

A vintage photograph of a smiling woman holding a baby, viewed through a wooden frame with shattered glass. The woman is wearing a red dress with white polka dots and a white collar. The baby is wearing a blue and white striped shirt. The glass is shattered in a starburst pattern, with a large crack running diagonally across the center. The wooden frame is made of light-colored wood with visible grain and knots.

THERE IS A FIELD

NEW PLAY BY
JEN MARLOWE

Land Day Tour 2016

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

October 2 2000, 9:00am: I got a phone call from the director of the peace program I worked for. “Aseel was killed this morning.”

I hung up the phone and sat on my couch. I didn’t know what to do. What do you do when you find out that a kid you love was killed?

The question “what do I do?” stayed with me as I watched Aseel’s family and friends deal with their traumatic loss. It grew as I realized that the events of October 2000 were a collective trauma for the entire community of Palestinians inside Israel. It strengthened as it became apparent that there would be no indictments for those who pulled the triggers, or their supervisors.

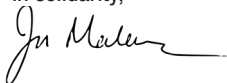
When traditional systems of justice violate the rights of marginalized communities, art can offer alternative forms of truth-telling. I would write a play about Aseel’s story and his family’s struggle.

This was what I could do.

I began a 15-year process of interviewing Aseel’s family members, particularly his sister Nardeen, and compiling the emails he had left behind, shaping it all into a script. The deeper I went into writing *There Is A Field*, the more I came to understand that this play is not only about Aseel’s family. In Aseel’s parents and siblings, I hear echoes of the families of Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, and Troy Davis—of all those who have lost a loved one to state violence.

My hope is that audience members will leave tonight with a deeper understanding of the human impact of violence driven by supremacy. Even more: I hope we will all leave with a deeper commitment to taking part in all struggles for equality, freedom and human rights.

In solidarity,



Jen Marlowe
Playwright/Producer, *There is a Field*
Founder, Donkeysaddle Projects
www.donkeysaddle.org



Photo by Carlton Mackey

Jen Marlowe and Nadia Ben-Youssef

SETTING THE STAGE FOR JUSTICE

To consider October 2000 an event of the past is to be blind to the realities of the present. Today, as it was over fifteen years ago, Palestinian citizens of Israel are perceived less as citizens than as security threats. Young Palestinian protestors who take to the streets in 2016 continue to face severe police brutality. Israeli lawmakers are relaxing police regulations to allow the use of live fire at demonstrations. No police officer has been held responsible for the killing of Aseel Asleh and the other unarmed Palestinian protestors killed in Israel during October 2000. Worse, the structures that devalue Palestinian lives remain intact.

As cause lawyers and the legal representatives of the victims of October 2000, Adalah continues to demand accountability through the language of law and human rights. But we also know that justice can only be served when the wider systems of oppression that allowed the injustice to occur are dismantled in favor of equality for all.



Nardeen and Aseel Asleh in Haifa

Courtesy of the Asleh family

Perhaps this is why, in 2016, our work for social change has never felt more hopeful. Today, we are witnessing a powerful transnational movement for equality. Young people from minority and marginalized communities around the world are rising up to challenge the status quo of supremacy, and recognizing the inextricable links between all struggles for justice. Organizers, students and artists in the movement for Black lives in the United States and advocates for Palestinian rights are joining together in solidarity and daring to imagine a world transformed.

