Who are the Palestinians' natural allies?

(Ryan Rodrick Beiler)
One of the pillars of my trip to Gaza with the Palestine Literature Festival turned out to be an ongoing discussion regarding the essential blackness of the Palestinian struggle and the need to form greater ties with our “natural allies” from Africa and South America in particular.

At one event, a man in the audience questioned the usefulness of seeking alliances or help from Africa, where, he said, people are “hungry and poor and in need of help themselves.”

I pointed out that the image he holds of African peoples was planted in his mind by those who also plant the same image of us around the world. We, too, are viewed as helpless, hungry and needy. We,
too, are seen as less human somehow, as savages, terrorists. The various layers and temper of our and their intellectual, cultural, social and historical lives are ignored, or worse, intentionally obscured. Instead, the challenges of our societies are highlighted as all-encompassing truths.

But a better answer came from Ayman, a gentle soul who is trying to start up a film program in Gaza to help children cope with the violent realities of their lives. He said, simply, “So what? What does hunger and poverty have to do with dignity, anyway?”

Sameeha, a brilliant Palestinian writer in Gaza, noted that such reductive stereotypes are precisely the things that hinder badly-needed alliances among oppressed peoples. She, along with Rana, the indefatigable, ever-smiling and warm organizer of PalFest in Gaza, also pointed out that too often, when we speak of engaging “the world,” what we mean is Europe and the US, because someone convinced us somewhere along the line that these were the only places that mattered. That somehow our freedom can only come from the same nations that facilitated and cheered on the destruction of our society.

That, of course, is far from the truth. But understanding this requires that we reorient the Palestinian struggle to align with indigenous struggles — struggles of the marginalized and voiceless — which I consider to be spiritually and politically black because there is no equivalent to the savagery inflicted on the black body over centuries by white supremacy.

To me, blackness is what has been and is the recipient of colonialism and supremacy, with all that this entails in clashing forces of internalization of inferiority, resistance, black power and black empowerment.

Natural allies
In Black Skin, White Masks, Frantz Fanon describes the narcissism of inferiority that results from white colonization and enslavement of blacks. He said: “Black men want to prove to white men, at all costs, the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect.” This single sentence describes the Anglocentric nature of Palestinian discourse with “the world.”

The conversation we have with Europe and white America is one in which we are always trying to prove our humanity. One in which we beg for acceptance and solidarity, and one from which we accept the various sympathies of a white man’s burden as if it were true solidarity, or something of a slice of bread that comes with an admonition that we have not behaved well.

This is not to say that true solidarity has not come from white individuals. I would not deny the love and sacrifices of men and women like Rachel Corrie, Tom Hurndall, Vittorio Arrigoni and many more. I do not deny the kind of solidarity that transcends ethnicity. But there is an undeniable difference in the way peoples of different ethnicities relate to us.
With Africans, including American descendants of those who were enslaved, there is no need to preface our words. There is never a sense that we need to prove our worth or the righteousness of our struggle for liberation. This is what I mean by “natural allies.” They are people who know, viscerally, what it means to be regarded as vermin by most of the world. Those who know what it is to be the “wretched of the earth.”

There are still some Jews who remember that, perhaps. They too are our natural allies. But to continue to knock on European and white American doors, including Israeli doors, begging, “Please help me, please look at me, I am human as you,” is not helpful. It is not helpful to continue to accept conditional handouts that are turning our once proud people into a nation of beggars, willing to dance for butter. It is humiliating, weakening and, more importantly, unnecessary.

That any Palestinian should entertain the notion of “negotiations” with Israel for the basic dignity of freedom and home is a screaming example of the narcissism of learned inferiority. This is the essential blackness of our fight. In this way, our struggle for liberation is spiritually and politically black in nature.

One of the features of this negative narcissism is the aspiration to all that the oppressor entails, while simultaneously hating him. Fanon describes this aspiration to whiteness more eloquently than I ever could. In the Palestinian case, I will add that there is another layer to our condition, which can be described as the narcissism of victimhood.

I remember the first time I heard Edward Said speak in person. It was at an Al-Awda Right to Return rally, I think the first one we held, in 2000. He said that “we [Palestinians] should remember the solidarity shown to us here and everywhere.”

I think of those words often because I don't think we do enough to honor the spirit of what he said. We don't recognize the origin of the solidarity shown to us. We are so immersed in our own pain and suffering — however understandably so — that we regard our victimhood to the exclusion of other suffering, much as (although not quite with the same worship) our oppressors have done.

**Black solidarity with Palestine**
The fact is that there is a tremendous amount of unsolicited solidarity coming from peoples who are themselves victims of colonization, exploitation, rapacious capitalism and institutional racism.

