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From the Rivers to the Seas: On the Politics of Inter/Nationalism and Solidarity with Palestine

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ABSTRACT

This roundtable, recorded in June 2025, highlights emerging scholarship on inter/nationalist solidarities with Palestine. It brings together emerging scholars in the fields of Indigenous studies, Asian American studies, and Pacific studies to document longer intellectual and activist genealogies of solidarity with and between Oceania, Asian/American, and the Palestinian diaspora. At the same time, this panel examines the larger inter/nationalist politics of settler institutions (i.e., the UN) and the collusions between North American and Israeli states to unpack the ongoing need to continue to articulate a transnational critique and analysis in the ongoing fight against genocide in Palestine.

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Introduction

Katherine Achacoso

Marajaw karajaw. I am joining you today on the lands of the Treaty of the Dish with One Spoon, on Anishinaabe, Huron-Wendat, and Haudenosaunee confederacy lands in Tkaronto (colonially known as “Toronto”). I want to begin by saying salamat karajaw (thanks so much) to the panelists for agreeing to gather in this time and space to think through inter/nationalist solidarities with Palestine.

As of today, June 12, 2025, it has been 614 days since Israel’s latest escalation of yet another genocidal massacre. These past twenty months have been filled with unfathomable violence and inhumanity. From the persistent enforcement of carceral borders that prevent Palestinian communities from seeking refuge in the sea and surrounding lands, to the denial of basic medical aid, food, and resources, to the destruction of Palestinian schools and 90 percent of Gaza’s residential housing, to the ongoing militarized attacks and bombing used to end Palestinian life. I am constantly reminded of Palestinian American Noura Erakat’s words that we are witnessing the persistent threat to Palestinian futures through this genocidal war on Palestinian land and sovereignty.

I want to pause here to hold space to note that there is unfathomable grief in this, of course, for Palestinians living through this ongoing war and terror, but also for those of us

witnessing this genocide in real time. Over the last two years, I have taught at two institutions, Dartmouth College and Vancouver Island University, working predominantly with Native students who see so clearly and hold the grief of the linkages between U.S., Canadian, and Israeli settler colonialism and these shared objectives to eliminate Native life. At the same time, an impetus of this forum was witnessing within various classrooms, but also more broadly across Turtle Island and Oceania, this new generation of students who have been approaching these issues with such a sense of clarity and fire in their fight for Palestine and futures beyond these settler states. From everyday conversations in the classrooms, to expanding the BDS campaign calling out our institutions' complicit investment in fueling the war on Palestine, to occupying administration offices demanding accountability, to marching the streets, to speaking in unprecedented solidarity with Palestine amidst the abductions of students, to the university encampments in 2024, to bodies of scholarship that are tracing recent and longer anti-imperialist legacies of internationalist solidarities with Palestine, I am constantly in awe of the ways this next generation continues to teach me of the decolonial potentiality of building reciprocal relationalities to reimagine more radical futures.

This forum featuring student activist perspectives on inter/nationalist politics carves space to highlight these emerging voices in hopes of mapping developing debates on the politics of internationalism. Inter/nationalism, a term coined initially by Steven Salaita, has been so key to student movements and so helpful in thinking about how other anti-imperialist and Indigenous movements might inform this contemporary moment. This forum aims to map longer genealogies of anti-imperialist and trans-Indigenous solidarities, and to articulate contemporary organizing and visions for decolonial futurities beyond the deathmaking project of these settler states. It also provides a transcribed historical record of our perspectives and views in this contemporary moment of navigating the grief and rage of this ongoing genocide.

Editorial Note: The views and opinions expressed in the following forum represent the perspectives of the individual authors.

“Long live the victory of people’s war”: Tracing Third Worldist visions of Asian American/Palestinian solidarity through I Wor Kuen

Sarah Halabe

In September 1970, the Asian American Marxist-Leninist-Maoist group I Wor Kuen (IWK) published a column in their newspaper *Getting Together* in which they declared support for the Palestinian Liberation Front to “throw the Zionists out and liberate their homeland.”¹ This explicit and public declaration of support for Palestinian resistance against Israeli occupation was quite rare for an Asian American group at the time, despite the Asian American Movement’s (AAM) overlying commitment to transnational solidarity and anti-imperialist struggle. This presentation identifies IWK as a Maoist, Third Worldist model of Asian American-Palestinian solidarity. Although Palestine and Arab issues in general were not a central concern of either IWK or the Asian American Movement, a close analysis of how IWK theorized the Palestinian struggle can offer insight into the central role of internationalism in the AAM, as well as expand the geographies of internationalism as we typically trace them in Asian American studies. Moreover, I explore how IWK negotiated the relationship between theory and praxis in its intervention in the narrative war surrounding “the U.S.-Israel special relationship.”

In the wake of the ongoing genocide in Gaza, it is extremely urgent to seek out usable historical frameworks of Asian American-Palestinian solidarity. What, specifically, this looks like in terms of theoretical and material application, though, remains opaque. This project highlights the ways that IWK articulated Asian American liberation in the U.S. as directly tied to both socialism and liberation movements happening across Asia and elsewhere. Moreover, I hope to not only underline how the internationalism of the AAM extended to Palestine, but theorize the ways in which the very idea of Third World internationalism shifts when we center Palestine within it.

I Wor Kuen, which translates into “Righteous and Harmonious Fists,” was an Asian American Marxist-Leninist-Maoist organization founded in 1969 with the aim to “fight for the total self-determination of the Asian people in Chinatown.”² IWK existed independently for two years until 1971, when it merged with the Red Guard party and expanded from New York City to San Francisco. Its members were primarily second-generation Chinese Americans radicalized by the debilitating poverty and disenfranchisement of the people of Chinatown, where terrible conditions produced the highest rates of tuberculosis and suicide in the country. Heavily inspired by the Young Lords and the Black Panther Party, IWK published a 12-point platform with a list of demands to “fight for freedom and justice against the rulers of this country” (Figure 1). The platform states,

We have tried the peaceful means of court, petition, voting, and even demonstration. But our situation remained the same. We are not free. We want to improve the living conditions of our people and are preparing to defend our communities against repression and for revolutionary armed war against the gangsters, businessmen, politicians, and police.

The image of the AK-47—a visual icon of the late ‘60s and a frequently recurring motif in *Getting Together*—complements the militancy of the text as they jointly encompass IWK’s revolutionary aspirations. They were one of a handful of radical political organizations during this period that adhered to Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thinking, and they believed that the single greatest solution to Chinatown’s disenfranchisement (and the oppression of people of color in the United States more broadly) was a socialist revolution. They implemented a broad range of community support initiatives, including door-to-door tuberculosis testing, legal counseling, childcare, and free food programs. In this way, they very much represented the “serve the people” spirit of the Asian American Movement. What set them apart was their militancy in their demand for community control and their belief that only a socialist uprising could liberate Asians and other oppressed groups in America.

IWK’s ideology can be viewed in terms of a three-pronged approach, with the first being their adherence to Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought and the second being a deep commitment to grassroots community work. What this paper seeks to highlight is the third prong: an internationalist politics that paid close attention to anti-imperial, anti-colonial struggles happening around the world. In this sense, IWK was very much a product of the moment: in 1968, the proliferation of global national liberation movements fundamentally reshaped how Third World people within the United States saw themselves in relation to larger structures of capitalism, imperialism, and militarism.³

Getting Together (GT) was published bi-monthly between the years of 1970 and 1978, and a large portion of every issue was devoted to major events happening in the Third World. The first ever instance of GT referencing Palestine occurs in September 1970

I WOR KUEN

12 Point Platform and Program

Asian people in Amerika have been continually oppressed by the greedy, traitorous gangsters of our own communities and by the wider racist exploitative Amerikan society. We have been bombarded by the media (newspapers, T.V., radio and schools) with false ideas about how we should accept our position in this society. They have tried to brainwash us and have even coerced us into going overseas and fighting against our own people in S.E. Asia.

