 2002; Taylor 2003; Womack et al. 2008; Million 2009; L. B. Simpson 2011), I reconceptualize the transmission of memory across generations as a living archive in which memory and knowledges are shared in an unbroken succession through a repertoire of practices such as storytelling (Taylor 2003, 21–25) and sustained through a web of relations. I am interested in the way this living archive transfers prior realities and details of life on the land (Whiteduck 2013, 79) that are relived, retained within embodied ways of knowing, and passed on. Rather than analyze individual oral histories, I focus on the overall ways in which this living transmission is intrinsic to being and is a part of how Palestinians continue to know and live from their world. Providing an alternative record of these lives, this living archive fills in (some) gaps caused by settler colonialism. It illuminates the ways individuals reconstitute, inhabit, and allow others to carry prior histories and ties to land with them, creating anti-colonial schemas of being that refuse to stop being Palestinian and building a different world conveyed in ways of living otherwise.

To begin to see histories and lives that have been obscured is not an easy task. It was only through prolonged engagement, immersing myself in Palestinian communities, that I came to see the processes analyzed in this book. In the course of this research, I conducted interviews with over one hundred Palestinians across historic Palestine about their memories of the past century. These interviews were coupled with observations of everyday practices, during which I spent a significant amount of time with grassroots actors and communities.⁸ I also participated in collective practices of return to a number of different

destroyed Palestinian villages. In addition to this, I conducted archival research at different sites and collected Palestinian texts and political documents, including reports from political parties, as well as pamphlets, press releases, and articles, published in the magazines of the political parties of the PLO. I relied on both physical and digital archives; the latter were particularly important, as I benefited from new digital archives that have compiled material that would otherwise remain scattered at fragmented sites.

One of the main sites of this research was Jenin refugee camp. In 2002, I was involved in an oral history project that recorded Palestinian testimonies after the Israeli invasion of Jenin in 2002. I returned to Jenin repeatedly and conducted oral history interviews over three intervals across a ten-year period: 2002–3, 2013, and 2017–18. This extended temporal framework allowed me to revisit the same individuals, often interviewing them two or three times over the years.⁹ It was through this deep engagement that I was able to observe recurring patterns that challenged my understanding of memory; I came to see memory as part of a dense oral tradition. In the summer of 2018, I conducted further interviews with Palestinians putting themselves back on their lands in destroyed villages and at frontier sites of land defense. In Jenin and at these sites of land reclamation and defense, I immersed myself in peoples' everyday practices. In addition to this, I also accompanied Palestinians on practices of return to varied sites across historic Palestine. This deep immersion in everyday spaces, practices, and alternative archives reveals how challenging it is to piece together Indigenous lives and realities against settler colonialism and its efforts to extinguish these realities. One cannot recompose and tell these stories without this level of engagement.

To think with the anti-colonial lives and resistance trajectory explored in this book, it is necessary to unsettle dominant conceptual frameworks. Indigenous actualities have not only been erased by settler colonialism; much of these realities have also been rendered unintelligible by Eurocentric knowledge production. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999, 30) argues that in claiming “theory as thoroughly Western,” academia has also “constructed all the rules by which the indigenous world has been theorized.” Indigenous scholars have resisted this by centering Indigenous intellectual traditions and ontologies, producing theory and knowledge that is both by and for Indigenous communities. As a Palestinian scholar, I contribute to this process by thinking with the specificities of Palestinian anti-colonial lives and tradition. To decipher these lives and resistance traditions requires a willingness to entertain what has been discounted, ignored, or rendered unimaginable within prevailing conceptual frameworks.

The Indigenous Anti-Colonial does this in two broad ways. First, in rethinking memory as a living archive, it rejects the superimposition of Eurocentric

concepts and abstractions on Indigenous social forms. Engaging in what Audra Simpson calls “ethnographic refusal” (2007), unlike dominant frameworks, I do not displace Palestinian memories from oral knowledge systems and reduce them to purely subjective narratives or to static accounts, akin to “facts” or words on a page. I recognize the way memories and oral traditions are lived, that they are part of the architecture of a world, and that they are a vital part of how Indigenous people maintain a sense of who they are. This allows other modalities of being, presence, and agency to come into view. By departing from dominant accounts of memory, I slowly began to see spaces of transmission, assemblages, and circuits through which prior histories are sustained over time. At different sites, I came to perceive how individual memories are part of a broader tapestry of oral epistemologies and serve as nodes that are braided together with other forms: knotted together with personal objects and remains; used to create a metaphorical space that allows Palestinians in Jenin camp to reassemble former realities across a space of dispossession; or serving as a conceptual map in destroyed villages like Iqrit, allowing former collective forms of life to be seen and reterritorialized. As I explain in chapter 6, before Palestinian groups return to a destroyed village, they disseminate personal stories of individual lives before the Nabka, along with photos, remaining documents, or images, to participants, equipping individuals with intimate knowledges of the place before their collective return to the land. This constitutes a more generalized practice, also used by websites like Palestine Remembered, in which Palestinians bring together memories, matter, and physical remains to continually reconstitute a world and ensure that Palestinian presence is upheld through absence. I also began to perceive anti-colonial common sense imaginaries, conceptions of life, and futures forged through resistance and lived out in everyday life. These practices invite us to rethink agency, forms of life, and how people resist power.