A few years ago, I had the privilege of being invited to the Federación Democrática Internacional de Mujeres (Women’s International Democratic Federation) in Caracas, Venezuela. This was a gathering of women from all over Latin America, from Mexico to Chile and Argentina and everywhere in between. It was a forum to address the ills facing their societies: sexism, capitalism, ageism, homophobia, racism, land theft, exploitation, environmental destruction, indigenous rights, patriarchy, classism and so on.
They invited only two delegations outside of Latin America. One was a delegation of Palestinian women from Palestine and the other was a delegation of North American women, mostly women of color, including myself, a Palestinian.

Two weeks ago, the Organization of Women Writers of Africa held their a conference in Ghana. With all the ills that Africa — this continent that still reels from the legacies of centuries of white supremacy, exploitation, enslavement and so much more — faces, the conference still thought it important to feature discussions of Palestine.

In South Africa, at Time of the Writer, a literature festival sponsored by the University of Kwazulu-Natal, the only invited non-African writer was Palestinian. It was a profound expression of solidarity with Palestine, born of an inherent comprehension that we and they are of the same fabric. The same pain and the same struggle.

Our most vocal and vociferous champions have been Africans and African Americans, from Desmond Tutu to Angela Davis, Alice Walker and Cynthia McKinney. No one would blame Tutu if he focused his fight for justice solely on the economic apartheid that still festers in his country. No one could blame Davis or Walker if they spent their energies combating the great social and economic injustices that are the enduring and bitter legacy of centuries of enslavement in the US.

I could fill pages with examples of solidarity coming to us from communities and individuals who could so easily ignore us and immerse themselves in their own difficult struggles. Rarely will any of these examples be from our Arab brethren, particularly those in oil-rich nations, who have within their power the ability to affect real and significant change.

I know that we, too, do emerge from the yoke of Israeli oppression and ethnic cleansing to show solidarity, whether with tsunami victims, the Rohingyas in Burma, or exploited factory workers in Bangladesh. But I think we can and should do more to give solidarity where it is needed, even if we have nothing to offer but heartfelt words written and broadcast from the ghettos of Bantustans and refugee camps. Because such is an essential beauty of being human.

Because there is a kind of liberation that can only come from being a part of the liberation of others. And because fostering reciprocal human solidarity, is how we break an oppressor's imposed isolation, such as the siege of Gaza.

Because the United States and the European Union are not our friends. They have never been our friends.

_Susan Abulhawa is the author of the international bestseller Mornings in Jenin and founder of Playgrounds for Palestine._

Tags: PalFest solidarity Gaza Gaza siege Africa South America Edward Said Frantz Fanon
Comments

Support from Ireland

Permalink Submitted by Robby Martin (not verified) on Tue, 06/11/2013 - 23:18
Although we Irish are European we understand occupation & oppression well from our own history. This I believe is why our support of Palestine is perhaps the strongest in Europe. Our history is mirrored in the occupation of Palestine today, land theft, subjection and oppression of the indigenous people and attempts to wipe out culture. The Palestinian hunger strikes were also a reminder of our recent history when 10 Irish hunger strikers died because of the intransigence of the occupier. To know is to understand. "When a Palestinian is cut the Irish bleed"

Indeed. Erin's children are

Permalink Submitted by susan (not verified) on Wed, 06/12/2013 - 13:37
Indeed. Erin's children are among what I call our natural allies. Creating Jack O'Malley, an Irish character in my novel, was my way of giving a shout out and gratitude to Ireland to acknowledge what you speak of.

"our support of Palestine is

Permalink Submitted by anan (not verified) on Wed, 06/12/2013 - 17:36
"our support of Palestine is perhaps the strongest in Europe" Not just in Europe. One of the strongest supporters of Palestine in the world. A bigger supporter of Palestine than most Arab countries.

How many Palestinian immigrants does Ireland accept? Is Ireland open to negotiating a free trade, free work visa, free student visa, free investment, free cross border product development agreement with Palestine?

Another question if I might. One of the big selling points of Israel is that Israel was harshly occupied by England 1918-1948 and fought hard against English occupiers. Israelis claim that England sided with the Palestinians (non Jewish Arab) against Arab Jews and immigrant Jews. This has won Israel a lot of international sympathy around the world. Including in Asia. Does Israel push this narrative hard in Ireland? How do Irish respond to this narrative.

BTW, the Palestinians also push this narrative of resisting English occupiers and win a lot of international support as a result.

As a result in many countries many people are strong backers of both Palestine and Israel.