But, Asian Amerikans have been fighting back against the oppression of this country ever since we first tasted the bitterness of Amerika's racism and exploitation. The long and heroic history of the Asian American struggle inspired and strengthened us in our purpose. No longer can we endure these oppressive conditions. We cannot let our ancestors' struggles go down in vain. We know who are our real enemies and friends and we have found new strength for we are joining our sisters and brothers within this country and around the world to fight for freedom and justice against the rulers of this country.

We have tried the peaceful means of petition, courts, voting and even demonstrations. But our situation remained the same. We are not free.

We want to improve the living conditions of our people and are preparing to defend our communities against repression and for revolutionary armed war against the gangsters, businessmen, politicians and police. When a government oppresses the people and no longer serves the needs of the people, we have the right to abolish it and create a new one.

We are working for a world of peace, where the needs of the people come first, which is without class distinctions and is based upon the love and unity of all peoples.

The following 12 points are what we are fighting for:

- 1. WE WANT SELF-DETERMINATION FOR ASIAN AMERICANS.**
The masses of Asian people in Amerika live in ghettos which are like small colonies. The Amerikan capitalists continually attempt to make profit off us by trying to alter our entire way of life for their own benefit. We want liberation from this enslavement so we can determine our own destinies.
- 2. WE WANT SELF-DETERMINATION FOR ALL ASIANS.**
Western imperialists have been invading and colonizing countries in Asia for the past 500 years. Amerikan imperialism, concentrating in Asia is now engaged in the most sadistic and genocidal war of aggression the world has ever seen. We want an immediate end to Amerikan imperialism.
- 3. WE WANT LIBERATION OF ALL THIRD WORLD PEOPLES AND OTHER OPPRESSED PEOPLES.**
People of color, Asian, Black, Brown, Red are all fighting for liberation from Amerika's racist oppression. Millions and millions of white people are also rising up to fight our common oppressor. We recognize that only when the oppression of all people is ended can we all really be free.
- 4. WE WANT AN END TO MALE CHAUVINISM AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION.**
The thousands of years of oppression under feudalism and capitalism have created institutions and myths of male supremacy over women. Man must fight along with sisters in the struggle for economic and social equality and must recognize that sisters make up over half of the revolutionary army. Sisters and brothers are equals fighting for our people.
- 5. WE WANT COMMUNITY CONTROL OF OUR INSTITUTIONS AND LAND.**
Those institutions in our communities such as the police, schools, health, housing, transportation, sanitation, anti-pollution, and welfare must be controlled by and serve the needs of our people and not be geared to the making of money. We want an end to our community being used to make profit for outsiders, such as slumlords and tourist agencies.
- 6. WE WANT AN EDUCATION WHICH EXPOSES THE TRUE HISTORY OF WESTERN IMPERIALISM IN ASIA AND AROUND THE WORLD: WHICH TEACHES US THE HARDSHIPS AND STRUGGLES OF OUR ANCESTORS IN THIS LAND AND WHICH REVEALS THE TRULY DECADENT EXPLOITATIVE NATURE OF AMERIKAN SOCIETY.**
The Amerikan imperialists have tried to justify their world empire by covering up the inhuman deeds they perpetrated in Asia and to the rest of the Third World. They also try to brainwash us in school with racist history which does not tell of the degradation, oppression and humiliation Asians and other Third World People have been forced to suffer in Amerika. We want to learn of the heroic and inspiring struggles Asian people have conducted throughout the world as well as in Amerika.
- 7. WE WANT DECENT HOUSING AND HEALTH AND CHILD CARE.**
The institutions of housing, health and child care are set up only to make money for landlords, doctors, hospitals and drug companies. We want housing, health and child care that gives us life and not slow death.
- 8. WE WANT FREEDOM FOR ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS AND ALL ASIANS.**
Our Asian brothers and sisters in Amerika's racist jails should be set free for they were not tried by their peers (other Asian brothers and sisters). Political prisoners are jailed because they fought for their freedom and basic rights as human beings. They all must be set free.
- 9. WE WANT AN END TO THE AMERIKAN MILITARY.**
The Amerikan military machine is butchering people throughout the world, especially in Asia. The end of the Amerikan military will be one of the greatest events in the history of the liberation of mankind. We want all Asian Amerikans exempt from military servitude.
- 10. WE WANT AN END TO RACISM.**
White racism has been oppressing Third World People for the past 500 years. Although we recognize and firmly support the progressive white people in the anti-imperialist struggle, we should continue to struggle against white racism on all levels. The racism among Third World People toward each other is being broken down and a new unity is being created in our struggle against our common enemy.
- 11. WE WANT AN END TO THE GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES OF AMERIKA.**
From its beginning, Amerika has been a robber country. It stole land by the use of armed force from native Americans, Chicanos and Latinos, and other peoples. Amerika can now only maintain its present boundaries both internally and externally by the threat and use of violence. We want free passage of all people to and from Amerika. The people of the world have built Amerika, and they must now determine its destiny. Amerika has also tried to blind those who live here as to the realities of socialism by restricting information from and travel to the People's Republic of China, Cuba, Albania, North Korea, and North Vietnam. We want open boundaries and an end to immigration and emigration harassment.
- 12. WE WANT A SOCIALIST SOCIETY.**
What exists in Amerika today is a society where one man in order to survive must exploit his fellow man. We want a society that works for the fulfillment of human needs. We want decent housing, health, child care, employment, sanitation and old age care. We want a society where no man or woman will die due to lack of food, medical care or housing, where each gives according to his ability and takes according to his need.



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Figure 1. "12 Point Platform and program," *Getting Together* Vol. 1, No. 5 (September-October 1970). Courtesy of the UC Berkeley Ethnic Studies Library.



Figure 2. *Getting Together* Vol. 1 No. 5 (September-October 1970). Courtesy of the UC Berkeley Ethnic Studies Library.

when they reported on Arab governments' condemnation of the Rogers Plan following the Six Day War (Figure 2). The article concludes: "We must resolutely support the just struggle of the Palestinian and Arab people to the end. Long live the victory of People's War!"⁴ Notably, the phrase "Long live the victory of People's War!" was frequently reprinted throughout *Getting Together* in reference to liberation struggles in Taiwan, Vietnam, Laos, and other countries. The repetition of this phrase demonstrates how IWK saw the Palestinian national liberation movement as constitutively linked with other struggles happening throughout Indochina. It is this linkage—articulated through a global discourse of political solidarity—which constitutes the vision of Asian American/Palestinian solidarity that IWK espoused. This is further reflected in their coverage of local protests (Figure 3); *Getting Together* amplified Bay Area protests and articulated how the community was making global anti-imperial connections. The 1973 issue covered a San Francisco protest in which community members chanted "From Vietnam to Palestine, one struggle, many fronts." This protest was one of a plethora of actions that reflected local resonances of the rising global New Left framework of which IWK was a part. As such, IWK's public support of Palestine was deeply exceptional in

From Vietnam to Palestine- ONE STRUGGLE, MANY FRONTS



ENTHUSIASTIC CROWD DEMONSTRATES SUPPORT FOR THE RIGHT OF THE PALESTINIANS TO THEIR HOMELAND

Five days after the Middle East War erupted over 300 people picketed in front of the Israeli consulate. Representatives from the Organization of Arab Students, Iranian Student Association, Liberation Support Movement, October League, Revolutionary Union, and Yenon Bookstore met only three days before to plan the demonstration and united around three issues. These supported (1) the right of the Palestinians to their homeland "for a democratic, non-religious, non-racist state where Jews and Arabs can live together, (2) the right of the Egyptians and Syrians to their occupied lands, (3) and no U.S. interference in the Middle East. All imperialists out of the Middle East. The Israeli Consulate (which is located in the S.F. financial district) drew a large audience of office workers. Some secretaries and businessmen joined in the picket, chanting "Long live Palestine," "Down, down with Zionism," "U.S.A.: Stay Away," "Golan for Syria, Sinai for Egypt," and "From Vietnam to Palestine, one struggle, many fronts."