Second, in analyzing these processes, this study takes seriously that which has been discounted within dominant frameworks. It looks beyond the primacy that the European Enlightenment accords to reason and written knowledges, reconsidering the power of oral traditions, the poetic, the imagined, and the immaterial. This book recognizes the formidable power of stories and metaphorical terrains in creating an alternative infrastructure that sustains Indigenous ontologies through settler colonialism. It takes seriously the knowledges and theories that are generated through practice and produced in everyday spaces by actors engaged in anti-colonial resistance. This methodology provides a deeper reading or “thick description” of Palestinian anti-colonial lives and resistance trajectories. It takes us to myriad places where the anti-colonial radical political imagination is not simply the property of a movement or a political leadership but is

produced and reproduced by people at different levels in the course of the struggle for liberation and is expressed through texts, resistance art, daily practices, and the quiet ways people rebel and live differently. In doing so, *The Indigenous Anti-Colonial* offers a method that can be used to recover the intellectual and political traditions of those subject to dispossession and erasure. It outlines the methodological and conceptual shifts involved in positioning these traditions where they belong: in world politics, as part of international theory, knowledges, and world-making practices.

The Structure of This Book

Chapter 1 reexamines the conditions that led to the dispossession of the Palestinian people in 1948, analyzing how British colonial rule fundamentally transformed Palestine to authorize Zionist settler colonialism. The British legalized and legitimized Zionist colonizing of Palestinian land as a “right,” while Indigenous Palestinians were assigned circumscribed rights that negated their national political rights and denied them valid presence on their land. The liberal rights of the nation-state, I argue, provided the framework in which Palestinians were rendered violable and transformed into a negligible presence on their land in ways that prefigured the mass expulsions of 1948.

Against this historical backdrop, chapter 2 begins to unpack the Indigenous anti-colonial. The ability to see from an enduring Palestinian presence through an apparent absence is a defining feature of this anti-colonial imagination. Showing how this way of seeing is actively produced by anti-colonial lives that equip Palestinians to see through ruins and erasures, I then trace this way of seeing in Palestinian resistance movements’ literature and art. Using two texts by Mahmoud Darwish and Emile Habiby that document what life was like for Palestinians after 1948, the chapter shows that Palestinians’ refusal and defiance of Zionist settler colonialism is not new. Both Darwish and Habiby insist that liberation requires the dismantling of settler colonialism, and I put their work in conversation with other anti-colonial art and culture that looks outward and understands Zionism within a continuum of European settler colonialism, racial domination, and imperialist aggression.

Chapter 3 focuses on the rise of the PLO in the 1960s. It situates and analyzes the organization’s vision of national liberation in the context of Palestinian internationalist commitments and participation in a global anti-colonial rebellion. Using the publications and documents of the PLO, the chapter traces a longer radical tradition that has been overshadowed by the present and brings to light the overlooked ways in which Palestinians’ internationalist commitments and

their conceptions of national liberation were shaped by global Indigenous perspectives and concerns. In analyzing Palestinian conceptions of national liberation, Chapter 3 reexamines the PLO's program of the secular democratic state to show how its vision of liberation rested on the restoration of Indigenous sovereignty. I further suggest that Palestinians reimagined sovereignty through anti-colonial principles anchored in nondomination.

Chapter 4 turns to the period of the 1990s, when after decades of waging a struggle for liberation, the Palestinian leadership began to turn its back on this goal and pursue a state. In signing the Oslo Peace Accords in 1993, the leadership capitulated to the conditions US imperialism and Zionist settler colonialism had placed on the PLO for recognition and inclusion in the nation-state order. This chapter critically unpacks these processes, looking at how the Oslo Accords were designed to pacify the Palestinian liberation struggle and the broader Indigenous anti-colonial radical tradition. In pursuing colonial recognition, the official leadership has replaced the Palestinian struggle to overturn Zionist settler colonialism with a politics of appeasement that upholds the very settler claims and white supremacist premises that sanction Indigenous dispossession.

