

Introduction

With the Israeli-Palestinian conflict raging on into its eighth decade, by now, we are well-accustomed to reoccurring reports discussing the latest flare-up in violence. The vicissitudes of the Mideast conflict continue to dominate the international policy agenda, undeterred by the numerous failed attempts at reconciliation and the resulting entrenchment of the peace-adverse status quo. Despite the primary conceptualization of the conflict as a territorial dispute over borders and designated state territory, the interminable state of political confrontation and violence has had a profound effect on both Palestinian and Israeli-Jewish society. Palestinians and Israelis' worldview, past and present, has been affected by – and in turn influences – the ongoing dispute. This study is concerned with the usage of primary historical narratives as a means of group identity-formation and as a means of contextualizing and justifying political acts. In doing so, this book exposes the social taming of societies' pasts. The resulting tales of empowerment seek to demonstrate the justness of today's cause and culminate in a rejection of the opponent's foundational narrative.¹ The pasts inferred here are the Holocaust and the Nakba, which have turned into primary formative events among the two groups engaged in an intractable conflict.²

¹ Robert Rotberg, "Building Legitimacy through Narrative," in *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict: History's Double Helix*, ed. Robert Rotberg (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 1.

² A work published by Amos Goldberg and Bashir Bashir in 2015, dedicated to "examining the possibility of a joint engagement with the Holocaust and the Nakba as [the] two traumatic national identities of Palestinians and Jews in Israel and Palestine," fell subject to public scrutiny because it was wrongly deemed to compare both events. Amos Goldberg and Bashir Bashir, *The Holocaust and the Nakba: Memory, National Identity and Jewish-Arab Partnership* (Jerusalem: The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and Hakibbutz Hameuchad), 2015, 7 (in Hebrew).

See Ben-Dror Yemeni, "The Disgraceful Link Drawn between the Holocaust and the Nakba," *Ynet News*, July 29, 2015, www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4695275,00.html, accessed December 18, 2019.

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This work's simultaneous deliberation of the Holocaust and the Nakba³ does not mean conflating or equating them: one cannot compare mass extermination by an external, third party with mass, episodic displacement.⁴ Such an equation would not only be historically – and ethically – erroneous, but would equally fail to recognize the divergence in historical culpability. Indeed, Germany is chiefly responsible for the Holocaust.⁵ The state of Israel is, on the other hand, in large part responsible for the Nakba and its persistence.⁶ Both events are, nevertheless, historically tied together. The founding of the state of Israel as a post-Holocaust haven for Jews meant⁷ disestablishing the Palestinians from their homes; the state's subsequent confiscation of land and property, in addition to the purposeful destruction and reappropriation of Palestinian towns and localities, has all but precluded Palestinians' return.⁸ This historical connection is not indicative of a causal link, as has been promulgated by, inter alia, the late Palestinian writer Emile Habibi,⁹ but rather a contextual link. A more relational linkage does exist: as dominant national metanarratives, the Holocaust and the Nakba have bolstered exclusive identities within the two groups, both centering on unique claims of ongoing victimhood and loss and a consequential devaluation – if not denial – of the other's catastrophe.¹⁰ Despite the obvious differences in political circumstances and national rights among Palestinians – as a stateless people – and Israelis, the foundational traumas continue to constitute open wounds. Their explicit “presentness,” as this study demonstrates, centers on diverging concerns and perspectives through the application of a similar syntax of binary opposition and ethnocentrism.

³ This work will adopt the English rendition of the word Nakba; the final ة (نكبة), as such, will be presented without the “h,” with the sole exception of transliterated work.

⁴ Nadim Khoury, “Postnational Memory: Narrating the Holocaust and the Nakba,” *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 46 (2019): 5.

⁵ Ibid. ⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Edward W. Said, “Invention, Memory, and Place,” *Critical Inquiry* 26:2 (2000): 183.