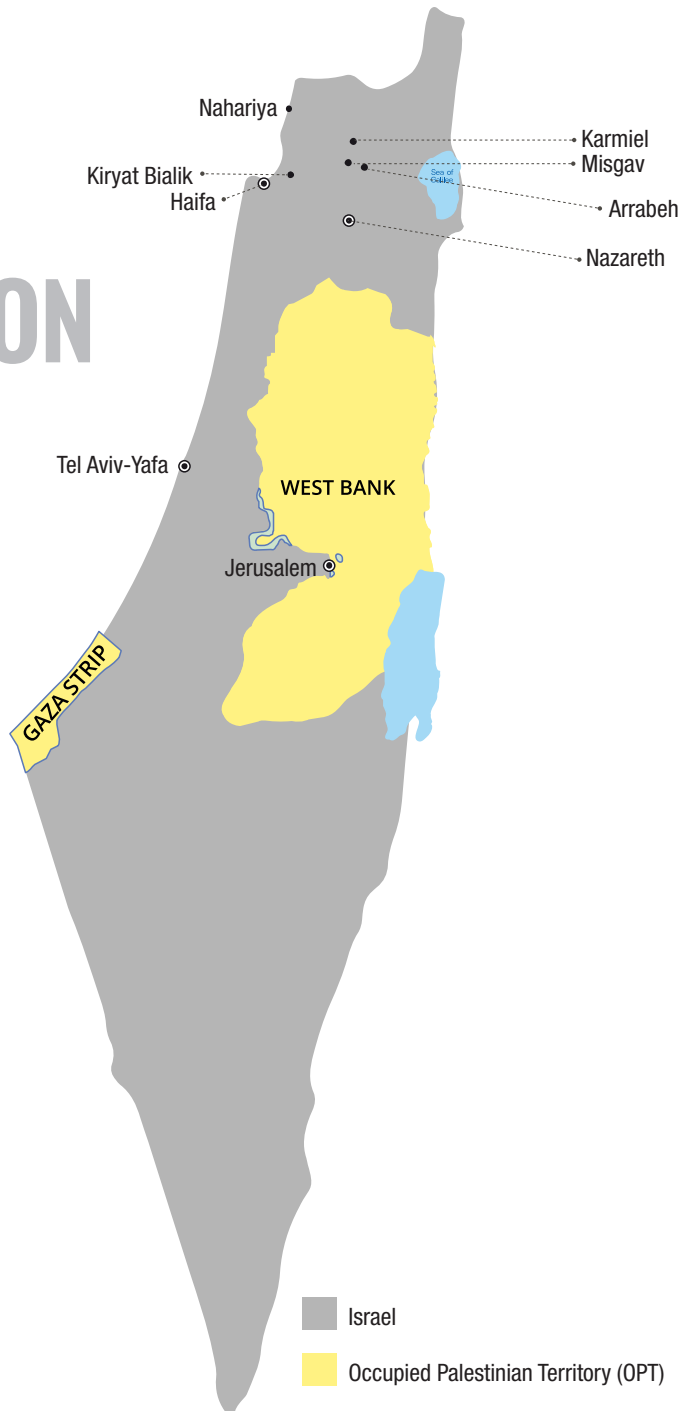
Art invites this transformation. In *There is a Field*, we are invited to confront the social, political and individual forces that dehumanized Aseel, and in turn are empowered to reclaim both his humanity and our own. It is an invitation to recognize our shared responsibility in setting the stage for justice, and to pursue the world we must imagine.

Towards justice,

Nadia Ben-Youssef
USA Representative
Adalah – The Legal Center
for Arab Minority Rights in Israel
www.adalah.org

There Is A Field LOCATION MAP

Israel and the Occupied
Palestinian Territory



THERE IS A FIELD

by Jen Marlowe

CAST

(In order of appearance)

ASEEL	Kesav Wable*
NARDEEN	Amel Khalil
JAMILA	Gamze Ceylan*
HASSAN/JUDGE OR	Alan Ceppos*
SIWAR/VARIOUS	Caitlin Nasema Cassidy*
BARAA/VARIOUS	Jackson Goldberg*

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States



ARTISTIC TEAM

Director	Noelle Ghoussaini
Playwright/Producer	Jen Marlowe
Stage Manager/ Assistant Director	Sarah Jane Schostack
Dramaturg	Deepa Purohit/Noelle Ghoussaini
Costume designer	Ari Fulton
Set consultant	You-Shin Chen
Tour Managers	Amer Shurrab/Steven Moore
Education consultant	Yamila Hussein
Graphic design	Carlton Mackey, Eva Najjar, Dane Jefferson

The Land Day Tour of *There Is A Field* is conducted as a partnership between 50 Shades of Black, Adalah – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, Center for Constitutional Rights, Code Pink, Donkeysaddle Projects, Dream Defenders, Hands Up United, Jewish Voice for Peace, Students for Justice in Palestine, and the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation.

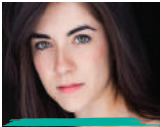
Special thanks to the following individuals from the partner organizations: Carlton Mackey, Nadia Ben Youssef, Ahmad Abuznaid, Tara Thompson, Tef Poe, Yamila Hussein, Shalva Wise, Ben Lorber, Ari Wohlfeiler, Leah Muskin-Pierret, Ramah Kudaimi, Anna Baltzer

Special gratitude for support: Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Hassib Sabbagh Foundation, Kathleen & Henry Chalfant, Sawsan Samara, Adham Rishmawi, Abdulsalam Alkhayyat, Inmar-Ella Givoni, Annette Touthangi, Ari Wohlfeiler & Gabe Freiman, Cindy & Craig Corrie, Lena Khalaf-Tuffaha

An earlier version of this play was developed and directed by Edward Mast

THERE IS A FIELD BIOS

CAST



CAITLIN NASEMA CASSIDY (SIWAR/VARIOUS)

National Tours: ShowBoat, Joseph & The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.