The supporters proceeded to a Market Street plaza where there were speeches

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Peralta Community College, written by some students involved in the struggle there. Ed. note)

North Peralta Community College, better known as Grove Street College (and previously known as Merritt College) has been in the forefront of developing the concept of progressive education in community colleges. Some of the programs that have been outstanding in the history of North Peralta Community College are as follows: ethnic studies programs, relevant and contemporary studies (i.e., Revolutionary Studies), child care for children of the students, book loans and free meals, and educational programs for prisoners.

Presently, in this country there is a crisis ensuing over such educational developments and directions. North Peralta Community College is an example of such attempts to stop any headway which has been gained in the field of community-oriented educational values and attitudes.

In 1965 the citizens of the Peralta Junior College District, including Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland and Piedmont, passed a \$47 million bond issue to build four colleges for the six-city area. Berkeley voted overwhelmingly (4 to 1) for the bond, yet now, 6 years later, three colleges have been built, but NOT for Berkeley! The northern communities are still without a college except for the North Peralta College (at 57th Street in North Oakland) which the Board of Trustees for the Peralta district community colleges is

Figure 3. *Getting Together* Vol. 4, No. 20 (October 1973). Courtesy of the UC Berkeley Ethnic Studies Library.

the sense that they were one of, or perhaps the only, Asian American organization to do so at the time, but deeply unexceptional in the sense that they were committed overall to an internationalist politic which championed anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggles throughout the Third World.

An April 1978 issue of *Getting Together* further demonstrates how IWK continually put the events in Palestine within a global context. Following Israel's violent seizure of southern Lebanon, *GT* published an article on the worldwide outrage quoting top officials from Egypt, Tunisia, Pakistan, Korea, and more. They wrote, "The U.S. and the Soviet Union each see Israel as a useful tool to further its own ambitions to dominate the Middle East."⁵ By providing this contextual analysis, IWK was not just promoting an Asian American/Palestinian solidarity, but a larger Third Worldist solidarity that opposed both Israeli and American imperial aggression and promoted the liberty and self-determination of all Arab people oppressed under Zionism.

This 1978 issue is one of many instances in which IWK attempted to change the hegemonic narrative around Israel's status as a peaceful democracy and specifically highlight the depravity of the "U.S.-Israel special relationship." As we have witnessed the genocide unfold in Gaza over the past two years, it has become abundantly clear how mainstream Western media manufactures consent by portraying the conflict in reductive or

explicitly manipulative terms. The media narratives were similarly ahistorical throughout the '70s, and *GT* worked tirelessly to reframe them and place the events in Palestine within a specific political context. When they covered the Yom Kippur War of 1973, *GT* wrote

The U.S. has begun resupplying Israel and the U.S. 6th fleet in the Mediterranean has doubled in strength since the fighting began The possibility of direct U.S. military intervention in the Middle East conflict is very real. However, most American people know very little about the reasons for the conflict in the Middle East. Over half of the people interviewed in a Gallup poll conducted immediately after the fighting began had no opinion on the war. The conflict in the Middle East has always been characterized as an Arab-Israeli conflict. The American people have heard stories about the Arabs “wanting to push the Jews into the sea.” But the roots of the conflict have its origin in the Palestinian struggle against Zionism. In order to fully address the Middle East crisis it is necessary to address the Palestine question.⁶

GT continually educated its readers on Zionism and brought the discussion back to Zionism when they were covering the unfolding events in the Middle East. They reprinted a blurb on “The Palestine Question” in multiple issues that reads:

The Palestine question is a major question today, and just like the war in Indochina, the conflict in the Middle East is completely the result of imperialist policies of aggression. From its very beginning, Zionism has conducted crimes against the Palestinian people. It is in this perspective that today's events in the Middle East become more understandable.⁷

IWK worked tirelessly to produce a distinct framework for understanding the Palestine issue, one that worked against the liberal “competing nationalisms” narrative, as well as the “competing religions” claims that upheld Zionist supremacy. They were continually reckoning with Zionism as a colonial project interconnected with capitalism and imperialism. Thus, while they could not materially participate in guerilla fighting for Palestinian freedom, they committed themselves to fighting a narrative war back home.

It's important to note that IWK's emphasis on education around the Palestine issue aligned with other U.S.-based groups that espoused an anti-Zionist, anti-imperialist ideology during this period. In 1967 the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee famously published their “Third World Roundup” on the Palestine problem to tremendous pushback. Within this issue, they demanded that their readers “Test Their Knowledge” and challenge their preconceptions around the Israel-Palestine conflict. Notably, in writing these articles, “Third World Roundup” and *Getting Together* both drew from similar source material: SNCC credits the Palestine Research Center and IWK credits the Arab League of New York City. The Palestine Research Center and Arab League worked closely throughout the 1970s and 1980s with the former being the official research arm of the PLO. This shared source material is clear when you read the articles side by side, which feature close similarities in tone, framing, and language. These textual intimacies, constituted through source material, are extremely important insofar as they constitute a transnational textual circulation—a global discourse of political solidarity—between the anticolonial horizons of the Black and Asian American liberation struggles and Palestinian knowledge production. I wish to highlight this circulation in order to triangulate a Third Worldist vision of Asian American-Black-Palestinian solidarity that was conceived of and born through the articulation of national liberation struggles in print media.

I conclude this essay with the thorny question of how to adapt historical frameworks of Asian American-Black-Palestinian solidarity to our contemporary moment of the ongoing

genocide in Gaza. As scholars, it is equal parts soothing and exciting to discover these archival traces and know that these visions of solidarity have been practiced before. But what actual tactical strategies can we take from the '70s and put into use today? Rigorous theoretical critiques often feel like a gesture toward liberation until I open social media and see images of utter, catastrophic violence: an arm protruding from a pile of rubble; parents clutching the bloodied, lifeless bodies of their children; a row of tents on fire; smoke rising in eerie, symmetrical plumes. In these moments, I am reminded of the limits of theory and that no amount of communal political education will stop the bombs that are falling in this exact moment. It is with this knowledge of the insufficiency of academic work that we move forward regardless. The tactics that worked in the '70s cannot be copy-and-pasted to today; for one thing, the political economy is completely different. As IWK's 12-point program eloquently shows, they were responding to debilitating poverty and the failure of the welfare state. In 2025, instead of the welfare state, we have neoliberalism and the rise of authoritarian fascism. If we are to adapt frameworks, we must first take into account the material conditions of the present moment.

The internationalist makings of the Zionist entity

Maisaloon Al-Ashkar

Salaam! My name is Maisaloon Al-Ashkar. I'm the granddaughter of Palestinian orange and olive tree farmers, with lineages from the river to the sea. I was born in Jordan and grew up in so-called Vancouver.

The paper I'm presenting today is from my master's research,⁸ where I look at internationalism as used and abused by imperial forces, such as the United Nations' role in making possible the conversion of the settler colonial state of Isra*l from a fictional territorial aspiration to a material operation. I want to add a quick note that Palestinians don't even acknowledge Isra*l when we speak about the occupation in Arabic. We often say "al-kayan al-sahyoony," which means "the Zionist entity." And so that's the term I'll be using.