⁸ According to Khoury, a third of the Zionist forces “that ethnically cleansed Palestinian villages and towns” were Holocaust survivors, and many of these survivors were given abandoned Palestinian property unjustly seized after the promulgation of absentee laws. Nadim Khoury, “Holocaust/Nakba and the Counterpublic of Memory,” in *The Holocaust and the Nakba: A New Grammar of Trauma and History*, ed. Amos Goldberg and Bashir Bashir (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 117.

⁹ See, for instance, Habibi's 1986 article, entitled “Your Holocaust, Our Catastrophe,” in which he argued that “If not for your – and all of humanity's – Holocaust in World War II, the catastrophe that is still the lot of my people would not have been possible.” Emile Habibi, “Your Holocaust, Our Catastrophe,” *Politica* 8 (1986): 26, 27 (in Hebrew).

¹⁰ See Bashir Bashir and Amos Goldberg, “Introduction: The Holocaust and the Nakba: A New Syntax of History Memory and Political Thought,” in Goldberg and Bashir, *A New Grammar of Trauma and History*, 1–42.

The Holocaust and the Nakba as Foundational Pasts

Scholarly application of (post)memory theory has convincingly demonstrated that both Palestinians and Israeli-Jews are shaped by traumatic events that preceded their birth, leading the Nakba (Arabic: grievous catastrophe)¹¹ and the Holocaust to respectively become the major component of the contemporary identity of Palestinians and Israeli-Jews despite more than seventy years that have passed since the foundational events took place.¹² Surveys and studies conducted among the Israeli-Jewish population since the early 1990s consistently show that the early dialectical process of exclusion and appropriation has given way to an entire third generation, which, irrespective of family heritage and origin, has had the Holocaust narrative etched into its consciousness. This narrative dictates, as indicated in a 2009 survey, that remembering the Holocaust's particularistic and ethnocentric meaning – captured by Yoram Taharlev in his popular 1970s song, *ha-'olam kulo negdenu* (Hebrew: the entire world is against us)¹³ – constitutes the most important guiding principle for the adult population, far outweighing the committal to Jewish solidarity and Jewish existence in Israel.¹⁴ Most people in Israel, as a result, do not identify with Yehuda Elkana's universalistic appeal that a Holocaust should “never happen again.”¹⁵ Instead, they identify with the Zionist lesson of the Holocaust which dictates “it should never happen to us again.”¹⁶

Much like the Holocaust in Israeli-Jewish collective memory and, according to some, in response to Israeli memory discourse,¹⁷ the

¹¹ Throughout this work I use the term Holocaust to refer to the systematic murder of approximately six million Jews at the hands of the Nazis and their collaborators between 1939 and 1945. Application of the neutral designation “the 1948 War” will be used to infer the period between the outbreak of the unofficial civil war in November 1947 and the signing of the final armistice agreement with Syria at the close of the official war in July 1949. The Palestinian conception of the war as a catastrophe will be applied when invoking Palestinian collective memory of the war and its aftermath.

¹² Lila Abu-Lughod and Ahmad H. Sa'di, “Introduction: The Claims of Memory,” in *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*, ed. Lila Abu-Lughod and Ahmad H. Sa'di (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 21; Yair Auron, *Israeli Identities: Jews and Arabs Facing the Self and the Other* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2012), 145.

¹³ Auron, *Israeli Identities*, xviii.

¹⁴ In 2009, 98.1 percent of the respondents stated that the Holocaust is a guiding principle in their life. Yechiel Klar, Noa Schori-Eyal, and Yonat Klar, “The ‘Never Again’ State of Israel: The Emergence of the Holocaust as a Core Feature of Israeli Identity and Its Four Incongruent Voices,” *Journal of Social Issues* 69 (2013): 126.

¹⁵ Yehuda Elkana, “A Plea for Forgetting,” *Haaretz*, March 2, 1988, 13.

¹⁶ Auron, *Israeli Identities*, xviii. Emphasis added.

¹⁷ Adoption of Israeli-Jewish Holocaust mnemonic rituals include the sounding of a siren and the observance of a two-minute silence on Nakba Day.