Other Theatre: Anything

Goes (Williamstown), Kafka's Metamorphosis (Synetic Theater Company), Yerma (London Cockpit), Cymbeline, Adapted (Shakespeare's Globe Theatre). Readings and Workshops: New York Theatre Workshop, The Lark, Women's Project Theater, Noor Theatre, The Civilians, Epic Theatre Ensemble. TV: A Crime To Remember. Training: London's East 15 School of Acting and Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. Endless love and gratitude to mom, dad, Connor, Geoff, and the *There Is A Field* family.

www.CaitlinNCassidy.com



ALAN CEPPOS (HASSAN/JUDGE OR) first appeared on Broadway at the age of nine in *The Three Musketeers*. He

has since appeared numerous

times in various Off Broadway productions, films, television commercials as well as *Knots Landing*, *The Conan O'Brien Show*, *The David Letterman Show*, *Days of our Lives*, *New York Undercover* and *Law and Order*. He is also Co-Founder and President of *The Hamptons Honey Company* and *PIQ*, a Retail Gift concept with multiple locations including Grand Central Terminal and Rockefeller Center in NYC. Special thanks to FAR.



GAMZE CEYLAN (JAMILA)

most recent NY stage work was in 'LoveRosePepe' based on Gertrude Stein's *Children's Story* and devised

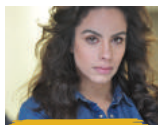
by Handan Ozbilgin Bromley and Henry Holmes at the Target Margin Theatre Lab (Connelly Theatre). Other NY and regional credits include: 'A Doll's House-Remix' with the Epic Theatre Company, 'The Wishing Tree' by Mustafa Kaymak (Signature Theatre), 'The Butcher' by Gwydion Suilebhan (Players Theater), 'the wall: a story of the land' by Noelle Ghoussaini (Brooklyn Lyceum), 'Lidless' by Francis Ya-Chu Cowhig (Philadelphia's InterAct Theatre), 'Neither Heaven Nor Earth' by John Hansen-Brevetti and Gabriella Pinto (New School's Theater). www.gamzeceylan.com



JACKSON GOLDBERG

(BARAA/VARIOUS) is an American actor based in Brooklyn, NY. He most recently appeared in *Wreckless*

Endeavor Productions' TV Series *Night Shift* (Milton), and recent theatre credits include *INVASION!* (Actor A) by Jonas Hasan-Khemiri at Theater for the New City, NYC, Rabindranath Tagore's *The Post Office* (Patrick Moore) at George St. Playhouse in New Brunswick, NJ, and *Gruesome Playground Injuries* (Doug) by 2010 Pulitzer prize finalist Rajiv Joseph at 4615 Theatre Company in Washington DC. Jackson graduated from Indiana University Bloomington where he majored in Arabic language. Jackson is from San Francisco, CA.



AMEL KHALIL (NARDEEN) is delighted to play her first lead role in a theater production as Nardeen, with Donkeysaddle Projects. Recent credits

include the 2016 Vagina Monologues. Film credits include lead roles in shorts, El Mundo Mas Alla, and Shift as well as contributions to Michael Pinckney's TV pilot series The Trade. Amel is a trained Mixed Martial Artist for stage combat and will be showcased in both Messengers and Nightwing Escalation web series. As a Palestinian American, Amel is honored to be a part of such an important piece so clearly depicting the daily struggle faced by the strong and faithful people of Palestine.



KESAV WABLE (ASEEL) is an actor/writer who has appeared in several productions on stage, in film and TV. Stage credits include:

Bassam in Tsunami (PEN World Voices Play Festival 2014); Vilayat Khan in Soundwaves (New York Fringe Festival 2013); TV credits: ABC's hit show What Would You Do. He wrote and produced For Flow, a short film that was a 2011 HBO American Black Film Festival Finalist and aired on HBO and Cinemax.