"Does Israel push this

Permalink Submitted by Raymond Deane (not verified) on Thu, 06/13/2013 - 11:06
"Does Israel push this narrative hard in Ireland? How do Irish respond to this narrative." I think it’s true to say that Israel doesn’t push it at all here, because it knows that it wouldn’t hold any water. Instead, Israel - and Irish ultra-Zionists like our Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence Alan Shatter - push the line that the Irish are natural anti-Semites given how few Jewish refugees we took in during and after WW II, and because Republicans sought to import Nazi arms, and the IRA were fascists, etc. etc. etc. All empty nonsense that doesn’t impress many people.

**Dismissing hasbara.**

Permalink Submitted by Robby Martin (not verified) on Thu, 06/13/2013 - 16:21

"How do Irish respond to this narrative." We enjoy humour a lot.

Israel was created in 1948 not 1918 and the Jewish population of Palestine in 1918 was less than 10%. It was Palestine that the British occupied and they had no right to give Palestine, nor Ireland which they occupied at that time, to the Zionists. But of course I forgot you zionists like to rewrite history.

**Actually, Israeli groups do**

Permalink Submitted by Liam (not verified) on Fri, 06/14/2013 - 23:34

Actually, Israeli groups do push their narrative within Israel. There is a growing connection between zionist groups and loyalist groups in the North. Just like the Israelis the British loyalists see all of somebody else’s country (Ireland) as belonging to them.

So the Israeli narrative is a right-wing narrative that is received well amongst the right-wing of North Irish politics.

**Robby**

Permalink Submitted by Luay (not verified) on Sat, 06/15/2013 - 11:41

Robby

We consider Irish to be the blacks of Europe. Thank you for your support and hope someday we can all have peace together!

**Principled solidarity needed against anti-Afrikan racism**

Permalink Submitted by ajamu nangwaya (not verified) on Wed, 06/12/2013 - 03:22

If folks are going to make the link to Afrikan peoples and their struggles, they could start with engendering solidarity with Afrikan Palestinians who are othered among Arab Palestinians.

What accounts for this silence on the racial marginalization of Afrikans among our erstwhile Arab allies?
This article did a disservice to the call for solidarity in failing to call out the anti-Afrikan pogrom that took place in Libya at the hands of Arab agents of imperialism and ideological backwardness.

In spite of the presence of anti-Afrikan racism among Arab Palestinians and Arabs in general, our support for Palestinians' right to self-determination and an end to the occupation of Palestine should be unwavering.

Our solidarity politics is informed by principles and not pragmatic considerations. Yet we must remain unyielding in our critique of anti-Afrikan, racist forces.

Comrades, check out this article by an Afrikan Egyptian sister: http://lizderias.blogspot.ca/2...

your point is important:
Permalink Submitted by susan (not verified) on Wed, 06/12/2013 - 13:39
your point is important; thank you. see my reply to the first post below on the subject.

I concur wholeheartedly. The
Permalink Submitted by Kathleen Wills ... (not verified) on Mon, 07/08/2013 - 15:15
I concur wholeheartedly. The Arab world is unabashedly racist and historically has been an enemy of Africa and African peoples. Even their language exposes their racism. "Abed," or "slave," is what they call us.

Unless and until the Arab world admits, challenges and overcomes its centuries-old history of slavery, racism, oppression, imperialism and discrimination, Arabs have NO RIGHT to speak of the "blackness" of the Palestinian struggle.

And I say this as an African-American, and a long-time pan-Africanist and anti-Zionist.

seeking friends
Permalink Submitted by anan (not verified) on Wed, 06/12/2013 - 05:16
"Because the United States and the European Union are not our friends. They have never been our friends."

This comment is completely inappropriate. Instead what the friends of Palestine need is a $200 billion global PR campaign over the next 30 years to lobby the rest of the world and increase Palestinian leverage and influence all over the world.

This means aggressively court friends in America, Europe, Turkey, Russia, India, Canada, Australia, South Korea, China, Japan, Indonesia, Brazil, Mexico, Malaysia, Chile and all the other great global powers.

The highest ROI is generally from courting and influencing the great global powers.
Many countries around the world have powerful global lobbies [China, Brazil, Japan, India, Turkey, Israel, Singapore, UK, France, Germany to pick a few examples]. Why can't Palestine follow their example? What is wrong with the friends of Palestine donating billions of dollars to the political campaigns of politicians in Mexico, the States, Canada, India and everywhere else?

In Africa, a potential ally Palestine could try to court would be Botswana. Botswana is an Asian Tiger .. . in Africa. Low marginal tax rates, low business taxes, deregulation, simple regulations, small government, pro business, pro globalization, low government spending, rapidly growing economy and global influence, rapidly rising standards of living.

Other successful African countries should similarly be courted.

**i think it's very fair and**

*Submitted by susan (not verified) on Wed, 06/12/2013 - 13:43*

i think it’s very fair and appropriate. it should be repeated over and over until Palestinians move away from their US/Eurocentric groveling, this does not mean that we shun individuals showing solidarity. Quite the contrary and I thought I made that clear. But on a political level, Europe and the US should not receive such respect or energy from us. Next to Israel, these supremacist powers are responsible for the destruction of our ancient society.