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Nakba constitutes a foundational event for the Palestinians.¹⁸ Although Palestinians had various forms of identity before 1948,¹⁹ the Nakba has become “a key narrative”²⁰ not only for those directly affected but for subsequent generations as well, leading the “loss of Palestine”²¹ to become “a shared national identity.”²² Both inside the 1948 borders and in the West Bank – the principal geographical focus areas in this work – the 1948 War left its imprint on the two emerging categories of Palestinians: *Filastīniū al-dākhil* (Arabic: the internal Palestinians)²³ and *Filastīniū al-shatāt or al-khārij* (Arabic: the Palestinian refugees of the diaspora), as they are known in the national discourse. Inside the 1948 borders, the Haifa Declaration of 2007 issued by the “sons and daughters of the Palestinian Arab people who remained in our homeland despite the Nakba” thus casts the Nakba as a “formative event,” which defines “our citizenship and our relationship to the state of Israel [in view of] the setback to our national project.”²⁴ In a similar fashion, the Palestinian Declaration of Independence issued in 1988 by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) positions the Nakba as the lens through which to view the Palestinian people’s struggle for nationhood; in spite of “the willed dispossession and expulsion from their ancestral homes [the Palestinian people] never faltered and never abandoned its conviction in its rights of Return and independence.”²⁵ As is evident from these documents, the Nakba among these communities represents an

¹⁸ Gilbert Achcar, Ahmad Sa’di, Lila Abu-Lughod, Meir Litvak, and Esther Webman are among the few who have noted symmetries between the role of the Holocaust and the Nakba among Israelis and Palestinians, including similarities in terminology. Thus, as Achcar notes, symmetries between the various terms include: “Shoah/Nakba, displaced person/refugee, Law of Return/Right of Return [...]” Gilbert Achcar, *The Arabs and the Holocaust* (New York: Metropolitan, 2010), 23.

¹⁹ Abu-Lughod and Sa’di, “Introduction,” 4; Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 7, 20.

²⁰ Saloul Ihab, *Catastrophe and Exile in the Modern Palestinian Imagination: Telling Memories* (New York/Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 3.

²¹ The Nakba not only represents the loss of “the homeland,” but also “the disintegration of society, the frustration of national aspirations, and the beginning of a hasty process of destruction of Palestinian culture.” Ahmad H. Sa’di, “Catastrophe, Memory and Identity: Al-Nakbah as a Component of Palestinian Identity,” *Israel Studies* 7:2 (2002): 175.

²² *Ibid.*, 177.

²³ According to a survey conducted in 2008, the 1948 War consisted the most formative event for contemporary Palestinian identity inside Israel, with 33 percent of respondents self-identifying with reference to the war. Tamir Sorek, *Palestinian Commemoration in Israel: Calendars, Monuments and Martyrs* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 206, 207.

²⁴ Mada al-Carmel, *The Haifa Declaration* (Haifa: Mada al-Carmel, 2007), 7, 8, 14.

²⁵ Yehuda Lukacs, ed., *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A Documentary Record 1967–1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 412.

“eternal present,”²⁶ for, as Lila Abu-Lughod and Ahmad Sa’di state: “the past is neither distant nor over [and] exile is neither transitional nor transitory; it is an inherited state.”²⁷

Theorizing Collective Memory

The Nakba’s “presentness,” similarly to the Holocaust, is an outcome of intergenerational familial and cultural transmission. In the context of the aforementioned post-memory theory, this “present continuous” can be related to the affix “post,” which does not necessarily indicate an “adopt [ion] of [an]other’s [memories] as one’s own,”²⁸ but rather, the transmission of the emotional and personal effects related to the original memories.²⁹ As Taharlev’s song continues, “We have learned it from our forefathers and we will teach it to our children and grandchildren.”³⁰ Crucially, family, even in its most intimate moments, is entrenched in the society that surrounds it, where it is shaped by public structures and shared stories and images that inflect the transmission of familial remembrance. Moreover, while communicative memory is dependent on original exposure to the historical event, cultural or collective memory transmission allows for a conveyance of narratives to individuals based on group membership rather than familial heritage or generational belonging.³¹ Indeed, with regard to the group memories at hand, I will demonstrate that the contemporary prominence of the Nakba and the Holocaust, which exists among both the descendants of affected and unaffected families, has relied on what Maurice Halbwachs in his landmark study of 1925 defined as *cadres sociaux*. Halbwachs, evidencing the influence of his teacher, the social theorist Émile Durkheim,³² argued

²⁶ Sa’di, “Catastrophe, Memory and Identity,” 177.