ARTISTIC TEAM



Noelle Ghoussaini

(Director)- Noelle Ghoussaini is a playwright, director and educator. She has created theatrical works throughout

the US, France, Russia and the Middle East. Noelle is currently a 2050 directing fellow at New York Theatre Workshop where she is developing a site-specific performance about dreams. In 2013, she was a Laundromat Project create change fellow as well as a participant at the Lincoln Center Director's lab and the Bolshoi Drama Theatre's Director's lab. She has two, very cute cats. www.noelleghoussaini.com



Jen Marlowe (Playwright/

Producer) is an award-winning author/filmmaker/playwright and human rights/social justice activist. Her plays include There

Is A Field. Her books include I Am Troy Davis, The Hour of Sunlight: One Palestinian's Journey from Prisoner to Peacemaker, and Darfur Diaries: Stories of Survival. Her films include One Family in Gaza, Rebuilding Hope: Sudan's Lost Boys Return Home and Darfur Diaries: Message from Home, and, just completed, Witness Bahrain. For more information about Jen's work, visit www.donkeysaddle.org.



Sarah Jane Schostack (Stage Manager/Assistant Director):

Select assistant directing credits: Lincoln Center Originals: CRY HAVOC (Lincoln Center),

Period of Adjustment (WHAT), Disney's The Lion King Jr. and A Rockin' Midsummer Night's Dream (Michael Unger and the 12.14 Foundation/NewArts Newtown Musicals), The Stone Will Roll (New York Theatre Workshop) and Trip to Bountiful (Hangar Theatre). Selected NYC directing credits: Manere Fortis (Semi-Finalist in the Take Ten Festival), The Stand-Ins, and No Stranger There by Luke Wise (2014 Samuel French Finalist). Stage management credits include Prelude Festival 2015, Theban Plays at the Brick Theatre. Associate Member of the SDCF.

ABOUT ASEEL



Aseel and Baraa

Courtesy of the Aseel Family

It is difficult to describe Aseel; in life, he defied stereotypes, labels and definitions. How many teenagers read and write poetry and philosophy, converse and correspond intensively and insightfully, and laugh and joke fluently and frequently in each of three languages? Aseel did. How many Palestinian citizens of Israel have created friendships with scores of Jews and Arabs at age 17? Aseel had. How many people of any origin, of any citizenship, of any age, are truly proud of themselves, their own nation and religion, and simultaneously curious, open and respectful towards everyone else's, including their historical "enemies"? Aseel was. Aseel was. That is our tragedy. Words cannot capture the complexity, the curiosity, the sensitivity, the wit, the radiance of our friend. They are simply all we have left.

Aseel's favorite mode of communication was the computer. Cyberspace was a realization of Aseel's vision: a world without checkpoints or identity cards. He spent much of his earthly life online, and left his friends' inboxes full of jokes, holiday greetings, and everyday notes, mixed with extraordinary reflections on life and death, war and peace, and human identity. The issue of identity is perhaps the area of Aseel's deepest insight. Conflict and confusion seem inherent to being a Palestinian Arab living in Israel. Yet Aseel used his multiple languages and multicultural knowledge to reach the widest range of people and to increase understanding between the people he met on all sides.

When you understand who Aseel was, you understand the price of hatred and violence—the contrast between the multidimensional teenage pioneer of peace, the complexity and vivacity that was Aseel, and the brutal impulse that ended his life in a matter of seconds.

Aseel is gone, and we can never recover him. The most we can do is celebrate everything that we loved about him, emulate all that he did to help us enrich our own existence, and remember: Remember Aseel alive in all his aspects and remember to see the spectrum of life in each other, in every human being, as he did. Let many more live like him. Let no more be killed like him. Let his memory teach us forever.

(modified from Ned Lazarus's preface in the 2001 Seeds of Peace Tribute book to Aseel)

LETTER TO MY SON

Hassan Asleh, father of Aseel Asleh

You woke up in a hurry, your ribcage heavy as lead, with something in your heart. You left me and I'm still confused. Fire, smoke, bullets, the wounded, soldiers. The olive trees were crying in the face of the universe.

I saw you at that moment walking in all your glory. I was afraid that the halo surrounding you would fall if I called to you, so I swallowed my voice and let you walk. I did not know you were walking towards the no return.

I watched you from afar. And suddenly, fate came. The killer came. Wielding his gun. I could not believe someone would shoot you, Aseel, or steal the bloom from your cheeks. I saw them, my son, surrounding you. They seized the breath of life from you.

When I saw you in front of me, I cried out and you did not answer. The world was



Hassan holding baby Aseel

Courtesy of the Asleh family

burning and screaming and you were not responding. I wanted to hug you tightly and shout to the whole world: this cannot be happening! But the overwhelming shock froze my tears and silenced my tongue.

