As the Oslo Peace Process has given way to the violence of the second intifada, Tobias Kelly, a social anthropologist, explores in this book the continuing legacy of Oslo in the everyday life of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. In doing so, he places the Peace Process, and the second intifada, in the context of a longer historical process of simultaneous social integration and attempts at political separation. Taking a perspective that sees the Israeli–Palestinian conflict as a conflict over the distribution of legal rights, he focuses on the daily concerns of West Bank Palestinians, and explores the meanings, limitations and potential of legal claims in the context of the region’s structures of governance. Kelly argues that fundamental contradictions in the process through which the West Bank has been ruled and misruled have resulted in an unstable mixture of legality, fear and uncertainty. Based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork, his book provides an insight into how the wider Middle East conflict manifests itself through the daily encounters of ordinary Israelis and Palestinians, offering an evocative and theoretically informed account of the relationship between law, peace-building and violence.

Tobias Kelly is a Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the School of Social and Political Studies, University of Edinburgh.
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Law, Violence and Sovereignty Among West Bank Palestinians
Tobias Kelly
For Faye
. . . they were searching in the sea for that reassurance that there was something stronger there than our state.

Emile Habiby, The Secret Life of Saeed the Ill-Fated Pessoptimist

We forget that beneath the cupolas of certainty and the columns of law there is a dream full of rock, vermin, and quicksand that will put the equilibrium of the temple of the republic in danger.

Carlos Fuentes, The Campaign
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GLOSSARY OF ORGANISATIONS
AND ACRONYMS

DCO  District Co-ordination Office: the office responsible for co-ordinating between the PNA and the Israeli state in civil matters.

DFLP  Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine: a leftist faction of the PLO, which has opposed the Oslo Process.

DWRC  Democracy and Workers’ Rights Centre: a non-governmental organisation based in Ramallah, which deals with worker issues.

Fatah  The largest faction of the PLO, formerly headed by Yasser Arafat.

GUPET  General Union of Palestinian Educationalists and Teachers: a PLO-affiliated teachers’ union.

GUPET-WB  West Bank branch of the GUPET.

GUPW  General Union of Palestinian Workers: a PLO-affiliated trade union federation for Palestinians in the Diaspora.

Hamas  The main Islamic nationalist movement in the West Bank and Gaza.

Islamic Jihad  A small radical Islamic group in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

HCCT  Higher Co-ordinating Committee for Teachers, formed in the late 1990s.

Histadrut  General Federation of Labour in Israel.

IDF  Israeli Defence Force.

IoL  Institute of Law. Based at Birzeit University.

ILO  International Labour Organisation.

Kav La Oved  A Tel Aviv–based NGO, which deals with workers issues.

Likud  A right-wing Israeli Zionist party.
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<th>Acronym</th>
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<td>PFLP</td>
<td>The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a leftist faction of the PLO, which has opposed the Oslo Process.</td>
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<td>PGFTU</td>
<td>The Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions, a PLO-affiliated trade union federation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.</td>
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<td>PLA</td>
<td>Palestine Liberation Army: the army of the PLO, based in the Diaspora.</td>
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<td>PLC</td>
<td>Palestinian Legislative Council: the legislative body of the PNA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLO</td>
<td>Palestine Liberation Organisation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PNA</td>
<td>Palestinian National Authority: the administrative body set up by the Oslo Accords to govern many aspects of the lives of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.</td>
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<td>PPP</td>
<td>Palestinian Peoples' Party, formerly the Palestinian Communist Party.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preventative Security</td>
<td>Historically the largest and best resourced of the PNA security agencies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shabiba</td>
<td>Youth wing of Fatah.</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNSCO</td>
<td>United Nations Special Co-ordinator for the Occupied Territories.</td>
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<td>WUB</td>
<td>Workers’ Unity Bloc, a union affiliate of the DFLP.</td>
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West Bank under the Oslo II Interim Agreements, 1995.