²⁷ Abu-Lughod and Sa’di, “Introduction,” 10, 19.

²⁸ Marianne Hirsch, “The Generation of Post-Memory,” *Poetics Today* 29:1 (2008): 114.

²⁹ Ernst van Alphen, “Second-Generation Testimony, Transmission of Trauma, and Postmemory,” *Poetics Today* 27:2 (2006): 473–488.

³⁰ Cited in Ilan Peleg, ed., *Victimhood Discourse in Contemporary Israel* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2019), 3.

³¹ In his book *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, Jan Assmann differentiates between two kinds of collective memory: communicative memory and cultural memory. Communicative memory is biographical and factual and is located within a generation of contemporaries who witness an event as adults and who can pass on their bodily and affective connection to that event to their descendants. Cultural memory views individuals as part of social groups with shared belief systems that frame memories and shape them into narratives and scenarios. Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis* (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1992), 36, 37 (in German).

³² Émile Durkheim, “The Elementary Forms of Religious Life,” in *The Collective Memory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 136.

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that group membership – as a social milieu – provides the materials for memory and prods individuals into recalling certain events, including those that have never been experienced in a direct sense.³³

The dual role ascribed to individuals, as members of social groups that draw strength from individuals' behavior and, simultaneously, as individuals that constitute social groups, means that Halbwachs acknowledged the relationship between the individual and the social group.³⁴ Yet Halbwachs' apt analysis of a practical construction of group memories in line with contemporary societal needs is underpinned by the less-than-adequate conception of the formation of these memories as passive materializations of the group's present concerns based on an unambiguous consensus which does not require any active mobilization.³⁵ Far from a spontaneous retrieval by individual group members, however, recollection of the past is an active, constructive process, and one which is mostly orchestrated from above.³⁶ Thus, this book conceives of collective narratives as those which, while reflecting the social group and affirmed by its members, are actively constructed and imparted on behalf of elite societal institutions.³⁷ The resulting hegemonic³⁸ narrative can be deemed a compromise, unifying the political and societal outlook and designs of the elite and the subjective reality of the "community of memory."³⁹

The incorporation of post-modern individualist theory requires an important revision of the unitary Durkheimian approach, namely the transformation of Halbwachs' schema to schemata as a means of indicating an individual's simultaneous belonging to numerous societal groups.

³³ Jeffrey Olick, "Collective Memory: The Two Cultures," *Sociological Theory* 17:3 (1999): 335.

³⁴ As Halbwachs stated: "One may say that the individual remembers by placing himself in the perspective of the group, but one may also affirm that the memory of the group realizes and manifests itself in individual memories." Maurice Halbwachs, "The Collective Memory," in Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, *Collective Memory*, 139–142; Olick, "Collective Memory," 342.

³⁵ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992), 40.

³⁶ Barry Schwartz, "The Social Context of Communication: A Study in Collective Memory," *Social Forces* 61:2 (1982): 374.

³⁷ Daniel Bar-Tal and Gavriel Salomon, "Israeli-Jewish Narratives of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Evolvement, Contents, Functions and Consequences," in Rotberg, *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict*, 19, 20.

³⁸ Hegemonic is used here in the way it was put forward by Antonio Gramsci, namely a prominent set of ideas in society that the vast majority of the people cannot even contemplate to challenge. Cited in Peleg, *Victimhood Discourse*, 4.

³⁹ Julie Ne'emman Arad, "The Shoah as Israel's Political Trope," in *Divergent Jewish Cultures: Israel and America*, ed. Deborah Dash Moore and S. Ilan Troen (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 193.