Yet, despite this appeal to settler sovereignty, the Indigenous anti-colonial persists. Chapters 5 and 6 center everyday practices of anti-colonial lives and resistance forces engaged in struggle in the contemporary post-Oslo period. Chapter 5 tells the story of Jenin refugee camp, which became a center of resistance during the Second Intifada and was one of the main targets of the deadly settler colonial military campaign against the uprising. Relying on the memories and knowledges primarily of women in the camp to piece together this story, I maintain that Israel's invasion of Jenin camp continued settler colonialism's war against Indigenous lives by other means. I argue that in the face of this dispossession, women in Jenin continue to remake life and look toward a different future based on their own anti-colonial conceptions of life, freedom, and sociability.

Finally, chapter 6 examines how Palestinians have been "practicing return" since 2011, moving through the boundaries and spatial restrictions that bar them from the lands and villages from which they were evicted in 1948. Based on interviews, and sustained engagement with these actors and communities, the chapter investigates how Palestinians have been returning to these lands and engaging in land reclamation and defense; it analyzes how, in putting their bodies on the land of their own accord, Palestinians have also been imagining what actual return and a future beyond settler colonialism will look like. The chapter thus analyzes the way theories of liberation and visions of alternative futures are lived out on and with the land; they are collectively realized by actors engaged in struggle and carried by individuals. I argue that at each of these different sites,

Palestinians imagine life outside the confines of settler colonialism, capitalism, and the life of the nation-state. They maintain and create forms of life that are not translatable into Western ontologies and atomized liberal selves. In spaces of return, Palestinians are not only regenerating prior collective forms of life on the land but are positioning themselves as caretakers of place and reasserting alternative ways of being on the land, in which individuals are embedded in a web of relational ties and are accountable to the land and one another. Similarly, I outline how in places of land defense, Palestinians maintain ways of living with the land that establish the basis for a different way of life and an alternative economy that can free Palestinians and the land from settler colonialism and capitalism.

This book is a partial and piecemeal attempt to think beyond Eurocentric frameworks to decipher the forms and particularities of Palestinian anti-colonial traditions and lives. To capture these lives and this resistance tradition, I have suggested that one needs to stretch their imagination, thinking with the immaterial and the assemblage of circuits through which Indigenous ontologies endure through elimination of settler colonialism. To recover the radical anti-colonial imagination explored in the chapters that follow, this book emphasizes the validity of a broader set of archives and knowledges within world politics. It engages with the unassuming nature and forms of anti-colonial thought, whether hidden in practices or in documents, and the resistance culture of the liberation struggle. In doing so, this study reveals differentiated Palestinian imaginaries of liberation—including those forged on the land, in the spaces where Palestinians reassemble a prior world and their ties to the land; created in art as Palestinians grapple with the ungrievable; and produced through an anti-colonial internationalism that turns outward and identifies with other oppressed peoples as kin engaged in a shared global struggle.

These sites and this resistance tradition—what I am calling the Indigenous anti-colonial radical tradition—help us understand the longevity of liberation struggles. The anti-colonial liberation struggle is never simply an “eruption.” Beneath the surface, Palestinians are living out quiet anti-colonial lives of insurrection. Resistance practices and visions of futures are being nourished, regenerated, and sustained by an array of actors. The liberation struggle, therefore, is always in a state of potential becoming, even when this is not visible on the surface. The analysis offered in this book takes us to a resistance tradition that does not seek recognition from the system that is based on continued Indigenous dispossession. The *Indigenous Anti-Colonial* illustrates how, despite Zionist settler colonialism and its continued quest to eradicate us, the Palestinian people live from an enduring sense of their presence and continue to inhabit the fullness of our world, mapping out imaginaries of liberation and alternative futures.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. On October 9, 2023, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant announced the imposition of a complete siege on Gaza. Dehumanizing Palestinians as “human animals,” he declared that “there will be no electricity, no food, no fuel”; see *Middle East Eye* 2023. In the weeks and months ahead, scholars and United Nations human rights experts denounced the unfolding settler colonial obliteration and called for international action to stop what was described as “a textbook case of genocide,” designed to bring about the “systematic destruction of Palestinians and Palestinian society in Gaza, by killing them, starving them, cutting off their water supplies, and bombing their hospitals”; see Segal 2023. For other examples, see Saraf et al. 2023; and United Nations 2023. On January 26, 2024, the International Court of Justice’s provisional ruling ordered Israel to take all measures to prevent acts of genocide; see International Court of Justice 2024. Prior to October 2023, Palestinian scholars had already argued that Israel’s settler colonial policies of strangulation in Gaza, including the siege imposed in 2007, represent “a genocide happening in slow motion” (Nijim 2023, 166). The acceleration of this process today must be understood within a continuum of Zionist settler colonial logics of elimination, and the genocidal destruction of Palestinian society during the Nakba of 1948, which for Palestinians meant “the brutal extermination of human existence in one’s land” (171; see also Abdo 2018, 47–66).

