

PALESTINE-ISRAEL

IMPEDIMENTS TO EDUCATION in the OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

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(originally published in:

Ottoman History Podcast, No.166, 19 July 2014

www.ottomanhistorypodcast.com/2014/07/the-politics-of-1948-in-israeli-archives.html)

2. Akevot Institute Report on Access to israeli Archives

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A report on access to Israeli archives, particularly the State Archive and IDF and Security System Archive. Forthcoming late fall 2015.

Source: **Akevot: Institute for Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Research**

<http://www.akevot.org.il/index.html#>

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I. Introduction

Sa'ed Atshan

On October 28, 2009, Berlanty Azzam, a 22-year-old Palestinian Christian from the Gaza Strip, was handcuffed, blindfolded, and deported from the West Bank by Israeli occupation forces. A business student at Bethlehem University in the West Bank at the time, Israeli soldiers sent her back to Gaza because Gaza was the residence listed on her Palestinian identification card. On December 9, 2009, Israel's High Court, while acknowledging that Berlanty posed no security threat, ruled in favor of the state and army, refusing to allow her to return to Bethlehem in order to complete her education. *Gisha*, an Israeli human rights organization promoting freedom of movement for Palestinians in the Occupied Territories (the West Bank and Gaza Strip), represented Berlanty in this case.¹ *Gisha* advocates not only for students but for medical patients, professionals, and other Palestinian civilians devastated by the Israeli occupation and its policies of closure and inhibiting freedom of movement, a basic right under international law.

In a recent post on June 4, 2015,² *Gisha* published an update on their website, reporting that “Hundreds of students from Gaza who are enrolled in universities abroad have already missed the current academic year, and now their studies for next year are in jeopardy, too.” This is a result of the tremendous challenge in securing Israel's approval to permit Palestinian students to leave Gaza—the densely-populated small strip of land under Israeli siege—in order to arrive at universities abroad. In many cases, these students then lose their scholarships. The United States—known globally as Israel's largest patron—has also been known for not exerting pressure on Israel to facilitate travel permission for such students, even when it is to the United States. In fact, the American State

¹ <http://gisha.org/press/710>

² <http://gisha.org/en-blog/2015/06/04/let-them-study/>

Department has previously withdrawn American Fulbright Scholarships from Palestinian fellowship recipients after Israel denied their permission to leave the Occupied Territories for the United States.³

Berlanty Azzam's case highlights merely one name and one story that reflect the undermining of Palestinian higher education and the right to education for Palestinians, also a basic human right under international law. Scholars, journalists, and observers familiar with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict hear reports of violations of the Palestinian right to education regularly. In Gaza, Israeli bombs destroy schools and universities, and in the West Bank, Israeli settlers and soldiers inflict violence on Palestinian schoolchildren and teachers. Palestinian institutions cannot secure the Israeli visas they require for international faculty. They struggle to secure books and materials for their classrooms and labs from abroad. Students in the West Bank face Israeli military checkpoints while traveling from home to university. Israel targets students who are politically active in their respective student governments and within Palestinian political parties and frequently arrests them. The Israeli military is able to raid universities at will, releasing tear gas and entering campuses with weapons. Faculty and administrators are unable to protect their students from the intimidation and insecurity inflicted by the occupation forces. For high school students, even the ability to secure SAT booklets for a Palestinian testing site in the West Bank cannot be taken for granted. For instance, in 2008, two Palestinian students at Harvard University published an article, "Israel vs. No. 2 Pencils," expressing their concerns about the cancelation of an SAT exam in the West Bank due to an Israeli hold on the booklets in particular,⁴ and attacks on the Palestinian right to education more broadly.

The decades-long Israeli military occupation, with the continuing expansion of illegal settlements in the West Bank, has had a devastating impact on the

³ <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/30/world/middleeast/30gaza.html>

⁴ <http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2012/10/16/israel-sat-oped/>

Palestinian educational system. Israel's violations of Palestinian educational infrastructure often have little to do with security and are, instead, part of a larger structural assault on the basic social fabric of Palestinian life. Too many Palestinian students are denied the right to education as Israel violates scholarly freedom in Palestinian universities.

Israeli policy has serious implications for civil society development. A byproduct of Israel's occupation in the Palestinian Territories is its policy to limit the free development of ideas and knowledge within Palestinian institutions. When universities and schools are bombed, when students and teachers cannot reach their classrooms due to military checkpoints, an apartheid Wall, and U.S.-supplied tear gas, when supplies and books cannot clear Israel's control of Palestinian mail, when students are taken as prisoners in Israeli jails, and when international lecturers are routinely denied entry to the Occupied Territories by Israel, the odds are stacked against Palestinian students and educators.

Scholarship by Palestinians and on Palestinians is severely restricted as a result of Israel's violations of academic freedom. While Israeli universities are able to recruit whomever they please, Palestinian institutions are largely unable to avail themselves of the talented diaspora and solidarity communities of academics who seek to teach at Palestinian universities. Moreover, while Israeli scholars are able to conduct research in Israel/Palestine, and their historians have access to archives, Palestinian scholars are severely limited in their access. Palestinian archeologists, for instance, cannot reach most archeological sites in Israel/Palestine. Additionally, Palestinian historians are largely unable to conduct research in Israeli archives or maintain their own archives. In Part III of this pamphlet, historian Joel Beinin references the evidence that Israel has historically looted tens of thousands of Palestinian books and documents. The documentary *The Great Book Robbery* discusses this in further depth.

Nonetheless, Palestinians remain resilient in building their educational infrastructure, improving literacy rates, and establishing institutions. Yet their academic freedom and basic right to education is severely undermined by the Israeli occupation and they will never realize their full potential while under the control of a colonizing state and military. This is precisely why we see initiatives such as the *Right to Education Campaign* at Birzeit University, which sheds light on how Palestinian education has been impacted by Palestinian statelessness and life under foreign military rule. Additionally, Palestinian civil society initiated a call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) in 2005, a nonviolent movement inspired by the South African anti-apartheid boycott and based on international law. It targets institutions, not individuals, complicit in these realities to place pressure on them to end the occupation. This distinction between institutions and individuals is critical. Israelis of conscience from *Boycott from Within* have also supported the BDS call despite the Israeli state's attempts to criminalize BDS activism.