Moreover, the pluralist conception of collective memory allows for the coexistence of alternative memories and, of most relevance to this study, rival memories among a social group bound in a cultural schema.⁴⁰ The materialization of the former is evidenced with reference to diverging in-group narratives. In the case study on Israeli-Jewish collective memory, deviant narratives can be found among individual Israeli-Jews who seek to challenge the normative Israeli usage of the Holocaust and, as Elkana put it, “eradicate the domination of this historical memory over our life.”⁴¹ Rather than amending the collective memory of the in-group, rival memories in existence among Palestinians living within the 1948 borders and Israeli-Jews – constituting a social group based on geographical perimeters, citizenship, and, to a large extent, the Hebrew language – challenge the very historical foundations of the other’s collective memory, thereby indicating that an ethnic in-group alliance defines the community of Nakba and Holocaust memory.

Silencing the Other’s Past

Collective memory is by definition subjective, as historical narratives in the service of the collective must facilitate the crystallization of a common consciousness through the creation of an orderly metanarrative of the past constructed in the service of the present.⁴² It follows that mnemonic narratives need not reflect the historical truth, and instead they favor a narrative that is functional for a group’s existence.⁴³ As a result, I am not so much concerned with the historical particularities of the Holocaust and the 1948 War; rather, I am principally interested in the exclusionary memories of these events and their endurance to this day. This singular focus equally means that this work pertains to describing the exclusionary identity practices that derive from and – in turn – sustain the dominant metanarratives while foregoing an in-depth analysis of the counter-narratives promoted by individuals and organizations in both societies. Nevertheless, non-conformist messages are featured throughout this book, offering important insights into nuanced attempts – and, where relevant, their failure – at envisioning an alternative reality in which the relationship between Israeli-Jews and Palestinians is not bound by the logic of ethnonationalism.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Peter Burke, “History as Social Memory,” in Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, *Collective Memory*, 191.

⁴¹ Elkana, “Plea for Forgetting.”

⁴² Adil Manna and Moti Golani, *Two Sides of the Coin: Independence and Nakba 1948* (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters, 2011), 5.

⁴³ Rotberg, “Building Legitimacy,” 4. ⁴⁴ Khoury, “Postnational Memory,” 2.

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Part and parcel of selecting functional collective narratives worth remembering is its antithetical process, because, as Ernest Renan contended, “Forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation.”⁴⁵ By emphasizing the plasticity of memory construction, Renan, of course, alluded to cultural demarcation practices within national groups in Europe; yet, in conflicts “social silencing” does not only denote forgoing incompatible in-group memories, but also the opponent’s master narrative(s).⁴⁶ Typically, the delegitimization and dehumanization of the out-group center on the simultaneous de-emphasis and erasure of the other’s suffering to justify the in-group’s own moral standing and provide a coping mechanism in a situation of interminable strife.⁴⁷ As in other national conflicts in which the opposing sides are members of different ethnic groups, the psychological dimension of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict manifests in a subversion of the other’s narrative of suffering and a lack of recognition of the most fundamental traumas framing the conflict, including by the current leadership.⁴⁸ For instance, in 2018, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas delivered what he called a “history lesson” in a speech broadcast live on Palestinian TV. During the 90-minute remarks, Abbas suggested that the Holocaust was the fault of Jews themselves, further claiming “that animosity toward Jews was not because of their religion but because of their social activities.”⁴⁹ Abbas’ Israeli counterpart has equally engaged in Nakba trivialization. More than ten years earlier, then opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu said that including the word “Nakba” in Israeli

⁴⁵ Ernest Renan, “What Is a Nation,” in Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, *Collective Memory*, 80.

⁴⁶ Efrat Ben-Ze’ev, “Social Silence: Transference, De-sensitization and de-focusing among Israeli Students,” in *Zoom In: Palestinian Refugees of 1948, Remembrances*, ed. Sami Adwan et al. (Dordrecht: Institute of Historical Justice and Reconciliation and Republic of Letters Publishers, 2011), 165–175.