I followed you to the hospital, still hoping deep in my heart that you would open your eyes. But you refused. You wanted to steal sleep from the world's eyes and slumber alone.

Silence filled the house when I returned and for a moment I thought you were home with us, to stay. Instead, we accompanied you towards the place of no return. I had to choke back my tears so that Mother wouldn't see her husband weep, and your sisters wouldn't hear their father's sobs. I feared looking into their eyes.

I wanted somebody to shout to the world, “How could you kill the downy bird before it spreads its wings to fly?” But the silence was overpowering and we lay you in your eternal home.



Courtesy of the Asleh family

Aseel, building a spaceship or a palace

I wanted to collapse on the ground, just for a second; to cry, to tear my clothes, but I couldn't. I hope you have forgiven me, my son. I couldn't succumb to weakness, because your voice meant glory, strength and force.

I've searched for you in all corners of the house, I've searched for you in the eyes of the trees. In the orange tree that we planted together. In the backpacks of your schoolmates. In the tranquility of the night, the stars, among the stones, behind each thing. Your voice calls me in the heart of the night. I see you in everything. The notebooks on the table, the unfinished homework, the half-written poem, the computer that reflects nothing but your image.

I know you remember well your brother Baraa. A year later, he was still living the anguish and sorrow. But Baraa is growing. He is searching for you in everything and as he looks for you, the look on his face kills me.

And Nardeen, who carries inside her a volcano of sorrow and heartbreak; Nardeen who carries for you all the love and goodness. She's preserves your things as she would the iris of her eye.

Spirited Siwar asked me yesterday, “What does it mean for somebody to go and never come back?” She wanted to hear about our conversations. “Which color did he like? Which books did he read? Who were his friends?”

My Aseel, I don't call you a hero, nor a legend. I don't say you were carrying the banner of this nation. And I don't call you a martyr. I only call you my son. You are my son, and nothing more.

Even now, my son, something prevents my tears from falling. Because there are 13 families living what I am living, and I know that a single drop from my eyes might induce burning tears from theirs.

Know that I will continue living for you and with you, as I promised and as you know me: a loving father, dreaming of a better tomorrow.



Courtesy of the Asleh family

Jamila Asleh with her son Aseel

CONTEXT: A DEEPER LOOK

Palestinian Citizens of Israel

Palestinian citizens of Israel comprise 20% of the total population of Israel, numbering around 1.2 million people. They remained in their homeland following the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, becoming an involuntary minority. They are an integral part of the Palestinian people who currently live in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Diaspora. They hold Israeli citizenship, and their status under international human rights instruments is that of a national, ethnic, linguistic and religious minority.

However, despite this status, the Palestinian minority is not declared as a national minority in the Basic Laws of Israel. In 1948, Israel was established as a Jewish state. There is no right to equality enshrined in Israeli law, and the definition of Israel as “the Jewish State” or “the State of the Jewish People” makes inequality a practical, political and ideological reality for Palestinian citizens of Israel on the basis of their national belonging and religious affiliation as non-Jews. There are more than 50 laws that directly or indirectly discriminate against Palestinian citizens of Israel in all areas of life, including their rights to political participation, access to land, education, state budget resources, and criminal procedures. (See Adalah, The Inequality Report, 2011)

Land Day

(Yom Al-Ard in Arabic) Observed annually on March 30, Land Day marks the first large-scale political protest organized by Palestinian citizens of Israel since the establishment of the State of Israel. In March 1976, Israel published a plan to confiscate approximately 1,500 acres of land from Palestinian villages in the Galilee region, in order to establish military bases and new Jewish settlements. A General Strike and marches were called for March 30, 1976 to protest the confiscation. On that day, the Israeli police and army killed six unarmed Palestinians citizens, and hundreds more were wounded and arrested. The day is commemorated both by Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinians within the Occupied Palestinian Territories to honor Palestinians who have died in the struggle to hold onto their lands and identity. (Adapted from Just Vision's glossary at www.justvision.org/glossary)

October 2000 Events

In early October 2000, Palestinian citizens of Israel staged mass demonstrations in towns and villages throughout the country to protest the Israeli government's oppressive policies against Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) at the beginning of the Second Intifada. During these demonstrations in Israel, the police and special police sniper units killed 13 unarmed Palestinians (12 citizens of Israel, 1 resident of Gaza) and injured hundreds more using live ammunition, rubber bullets, and tear gas. About 660 Palestinian citizens of Israel were arrested in connection with these events, and hundreds, including scores of minors, were indicted and detained without bond until the end of trial. Although the use of lethal force against unarmed protestors is illegal, and none of the individuals shot

posed a danger or threat to life to the police or to others, all case files on the killings have since been closed without any of the police officers, commanders or political leaders responsible being prosecuted or otherwise held to account. The October 2000 killings underscored how precarious the citizenship status of Palestinian citizens of Israel is, and how readily the state perceives and treats them as “enemies within”. (See Adalah, The October 2000 killings)