**Thanks, Susan, for your article**

*Submitted by Ben Alofs (not verified) on Thu, 06/13/2013 - 23:01*

You make a very important point in that the natural allies of the Palestinians are the "wretched of the earth", many of whom have been - just like the Palestinians - the victims of Western imperialism and colonialism. I quite agree with you that the Palestinians should not try to beg for favours from the USA and EU governments. But they should know that in Europe, where I am based, ordinary people are much more advanced in expressing their support for the Palestinians than their governments.

**Thank you Susan**

*Submitted by Cees van Dijk (not verified) on Wed, 06/12/2013 - 09:50*

Thank you Susan for this article. At the moment I am preparing an article about the connection between the support for Israel and white supremacy. Your thoughts are an excellent counter-/supporting-part to the findings of my research until now.

Cees.

**Hello Susan... i need not say**

*Submitted by Ayatullah Muhammad (not verified) on Wed, 06/12/2013 - 11:29*

Hello Susan... i need not say i enjoyed the article except for the fact that it will always remain complete if some issues are not even addressed lightly..i dont know whether it was deliberate but talking about Black solidarity without talking about how to cheer Black Palestinians into the fore front of your struggle is highly problematic..in addition to that it will only even widen any existing divide if there
The Palestinian struggle is a black struggle | The Electronic Intifada

was for africans misguided or unsupportive of the cause for the fact that the Palestinian struggle has been lip serviced as an Arab struggle and Arab Racism is still endemic. Addressing/distinguishing Arab Racism (from non palestinians) is therefore essential to it otherwise it will hinder awareness progress in black communities. these are the two things i wanted to point out. #VivaResistance.

you are right, of course.

you are right, of course. this essay was not meant to be comprehensive and I intend to write more on the subject. anti-black racism among Arabs is an ugly reality that should be confronted. it's also more complicated than the more binary racism we know in the US, for many reasons, principally the fact that a very large proportion of Arab peoples are ethnically African or black. the learned narcissism of inferiority that i mentioned entails that we aspire to all that is white, including white racism and hollywood stereotypes of blacks. understanding this is a step toward liberating ourselves, our culture, and our history from a colonial past and present. more will come on the subject but thank you for bringing it up.

"a very large proportion of Arab peoples are ethnically African"

Hi Susan,

Thanks for responding to the comments to your article. Please elaborate on the meaning of the following claim, "a very large proportion of Arab peoples are ethnically African or black." If an Afrikan person has experienced cultural imperialism or domination as a result of being a dominated minority in an Arab majority society and has assimilated into Arab culture, is that person now ethnically Arab and no longer racially Afrikan?

If an Arab has settled in Afrika for centuries, is that person an Afrikan? Afrika is not a state from which Arabs may derive their nationality, therefore, Arabs in Afrika don't transform themselves into Afrikans. Our respective nationalities come from our country of birth, in most cases.

To what extent would it be accurate for one to make the claim that the Arabs who have settled in North Afrika claim an Afrikan identity? What exactly would this "Afrikan identity" be?

Settling of North Afrika?

I do sympathize with you on the matter of not having enough space to address every possible thing in an article or even a book. However, since you addressed the issue of solidarity and referenced Afrikan people, a paragraph to anti-Afrikan racism by Arabs would go a long way in demonstrating solidarity with Afrikans. Based on the feedback to the article on a number of Facebook walls, this omission has been noted as a serious thing by people who have commented.
Comrade Susan, I am glad that you wrote the article because it has created the basis for a conversation. I hope it will generate more light than heat. It will be a difficult engagement but we need to put this matter out into the open.

In solidarity,

Ajamu

**Personally i see this as an**

*Personal Link* Submitted by Ayatullah Muhammad (not verified) on Thu, 06/13/2013 - 23:52

Personally i see this as an issue for us Africans(indigenous and 'non-indigenous as you chose to call it) to debate on if they wish regardless how vast or certified she is in that subject. The key issue is politicising the word 'Black' as some people say with respect to Palestinian solidarity. And the Key issues i mentioned are the key subjects to be tackled. The Quote "a very large proportion of Arab peoples are ethnically African or black." is indeed a broad enough to fit the MENA(Middle East/North African) side she was addressing so it cant just be looked @ from One Perspective which makes the cultural imperialism topic entirely different.

It is indeed true that Arabs dont 'Transform' into been Afrikan ..I would also argue that your going to have a hard time trying to strip them from the 'Afrikan' name if some chose to identify as so..same goes to the Asians. For Arabs especially, they are indeed older than the concept of Nationality entirely so we may have to be referencing back to 1millenium of history between now and then. Like I said regardless here field, from her perspective i dont think its necessary...and i may be indeed wrong.