⁴⁷ Bar-Tal and Salomon, “Israeli-Jewish Narratives of the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict,” 24.

⁴⁸ Shifra Sagy, Avi Kaplan, and Sami Adwan, “Interpretations of the Past and Expectations for the Future among Israeli and Palestinian Youth,” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 72:1 (2002): 27.

⁴⁹ Abbas has long been accused of denying or undermining the Holocaust. His doctoral thesis, executed in the former Soviet Union, questioned whether the death toll of six million Jews might have been inflated, and he argued that Zionists and Nazis worked together to send Jews to present-day Israel. However, in 2003 Abbas said that the Holocaust was “a terrible, unforgivable crime against the Jewish nation, a crime against humanity that cannot be accepted by humankind”; in 2014, he issued a statement in which he called the Holocaust “the most heinous crime to have occurred against humanity in the modern era.” See Siobhán O’Grady, “Palestinian President Says Jewish Behavior Caused the Holocaust, Sparking Condemnation,” *The Washington Post*, May 2, 2018, www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/05/02/palestinian-president-says-jewish-behavior-caused-the-holocaust-sparking-condemnation/, accessed February 23, 2020.

textbooks was tantamount to spreading propaganda, paving the way for the term's ban by the Israeli Ministry of Education in 2009 and other cultural restrictions outlined in this work.⁵⁰

In addition to polls conducted among Palestinians living inside the 1948 borders and Israeli-Jews on attitudes towards the other's foundational trauma, reconciliatory attempts by individual civilians on both sides and the ensuing societal responses shed light on the materialization of mnemonic delegitimization efforts. In May 2009, Sammy Smooha published his index of Jewish-Palestinian relations, which found that despite public exposure to the Holocaust, 40.5 percent of Palestinian citizens in Israel claimed that the Holocaust never occurred, a 12.5 percentile rise from Smooha's 2006 polling.⁵¹ Attempts to expose Palestinians to the Holocaust have largely been met with rejection,⁵² as evidenced in the reactions to Khalid Mahameed's homemade Holocaust museum. Founded in 2005 in his law office in Nazareth, Mahameed sought to "help Palestinians understand the source of Israeli behavior," which according to the lawyer "is grounded on a Holocaust victimhood memory." Mahameed's personal initiative⁵³ fell on deaf ears, as, in his own words, the Palestinian community engaged in "a total boycott" of his exhibition.⁵⁴ In a similar fashion, an educational trip organized to

⁵⁰ Reuters, "Israel Bans Use of Palestinian Term 'Nakba' in Textbooks," *Haaretz*, July 22, 2009, www.haaretz.com/1.5080524, accessed February 24, 2020.

⁵¹ According to Smooha, Holocaust denial cuts across sectors within the Palestinian population and is espoused by 37.1 percent of those with high-school education and 56.4 percent of Negev Bedouin. Smooha's research question regarding the Holocaust reads as follows: "I believe that there was a Holocaust in which the Nazis murdered millions of Jews." Possible responses included: disagree; inclined to disagree; inclined to agree; agree. Of the respondents, 40.5 percent disagreed or were inclined to disagree. Auron, *Israeli Identities*, 139.

⁵² Not all exposure attempts are met with rejection. See, for instance, a 1997 *Maariv* article for a discussion of workshops for Palestinian students and teachers at Kibbutz Lohamei Hagetaot. Karni Am-Ad, "Saour and Ibrahim," *Maariv*, May 5, 1997 (page number unknown).

⁵³ Interview conducted with Khalid Mahameed on August 3, 2016. Also see Charles A. Radin, "Muslim Opens Holocaust Museum in Israel," *The Boston Globe*, May 6, 2005, http://archive.boston.com/news/world/middleeast/articles/2005/05/06/muslim_opens_holocaust_museum_in_israel/, accessed January 12, 2020.