Or Commission—

On 8 November 2000, following enormous public pressure, an official commission of inquiry was established into the October 2000 events. The Commission was named after former Supreme Court Justice Theodor Or, who headed the body. Its primary mandate was to “investigate the sequence of events and...determine its findings and conclusions regarding what occurred during these events and regarding the causes leading to their occurrence at that time.”

The Or Commission found that there was no justification whatsoever for the live gunfire that caused the deaths of the 13 Palestinians. Similarly, the Commission determined that the firing of rubber-coated steel bullets, which produced fatal results, was also contrary to the internal police regulations. It also found that in none of the cases was there a real threat justifying the gunfire that led to the killing of citizens. The Commission also made the general recommendation that the Israeli police must radically alter the way they treat Palestinian Arab citizens.

However, despite the Or Commission’s findings and recommendations, no Israeli officer or official has been indicted for the killings. In a heavily-criticized report in September 2005, the Israeli Police Investigation Unit (“Mahash”) decided not to pursue any indictments against its members. In January 2007, Israel’s Attorney General also closed the investigation files into the killings.



Nardeen says goodbye to Aseel at his funeral

OCTOBER 2000

15 YEARS OF IMPUNITY

ISRAELI SECURITY FORCES
DEPLOYED **LIVE AMMUNITION** AND
RUBBER-COATED BULLETS AGAINST
PALESTINIAN DEMONSTRATORS IN ISRAEL

1
RAMI
KHATEM
GHARA
(21) Jatt

2
EYAD
SOBHI
LAWABNY
(26) Nazareth

3
MOHAMMED
AHMED
JABAREEN
(23) Umm
al-Fahem

4
AHMED
IBRAHIM
SIYYAM
JABAREEN
(18) Moawiya

5
MISLEH
HUSSEIN
ABU JARAD
(19) Umm
al-Fahem

6
ASEL
HASSAN
ASLEH
(17) Arrabe

7
ALA
KHALED
NASSAR
(18) Arrabe

8
WALID
ABDUL-
MENEM
ABU SALEH
(21) Sakhnin

9
EMAD
FARRAJ
GHANAYM
(25) Sakhnin

10
MOHAMMAD
GHALEB
KHAMAYSEH
(19) Kufr Kana

11
RAMEZ
ABBAS
BUSHNAQ
(24) Kufr
Manda

12
OMAR
MOHAMMAD
A'KKAWI
(42) Nazareth

13
WISSAM
HAMDAN
YAZBAK
(25) Nazareth

13 **KILLED**
DEMONSTRATORS

1,000+
PALESTINIAN
DEMONSTRATORS
INJURED

660
PALESTINIAN
DEMONSTRATORS
ARRESTED

248
PALESTINIAN
DEMONSTRATORS
INDICTED

OR COMMISSION:
NO LEGAL JUSTIFICATION
FOR THE USE OF DEADLY FORCE...

2003



WWW.ADALAH.ORG

0 **POLICE OFFICERS**
INDICTED

ארגון אדאלה למען הצדק

FROM FERGUSON TO PALESTINE

I met Aseel in January 2015, over fourteen years after Israeli police murdered him in an olive grove for protesting against oppression. I heard his story from Jen Marlowe while a member of the Dream Defenders delegation to Palestine, where together with other journalists, artists and organizers in the movement for Black lives, I spent 10-days connecting with activists living under Israeli occupation. In Aseel's murder, I recognized immediately the shared system of oppression that deems certain lives dispensable and certain existences criminal; but in his life, legacy and the resilience of his family and of his people I saw the strength and righteousness of our shared struggle for freedom. Below is a reflection I co-wrote with my friend and comrade, Palestinian-American organizer Sandra Tamari on our lived experience of solidarity.

Tara Thompson, Hands Up United

WE SEE US

by Tara Thompson and Sandra Tamari*

October 2014. Ferguson October was a mass mobilization in St. Louis calling for justice for Michael Brown Jr. and an end to police brutality. Hundreds marched together, including a delegation of Palestinians and Palestine activists who gathered to stand with the struggle for Black liberation.