Indeed, we'll have to wait for what upcoming write ups....its bound to stare much inevitable hit which will stem up from islamo-Hatred misunderstood for Arab dislike aside the racism aspect and only more education which is very Possible like that in south africa will surpress this idea across the SubSaharan region... Thats why i believe its necessary to address whether the relationship between its 'blackness' and Arabness as a whole. I've heard several remarks about (my)people believing if they weren't in such conditions..Africans could have been meted same treatment as the rest of the regions and its indeed sad but insightful to an extent..

**Dear Ajamu,**

*Personal Link* Submitted by susan (not verified) on Fri, 06/14/2013 - 02:16

Dear Ajamu,

I am not an expert on who belongs to what race, why and how. I'm not sure anyone is, frankly. Individuals self-define to some extent and I make no claim to have answers to such complex human identities. My comment about a large proportion of Arabs being ethnically African stems from the fact that physical features of Arabs point clearly to African ancestry.
I see you used the word 'race' and that's something I try to avoid, as it is really a modern invention meant to create definitive black/white (inferior/superior) lines. So, we might be caught in semantics. The fact is that the Arab slave trade, an abhorrent part of Arab history, focused primarily on obtaining African women as sex-slaves. These women bore children who were then considered legitimate heirs of their fathers and who, in turn, provided legitimacy to their mothers to be released from bondage. In this way, Arabs are sons of African women; and that's what I meant. I hope I've answered your question. I do intend to write more on the subject; so, I'll apologize now for not responding further and hopefully what I write in the future will help clarify.

**what about that historic and**

Permalink Submitted by newyork (not verified) on Wed, 06/12/2013 - 22:15

what about that historic and still active slave trade? how will the treatment of Africans by Arabs change with Palestinian liberation? will it?

**positionality**

Permalink Submitted by Amal (not verified) on Thu, 06/13/2013 - 21:44

Dear Ayatullah Muhammad- experiencing sexism, racism, ableism, heterosexism, doesn't undermine ones connection to land, experiences under zionism, cultural memory and/or national belonging. By focusing exclusively on gender, race, religion and so forth you de-contextualize peoples lived realities and reduce them to one dimensional card-board cut outs. The trope of the racist, sexist, homophobic Arab erases complex identities and solidarities among different groups struggling against isms within the Palestinian context, and against Israel. Palestine is a multi-racial country, and like other colonized countries wrestles with internalized racism, that goes beyond anti-black racism, to encompass a range of bodily subjugations, including rejection of olive skin or a hook shaped nose to name the most common. Please try not to cut and paste the US experience. Try to engage, instead of imagining. Afro-Palestinian advocates are very explicit -they are committed to the liberation of Palestine because Israeli bombs don't discriminate, and it is the shared experience of occupation that fosters a common identity, (as well as values/culture, etc since many are integrated as a result of kinship ties and interracial unions over multiple generations).

**Dear Amal - Thanks mam, never**

Permalink Submitted by Ayatullah Muhammad (not verified) on Fri, 06/14/2013 - 00:10

Dear Amal - Thanks mam, never was i @ any instances when typing that trying to fit in the US narrative... i was speaking as An African(Nigerian to be specific) who has experienced Silent discrimination from even Sudanese(if you get what i mean). I am or i can say i intend to be One of the Afro-Palestinian activists you mentioned for many reason reasons(relating to me personally) ranging from Human to religious connections and while i dont intend to advocate to just a single demographic..am aspacting such questions to Pop up and indeed they need to be addressed so as not to be looked @ as normalizing Racism for whatsoever *insert here* sake. hence i believe those two questions needed to be addressed because as people get enlightened ..such from dissenters and wellwishers similar to islamophobes are
unsurpressable. A vast majority of (non muslim) Africans for example dont even know 'Black' Palestinians exist and their reason and since Human connection to a suffering seems to be a myth because of the class they stand today, theres always a tendency to nothing but basically 'sympathy' based on the fact that we share the same Oppressors(white supremacy) with excuses like 'they are Arabs and Racists to us too anyways'. Hence indeed it is necessary to address the relationship between its 'Blackness' which i have always religiously believed exists personally for me but also its 'Arabness' too. As much as mythical as it might look like today between arabs of various nations...Alot of people(including) buy the idea that its strictly and Arab cause and the rest can do nothing but offer sympathy or passive support against the aggressor...for such ideologies to be eradicated we have to cleanse the existing road blocks as the ones highlighted above for easy communication of the message

Am sorry if my First Post sounded a bit inHumane.