⁵⁴ Four years later, Mahameed also held a Holocaust exhibit in the small West Bank village of Naalin to understand Jews' "defense mechanism deriving from [...] the Holocaust." This initiative was heavily criticized too, both by Israelis and Palestinians. For the former, the simultaneous presentation of the Nakba side-by-side to the Holocaust as a way to "explain the Shoah to Palestinians by passing through their own narrative and identity" drew accusations of conflation. Lorenzo Kamel and Daniela Huber, "The De-Threatenization of the Other: An Israeli and a Palestinian Case of Understanding the Other's Suffering," *Peace & Change* 37:3 (2012): 374–376; Roi Mandel, "Naalin Holds Holocaust Exhibit," *Ynet*, January 27, 2009, www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3662822,00.html, accessed January 12, 2020.

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Auschwitz in 2014 by a former professor of Al-Quds University, Mohammed Dajani, resulted in a public dismissal of his “normalization efforts.” As part of a history program, Dajani took twenty-eight students from East Jerusalem and the West Bank to Auschwitz in order to “challenge the denial of the Holocaust, which is both historically and morally wrong and, through a failure to understand the other’s psychic, impedes the peace process.”⁵⁵ While implicit threats had been conveyed to Dajani and the participants prior to the trip, upon the return from Poland, Dajani came under particular scrutiny from the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the university’s faculty who demanded his resignation. The accusation leveled at him was treason and “selling out to the Jews” as he and his students had chosen to study the Holocaust rather than the Palestinian tragedy: the Nakba.⁵⁶

Left-wing Israeli organizations dedicated to exposing their fellow citizens to the Nakba find themselves accused of the same perfidious conduct. Zochrot (Hebrew: remembering), an Israeli NGO established in 2002 amidst the ongoing turmoil of the Second Intifadah to raise awareness of the Nakba among the broad Israeli-Jewish public, has been accused of conducting “anti-Israeli” and “traitorous activities” equal to “commemorating [the] pain of Nazi casualties.”⁵⁷ Objections to the dissemination of the Palestinian narrative have not remained confined to the public (media) sphere;⁵⁸ rather, as will be discussed in Chapters 2 and 4 of this work, appointed officials have attempted to thwart the Nakba’s invocation among Israeli-Jews and Palestinians living inside Israel. In 2001, the minister of education, Limor Livnat, declared that she was considering awarding extra funding to “Arab schools” that were considered “loyal to the state.” One of the ways in which schools

⁵⁵ Interview conducted with Mohammed Dajani on March 17, 2016.

⁵⁶ William Booth, “Palestinian University Students’ Trip to Auschwitz Causes Uproar,” *The Washington Post*, April 12, 2014, www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/palestinian-university-students-trip-to-auschwitz-causes-uproar/2014/04/12/c162ba42-c27d-11e3-9ee7-02c1e10a03f0_story.html?hpid=z5, accessed March 10, 2016.

⁵⁷ Jo Roberts, *Contested Land, Contested Memory: Israel’s Jews and Arabs and the Ghosts of Catastrophe* (Toronto, ON: Dundurn Press, 2013), 227. Also see Itamar Inbari, “The Palestinian Nakba Is Coming to the Streets of Israel,” *NRG/Ma’ariv*, May 14, 2007, www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART1/581/574.html, accessed September 6, 2017; Eitan Bronstein, “Im Tirtzu Targets Zochrot for Promoting the Return of Palestinian Refugees,” *Zochrot*, <http://zochrot.org/en/article/53843>, accessed September 6, 2017.

⁵⁸ For another example, see a 2018 report by *Haaretz*, which found that Israel’s art scene has made conscious efforts to whitewash the Nakba by refusing to use the term – or any terminology which would indicate “the ‘catastrophe’ endured by the Palestinians” – to ensure the “erasure of consciousness that Israel is forcing upon the Palestinians.” Rona Sela, “Israel’s Art Scene Is Whitewashing the Nakba,” *Haaretz*, December 28, 2018, www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-israel-s-art-scene-is-whitewashing-the-nakba-1.6787625?=&ts=1547149605080, accessed January 10, 2019.