Since the murder of Brown on August 9, 2014, we have learned a great deal about our joint struggle. Black and Palestinian solidarity continues to grow as our communities connect the dots between state violence, the prison industry and the militarized policing we face. Standing together during the Ferguson rebellion (and for Tara, traveling to Palestine with the Dream Defenders delegation in January 2015) has pushed our worldview to an unshakable position of solidarity. This solidarity is not a hashtag. Instead, we have chosen to side with oppressed communities in both locations.

Solidarity emerges from empathy palpable enough to force one to take action, educate oneself, share a story and choose a side. This has been an important theme in the

organizing between our two communities in St. Louis. When Brown was demonized as a "thug" after his murder, we saw parallels to the media tactics used to dehumanize Palestinians as "terrorists." When Palestinians are called violent for their freedom demonstrations against the Israeli military, we are reminded of our liberation protests on the streets of Ferguson where we were treated as state enemies. We know that those that oppress us are united. The same teargas the Israeli army and police regularly use against Palestinians, was deployed on the streets of St. Louis to in an attempt to suppress our protest. U.S. police forces, including the former St. Louis County police chief, are regularly trained in "counter-terrorism" tactics by Israel.

So together we have challenged repressive state systems. In the streets of Ferguson, it is common to see Palestinian flags and keffiyehs, the black and white checkered scarf symbolizing Palestine. We have marched calling for justice for Brown, VonDerrit Myers, Kajieme Powell and Mansur Ball-Bey, all gunned down by St. Louis police in the past 14 months. They are not the only ones lost. We march as Israel continues to kill Palestinian protestors, and civilians living under Occupation. We march for Aseel Asleh, a 17 year-old Palestinian citizen of Israel who was murdered at a protest in

October 2000, and whose family continues to demand accountability for his death. We stand together and declare that our struggles are indivisible. As we insist in our shared humanity and in the need for change, we cultivate a society where we see ourselves in each other.

While we are living in a momentous time of Black-Palestinian solidarity, we know that these ties have a long history. In the 1960s and 1970s, many leading Black organizations saw the Palestinian struggle as central to their own. Likewise, the Palestine Liberation Organization forged ties with pan-African liberation movements, including the Black struggle in the United States. Once again, because of our critical joint struggle, we have become close enough to feel the pain and mourning of the other. When we see them, we see us.

For more, watch "When I see them, I see us" www.blackpalestiniansolidarity.com

***Sandra Tamari, co-chair of US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation.**



We stand together and declare that our struggles are indivisible. As we insist in our shared humanity and in the need for change, we cultivate a society where we see ourselves in each other.

Photo by Christopher Hazou, Institute for Middle East Understanding



Dream Defenders Palestine Delegation, January 2015

DISCUSSION GUIDE THERE IS A FIELD

The post-play discussion is intended to create a space where we can collectively analyze questions raised by the play, to draw transnational connections and begin thinking of action strategies based on an analysis of structural, state-sponsored systems of oppression in Israel and the United States.

TO BEGIN

- In one word, describe the emotion you felt as the play ended
- What moment in the play did you feel, see, or hear most vividly?

WHEN I SEE YOU

- Who is the character that you most/least identify with?
- What events in the play felt familiar?
- What's one way you felt connected, saw yourself in the play?
- What's one way you felt challenged or frustrated with what you experienced through the play?



Aseel (front) with friends from Seeds of Peace

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

- Who killed Aseel? Who was held responsible for his murder?
- What did Aseel's friend from Seeds of Peace mean when s/he said, "If I were Arab-Israeli, instead of being Jewish, I might have died just like Aseel did."?
- How did each of the following respond to Aseel's killing? How much (and what kinds of) power does each of these groups exercise?
 - The Israeli legal system
 - The police
 - The media
 - Aseel's family
 - Aseel's friends from Seeds of Peace
 - Other Jewish Israelis
- What are the implications of the killings and the non-indictments?
- Was the injustice that happened to Aseel isolated/a fluke? Were there examples in the play that pointed to systemic, structural injustice?
- When Aseel's Jewish Israeli friends from Seeds of Peace protested the Attorney General's decision to close the cases, Nardeen told them: "I'm proud to be on your side of this struggle." What did she mean? What are the sides?