**Black Solidarity with Palestinians**

*Permalink* Submitted by Joel Arendt (not verified) on Wed, 06/12/2013 - 12:26

A good article but there needs to be a concerted push by Palestinians to build the BDS campaign on the African continent and in Latin America within communities, schools, universities, churches and trade unions.

Much of the activity is at an elite level. Ordinary people are likely to support the struggle. Moreover the Palestinians should end the involvement in the Oslo process. Involvement in the PA elections should only be to prevent Fatah from selling out the Right of Return and Land Swap deals. Hamas and other factions should be persuaded that there is no honour in Bantustan administrations. Aim to win the elections in order than Abbas cannot claim a mandate to speak and sell out. As for the struggle on the ground the Arab citizens of Israel should be supported to push the legal limits of Israeli Apartheid. They must be supported to fight for their civil rights in the courts so that the duplicity of Israeli justice can be exposed. It will also force sympathetic and leftist Israelis to make clear choices where they stand. That struggle must be integrated with the struggle of the prisoners. Have concerts abroad to put names and faces to the detainees. Refuse to make the occupation work by not working in the Oslo structures. Non-collaboration with the enemy is unclear in Palestine today. Have Right of Return Conferences in Gaza and enter through Rafah but let the Palestinian Diaspora be on the ground so that Abu Radneh and others do not have a token 100 000 palestinians return. That way the Palestinians inside Israel, in the Israeli prisons and the occupied territories as well as the diaspora are one.

That narrative should be taken to the street in Africa, Scandanavia, Latin America and African Americans. It is not always clear what the Palestinians want and who speaks in their name. The only show on the road is really Oslo. Yet there is a counter-process that has been there from the earliest days of colonial dispossession. Be visible and coherent.

**The New Black by The Mavrix**

*Permalink* Submitted by iResistDe4iAm (not verified) on Wed, 06/12/2013 - 13:45

Here’s an appropriate song partly inspired by Susan’s novel, Mornings in Jenin.
Extract from video description:
"In a first ever musical collaboration between South Africa and Palestine, South African band, The Mavrix, and Palestinian Oud player, Mohammed Omar, have released a music video called "The New Black". The song is taken from The Mavrix' upcoming album,"Pura Vida", due for release in June 2012.

Written and composed by Jeremy Karodia and Ayub Mayet, the song was a musical reaction to the horror of the Gaza Massacre of 2008/2009 and then subsequently inspired by the book "Mornings in Jenin", authored by Susan Abulhawa. Mayet had penned the first lyrics in 2009 after the Massacre and the song went into musical hibernation. Having read the novel, "Mornings in Jenin", he then re-wrote the lyrics and the song evolved into its current version."

**As a member of a minority.**

*Permalink* Submitted by Robert (not verified) on Wed, 06/12/2013 - 14:56
As a member of a minority, but also also a man of Anglo-ancestry born and raised in the United States, I am suspicious of anyone who advocates increasing division and suspicion among minorities in the style of parsing played out in this article. Clearly, the author has had experiences that influence perceptions and views, many of which seem less than charitable and less than human.

Interesting to cite "reductive stereotypes" and then play them out with characterizations like, "Europe and white America is one in which we are always trying to prove our humanity. One in which we beg for acceptance and solidarity, and one from which we accept the various sympathies of a white man's burden as if it were true solidarity, or something of a slice of bread that comes with an admonition that we have not behaved well."

I agree that there are 'natural allies', and would add that we are everywhere. Some of us have white skin and live in the United States, where we advocate from within for change. It seems like a losing battle at times because the other side is so much more powerful within the system here, but it is not at all pleasant to find oneself judged, weighed in value, mischaracterized as withholding boons from beggars, and dismissed in simplistic, nonsensical generalizations.

The world is insane enough without perpetuating divisions by skin color and country of origin. Grow up.

**Robert, I agree with you**

*Permalink* Submitted by Nick (not verified) on Thu, 06/13/2013 - 20:52
Robert, I agree with you fully, and I might add that not every Israeli or Jew agrees with the actions of Netanyahu. While Palestine activists routinely complain about being coupled with terrorist or terrorist sympathisers, they quite often seek to perpetuate a narrative of Israel as a monolithic oppressor state and call for collective action against Israeli citizens as if all were equally
responsible and equally supportive of their government. We need to bring back activism to an umbrella under which most people can eventually move - the idea that we are all humans, that we deserve equal treatment, and must be treated and respected as individuals.