While the escalated genocidal persecution of Palestinian people in Gaza persists, many are either shocked by the United Nations' uselessness or continue to look to the UN to sweep in and save the day. Examining the track record of this institution, however, indicates that it has historically and continually proven to be a disservice to liberation struggles, especially when the subjects of said struggle are colonized and not white. Here, I look at the UN's role in materializing the Zionist entity, as part of understanding the Zionist project as an internationalist one that ought to be resisted as such.

In his groundbreaking analysis of Zionist literature, originally published in Arabic in 1967 and translated into English in 2022, the Palestinian martyr and icon Ghassan Kanafani takes us to a text published as early as 1833 to trace how the Zionist entity was invented in works of fiction and normalized in literature over time before it became a material settler colonial operation. As Kanafani writes, "[a]ll that this study hopes to achieve is to shed new light on that exacting principle: know your enemy."⁹ In this same vein, the purpose here is to understand the Zionist-imperialist enemy's tactics as part of considering what it means to organize an international community that centers those who bear the brunt of imperial violence.

The Sykes-Picot Agreement, also known as the Asia Minor Agreement, was conducted in secrecy in 1916 between Britain and France. Among the material outcomes of the territorial divisions outlined in this Agreement was the British Empire's occupation of Palestine

through the Mandate System from 1917 to 1948, which emerged through the League of Nations after World War I. The founding of the League of Nations marks a key point of imperial internationalism in recent history when we see mainly European powers working together to strategize on how to divide lands in other continents they are colonizing in order to expand their imperial projects, while preventing in-fighting among themselves. That process of dividing up lands was precisely what the Mandate System did. As a result, this Agreement partitioned the so-called Middle East between France and Britain after World War I, creating the current borders of many countries in the region. In the case of Palestine, which was assigned to the British, the mandate system also streamlined the transfer of the occupation of Palestine from British rule to Zionist rule. There is a long history we can trace in terms of the collusion between the British empire and the Zionist project, but one pivotal precursor I want to point to in terms of this collusion through the mandate system is the fact that only a year after the Sykes-Picot Agreement was signed in secrecy, Arthur Balfour officiated Britain's allegiance to the creation of the Zionist nation-state in 1917 in a letter addressed to the head of the Zionist Federation in Britain, which is also known as the Balfour Declaration. In the three decades to follow, the British used this mandate period to set up the infrastructures that would enable Zionist settlements and streamline the transfer of Palestine to the Zionist entity as promised in the Balfour Declaration.

The UN replaced the League of Nations after World War II and, as many have pointed out, it still carries out the same legacy in terms of sustaining imperial interests. It is no coincidence, then, that the official implanting of the Zionist entity on the map was among the UN's immediate priorities when it was established in 1945. Only two years later, the Partition Plan outlined in UN Resolution 181 ratified the creation of a Jewish ethno-state in Palestine. In fact, the UN's Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was adopted by the General Assembly in 1948 within the same year of the Nakba, during which the Zionist settler colonial state was established through the ethnic cleansing of Palestinian villages to steal their lands.

Again, this overlap is not a coincidence, especially when we consider the UN's threshold for whose humanity it counts. And so, I want to draw our attention to 1951, when the Civil Rights Congress, with the legal leadership of African American lawyer and activist William L. Patterson, took the UN's international law apparatus to task a few years after the Genocide Convention was adopted by putting forth a petition to charge the U.S. government with genocide. This petition is called *We Charge Genocide*, and I want to acknowledge the origin of this phrase in Black struggle, given that this chant has been taken up recently at demonstrations for Palestine. This groundbreaking petition provides a thorough archive and clear record of state violence, detailing accounts of brutal atrocities committed by the United States government against Black citizens. The UN's unresponsiveness to this petition, however, spoke volumes and is among the early glaring markers of its allegiance to the imperial world order. The disregard for this petition, along with the endorsement of the creation of the Zionist entity, which necessarily meant the genocide of Palestinians, reveals that, since its inception, the UN has contributed to expanding the internationalist strategy of the imperial world order.

I now want to briefly touch on an example of the UN's financing of the Zionist settler colonial state under the guise of humanitarian aid. The joint efforts of the World Bank and USAID funded the infrastructures of the Zionist occupation, which made possible the construction of the apartheid wall, segregated roads, and checkpoints that further

fragmented Palestinian peoples and lands. It also made possible the Gaza disengagement plan that resulted in the besiegement of Palestinians in an open-air concentration camp, which Dr. Omar Jabary Salamanca wrote about in a 2016 article that explained that “[h]umanitarian rhetoric not only defines the current stage of colonial occupation, it also becomes an instrument to normalize the project.”¹⁰ This context is essential to understanding the UN’s role not only in legally enabling and normalizing the Zionist entity on a global scale, but also in funding and materially actualizing it.

Although I use Palestine as my focal point of engagement, the contentions I bring forth with the UN do not begin or end with my homelands. In an article published in 2020, Dr. Jemima Pierre,¹¹ for instance, details an archive of the ongoing occupation in Haiti since 2004 with the official commencement of the MINUSTAH mandate and continued meddling funded by the U.S.A. and the UN, the same culprits funding the Zionist occupation addressed earlier. The enabling of imperial violence under the guise of international humanitarianism is not an exception to Palestine but a recurring function of the UN.

Again, if we take seriously Black liberation as a gauge for the effectiveness of an institution that claims to promote world peace, then the UN failed from the onset when it disregarded the *We Charge Genocide* petition in 1951. In the context of Palestine, in addition to legalizing the Zionist entity and helping actualize its genocidal project, the UN has also played a key role in popularizing Zionist talking points through the misrepresentation of the Zionist occupation as the so-called “Israeli-Arab conflict.” In fact, al-thawabet translates to “the constants” and outlines key red lines of the Palestinian national liberation movement. An important moment for the consolidation of al-thawabet unfolded in 1977 during the 13th session of the Palestine National Council (PNC), in response to UN Security Council Resolution 242 that ratified this skewed narrative of the Zionist colonial occupation as a conflict. I encourage folks to check out the whole document, but I retrieved the following key points from the minutes of this meeting’s proceedings to summarize the internationalist orientations of this consolidation:

The Council stresses that [...] Security Council Resolution 242 ignores the Palestinian people and their inalienable rights, and therefore the Council reaffirms its rejection of this resolution and of action taken on the basis of it, at either the Arab or international levels

[...]

The Council resolves to intensify Arab struggle and solidarity on the basis of anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist struggle and of action for the liberation of all occupied Arab territories, and in support of the Revolution in recovering the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian Arab people, without peace or recognition of Israel

[...]

The Council stresses the necessity of consolidating cooperation and solidarity with the socialist countries, the non-aligned states, the Islamic states, the African states and with all national liberation movements in the world.¹²

I will end here for now because I think al-thawabet’s focus on solidarity and joint struggle signifies the longstanding tradition within the Palestinian liberation movement to apply an internationalist analysis and strategy, both in terms of how we understand the Zionist entity and how we resist it. In this vein, while the Zionist entity is an outpost of the imperial world order, Palestine is a fortress for decolonial struggles fighting to break free from that order.

Pae ‘āina to Palestine: U.S. Imperialism, settler colonialism and solidarity

‘Ihilani Lasconia

I’ve been a member of Students and Faculty for Justice in Palestine (SFJP) at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa since 2018 (Figure 4). I’m a graduate student in Indigenous politics but my background in undergrad is ethnic studies, and I earned my master’s degree in education. What really brought me into this struggle for Palestine is my intellectual mo‘okū‘auhau (genealogy). For me, having the privilege to learn ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, or Hawaiian language, to understand Hawaiian sovereignty and our movements for liberation, the kumu or the teachers that I’ve had were always talking about Palestine or Palesetina in relation to our movement struggles. Whether that be teachers such as Haunani-Kay Trask, Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, or Jamaica Heoli Osorio, thinking about our liberation as being in tandem and bound to the freedom of other people, especially in Palestine, was always a part of my intellectual genealogy.