The undermining of the Palestinian right to education is certainly relevant to American academics, especially since Israel is the world's largest recipient of U.S. aid, thereby rendering U.S. taxpayers complicit in violations of Palestinian human rights. U.S. professional academic associations have responded in various ways, with some specific associations endorsing BDS⁵ while others, such as the Modern Language Association, have debated more limited resolutions such as the following in 2014:

⁵ In 2013, the *Association for Asian American Studies* was the first U.S. professional academic association to endorse BDS. This has been followed by resolutions or statements from the *American Studies Association*, the *Native American and Indigenous Studies Association*, the *Association for Humanist Sociology*, the *African Literature Association*, the *National Women's Studies Association*, the *Critical Ethnic Studies Association*, the *National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies*, and the *Peace and Justice Studies Association*. Other associations may follow suit in future years, with, for instance, over 1,100 anthropologists thus far endorsing BDS.

Whereas Israel has denied academics of Palestinian ethnicity entry into the West Bank;

Whereas these restrictions violate international conventions on an occupying power's obligation to protect the right to education;

Whereas the United States Department of State acknowledges on its Web site that Israel restricts the movements of American citizens of Palestinian descent;

Whereas the denials have disrupted instruction, research, and planning at Palestinian universities;

Whereas the denials have restricted the academic freedom of scholars and teachers who are United States citizens;

Be it resolved that the MLA urge the United States Department of State to contest Israel's denials of entry to the West Bank by United States academics who have been invited to teach, confer, or do research at Palestinian universities.

Inspired by the MLA debate, Historians Against the War (HAW) has initiated a resolution censuring Israel at the upcoming (2016) Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association (AHA) for its violations of the Palestinian right to education. The resolution can be found in this pamphlet.

By standing in solidarity with the Palestinian people, a nation facing one of the world's longest military occupations—and a community whose oppression we are directly funding and sustaining as U.S. citizens—our professional academic associations can ensure that history will look kindly upon our community of scholars. By affirming the need to protect the right to education and academic freedom for Palestinians, Israelis, and all Americans here at home, we help shape a more equal and just world, and a more sustainable future.

Part II: The Palestinian Right to Education

II.A. Palestinian Right to Education Under Siege, 2008-2015

a partial chronology

The right to higher education of Palestinians in the oPt has been severely compromised for decades, with universities bombed, invaded, and forcibly shuttered; and as a result of the restrictions on freedom of movement. As bad as the situation had been, with only a few students from Gaza able to travel to study at West Bank universities since 2000,⁶ 2008 marked a turn for the worse, with both the bombing of universities in Gaza and the formal adoption by the Knesset of a policy that prevented students in Gaza from leaving.

This policy is a clear violation of international law as noted by Rabbi Michael Melchior, chair of the Knesset education committee, who complained during the 2008 hearing on the policy that it “could be interpreted as collective punishment.”⁷ Only very recently have some students in Gaza been allowed to leave to take up their studies at foreign universities, but they are still not able to attend the universities in the West Bank.⁸

While universities in the West Bank, including eastern Jerusalem, have not bombed, they are frequently raided by the military; and students there have to contend with restrictions on their freedom of movement, negotiating more than 500 Israeli checkpoints as well as the fence/wall, frequently experiencing not only delays, but harassment and abuse by Israeli personnel.⁹ In addition, roads leading in and out of university campuses are regularly subjected to arbitrary closures by Israeli military checkpoints and patrols.¹⁰ As noted by the Middle East Studies Association, these various restrictions on movement of faculty, staff and visitors “impede, and in some cases prevent, the regular functioning of courses, university activities and campus life at Palestinian institutions of higher learning.”

⁶<http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/high-court-rejects-gaza-students-petition-to-study-in-west-bank-1.466867>

⁷ http://www.nytimes.com/200/05/30/world/middleeast/30gaza.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

⁸ <http://gisha.org/updates/4024>

⁹ <http://www.amnesty.org/en/annual-report/2013>

¹⁰ <http://mesana.org/pdf/israel20130917.pdf>

Recent reports of Gisha (Legal Center for Freedom of Movement), Amnesty International and various agencies of the UN document the persistence of these impediments to the exercise of the right to education embodied in UN principles and conventions. Coupled with the impact of the entry difficulties of foreign national academics and the large number of youth whose education is interrupted as a result of imprisonment, the picture is grim.¹¹

The following chronology focuses on physical attacks on Palestinian institutions of higher education and on Israeli policies and actions that undermine the right to education. [See also the June, 2015 Gisha analysis:

<http://gisha.org/UserFiles/File/publications/separating-land-separating-people/separating-land-separating-people-web-en.pdf>

6/04/2015 To date, only 94 students have left Gaza, in three separate instances. Most of the students who were hoping to study abroad this year lost their scholarships and visas, which have since expired, and have missed the school year. A new academic year will begin in September, and those who wish to take part have already begun their preparations.

<http://gisha.org/en-blog/2015/06/04/let-them-study/>

3/01/2015 Despite Israel's recent permission for 30 students from the Gaza Strip to exit the Strip via Erez Crossing en route abroad, students from Gaza are still not able to go to West Bank universities, a more affordable option. As a result, most of the students granted permission are those going to universities in Algeria and Tunisia.

<http://gisha.org/updates/4024>

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/blogs/politics/17103-israel-is-still-banning-gaza-students-from-west-bank-universities>

¹¹ "Academia Undermined: Israeli Restrictions on Foreign National Academics in Palestinian Higher Education Institutions," Report of the Campaign for the Right to Enter the Occupied Palestinian Territories, 2013. http://www.pchrgaza.org/files/2013/Education_Report_Academia_Undermined_May_2013. ; and <http://mondoweiss.net/2015/03/students-locked-israeli>

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/blogs/politics/17103-israel-is-still-banning-gaza-students-from-west-bank-universities>

2/25/2015 Follow-up letter of October 7, 2014 (based on UNESCO's *Rapid Assessment of Higher Education Institutions in Gaza*) to sponsors of international conference for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, Foreign Affairs Minister of Norway, Børge Brende, and Foreign Affairs Minister of Egypt, Sameh Shoukry, regarding Israel's indiscriminate bombardment and destruction of Palestinian educational institutions in July and August 2014.

<http://mesana.org/pdf/Gaza20150225.pdf>

10/07/2014 Letter expressing concern over the indiscriminate bombing and destruction of Palestinian educational institutions. MESA Committee on Academic Freedom views these actions as part of the ongoing, intentional attack on education.