**I agree with the thrust of**

Submitted by Claudia (not verified) on Wed, 06/12/2013 - 16:11

I agree with the thrust of this article that indigenous colonized peoples (past and present) can be naturally sympathetic to the Palestinian plight because they can viscerally relate to it. Indeed our struggle is increasingly resembling that of other indigenous peoples who resisted ethnic cleansing by simply refusing to leave their land (in some cases unsuccessfully, unfortunately). However, as Susan said, I also as a Palestinian applaud the involvement of American and European activists who in recent years have come to our side in their thousands. Regardless of nationality, there are decent people everywhere who can relate to the Palestinian struggle once they become informed about it. There is a difference between working with Westerners in an equal capacity and sucking up to them.

**Solidarity**

Submitted by ajamu chaminuka (not verified) on Wed, 06/12/2013 - 17:10

Why do pseudo-intellectuals complicate simple things? Is it to distinguish or to play with one's self mentally? Anyway, not being one, i try to keep things simple stupid in order to understand what is being said and what Susan Abulhawa wrote is perfectly understandable and logical to me.

**Thank you for writing this.**

Submitted by j.austin yoshino (not verified) on Wed, 06/12/2013 - 21:20

Thank you for writing this.

And thank you for not equivocating on the following point:

"you are right, of course. this essay was not meant to be comprehensive and I intend to write more on the subject. anti-black racism among Arabs is an ugly reality that should be confronted. it's also more complicated than the more binary racism we know in the US, for many reasons, principally the fact that a very large proportion of Arab peoples are ethnically African or black. the learned narcissism of inferiority that i mentioned entails that we aspire to all that is white, including white racism and hollywood stereotypes of blacks. understanding this is a step toward liberating ourselves, our culture, and our history from a colonial past and present. more will come on the subject but thank you for bringing it up."

**GOOD IN THEORY BUT IT DOESN'T REALLY HAPPEN !**

Submitted by Peter Loeb (not verified) on Thu, 06/13/2013 - 08:53

I call this the "workers of the world unite" theory (slogan). It has always had an especial appeal to intellectuals and to those who write. The fact is that despite its sense it does not really happen. The reasons are various depending on different histories, environments and other factors. (As an example, blacks and poor whites in North
America should have united as both groups were exploited by slaveholders and employers. In reality, these groups became bitter enemies for jobs, for "turf", for status. There are many reasons (see G. Kolko: MAIN CURRENTS IN MODERN AMERICAN HISTORY for an in-depth discussion.) It makes analytical sense. The fact that it SHOULD happen is belied by the fact that it almost never does happen.

In the example you mention:
Permalink Submitted by j.austin yoshino (not verified) on Wed, 06/19/2013 - 13:09
In the example you mention: "black slaves and poor whites" which 1) is just another historical equivocation used to nullify the actual occurrence of slavery by insisting that whites suffered in much the same way that African slaves did and 2) poor whites have NEVER been in the same situation as African slaves. The worst they have been subjected to would be called indentured servitude. The reason why those two groups did not unite is because they both understood that their situations were inherently very different. Whites were NEVER kept as chattel in perpetuity and had some hope of working off debt. As time progressed the disparity grew. Whites were manumitted when slaver was outlawed. When Britain outlawed slavery they could actually return to Europe as free men. And later "poor whites" were more than happy to us Jim Crow to continue political and economic disenfranchisement of African Americans.

"which I consider to be
Permalink Submitted by Arab supremacy? (not verified) on Thu, 06/13/2013 - 14:50
"which I consider to be spiritually and politically black because there is no equivalent to the savagery inflicted on the black body over centuries by white supremacy."

What about that inflicted on the black body over centuries by Arab slavery?

i'll refer you to www
Permalink Submitted by susan (not verified) on Fri, 06/14/2013 - 02:22
i'll refer you to www.arabslavetrade.com, which provides enlightening scholarship on the subject for anyone interested in learning, though I suspect you're just trolling.

The Wrongness and Criminality of Zionism
Permalink Submitted by Dod Grille (not verified) on Fri, 06/14/2013 - 09:34
This is not an issue of "Black" "White" "Christian" "Jew" "Muslim" "Arab" "European" or whatever. This is a issue of the wrongness and criminality of discriminating against someone because of racial, ethnic or religious background. In the end there is only one background that matters, "human".

It is self evident that Zionism is wrong, ethnic cleansing is wrong, and disrespecting others is wrong; yet certain people here defend those things. They argue for things that they themselves would not wish to be subjected. The use biblical scripture as justification for their actions.
There are not two peoples or populations vying for one parcel of land, there is a segment of one population unwilling to live in peace with the remainder of itself. Of course there are also certain business and commercial interests playing upon this to further enrich themselves. But that is another matter.

**Do not forget that certain**

*Permalink* Submitted by Nick (not verified) on Sun, 06/16/2013 - 18:46

Do not forget that certain claims to land are for religious reasons, and only secondly for historic reasons - from both sides. For example, the importance of Jerusalem to both Palestinians and Israelis.