In my dissertation research, I look at historical and contemporary connections between Hawai‘i and Palestine. I also use creative mediums such as hip hop, spoken word, and rap to document that this history and this legacy of solidarity aren’t anything new, but that these iterations of pilina, or relationship, are continuing to be built.

One of the most important reflections that I would like to share in terms of what motivates me to do this work is from July 2019 on Mauna Kea, when Kanaka Maoli were taking a stand to protect our most sacred mountain. A top that mountain there were Palestinians who showed up as part of a delegation who flew the hae Palestine, or the Palestinian flag, on our mauna. And there were even folks in Palestine who held signs for us. There’s a mural describing our movement all the way in Palestine. So, for me, being Kanaka Maoli, and understanding the severity of these struggles and knowing that the solidarity continues, inspires me to take up this honorable struggle.

I’d like to very briefly discuss some historical connections between Hawai‘i and Palestine. These examples are not exhaustive, but important to share in the context of



Figure 4. Film screening of Jumana Manna’s film “Foragers,” hosted by the students and faculty for Justice in Palestine at the University of Hawai‘i. Left to right: Mahina Kaomea, Jumana Manna, ‘Ihilani Lasconia. Courtesy of the author.

this work. In the 1800s, Lahainaluna, which was the first college in the Hawaiian Kingdom, had various palapala ‘āina, or maps documenting Palestine (Palestina). So the map pictured here (Figure 5) is just one of many maps we had, and, as you can see, we had names for mauna or mountains and rivers in Palestine all in ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i. For me, having these palapala, or these maps in ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, is a testament to the relationship that we had to Palestine. For Kanaka Maoli, our relationship to ‘āina is evoked through naming, so this was just one incredible example of how this relationship with Palestine is nothing new.

Another of my favorite examples of this pilina is “He Mele Kanikau No Timoteo Haalilio.” A kanikau is considered to be one of the highest forms of Hawaiian composition: it is a chant of lamentation that is composed for someone after they pass. Timoteo Haalilio was crucial to establishing Hawaiian sovereignty and critical to establishing multiple treaties with other nations for the Hawaiian Kingdom. And when he passed, the kanikau names all of these different ‘āina, or these different lands that were so beautiful to him and beautiful to Kanaka Maoli. In one of the last lines at the very bottom, it states “Aloha na waipuna a me na kio wai o Palestina,” acknowledging the rich and beautiful waters of Palestine. Having such a historical figure being acknowledged along with Palestine being acknowledged in that same breath was really amazing for me to learn, and a testament, again, to this relationship and how much respect Kanaka Maoli had for Palestine and Palestinians. And so we’ve seen that this relationship is not new, especially in terms of our education, our maps, our chants.

However, post 1893, when the Hawaiian government was illegally overthrown by haole (white) sugar barons, the imposition of settler jurisdiction radically transformed these traditions and relations. Indeed, after Hawai‘i became a territory of the United States and then a state in 1959, we have seen the emergence of settler colonial and, more specifically, Asian settler jurisdiction and governance, as in the case of the rise of Senator Daniel K. Inouye. For the sake of this presentation, I will not recite his whole history, but what is important is that he was a senator in Hawai‘i, elected in 1953 to the territorial House of Representatives. In 1954, there was a democratic revolution, which for Asian settlers in Hawai‘i was an incredible opportunity that increased their access to social, political, and economic power, after years of experiencing political marginalization as a result of the plantations. This revolution also paved the way for Hawai‘i to eventually become a state in 1959. This process happened with the backdrop of American liberal multicultural ideals being weaponized to push the legitimacy of American democracy on occupied lands. For Kanaka Maoli, this championing of liberal multiculturalism was detrimental because it brought us even further away from Kanaka restoring our kingdom and restoring sovereignty.

Inouye’s legislative career and well-documented support of Israel capture how settler colonialism in Hawai‘i and Palestine are implicated with one another. An American World War II veteran of Japanese descent, Inouye was honored by Israel for his advocacy and was even given a chief of staff medal of appreciation by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). This is undoubtedly because of the tremendous amount of funding Inouye allocated to expanding Israel’s infrastructure. The orchestration of these subsidies largely occurred during his time as chair in the Senate Appropriations Committee. In recognition of his support, there is an Arrow anti-missile facility in Israel that was named after Inouye in 2014. This posthumous dedication is a striking example of how violence endures through the legacy he has created.¹³ News sources from Israel and the U.S. that I found in his congressional papers collections suggest that Israel considered Inouye the absolute best senator and that the creation of Israel as a settler colonial project would not have been possible if it were not for



Figure 5. Kunui, map of holy lands, Plate 4. Palesetina (Lahainaluna, 1840). Courtesy of the Hawaiian missions houses.

Senator Inouye and his support early on.¹⁴ The collection also features a photo of him with Benjamin Netanyahu standing in solidarity, connecting one settler colonial project to the other, using Indigenous peoples as the backbone for their genocidal projects.¹⁵ This history draws striking connections between war and imperialism and settler colonialism. Knowing that many Israeli weapons are manufactured within the United States makes it even more apparent that the United States benefits from this genocide. During RIMPAC or the Rim of the Pacific Games, imperial countries like the United States, Japan, and Israel test these weapons in Hawai‘i, on our ‘āina, on our land. And these weapons, in turn, get used on folks in Palestine and other places throughout the world.

I also wanted to challenge this history and emphasize that resistance has always been present. Kanaka Maoli and Asian settler allies were calling into question Inouye’s support for Israel and talking about Palestine as often as he was advocating for this. There were always people speaking back against this terrible legacy. What we can make of this very brief synopsis is that settler colonialism in Hawai‘i helps to make settler colonialism possible in Palestine. The weapons that are manufactured in the U.S. and tested in our ‘āina are then used to cause real harm to people abroad, even in Palestine. Knowing this, when we envision and fight for our own sovereignty and freedom, it cannot be at other people’s expense.

The Hawaiian Kingdom won’t be free or liberated until Palestine is free, until all oppressed peoples are free. Settler colonialism is so prevalent in Hawai‘i because Asian settlers and white settlers wanted their freedom at the expense of ours. But the truth is that there is no true freedom for anyone under this system, just the ability to incrementally distance yourself from the crushing weight of colonialism. In our struggle for true liberation we must be capacious enough to understand that this structure harms all, and that it will take everyone to dismantle it.

Last but not least, this pilina that Kanaka Maoli and Palestinians have is older than both of our occupations, and together, we’ll be free. Looking at these beautiful images of solidarity (Figures 6 and 7) with the movement to protect and deoccupy Hawai‘i and Palestine, we are reminded that Kanaka Maoli and Palestinians have this deep-seated relationship with one another. We will continue to show up for one another no matter the stakes because we know that the cost may be our lives. It’s ultimately our ‘āina and our kūpuna—the generations to



Figure 6. Sign waving for Palestine in the Spring of 2021. Left to right: Cindy Franklin, ‘Ihilani Lasconia. Courtesy of the author.



Figure 7. Members of Af3irm Hawai'i join demonstration to support Palestine. Left to right starting from top: 'Ihilani Lasconia, Ashley Galacgac, Vanessa Cabilan, Alex Balgos. Courtesy of the author.

follow—that are going to benefit from this sacrifice, and it's because of our kūpuna—our ancestors and elders—that we are able to continue the struggle today. Mahalo.

AI (de)generation and visual cultures of dispossession in transpacific Palestine

Hady Elrafei

I must begin this project with laying bare of the visceral sense of horror from which I approach its objects of analysis. To behold the most recent episode of genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza is horror enough. But in the objects I study here (which can be accessed on *ynet* and Truth Social in the links found in the notes), the aesthetic category of horror attains a new level of satiety, where an endgame of genocide is imagined.