<http://mesana.org/pdf/Gaza20141007.pdf>

<http://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2014/08/educational-toll-gaza-war-two-universities-six-schools/>

08/02/2014 - Islamic University of Gaza, which serves 70,000 students, especially targeted, with Israel again claiming that it houses a weapons program



despite the conclusion of a 2008 UN investigation that those claims were false - Lizzie Deardon, "Israel-Gaza conflict: university hit as Palestinians endure more than 200 strikes in 24 hours." *The Independent*. 2 August 2014. Gaza

<http://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2014/08/educational-toll-gaza-war-two-universities-six-schools/>

7/07 to 8/26/2014 - According to the January 2015 UNESCO Assessment, a total of fourteen institutions of higher education (HEI) in Gaza were damaged by Israeli bombardment as a result of direct targeting or collateral damage. Nine of

these were partially or completely damaged, including including the Islamic University of Gaza, which houses the Oral History Center. The UNDP estimates the financial of the destruction and damage at almost \$7.5 million USD. Additionally, during the Israeli seven week attack on Gaza, staff and students suffered heavy casualties, with nine academic and administrative staff killed and 21 injured; and 421 students killed, most of whom were studying at Islamic University, with 1,128 who were injured.

[http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/UNESCO HEI Assessment Gaza Report FINAL-January 2015.pdf](http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/UNESCO%20HEI%20Assessment%20Gaza%20Report%20FINAL-January%202015.pdf)

6/19 to 6/22/2014 Military raids were conducted at multiple universities throughout WB including: Palestine Polytechnic U in Hebron (with computers seized); Birzeit and Arab American University in Jenin (with confiscation of flags, files, posters from student unions); and at Al Quds University in East Jerusalem (with computers removed from law faculty building)

<http://monitoring.academicfreedom.info/reports/2014-06-22-birzeit-university-arab-american-universityal-quds-university-palestine>

1/25/2014 Abu Dis (Al Quds University) campus raided after Israeli soldiers stopped students in front of the main entrance to the campus, asking for their i.d. cards. Clashes erupted after the forces fired tear gas, eventually entering the university and also firing bullets. 100 students and employees injured

<http://www.maannews.com/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?id=667359>

9/8/2013 Israeli patrol raid on Al Quds campus (Abu Dis) after it was denied permission to enter, launching tear gas canisters and firing rubber bullets indiscriminately. University officials are concerned that these repeated provocations by Israeli patrols are intended to interrupt the university's preparations for the start of the new academic year, and to create a sense of instability on campus

Letter to Israeli PM from MESA Committee on Academic Freedom
<http://mesana.org/pdf/israel20130917.pdf>

10/15/2012 US officials cancel a two-year-old scholarship program for students in the Gaza Strip, just two years after being launched with great fanfare by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton during a visit to the region in 2010. The program offers about 30 scholarships to promising but financially challenged Palestinian high school seniors from Gaza and the West Bank to study in local Palestinian universities.

<http://news.yahoo.com/us-drops-gaza-scholarships-israel-travel-ban-062209499.html>

According to State Department spokesperson, Victoria Nuland, the scholarships were suspended for this academic year so that American policy can be in compliance with ongoing Israeli policy concerning the issuance of travel permits to Gaza.

<http://mesana.org/pdf/USGaza20121113.pdf>

10/2012 -October SAT exam for WB students cancelled after Israeli authorities held the exams sent by the College Board for weeks, not releasing the tests to AMIDEAST's office in Ramallah, which is the only testing agency in the West Bank, serving over three hundred thousand Palestinian students. Lena K. Awwad and Shatha L. Hussein. "Israel v. No. 2 Pencils." Harvard Crimson. October 16, 2012

<http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2012/10/16/israel-sat-oped/>

09/27/2012 - Israeli High Court of Justice rejects petition by four women in Gaza registered for the MA program at Birzeit University, accepting the state's argument that it has no obligation to accord Gaza residents the right to study in the West Bank. Amira Hass, "High Court Rejects Gaza Students Petition to Study in the West Bank," *Haaretz*. 27 September 2012

<http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/high-court-rejects-gaza-students-petition-to-study-in-west-bank-1.466867>

7/02/2012 - Israeli Government's ongoing violations against Palestinian education and its denial of Gaza students' right to study in the West Bank, in particular the four students who had to discontinue their studies in 2000, and are

now seeking to resume their studies at Birzeit University, as well as Lujain Zaim who Israel is denying the right to begin university studies there.

<http://mesana.org/pdf/Israel20120702.pdf>

3/19/2012 - Early-morning IDF invasion of al-Quds University's Institute of Modern Media at the Abu Dis campus when televising equipment was destroyed and the television transmitter seized. "This wanton attack upon an educational establishment is a direct infringement upon academic freedom and seems to be part of a broader Israeli campaign against education and academic freedom in the West Bank and Gaza."

<http://mesana.org/pdf/Israel20120319.pdf>

5/26/2010 - Israel's ongoing travel restrictions and new military orders effectively bans over 400 Palestinian students from Gaza from studying in West Bank universities.

<http://mesana.org/pdf/Israel100526.pdf>

1/25/2009 - Military campaign against the Gaza Strip included the killing of students outside the Gaza Training College in Gaza City and the bombing of the Gaza Islamic University

http://mesana.org/pdf/09_0105_Israel.pdf

May, 2008 - US withdrew Fulbright grants to seven Gaza students as a result of Israel denying them permission to leave: Ethan Bronner, "U.S. Withdraws Fulbright Grants to Palestinians in Gaza."

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/30/world/middleeast/30gaza.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&

II.B. Palestinian Universities Under Occupation

NOTE: *This is an abbreviated/partial version of the report issued by a delegation of British, French, Icelandic, Norwegian and Swedish academics who visited seven Palestinian universities and academies in April 2015. The eight members of the delegation included faculty and researchers in archeology, environmental engineering, history, law, management, operational research and pure and applied mathematics. We would like to thank BRICUP (UK) and AURDIP for making the report available. For full report: <http://aurdip.org/palestinian-universities-under.html> or <http://www.bricup.org.uk/2015DelegationReport.pdf>*

Summary of findings:

The delegation was unable to visit all of Palestine's institutions of higher education, and in particular it was prevented from visiting Gaza's universities by the Israeli blockade. However, it found a consistent pattern across all the universities that it visited, and by their systemic nature it is reasonable to assume that this pattern applies to all of them.

This pattern was of a coherent and multi-faceted policy of Israeli interference with the normal functioning of academic life. This interference inhibits free movement of staff and students; reduces academic effectiveness and productivity by the usurpation of staff time through mobility restrictions and imposed bureaucratic obstacles ; prevents effective collaboration and sharing of intellectual resources between Palestinian universities; obstructs international visits to Palestinian universities ; substantially prevents the employment of teaching staff from abroad ; interrupts the supply of equipment, materials and books ; and subjects staff and students to repeated humiliations and indignity.

Report

. . . This Report briefly enumerates ways in which Israel obstructs and subverts the

operation of the universities, and the consequences of these policies and practices for Palestinian higher education.

