



Tishman Environment
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Hope, Truth and Solidarity with Palestine

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The author's family on the ship that brought them to the United States in 1953.

I grew up during the first Intifada. If you were a child in the late 1980s, you might remember images of Palestinian boys and young men hurling rocks at Israeli tanks and soldiers as they tried in vain to save their homes and families. I remember deeply; those images are etched in my brain because this was my first exposure to where my mother is from. I didn't understand what was happening, but I would watch my mother watch the news and could tell how bad it was. She would sit on our couch, her hand gently tapping the wall above her head and sadness,

fear and anger on her face. I never could understand how these young boys with their little rocks and stones could be considered terrorists and predators, while a well-armed and organized national military could be seen as the victims.

I later learned that the First Intifada was largely a non-violent movement grounded in civil disobedience and self-determination (mostly led by women) for a people long dispossessed from their homes and land. But we hardly ever read about that in American media, which for so long has been lopsided towards Israel. The American government and media have told the story that the Palestinian people are terrorists, aggressors and a danger to the people of Israel; not victims of colonization, oppression and apartheid.

My mother was about three or four years old in 1947, during the [Nakba](#), or Palestinian Catastrophe. Over 700,000 Palestinians were forced to flee their homes with nowhere to go, my mother included. Her family left Jerusalem in the middle of the night with only what they could carry and crossed into Jordan where they stayed for a few years until a church

in Rochester, NY sponsored them to come to the U.S.

What is happening right now to the Palestinian people, and especially in Gaza, is not new. This brutal assault has been going on for over 70 years. Palestinians have few rights in their own homes; unable to work or travel without passing through military checkpoints causing legacy trauma in multiple generations. The Israeli and US governments leave them with barely enough to survive and label them terrorists illegally imprisoning so many young people. In the US media and among elected officials, the blame is largely placed on Hamas and the Palestinians, as if the Palestinian people should stand by while they are forcibly removed from their homes or have their homes destroyed by military tanks. The Palestinian Occupied Territories have some of the highest poverty and unemployment rates in the world, due to this brutal occupation.

But I see some hope. I have never seen so much support for the Palestinian people in the news, on social media and among my friends and neighbors in the US. Palestinians have been fighting for decades for the rights to self-determination and homes free from oppression, abuse

and a militarized state. The similarities between police brutality and state-sanctioned violence against Black, Indigenous and people of color in the US is painfully similar to Israeli brutality against Palestinians. In many ways, it [seems that other liberation and anti-oppression movements in the US, especially the Movements for Black Lives and Indigenous sovereignty,](#) have helped change the narrative in this country and around the world. All of these movements are interrelated. We are all in this together and together we will prevail. Spend some time learning about the history of Palestine and the connections between this fight for liberation and similar fights in the US for Black and Indigenous liberation. Speak out when you have the opportunity and connect with your elected officials in support of a free and unified Palestinian state.



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