This project examines AI-generated images of Gaza to contend with several existing and emergent technologies of genocidal ideation. The first of two objects is a slide deck leaked by *ynet* in the early months of 2024, in the immediate wake of the October 7, 2023 Operation al-Aqsa Flood.¹⁶ The machine-generated images in the deck, reportedly generated by the Netanyahu administration, imagine the Gaza Strip with a skyline of intricate skyscrapers, highways and rail, sustainable farmland, and lush, decadent greenery.¹⁷ Thoubed businessmen talk shop over the booming electric car industry—the images are throbbing in their aliveness, this Gaza Ideal is often compared visually to the urban utopia of Dubai or even Singapore.¹⁸ This progressive image appears at first glance as one of apartheid, but Stephen Salaita's discussion in *Inter/Nationalism* better situates it in its visual milieu of elimination: "‘Apartheid’ tacitly supersedes ‘settler colonialism,’ which in turn prevents serious understanding of Israel's history or of its present behavior. [...] Viewpoints that raise Israel-Palestine in an apartheid setting elide, even if unintentionally, a proper focus on garrison colonization."¹⁹

The second object is an AI-generated moving image posted to Truth Social by Donald Trump a year later, in late February 2025.²⁰ A dreamlike sequence ideates

over a new, modern Gaza, where the faces of Western oligarchs replace the Native in the utopian stage imagined in the Netanyahu administration slide deck. Propelled forward by punchy theme music, the viewer falls into a tempo of Trump Gaza time, a teleological progression toward economic and symbolic prosperity. Taking visual and aesthetic analysis as its starting point, the project disentangles the speculative storytelling in the state-sanctioned, machine-generated reimaging of Palestine as *tabula rasa*.

Bisected by a rail line with no visible end, the first of the Netanyahu slides captures a still of a breathing modern city. Lush greenery around sharp architecture is tied in visually by outlying sustainable agriculture—both embracing the city in the foreground and embraced by the city in the midground’s pastoral fields, greenness disappears into industry, leaving us only with an oxygen-rich scene of an empire long imagined in its plain satiety. Nature itself, through the artificiality of modernist visual curation, bows to the sleekness of the skyscrapers’ shining surfaces as they arc and reach to the sky. Their pointed slants a field of metallic phalluses, this concrete/jungle extends as far back as the AI algorithm can muster, eventually turning the dots of buildings into plain visual static. The sea continues to capture the AI-generated impressionism that you cannot look at for too long. This, the static, the rail itself transforming into water as the perspective rolls outward—looking too long at the image breaks it. We see the thick clouds parting from the Gazan beach as we run up against the logical limit of the technology used to imagine the land’s dispossession.

Beginning with the role of artificial intelligence in its entanglements in race and the psyche, my examination of “technologies of genocidal ideation” begins in the realm of science and technology studies, with a detour to contemporary psychoanalysis. Ruha Benjamin, in *Race After Technology*, formulates the field of race critical code studies, which “explores not only how emerging technologies hide, speed up, or reinforce racism, but also how race itself is a kind of technology—one designed to separate, stratify, and sanctify the many forms of injustice experienced by members of racialized groups, but one that people routinely reimagine and redeploy to their own ends.”²¹ Taking on Benjamin’s engagement of science and technology studies (STS), Black studies, and critical race studies with regard to image-generative AI, I then move for connections to a rising consciousness in AI that begs the folding in of contemporary psychoanalysis. Bringing Avgi Saketopoulou and her invocation of Édouard Glissant in *Sexuality Beyond Consent* into the conversation, I connect the technology of AI to technologies of colonialism in their set of egoic impulses: “Glissant understands this desire/urge/impulse to capture as being deeply rooted in the tradition of Western philosophical thought and as giving rise to colonial violence.”²² Through this aesthetic-technological-psyhic framework, I better locate the dialectical nature of the settler violence at hand through the invocation of a performance analysis, the embodiment and libidinal excitements both producing and provoked by a Gaza Ideal.

With the discursive and symbolic registers linking these virtual representations of Gaza to Dubai, I look to an analysis of urban and transnational labor flow that links Dubai to Asia. This leads to a larger discussion of infrastructure and human capital through a transpacific lens, where I pull in Jodi Kim’s critique of the transpacific as “at once a differentiated and vexed geocolonial site, method of decolonial critique, and multivalent keyword [...] constituted by ‘distinct yet densely interconnected political geographies’.”²³ These existing transnational structures represent the flows of labor necessary to enact the virtual vision of Gaza, and the execution of these networks calls our attention to the role of

area—"the Middle East," "the Gulf," "the Levant," even "Asia" writ large. By linking the visual cues that will come from an aesthetic analysis, one function of this project is to articulate how the utopian vision of dispossession is animated by a transnational politics of migrant labor and human capital.

The larger aims of this project have to do with an orientation of transpacific studies toward a mode of aesthetic and popular cultural critique. Looking to labor and urban studies, STS, and psychoanalysis as auxiliary streams of a transpacific critique in Palestine, this project lands on a discussion of discourse, popular culture, power, and their intimate encounter with race and sexuality. Engaging work in transpacific studies to call into question how the nature of these images is shaped by and shapes a larger discursive conundrum that produces the Middle East, or the "question" of "Israel/Palestine," this project looks to this gulf-to-Levant motion to incite rage, to provoke, to overwhelm—to cause alarm over a *then* and a *there* from which Gaza is stolen, from which Palestine is stolen.

Because these images are speculative, they can be reread through the challenges presented by aesthetic analysis, urban and labor flows, and militarism. We are met, then, with an image that is by its nature (as speculative) preventable. For instance, Juliet Nebolon and Jodi Kim, respectively, make the case for how these settler projects are, in many ways, defined by continuous failures. Working with Kim's frame of settler colonialism as a process of repeated failure, I read the flaws in the AI-generated images as representing cracks in the larger settler colonial encounter—as Kim puts it:

settler colonialism, and militarist settler imperialism more broadly, is not a *fait accompli* but rather an ensemble of relations that continually requires renovation. As Alyosha Goldstein, Juliana Hu Pegues, and Manu Karuka suggest, it would be productive to consider settler colonialism as a structure of failure.²⁴

Juliet Nebolon takes up this frame by observing that settler colonialism's failure is constituted in the impossibility of its completion: "Settler colonialism is by definition incomplete: even as it desires totality via the social reproduction of the racial, gendered, and economic conditions that fortify it, it by necessity can never be total. [...] That is, every history of conquest, dispossession, and exploitation has produced its own contradictions as well as the conditions of its own challenge and demise."²⁵ Nebolon formulates the frame of settler militarism to understand how state musculature reproduces the same impotence, "banking on its future absolution and regeneration via imperial war and the plundering of others' lands and livelihoods. Settler militarism—which is necessarily entangled with the relations of capitalism—operates in contradiction to the lives and communities it purports to govern."²⁶ That is, settler militarism's internal pressures and contradictions relegate it to the same doom as settler coloniality, in itself inadvertently producing those "conditions for its own demise."²⁷ I want this to contour how we see broken moments of static in these speculative images. By viewing Indigeneity *a priori* as either subordinate or subjectifiable to its whims, the state crafts in itself a blind spot—one that will be its hubris, and one that, I argue, is opened to us in an engagement of the queer aesthetic methods that a transpacific lens enables.