II. The pattern of Israeli obstruction and subversion of Palestinian higher education

1. Obstacles to travel within the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT)

Distances between towns in the OPT should make it possible to travel by coach from Jerusalem to any of the 14 Palestinian universities in less than three hours and to most within an hour. The practical experience, however, is quite different. Israeli occupation authorities have blockaded Gaza since 2007, and in particular have barred all movement of faculty and students between Gaza and the Occupied West Bank.

Within the Occupied West Bank travel is possible but completely unpredictable, as a result of deliberate Israeli policy. At the permanent checkpoints erected between the main towns, Palestinian travelers normally must dismount from the coach and wait for security clearance, which may take only 15 minutes but more often half an hour and sometimes much longer. Travel is also frequently further disrupted by temporary checkpoints and unmanned barriers or simply for the convenience of Israeli settlers. Thus during a single week in April over fifty Palestinian villages were sealed off by Israeli security forces. In addition, travel between Ramallah, the administrative capital of the OPT, and Nablus, home of An-Najah, the largest university in the West Bank, was halted for most of one day so that a marathon run for residents of illegal settlements could take place. And in a separate incident travel in and out of Nablus was halted to facilitate the visit of settlers to the Joseph's Tomb site. Perversely, much of the public transport in the Occupied West Bank is suspended on Israeli national holidays.

Besides the unpredictability of travel, Palestinians must expect humiliating treatment at checkpoints. The president of Bethlehem University reported a fourth year student's response to the question, 'what is the strongest impression you will take from your years here ?' as follows : 'the daily anxiety coming up to the checkpoint and worrying about what would happen. Will I be waved through ? Will the soldiers come onto the bus ? Will I be made to get out of the bus ? Will I be stood for hours in the sun ? Will I be interrogated ? Will I be strip-searched ?'

The consequences of these obstacles for Palestinian universities can scarcely be exaggerated. In the first place, the faculty, students and administration who comprise the university community must allow several hours to complete even the shortest journey. The result for most Palestinian universities is that the day does not begin before 9 or 10 am and stops at 5 or even 4 pm. Compared with European universities, where activity on campus commonly begins by 9 am and continues late into the evening, this constitutes a loss of at least 20 per cent in the working day.

Second, obstacles to travel impose a substantial extra cost on faculty, administrators and especially students. The only guarantee of timely arrival at class is to purchase or rent accommodation near their university, in order to avoid the deliberately imposed uncertainties of travel. This is an effective tax on many students whose parental homes are not many kilometers away but dare not risk the vagaries of what otherwise would be a short daily commute.

Third, obstacles to travel discourage collaborative activity between the universities. In earlier years the universities sought to share expertise through academic visits and exchanges. But an academic visiting a neighboring university which should be just half an hour away to give a one-hour lecture must allow a whole day to complete the round trip journey. As a result visits or exchanges of this kind are now uncommon. The practical effect is to isolate the universities from one another and diminish the quality of academic life.

Fourth, the extra time or cost imposed by obstacles to travel and the frequently abusive treatment received at the hands of the Israeli border police have discouraged West Bank students from attending universities outside their home towns or regions. This makes it more difficult for universities to become centres of excellence or to serve an integrative function in Palestine society. Instead, each university must replicate all the basic teaching functions and limit its ambitions merely to its own locale.

2. Obstacles to travel into and out of the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT)

For universities to function effectively, faculty must be free to travel abroad to attend conferences, undertake research, upgrade their qualifications and maintain contacts with scholars abroad. To ensure the circulation of knowledge, they must also be able to receive visits from foreign academics and scholars and enable their students to participate in exchanges. Palestinian universities report that Israel systematically obstructs all such activities.

Palestinian faculty, administrators and students, aside from the small minority with Jerusalem residence permits, have only one point of exit or entry : across the Allenby Bridge linking Palestine with Jordan. Because of Palestine's ambiguous legal status, Palestinians often require a visa to visit foreign countries. But obtaining visas is problematic because issuing offices are commonly located in Israel which most Palestinians require a special permit to visit. In addition to the difficulty of obtaining visas and the internal obstacles to travel described in the previous section, Palestinian academics repeatedly told us that they are frequently held up at the Allenby Bridge, for periods as long as 8 hours. Refusals of permission to leave, always without explanation, are not uncommon. For other intending travelers permission to leave may be made conditional on signing a statement confirming that they will not return for up to five years : the equivalent to a deportation order.

Many obstacles are placed in the way of academics (often though not exclusively members of the Palestinian diaspora, including those from the United States and Canada) who receive invitations to work at Palestinian universities. Resident status will not be granted, and anyone stating on arrival to Israel that they are there to take up a post at a Palestinian university will be refused entry. The only possibility of being admitted is to enter as a tourist, which is normally limited to a 3-month stay. The necessity of misrepresenting their status in the OPT leaves them constantly vulnerable to expulsion, while the three-month limit has other effects on their ability to contribute academically, especially to taught courses. The president of one Palestinian university who has not been allowed resident status reports that he possesses a multi-entry visa to the OPT issued by Israel, but at the Allenby Bridge Israeli officials regularly assert that the visa has expired, threaten to turn him back, and involve him in delays that range from half an hour to half a day.

The consequences for Palestinian universities of these obstacles to international travel are comparable to those of the internal obstacles to travel. In the first place, the extra time required is very considerable. Faculty seeking to attend even the briefest event abroad must allow an additional day to be sure of reaching their destination and a further day to return home. Second, it imposes substantial additional costs, not least because the likelihood of delays or refusals means that air tickets cannot be booked in advance. Third, it discourages travel, leaving faculty, administrators and students isolated from the international community and less able to pursue research. Fourth, it seriously damages morale.

3. Israeli obstruction of foreign visitors to Palestinian universities

The obstructions already described apply to all foreign academic visitors, not just those wishing to work at Palestinian universities, and to students also. Intending visitors are frequently held up or refused entry by Israeli authorities. For example, Israeli authorities refused permission for five of the 75 foreign participants to attend the first world conference of Palestinian academics at An-Najah University in 2014, and granted permission to three or four others, including keynote speakers, only on the last day of the conference when it was too late to be of any value. Al-Quds University reports that a professor of law at Harvard University who recently sought to visit the university was interrogated at Ben Gurion airport (Tel Aviv) for fourteen hours before being permitted to proceed. Birzeit University reports that the South African Higher Education Minister Blade Nzimande and three prominent South African academics were refused permission to visit the university in April 2015.