2. For more see Abraham 2023; Hearst 2023; and al-Wawi 2025.

3. Palestinians refer to the events of 1948 as the Nakba, which literally translates as “the Catastrophe.” It denotes an immense violence: the destruction of an entire society.

4. I use memory and its transmission through time to broaden how we think about and study anti-colonialism amid settler colonialism and its efforts to destroy Indigenous presence, archives, and records. In doing so, I challenge Western academic scholarship and Eurocentric perspectives on Indigenous memory. Nepia Mahuika (2019, 1) provides an important critique of the way these perspectives define Indigenous memories and oral histories as “false, unreliable, or the puerile imaginings of the ‘other.’” I agree with this critique, but while Mahuika intervenes in the field of oral history studies, I take this

D

UNIVERSITY
PRESS

critique in a different direction. This book is not an intervention at the level or historiography, nor am I concerned with the way individual oral histories can provide a literal account of history. Instead, focusing on anti-colonial intellectual and political histories, I am more interested in the vistas that are created when we understand memories as part of Indigenous oral traditions that are alive and are part of what I call a living archive, where something more substantial is shared than simply stories about the past. Through these living transmissions, prior Indigenous realities and ways of life on the land not only continue to be passed down but are also reembodyed and endure. This living archive provides access to hidden patterns of survivance and what I call anti-colonial schemas of being. It also takes us to places where individuals create embodied socialities that envision and build a different world.

5. Reem Masri and Majd Masri, *Re-Narration*, 2021, mixed media, collage and painting, Palestinian Art Court–Al Hoash, Jerusalem; see Reem Masri (@reemmasri), “Re-Narration,” Instagram, March 11, 2022, <https://www.instagram.com/p/Ca9uNiFtTB6/>.

6. Siba Grovogui (1996, 77, 80) describes how, during the Berlin Conference of 1884–85, Europeans restricted the rights of African peoples. The prior racist assessment that Africans were “incapable” of governing themselves was consecrated in the assignment of “limited political rights” that left them with “the right to dispose of themselves,” in which “Africans were expected to surrender their right to sovereignty and related privileges to a colonial power of their choice.” For more on the way liberal rights, racialized conceptions of the human, and private property have been used to facilitate land theft, dispossession, domination, and enslavement, see Mamdani 1996; Mills 1997; Mehta 1999; Gilroy 2004, 1–64; Estes 2013; Moreton-Robinson 2015; Bhandar 2018; and Kauanui 2018, 76–112.

7. Presentation by a member of the municipality in al-Khalil to an Indigenous feminist delegation organized by the author, al-Khalil municipality, October 25, 2019.

8. As a Palestinian scholar, the interviews I conducted were a part of individual or collective interventions to record our lives on our terms. In Jenin refugee camp, the initial interviews were conducted as part of a Palestinian project to record individuals’ testimonies and memories of the Israeli invasion of 2002. This initiative was carried out with a popular organization in the camp. We trained young people in the camp on interviewing techniques, and they participated in recording people’s memories. The original interviews were meant to be digitized. Their fate is unclear. This book thus offers a partial record of these interviews, which were conducted as part of Palestinian efforts to document individual testimonies in Jenin camp and prevent them from being fully silenced. The other interviews—carried out as I participated with other Palestinians in community land-based practices, or conducted with Palestinians in different settings—were all undertaken based on a commitment, shared between myself and interlocutors, on the importance of Palestinian chronicling, reflecting on, and analyzing our experiences as a part of exercising intellectual sovereignty over knowledge production, creating knowledge that is also *for* Palestinians and furthers our struggle. On intellectual sovereignty, see Warrior 1992; and Barakat 2018.

9. Unless an interviewee’s full first and last name is provided, I use pseudonyms in order to maintain the anonymity of Palestinian lives that are structured by the realities of settler colonialism and its invasive technologies of surveillance and violence.