In this moment, it absolutely cannot be dangerously suggested that settler colonialism and the Zionist project will simply fall on their own; rather, this project calls our attention to the static—an entropic politics of staying, one invested in a haptics and aesthetics that

supersede normative frames of space, represented by the nation.²⁸ In fact, such a charge demands active disruption. Perhaps it can be thought of, through José Esteban Muñoz, as contrapuntal to critical utopianism. “It is productive to think about utopia as flux,” he writes, “a temporal disorganization, as a moment when the here and the now is transcended by a *then* and a *there* that could be and indeed should be.”²⁹ By presenting a simulation of a *then* and a *there* that must be avoided at all costs, this moment asks for dynamic strategies of disruption that are devoid of telos, devoid of narratives of progress, and devoid of the politics of pragmatism that Muñoz critiques at the top of and throughout *Cruising Utopia*, “because pragmatism has only ever failed us.”³⁰ Static then emerges as a meaningful way of holding the aesthetic weight of these images, questioning and dismantling their popular register, and equipping us to resist and destroy the ideology upon which these genocidal images are machined. Then, the critical utopian project swings back—in favor of a *then* and a *there* where Gaza and Palestine are free.

Q&A

Katherine: Salamat karajaw for these awesome presentations! I want to begin our discussion today just outlining some important themes I’ve noted as you folks shared your works. First and foremost, Sarah and ‘Thi, thank you for sharing such important archives. I think there are ways in which the recent activism that has emerged in the aftermath of October 2023 has often been described as an exceptional time of solidarity and internationalism, but I was just so in awe of these archives from Asian American and Kanaka Maoli communities tracing these longer histories of internationalism. Particularly as we continue to reflect on what it might look like to be in good relation with one another, I appreciated learning about these anti-imperialist and trans-Indigenous archives that remind us that these communities have recognized one another before, even as we are still struggling to understand what being in good relation today might look like.

Then, Maisaloon, thank you for providing us with an alternative lens to think critically about transnational and imperialist projects that have underpinned histories of war and empire in Palestine. As I was listening to you, I was thinking a lot about how the constellation of empires you mapped through the UN and various settler states reminds of why we’re seeing all around the world people standing up for Palestine because the ongoing genocide in Palestine insists on us remembering that the issue persists across settler borders, that we must have this kind of transnational critique in order to understand how we’re going to be free because our struggles are so intimately connected via our colonizers and collective visions for liberation. Lastly, Hady, ending with your presentation reflecting on futurity reminded me that as you point out while settler futurities are often represented as inevitable, these iterations of settler aesthetics and desires of settler futures are actually examples of the fragility of empire and the fear empire has of our collective resistance. I think today, as these crude settler representations bombard us, I find much refuge in this insistence that decolonial and Indigenous futurities can exceed these fractures and settler anxieties—that what is already emerging is another world.

Hady: I'd like to propose a question. I am curious how a contestation of the international or global omnipotence of the U.S. shows up in these four projects. Because this is also a big current in transpacific studies: how do these ways of thinking actually recognize the active unsettling of the U.S. as the global superpower?³¹ I think that's apparent in all four of our projects. Maybe that's something that we can think about in the conversation that follows—how the United States in this moment is grasping at its own sovereignty in a very desperate way.

'Thilani: I guess I can chime in briefly, and thank you for your framing. That is really generative. In the context of the United States as an occupying force in Hawai'i, and more broadly in the United States, I am reminded how folks have articulated that the United States is a project and not a place, and it's a project that is incredibly fickle. I think it's Toni Morrison who talks about the United States as a fishbowl and once you start to see the cracks of this fishbowl, it starts to fall apart. And when I think about the premise for the legitimacy of the "United States" or even the legitimacy of Hawai'i as being a state, the premise of that legitimacy is based on a narrative, and that narrative is largely fiction. Kathy Ferguson talks about this, that you have to give things a history and once you start to weave these stories and histories, the legitimacy of the United States starts to crack and it starts to become more and more illegitimate. So much so that this thing that we've, at least in my upbringing, understood as an imperial superstructure that cannot be broken is actually fractured every single day in more ways than one, particularly during the '70s, as we've talked about through movements, and even more so today.

Maisaloon: I love what you said. It's a project, not a place. I'm going to keep that in mind because a part of my thesis is talking about the Zionist imagined geography. When you were speaking of the fiction, that clicked for me, especially with the concept of imagined geographies. I was talking to my supervisor about this recently because that concept comes from Edward Said. It has actually become very widely used, especially in my discipline in geography, but it's usually divorced from this Palestinian intellectual genealogy, even though, arguably, the fact that he's Palestinian played a big role in him thinking through empire building in this way—how imperial narratives are constructed in fiction and literature over time, before they materialize in territorial conquests. When you were speaking, I really thought about that. And I think that is a way for us to collectively reflect on how we organize and how we build internationalism in service of decolonization to look at our enemy as fiction. This makes it feel like it's more palpable to undo empire.

Katherine: If I can interject, Sarah, I would love to hear your thoughts about how your work on Asian America might contribute to a more anti-imperialist project in service of empire's demise. In part, because a good portion of Asian American organizing has often tethered to liberal politics with/in the United States, I'm curious about how the anti-imperialist archive that you drew from allows us to think about the undoing of the U.S. in different ways?

Sarah: Thanks so much for that question. It's definitely something that I am thinking through and I think it resonates on multiple levels. I'll share that first and foremost, something I try to drill into my students when I teach these "Intro to Asian American studies" classes is that the term "Asian American" is a political signifier that is fundamentally rooted in cross-racial coalition and transnational solidarity. "Asian American" was born out of 1968 and was coined by Yuji Ichioka and Emma Gee, two graduate student activists at UC Berkeley who founded the Asian American Political Alliance. Asian American was a coalitional term born out of all these intersecting movements: Anti-Vietnam War, Free Speech, Black Power, etc. In the late 1960s, to identify as Asian American was to signal solidarity with Black, Chicano, Native, and other "Third World" people, both in the U.S. and abroad.

Of course, as I point out in my presentation, the Asian American political movement overall spanned a political spectrum, with liberal domestic rights groups focused on affirmative action to Maoist groups like IWK who were arming themselves in preparation for a real class war. In general, people think about Asian American political activism in terms of domestic civil rights issues, which is why I really hope that my research can shed light on the more radical parts of the Asian American Movement, as well as how the activists were constantly thinking about the revolutionary struggles happening abroad.

Hady: Yeah, Sarah, I'm struck by your comment in that it leads me to how these ideas—our case studies, yes, but also the way they call for/to solidarity with Palestine across space—contest the idea or concept of Asia. What is continental or a spatial Asia, a molar Asia or a molar Pacific. It becomes apparent in the contradictions that you're bringing up, for example, the fact that these groups are down the street from one another. There are apparent cracks that emerge in these categories of state capture. They show up more clearly and do a lot of work in breaking down—to bring Said back to us—those imagined geographies of the U.S., Asia, the Pacific, "the Pacific Rim." I'm struck by how those categories, in their fragility, fall apart very quickly when they are considered in the way that we're considering them here.

Sarah: Definitely. And I'm so glad that Maisaloon brought up Said because I think he's really a prime example of this phenomenon that you articulated. Said's *Orientalism* is one of the founding texts of Asian American studies as a discipline, but it's mostly taken up by East Asian scholars and used in East Asian contexts. There's nothing inherently wrong with this, but the result is that Said's Palestinian identity is often erased and the geopolitical specificities he was writing from are flattened. Asian American studies as a field is certainly making efforts to expand, for example highlighting SWANA studies or critical Muslim studies, but there's still a lot of progress to be made in terms of troubling field formation and the geographies it rests upon.

Katherine: Yes. Thank you for sharing. There's so much work that needs to be done, but what strikes me about this conversation is a reminder that Palestine is bringing together in meaningful ways Third World, Fourth World, and Indigenous politics that ask us to

dismantle and also abandon the United States to draw these internationalist connections which is so powerful. On a similar note, in bringing us back to the initial impetus of this panel to document emerging student contributions and internationalist organizing across Asia, Oceania, and Palestine, I'd like to wrap up this discussion by prompting you to all reflect on how these brilliant bodies of scholarship are informing the kinds of organizing you all are involved in to build these inter/nationalist networks of solidarity? In other words, how do you draw from these genealogies of scholarship to inform your contemporary movement work?