Foreign academics invited to teach a one-semester course and foreign students intending to study for a semester at any of the Palestinian universities are routinely granted only a three-month tourist visa. Palestinian universities, like most European universities, operate on a system of three four-month semesters. The visas therefore do not allow visitors to stay for a whole semester. And applications for renewal of visas are a lottery, so course planning may be thrown into disarray at short notice by opaque and unaccountable bureaucratic decisions. The universities report that many foreign academics and students are discouraged from attempting to visit on account of the obstacles put in their way.

The consequences of this obstruction are obvious. In the first place, Palestinian university administrators confront endless logistical problems in their efforts to secure the passage of visitors through Israeli barriers. According to a senior administrator at Al-Quds University, 30 percent of his time is devoted to problems of this sort. Second, teaching and learning are disrupted by premature departures or undermined by the failure of visiting academics or students to reach the campus. Third, the universities are isolated from the international community, and fourth these difficulties frustrate and demoralise faculty and students.

4. Obstacles to the import of books, equipment and materials

Obstacles to the movement of people are the most common cause for

complaint in Palestinian universities. But only somewhat less frustrating are the obstacles Israel places in the way of importing books, equipment and materials. Certain types of machinery and supplies, in particular electronic equipment and chemicals, are banned outright by Israel who claim they might be used for terrorist purposes. But Israeli authorities routinely hold up practically all types of machinery and supplies for weeks, months or even years before allowing them to be delivered to the universities. This has created difficulties especially for research and teaching pure and applied sciences. The delegation heard of cases where academics who received a one-year grant to undertake a research project were unable to carry it out because the necessary materials did not arrive during their 12 month appointment. But the problem is not restricted to these academic disciplines. The director of an art academy complained of serious delays in the import of works of art and art books.

5. Arbitrary arrest and detention of Palestinian academics

Imad al-Barghouthi, a professor of astrophysics at Al-Quds University, was attempting to travel to a congress of the Arab Association of Astronomy and Space Sciences at Sharjah University in the United Arab Emirates on 6 December 2014 when he was arrested at the checkpoint to Jordan and held in administrative detention without indictment or trial. He was only released nearly seven weeks later, after his detention was publicized within the international scientific community. In October 2014 Israel was holding over 470 Palestinians in administrative detention, bureaucratic terminology which translates into imprisonment without either trial or any statement of the grounds for detention. According to B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, Israel violates international law in its grossly excessive use of administrative detention. Palestinian university administrators estimate that among the nearly five hundred detainees 40 were academics from the West Bank and 60 from Gaza.

The consequences of this practice for Palestinian universities are self-evident. But it is not only faculty who are targeted: students are also frequently detained without charge or trial. In fact, this is so common that several universities have developed special programs for the education of detained students.

NOTE: The remainder of the report includes: 6. *The special case of Al-Quds University*; 7. *The impact of the Gaza blockade on Palestinian universities*; and Part III, *Recommendations*. To read the full report, go to:

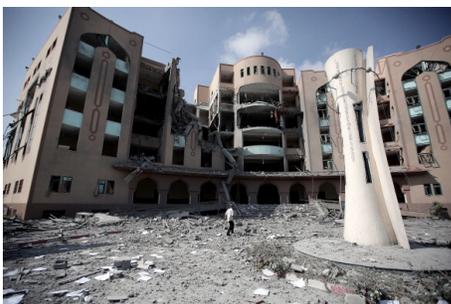
<http://aurdip.org/palestinian-universities-under.html> or

<http://www.bricup.org.uk/2015DelegationReport.pdf>

II.C. Imagine you are a Palestinian academic or a student

Nazmi Al-Masri, Professor of English, Islamic University of Gaza

<http://mondoweiss.net/2014/08/palestinian-academic-student>



The Islamic University of Gaza bombed by Israeli F16 warplanes, August 02, 2014.

(Photo: Mustafa Hassona/Anadolu Agency/Getty Images)

Over the one-year period from July 2013 to July 2014, I was supposed to participate in six international academic conferences and meetings as a partner in four international projects: three EU-funded projects (two from Erasmus-Mundus, one Tempus) and one British Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded project. Because of the siege and the current war, I could not participate in any of these academic gatherings, which were held in the UK, France, Spain, Germany, Jordan, and Cyprus. Many other colleagues have similar problems.

The Islamic University of Gaza (IUG) is currently a partner in four Erasmus Mundus exchange projects and about 50 students and staff members have won full scholarships to join about 30 universities in 14 European countries including the UK, Italy, France, Spain, Germany, Portugal, Greece, Sweden, Finland, Poland, Cyprus, Belgium, Austria and Czech Republic. All these grant holders were supposed to get visas in July and join their orientation and study programs in August or September, but it seems this is not going to happen.

On Saturday 2nd August 2014, the Islamic university of Gaza (IUG) was deliberately attacked as described by the Israeli "Defense" Minister Moshe Yaalon in a press conference held on the same day. The arts and education faculties, the university personnel and finance departments and other departments were reduced to rubble in a matter of minutes. This is not the first time Israel has destroyed higher education facilities in Gaza: in December 2008, two other buildings hosting the engineering and science faculties were leveled to the ground.

Imagine your university is bombed twice by the most advanced F-16 war planes on the planet, made and donated to Israel by the USA.

Imagine your office, computer, documents, books and files are completely destroyed or burned as a result of a heavy bomb deliberately hitting a six floor building in the middle of the university campus.

Imagine you can only travel for a maximum of 35 miles from south to north or 6 miles maximum from east to west for almost 8 years.

Imagine your home is completely destroyed and you lost EVERYTHING: your savings, happy memories, furniture, clothes, computer, books, etc.

Imagine, imagine and imagine more and more

These introductory scenarios are not science fiction at all – they are real and happening now in the bleeding and besieged but defiant Gaza.

All academic readers are kindly invited to use their imagination and reflect deeply on these nine real situations, which can also be used as real problem-solving and cognitive development activities.

Situations of domestic destruction:

- Your home is one of more than 10,800 homes bombed and destroyed or severely damaged (so far in this current assault) by Israeli F-16 warplanes. Your study room, laptop, books, documents, files, and personal belongings are all completely destroyed in seconds.
- You are a member of thousands of Palestinian families deliberately made to suffer the murder of one or more of its members as a result of Israel bombing your home with such warplanes. Even worse, you are one of more than 70 families who have lost three or more member, i.e. eliminated.
- You are one of about 10,000 Palestinian students who have completed all their courses required to graduate as an engineer, nurse, teacher, economist, IT specialist, etc., but you are not allowed to take your certificate for months or even more than a year until you pay the remaining tuition fees for the courses taken. (To assist needy students, Palestinian universities in Gaza allow students to register for courses without full payment of fees but their certificates are withheld until all fees are paid).