STRUCTURAL CONNECTIONS

- Do the questions about who killed Aseel, why Aseel was killed and who was held responsible resonate in the U.S?
- Do any of the other examples of systemic/structural injustice revealed in the play resonate in the U.S?
- After the Or Commission, a journalist asked the family what Aseel was doing at the demonstration in the first place. Are there examples of the U.S. media/public engaging in this kind of victim-blaming?
- What are the “sides” of the struggle here in the U.S.? Do you see yourself as part of the struggle? In what ways are we complicit in the systems that breed injustice here?

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

- What does a solution look like? What does actual justice look like? Think about this answer in Israel, the U.S. and beyond
- What work is already happening on your campus/in your community to build towards those solutions/visions of justice? How can you support that work?
- What still needs to happen and what could your contribution be?



Courtesy of the Aseel family

Baby Siwar sits on Aseel's shoulders

FOR REFLECTION



In this nation where we know all too well the way systemic injustice steals so many lives, *There Is A Field* allows us to connect with the stories of those facing the same devastation in Palestine. Our pain connects us, our liberation awaits us."

Ahmad Abuznaid, Co-Founder, Dream Defenders

Activists march under #UnitedWeFight banner in St. Louis, August 2015



Photo by Carlton Mackey

#PEACEFUL THOUGHTS

(An e-mail written and sent by Aseel Asleh to Seeds of Peace on March 31 1998)

30/3/1976. Nothing but anger that day brings to my people's mind. Youm El-Ard they call it in Arabic, or "The Land Day". Nothing but memories from that sad day when a group of Israeli soldiers tried to kick the local citizens out of the village. What village was that? It was my village. "Arrabeh" they call it. But back then, people knew nothing but bloodshed, and losing those who are close to them. As this day has come like any other year, I should fulfill my duty as an Arab and bring their memories to life.

We should never forget, but we should forgive.

Twenty-two years since it happened, and each time, people know nothing but madness, and violence in that day. If I were a cop walking by... Hmmm I think I should take another thought about walking in the uniform.

All that anger - where did it come from? As for the years I saw, this anger came from the fathers to the fathers of those people. For somehow most of us don't know what happened that day. Like I said, it became a duty. And it's our job to be there when they bring their memories to life.

We should never forget, but we should forgive.

They will say they fought bravely. They protected their land. They died for a reason. But I think nothing is worth dying for. But sometimes it's the only way to save others. What can I say for a mother who lost her son, or a sister who lost a brother? I stand worthless to bring them back, but powerful enough to bring their memories back by not forgetting them.

Eight months ago I went to this camp. It was nice: Jewish people, Arabs from some countries, some Americans too. During those forty days I spent there, those people became my friends—not for what they are, but who they are. I didn't see them as Israelis, or Jordanians, but as Sa'ad, and Ned, and Tim. They became my friends and a heart is where you keep them.



Aseel's first attempt at writing

Courtesy of the Asleh Family

For forty days I learnt who were those soldiers who tried to kick us out, and I learnt who are those people that I lived with for forty days. Now I know who are my friends. In a few years from now they will become soldiers. They will go to the army to protect their families. But will they stay the same? Will they be the same Edi or Tzakhi that I knew? Will they be the same? What will happen if they become like those soldiers? And the duty will call them for what they call

"protection" --what then? Will they be the same?

That's an answer that only time can answer. But until then, they will be the same for me. The same people I lived with for forty days. The same people I played with. The same people I shared with them my thoughts and feelings, and so they did too. What I learnt back in camp was priceless; we were all the same, so nothing else mattered. But what I learnt in camp only showed up here eight months later: today in Yuum El-Ard. Today I will know what Seeds of Peace really gave me. I will know what to do when someone will call my friends "killers" or "murderers". No friend of mine is a killer, and I'm not a friend of one either.

Today I will be asked to choose between what they call "protecting and remembering" and between what they call "forgiving". I will be asked to choose. And

I will. Will my choice be the right choice, be the right thing to do, or will it be the wrong thing to do?

Well [Rumi] once said: "Out beyond ideas of right-doing and wrong-doing, there is a field. I'll meet you there." And I will be there, and I will see you when you get there. For the thoughts that are around me and the feelings that guard me, I won't forget a friend's words, and I will remember his words, by making others remember mine.

I will go on. I will make this planet a better place to live and I will go on. For all the souls who only saw pain and sorrow in their eyes; for the souls who will never see a pain of another soul, I promise you I will go on.

Until we meet in the field, my friend, take care.

--Aseel Asleh



The Asleh family in 2015

[Adults L to R] Baraa, Jamila, Hassan, Siwar, Nardeen
[Nardeen's children L to R] Aseel Jr, Tayyeb, Sham

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