Thilani: For me, it's a pretty applicable question to us just being in academia and the research that we're doing. For me, it's how do we turn our research in these conversations into political education? And so the end-all-be-all of our work shouldn't be a publication or a panel. But how do we use these conversations to organize differently and organize smarter? There's something I noted in observing what is happening in L.A. with ICE and the attack on immigrant lives. They could control one 10,000-person protest, but they couldn't control ten 1000-person protests. And if we're thinking about how to be strategic in the multiplicity of our movements and thinking about how the research and the work that we're doing can feed different strategies and not just rest in one institution, I think that we would all be a little more successful in our movements for liberation. But, long story short, turning this research into political education that leaves here and informing our organizing and also letting organizing inform what we're doing shows there's checks and balances to both.

Sarah: Yeah, I definitely agree. I think political education is a great place to start. As I mentioned in my presentation, groups like IWK put a huge emphasis on political education and hosted a handful of leftist forums across the U.S. in the '70s. It was a form of intellectual base-building and allowing folks to experiment with the idea of socialism in real time. At the same time, I'm also thinking about how in the late '60s and '70s, there were extremely robust networks of community support (what we would now probably call mutual aid) being established in the Bay Area and around the country. This was led first and foremost by the Panthers establishing an infrastructure of free breakfast, childcare, healthcare, legal support, and then many other groups—IWK included—followed suit. I think this really exemplifies how political education can be accompanied by mutual aid as a foundation for this radical organizing. In a contemporary context, I think it's really important for the Palestine movement to continue to articulate the clear connections between the need for support in our communities and the destruction of Gaza. We saw this with the demand for financial transparency and divestment at the university level with the encampments last spring.

Maisaloon: Thanks, everyone. Honestly, this question feels heavy because on a personal level, I'm seeing the level of violence and atrocities committed and a lot of times, I'm just like, what is the point of all of this academic stuff? In the face of all of this atrocious violence, militarized violence? It's a lot to process. But I will say something that I'm grappling with, at

least in my discipline in geography, is if you look at colonial geography documents, you realize these geographers were running toward the opportunity to inform colonial and militarized operations. I'm thinking about what it means for decolonial geographers to work in service of people who bear the brunt of the empire. To actually think of what we can offer toward securing wins for the colonized as part of liberatory projects and armed struggle in service of decolonization, and take that work seriously. I feel like there's a lot of things in my head around this question. I don't have a direct answer, but I do think reminding ourselves of how this work connects to spaces beyond the walls of academia is important.

Katherine: Yes, thank you for bringing us back to the material reality of this political moment. In academia, what we saw during and in the aftermath of the student encampments for Palestine in 2023 were the limits of academic institutions and scholarship. To a certain extent, you had scholars who have made a career out of writing about anti-imperial critiques being unwilling to take that theory into praxis and to stand with their students on the frontlines of these movements. This is something I have observed repeatedly as a graduate student: scholars who are too comfortable within academic institutions often fail to recognize their responsibility to movements and, in certain cases, co-opt these movements to advance their academic careers. So I appreciate your reminder as a bookmark conclusion for this panel, Maisaloon, because I think what prompts this panel and the work many of us are doing is how we can draw from these genealogies of internationalist scholarship and solidarity to move our communities. I don't think our main focus here is a publication or a panel but rather in our everyday lives; I think we are all reflecting on how we mobilize communities to dream more radical futures to build constellations of solidarity (à la Simpson) with one another. To me, this is the perfect way to end this dialogue, not by romanticizing organizing and solidarity, but by foregrounding the political moment that we are in, the precarity and extreme violence that persist in this moment, and still thinking about how to get folks to move. I appreciate all the different intellectual labor that you have done for our readers to allow us to inhabit these new imaginaries and to mobilize.

Notes

1. *Getting Together* 1, no 5 (September 1970).
2. *Getting Together* 1, no. 1 (August 1970).
3. Diane Fujino, "Political Asian America: Afro Asian Solidarity, Third World Internationalism, and the Origins of the Asian American Movement," *Ethnic Studies Review* 47, no. 1 (2024): 63.
4. *Getting Together* 1, no. 5.
5. *Getting Together* 9, no. 4 (April 1978).
6. *Getting Together* 4, no. 20 (October 1973).
7. Ibid.
8. My M.A. thesis is called "In Ghassan Kanafani's footsteps: A study of the Zionist imagined geography," and can be accessed here: <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/ubctheses/24/items/1.0449983>.
9. G. Kanafani, *On Zionist Literature*, trans. Mahmoud Najib (Oxford, UK: Ebb Books, 2022), 6.

10. O. J. Salamanca, "Assembling the Fabric of Life: When Settler Colonialism Becomes Development," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 45, no. 4 (2016): 68. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2016.45.4.64>.
11. J. Pierre, "Haiti: An Archive of Occupation, 2004-," *Transforming Anthropology* 28, no. 1 (2020): 3–23. <https://doi.org/10.1111/traa.12174>.
12. *Journal of Palestine Studies* vi, no 3 (Spring 1977), <https://www.palquest.org/en/historictext/16268/palestine-national-council-13th-session-political-declaration>.
13. Jewish Telegraphic Agency Staff, "Arrow Facility to Be Named for Pro-Israel Senator," *The Times of Israel*, January 6, 2014, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-to-name-arrow-facility-for-inouye/>.
14. Congressional Papers Collection, Hamilton Library at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Box 35, Folder 29, (October 1967).
15. Congressional Papers Collection, Hamilton Library at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Box 35, Folder 29 (October 1967).
16. Itamar Eichner, "'Gaza 2035': Exposed—This is the Utopian Vision for the Strip, Examined in Netanyahu's Office," *Ynet*, March 5, 2024, <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/ryopqkmmc>. Images from the article can be accessed at https://ynet-pic1.yit.co.il/picserver5/wcm_upload_files/2024/05/03/r1xP7iKGf0/Gaza_Businessmen_Initiative_heb___Copy__1_.pdf.
17. Donald Trump, "Gaza 2025: Whats Next [sic]," Truth Social Post (February 25, 2025): <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/114068387897265338>.
18. Eichner, "Gaza 2035."
19. Steven Salaita, *Inter/Nationalism: Decolonizing Native America and Palestine* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 154–55. Salaita notes, and I name here, how the frame of apartheid is important to understand certain aspects of the occupation—my critique is not a wholesale dismissal of this frame, rather my joining the chorus with critiques that name its shortcomings as an all-encompassing understanding of the Zionist project. Also see J. Kēhaulani Kauanui and Patrick Wolfe, "Setter Colonialism Then and Now: A Conversation Between J. Kēhaulani Kauanui and Patrick Wolfe," *Politica & Società* 2, no. 2 (2012): 256.
20. Donald Trump, "Gaza 2025: Whats Next [sic]," Truth Social post (February 25, 2025): <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/114068387897265338>.
21. Ruha Benjamin, *Race After Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code* (New York: Polity Press, 2019), 36.
22. Avgi Saketopoulou, *Sexuality Beyond Consent: Risk, Race, Traumatophilia* (New York: New York University Press, 2023), 44.
23. Jodi Kim, *Settler Garrison: Debt Imperialism, Militarism, and Transpacific Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022), 32.
24. *Ibid.*, 160.
25. Nebolon, *Settler Militarism*, 6.
26. *Ibid.*, 19.
27. *Ibid.*, 161.
28. Gayatri Gopinath, *Unruly Visions: The Aesthetic Practices of Queer Diaspora* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 5.
29. José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2019), 97.
30. *Ibid.*, 121.
31. Naoki Sakai, *The End of Pax Americana* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022), 16.

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