The inability of students to pay their fees is due to the increasingly deteriorating economic situation in Gaza as a direct result of the siege and the three destructive Israeli attacks on Gaza in the past six years. Many Palestinian parents cannot pay the remaining tuition fees for their sons and daughters because of the high rate of unemployed Palestinians, currently c. 40%. If students cannot obtain their certificates, they cannot apply for a job.

Travel-related situations:

- You are a university professor who has conducted a study and prepared a paper to present in an international conference. Eager, you have prepared everything needed to exchange ideas and experiences with other professors from other countries, but you are prevented from traveling because of the illegal siege and the attacks. Imagine you are one of these academics!
- You are a student who has worked hard under extremely difficult economic, academic and social circumstances to graduate from a local university. Despite

the odds, you are dedicated to supporting your family and building your future. You obtain a bachelor's degree, get accepted to a European university and win a full scholarship, despite the strong local and international competition for funding, to get a master's or doctoral degree.

So far so good, but the agonizing journey begins with the draconian travel restrictions. First, you are lucky if you even get a visa in the space of a month after you have submitted all the required documents to one of the EU consulates located either in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv. Practically all Gazans are not allowed to exit Gaza to get to the relevant consulate. But let's imagine you do manage to get a visa and start finding ways to leave Gaza.

According to Gisha, an Israeli-Based human rights organization, "more than 1,000 Gazan students apply to universities around the world each year but there is no official body or channel to coordinate their requests or exits."

The besieged Gaza strip has no airport (Israel destroyed the only 3-year old airport in Gaza in 2001), no seaport and no control of its borders with Israel and Egypt. Palestinians in Gaza have to go through Cairo or cross Israel into Jordan to travel to any other country. To simplify this reality, imagine your country had no airport or seaport and you could only travel to other countries by crossing through two neighboring countries that border you.

Power/electricity-related situations:

Over the last 8 years, Israel has bombed Gaza's only power plant not once, but twice: on 28 June 2006 and 23rd July, 2014 respectively. What effect does this immoral bombardment have on academic life?

- Imagine that you are an English language professor who has prepared a teaching video about British or American culture. You have spent a lot of time selecting your material and preparing tasks and exercises to be shown on an LCD projector. After just two minutes of the show, the power suddenly goes off without any prior notice and you do not know how long the outage will last for. Thirty minutes later, the power is back on for five minutes and then off for another 10 minutes, and so on. Imagine and reflect what this is like!

- Imagine that you are a student in your final year of university. You have a final exam or important assignment to submit tomorrow and you need to use light and internet to study, but since 2008, the power has been off for least 12 hours per day, as Israel has prevented the import of sufficient fuel for the power plant.

It has taken me five days to finish and email this article because Palestinians in Gaza are denied electricity. During the past 2 weeks, we have internet access for around 1-2 hours per day for an unknown period of time.

- Imagine that you are an academic or a student, and you have a lecture on the 6th floor of the university. You take the lift with 13 colleagues. While the lift is ascending, the power suddenly goes off and you get stuck and suffocated in

complete darkness for an unknown period of time. Female students in the lift keep screaming and crying, including a pregnant lady. How do you feel?

To sum up, subjecting about 2 million Gazan Palestinians (out of about 11 million Palestinians) to live under Israeli military occupation for almost seven decades, besieging and imprisoning them for more than seven years, and launching 3 destructive attacks in less than seven years, has numerous academic, economic, mental and psychological consequences for academics, students and parents. Discussing these alarming consequences in full is beyond the scope of this article. However, below are just a few effects which one cannot measure effectively but which hamper the lives of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in the Gaza strip.

Firstly, many academics, students and parents have developed chronic anxiety and hyper-tension. Understandably, they suffer from lack of motivation, are angry and frustrated.

The bitterness felt toward the international community, which takes no significant steps toward relieving the oppression, repression and injustice can result in severe negative attitudes towards others. There is a serious lack of confidence in the international community, especially the governments of the so-called free and democratic world who have been watching constant violations of all sorts of human rights for years without taking effective actions to stop these violations.

The Palestinian academics and students have many legitimate questions. These include the following:

- How long do we have to suffer to lead a normal academic life like other academics and students in other countries?
- How long do we have to suffer to have a stable academic calendar, where we know we can plan to attend conferences and keep all academic dates?
- How long do we have to suffer to have freedom of movement via our own airport, seaport or border crossings?
- How long do we have to suffer to have power for 24 hours a day?
- How long do we have to suffer the destruction of our homes, universities, schools, airport, hospitals, water desalination plants, power plant and other infrastructure?

Nobody knows when these unbearable restrictions and this suffering will become history apart from Israel, its strongest ally, the USA, and the EU governments who could force Israel to end its inhumane and illegitimate military measures – which plant seeds of hatred, violence and extremism – by lifting the siege, respecting human rights and above all ending the occupation. These steps would plant the seeds of tolerance, co-existence and peace.

I conclude this article with a quotation cited in the aptly titled humanitarian campaign, "Education in Gaza, a seed for peace", intended to support Gaza's education system. The campaign is an undertaking by the UNESCO Centre of Catalonia – Unescocat:

In the long term, the profound psychological consequences and the pain deeply affecting children and young people makes it difficult for us to imagine a future with citizens educated within a culture of peace and free of violence for at least two generations.

As defenders of Human Rights in general and, specifically, the universal right to education (defined in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child), we cannot remain impassive in the present situation.

Part III: Researching Palestine: Records, Cultural Properties, and the Politics of Archival Declassification

III.A. Destruction and Appropriation of Palestinian History and Cultural Property: The Responsibilities of Historians

**Joel Beinin
January 15, 2015**

Israel as a state and society is premised on the destruction of the history and living society of the Palestinian Arab people and the effacement of the multiple histories of the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea for most of the last 1,400 years -since the Muslim conquest of the Byzantine province of Palæstina in 640. This is not because all Zionist ideologues and politico-military leaders intended to destroy Palestinian society. Many did not; only a small minority understood that this would be the likely outcome of mass Jewish settlement in Palestine.

Thoughtful historians may reasonably debate: who intended what, how this process occurred, whether or not ethnic cleansing is the best term to describe it, whether or not Zionist leaders had a preconceived plan for expelling Palestinian Arabs during the 1948 war, how many were directly expelled, how many fled out of fear, and similar questions. Amateur historians like Joan Peters (*From Time Immemorial*), Alan Dershowitz (*The Case for Israel*), and most recently, the deputy managing editor of the *Jerusalem Post*, Caroline Glick (*The Israeli Solution: A One-State Plan*) have worked overtime (sometimes using nearly the same words) attempting to obfuscate the matter. But while their books have received outsized attention in the U. S. mass media, their arguments have been thoroughly refuted, often by Israeli scholars (for example, Yehoshua Porath's scathing critique of Peters in the *New York Review of Books*, January 16, 1986). There is no legitimate debate about whether or not some 700,000 indigenous inhabitants were expelled or fled from the territories that became the State of Israel after the 1948 War and that Palestinian Arab society was devastated in the process.

Important currents in Israeli politics and culture have never denied this. An outstanding example is S. Yizhar, whose iconic novella, *Khirbet Khizeh*, describes one of several expulsions he personally witnessed during the last phases of the 1948 war, when he was serving as the

education officer of a Palmach (elite forces) unit. These expulsions are perhaps more egregious than others, because they occurred at a stage in the fighting when Israel's victory was certain. Although Yizhar is indisputably the leading Hebrew novelist of the 1948 generation (perhaps even of the second half of the 20th century), he was nearly unknown among English speakers until a tiny Israeli press translated *Khirbet Khizeh* in 2008. Farrar, Straus & Giroux republished it in December 2014.

In 1969 the much better known Moshe Dayan told students at the Technion (Israel's MIT):

Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages. You do not even know the names of these Arab villages, and I don't blame you because these geography books no longer exist. Not only do the books not exist, the Arab villages are not there either. Nahlal arose in the place of Mahlul; Kibbutz Gvat in the place of Jibta; Kibbutz Sarid in the place of Huneifis; and Kfar Yehoshu'a in the place of Tal al-Shuman. There is not one single place built in this country that did not have a former Arab population.

Dayan's speech was reported in Israel's most prestigious daily *Ha'aretz* (April 4, 1969). *The New York Times* did not consider it news "fit to print."

Shira Robinson's award-winning book, *Citizen Strangers* recounts the fate of those Palestinian Arabs who remained on their lands and became citizens of Israel. They were subjected to military rule until 1966 and although they received citizenship and the right to vote, they were effectively excluded from the polity because nationality rather than citizenship is the key category in Israeli public life. The popular Israeli terms "Israeli Arabs," and in official parlance often simply, "minorities," efface their national identity, which is rendered simply as "Arab" on their national identity cards. Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel still suffer from dozens of discriminatory laws and structural inequalities.

The destruction of Palestinian Arab society includes many instances of destruction of cultural property and patrimony. Historians have long been concerned about such matters, and properly so. For example, AHA Perspectives published an important essay on the destruction of Iraq's cultural heritage in the wake of the 2003 American invasion (<http://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/september-2003/iraqs-lost-cultural-heritage>).

The Palestinian cultural patrimony has been subjected to similar perils.

Dr. Gish Amit, a lecturer at Ben Gurion University, discovered in the course of the research for his Ph.D. thesis that during the 1948 War Israeli military forces looted approximately 30,000 books and documents from Jerusalem, mostly the western parts of the city where the wealthier and better educated Arab population lived. Another 40-50,000 books were collected in the post-war years, mainly from Jaffa and Haifa, which had large Arab populations before 1948, but only several thousand after the war. About 26,000 of the looted books were shredded because Israeli officials objected to their contents; about 6,000 were "loaned" to the Near Eastern Studies Department of the National Library in Jerusalem, where they remain; others were sold to Arab schools.

Settlers masquerading as archaeologists (in the Elad organization, an acronym for "To the City of David) have seized important sections of the Israeli-annexed Silwan neighborhood of East Jerusalem. With funding from American Jewish physician and bingo magnate Irving Moskowitz, they have been conducting excavations literally under Palestinian homes endeavoring to prove that Silwan is the site of the biblical City of David. No archaeological or other historical evidence has been found that would confirm the existence of King David's palace or of Solomon's temple on a scale described in the Bible. But the unprofessional and ideologically motivated settler-excavators have destroyed evidence of the presence of many other peoples and cultures in Silwan – 21 strata from the Canaanites, who established the first permanent settlement in Silwan some 5,000 years ago to the Muslims who ruled it from the mid-7th to the early 20th centuries. In 2008 settler-excavators uncovered human bones from the 8th-9th centuries – the Muslim 'Abbasid era. They were disposed of without notifying Israel's Ministry of Religious Affairs and halting the excavations, as the regulations of Israel's Antiquities Authority require.

The Israeli army occupied Beirut during its 1982 invasion of Lebanon. Before its evacuation it looted the Palestine Liberation Organization's Research Center, seizing the entire library of 25,000 books, microfilms, manuscripts, and archives. Israeli soldiers also broke into the offices of the Institute for Palestine Studies, a private research center, and removed items and destroyed property.

In 2001 the Israeli army closed the unofficial PLO office in Jerusalem, known as Orient House, and stole the entire archive. The papers were handed over to the Research Department of Israel's Foreign Ministry. After intelligence officers studied them, those deemed to have no political or security implications were deposited in the Israel State

Archive, where they are labeled “abandoned documents.” We do not know what proportion, if any, of the original archive remains intact but inaccessible or if any of it was lost or destroyed.

In 2004, the Simon Wiesenthal Center announced plans to build a Center for Human Dignity over part of the Muslim Mamilla cemetery in West Jerusalem, used as a burial site since the 7th century. The center ignored a 2006 court order by Israel's shari'a court (which, like rabbinical courts, is an official part of Israel's judicial system) to stop construction due to the discovery of skeletons. Final permission for construction was granted in 2011. According to Prof. Rashid Khalidi of Columbia University, a “parking lot was built over [part of the] cemetery [in 1964]....so, the Israeli authorities are basically pushing ahead with the desecration of a cemetery that they have been, unfortunately, slowly nibbling away at for over three decades....What they have now done is to dig down and disinter four layers, according to the chief archaeologist for the Israeli Archaeological Authority” (Democracy Now, February 10, 2010). The cemetery is located across the street from the U.S. Consulate in West Jerusalem.

In the same way that linguists and anthropologists are committed to preserving endangered languages and cultures, historians are committed to retrieving endangered histories. In doing so we should be careful not to claim the capacity to speak for the subjects of those histories. Our obligations in this respect are to engage in historical reconstruction and debate so that suppressed or marginalized, even if for some uncomfortable, narratives and experiences are preserved as part of the historical record. They also entail defending the freedom of speech and academic freedom of scholars and students who study, teach, and speak publicly about subaltern narratives, no matter how unpopular their views may be, and even if some deem them “offensive.” Prof. Steven Salaita was recently “unhired” by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign for his allegedly “uncivil” tweets about Israel/Palestine during Israel's assault on the Gaza Strip last summer. Emails among those responsible for the decision suggest that the actual problem was that the tweets were politically offensive and might negatively affect fundraising.

This is hardly a unique case. Norman Finkelstein's *Beyond Chutzpah* thoroughly debunked Alan Dershowitz's *The Case for Israel* – a quite possibly plagiarized and scholarly incompetent book. In 2007, under pressure from Dershowitz, De Paul University denied Finkelstein tenure in highly irregular circumstances. Unlike in the case of Prof. Salaita, AAUP's Committee A did not initiate a investigation of DePaul. So there has been some progress on this front.

Much current discussion of Israel/Palestine in academia is focused on the Palestinian call for an academic and cultural boycott of Israeli institutions. I do not think historians have any particular professional competence on whether or not this is an appropriate measure. We do have an obligation, like all scholars, to point out that advocating an academic and cultural boycott of Israeli institutions has nothing to do with anti-Semitism and does not violate the academic freedom of any individual scholars, who remain free to meet, collaborate, and discuss anything they wish.

Some oppose an academic boycott because they believe (or hope) that scholarly or other forms of "dialogue" contribute to peace. An absolute faith in the efficacy of dialogue often relies on historical amnesia and category errors. Dialogue between slaves and slave-holders or between abolitionists and slaveholders did not (and could not) bring about emancipation. Dialogue between French colonial settlers and Algerian Muslims did not lead to independence. Dialogue can be meaningful only when conducted among parties of equal status. In the case of Israel/Palestine, dialogue has most often served to perpetuate the status quo. Israeli scholars and institutions are generally pleased to regard Western scholars as their colleagues. Relatively few are willing to consider Palestinian scholars their peers, an expression of the underlying inequality that lies at the heart of any relationship between occupiers and occupied.

III.B. Catastrophic thinking: Did Ben-Gurion try to rewrite history?

Shay Hazkani

For complete article, see:

<http://www.haaretz.com/weekend/magazine/catastrophic-thinking-did-ben-gurion-try-to-rewrite-history.premium-1.524308>

EXCERPT:

The Israeli censor's observant eye had missed file number GL-18/17028 in the State WArchives. Most files relating to the 1948 Palestinian exodus remain sealed in the Israeli archives, despite the fact that their period as classified files – according to Israeli law – expired long ago. Even files that were previously declassified are no longer available to researchers. In the past two decades, following the powerful reverberations triggered by the publication of books written by those dubbed the “New Historians,” the Israeli archives revoked access to much of the explosive material. Archived Israeli documents that reported the expulsion of Palestinians, massacres or rapes perpetrated by Israeli soldiers, along with other events considered embarrassing by the establishment, were reclassified as “top secret.” Researchers who sought to track down the files cited in books by Benny Morris, Avi Shlaim or Tom Segev often hit a dead end. Hence the surprise that file GL-18/17028, titled “The Flight in 1948” is still available today.

III.C. Other Resources

1. Shay Hazkani and Chris Gratien, The Politics of 1948 in Israeli Archives

Ottoman History Podcast, No.166, 19 July 2014

www.ottomanhistorypodcast.com/2014/07/the-politics-of-1948-in-israeli-archives.html

Abstract of podcast: While state support of archives enables the production of history, state control of archives can often hinder it. In Israel, the nature of the expulsion of Palestinians in 1948, an event known in Arabic as the Nakba, has been at the center of political debates of the archives for decades. In this episode, Shay Hazkani explains the way state actors have and continue to use the archive to influence the historical memory of 1948 and explores the slippages that reveal this process.

2. Akevot Report on Access to Israeli Archives

Akevot: Institute for Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Research

<http://www.akevot.org.il/index.html#>

Report on access to Israeli archives, particularly Israel the State Archive and IDF and Security System Archive forthcoming late fall 2015.

APPENDIX: Draft Resolution of Historians Against the War for the 2016 AHA Annual Meeting

PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION in ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES¹²

WHEREAS, members of the historical profession support the Right to Education, including the universal access to higher education enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and

WHEREAS, members of the historical profession are dedicated to the documentation of human experience through the collection and preservation of historical information;

WHEREAS, the Right to Education can be exercised only when students and faculty alike have the freedom of movement to teach and study at institutions of their choice; and

WHEREAS, Israel's restrictions on the movement of faculty, staff and visitors in the West Bank impedes the regular functioning of instruction and university activities at Palestinian institutions of higher learning¹³; and

WHEREAS, Israel routinely refuses to allow students from Gaza to travel in order to pursue higher education abroad, and even at West Bank universities; and¹⁴

WHEREAS, the Right to Education right is undermined or deterred when educational institutions are damaged, or partially destroyed, and when state authorities raid, and even close, campuses; and

WHEREAS, during its siege of Gaza in the summer of 2014, Israel bombarded fourteen institutions of higher learning, partially or completely destroying nine of them, including the Islamic University of Gaza, which houses the Oral History Center;¹⁵ and

WHEREAS, the Israeli military routinely invades university campuses in Jerusalem and the West Bank and frequently impedes entry;¹⁶ and

WHEREAS, the Right to Education can be exercised fully and freely only when students have access to a broad range of ideas and a faculty of diverse backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, Israel restricts the right to lecture, teach, or attend Palestinian universities by denying entry to select foreign nationals, including U.S. citizens, thereby denying Palestinian educational institutions the rich experiences enjoyed in other universities worldwide;¹⁷

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the AHA upholds the rights of all faculty and students, including Palestinians, to pursue their educations and research projects freely and wherever they choose, and therefore,

BE FURTHER RESOLVED that the AHA calls for the immediate reversal of Israeli policies that restrict the freedom of movement required to exercise this right, including denial of entry of foreign nationals seeking to participate in educational programs; and

BE FURTHER RESOLVED that the AHA calls for the cessation of attacks on Palestinian educational institutions, including raids on campuses, which undermine and deter education and endanger historical records;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the AHA commits itself to continuing to monitor Israeli actions that restrict the right to education in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

¹² For more detailed documentation, see . . . (pamphlet)

¹³ <http://www.amnesty.org/en/annual-report/2013>

¹⁴ <http://gisha.org/updates/4024>

¹⁵ <http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/UNESCO%20HEI%20Assessment%20Gaza%20Report%20FINAL-January%202015.pdf>

¹⁶ <http://mesana.org/pdf/israel20130917.pdf>

¹⁷ "Academia Undermined: Israeli Restrictions on Foreign National Academics in Palestinian Higher Education Institutions," Report of the Campaign for the Right to Enter the Occupied Palestinian Territories, 2013.