**'Natural allies'**

*Permalink* Submitted by Ti (not verified) on Fri, 06/14/2013 - 11:19

I do understand that the author is referring to governments and elites when she says that Europe and the US are not 'natural' allies for the Palestinian struggle, and I do not dispute that. As a white, working class, and gay Southern European woman I can assure that they are none of mine either. Limiting potential white, Western allies to single individuals such as the names cited, however, seems a short sighted perspective to me. There are entire social groups within Western societies that have been marginalised, oppressed and happily exploited by the elites for centuries, and have been fighting them in various, albeit not always effective, ways for the same amount of time. In historical and chronological terms, it was these people's struggle a long time before it was anybody else's. And despite what falsities Power might try to feed all of us about how we are incompatible with each other, if you don't call these groups of people 'natural allies', I don't know what they are.

**Palestine journalism/academic industry**

*Permalink* Submitted by Woody (not verified) on Fri, 06/14/2013 - 23:39

"With Africans, including American descendants of those who were enslaved, there is no need to preface our words. There is never a sense that we need to prove our worth or the righteousness of our struggle for liberation."

What? This is ignorant fantasy. It's been great that the movement has grown. Why has a lot of utter nonsense had to fill in the empty spaces though?

**"potential" allies in joint struggle**

*Permalink* Submitted by WillSeethepoet (not verified) on Sun, 06/16/2013 - 02:44

I too commend the author for this article and look forward to her future writings on related subjects. As an Afrikan in usa (Detroit) who has been actively engaged in Palestine solidarity work for less than 1 year I find this discussion to be essential and unfortunately much too rare. The discussion on this comments is very rich. There are challenges of communication among the African diaspora also within these powerful disagreements and exchanges.
We need to see anti-racist Palestinians struggling with other Arab people over issues of race. We need to see Palestinians not just asking for solidarity as though it were a one-way encounter but engaging with oppression also as we define it. In Detroit we have a significant Arab merchant class who operate many liquor stores and gas stations in our (Black/Afrikan) community. A number of my comrades are less than sympathetic to the calls for solidarity as we have been to protests, rallies and demonstrations when these store owners (or staff) have shot and killed young Black men. Black women face demeaning sexual propositions in these environments. Upon calling for Solidarity with Palestine I have heard: "Why should I support them when they leave their oppression to oppress us over here" and "Take away the "common" struggle and what do you have...there are few places in the world as inhospitable for black Africans as Arab countries...let’s be realistic" Especially for young Black folks in their 30s, 20s and younger, it’s going to take some time and work for this solidarity to become a reality. Just as Palestinian activists challenge us to learn of the conditions "over there" in order to show solidarity, please learn more about how it is "in the hood" and perhaps one day true solidarity and anti-racism across communities can blossom.

I had no idea that Arab

Permalink Submitted by Ahab (not verified) on Sun, 06/16/2013 - 18:49
I had no idea that Arab (Christian) liquor store owners felt this way toward the noble Afrikan population of the land of Detroit.

HIP HOP CULTURE and the peoples' struggle

Permalink Submitted by Dr Koul (not verified) on Tue, 06/18/2013 - 10:57
I just wanted to point out some of the concept and goals of Hip Hop culture with regards to this article. Hip Hop culture began as a social uprising of rebelliously free entertainment and communitarian consciousness, principally focused on African Americans but importantly including Latinos, Native Americans, Asians and whites. What started as a lower class culture quickly evolved to embrace those of more well-off upbringing who supported the movement. Now let's ignore what the industry did to or tried to do with the culture, and move straight to its' global spread: all the way to PALESTINE. This is where a relevant example comes in, the song "Al Kuffiyeh 3Arabeyyeh" by Palestinian/British rapper Shadia Mansour featuring M1 of Dead Prez, probably the most important politically-charged black-struggle centered Hip Hop group of all times, where they openly support Palestine together. Furthermore, the Palestinian struggle is constantly referred to by Hip Hop artists around the globe (literally). In Israel, 99% of Hip Hop is pro-Palestinian! This is not to be ignored, considering the undeniable importance Hip Hop culture has in the world today (especially amongst the youth). Indeed, despite the music industry and media blurring the definition of Hip Hop culture and violating its morals while cashing in on its aesthetics, there is an unstoppable consciousness and truth as well as potential for mobilization and free-speech networks for which Hip Hop culture is the framework. Hip Hop culture is the Struggle culture. It is the counter-culture. It is the truth culture, the Peoples' culture. It has always existed (poetry, graffiti, dance...) but never has it been so trampled on, so important, so on-the-brink of being realized to its full potential. There are many great (underground) artists you can go out and support, as well as labels and coalitions. One of them, "world Wide connects", I personally recommend, they are growing in numbers and are very politically aware.
Palestine is a Black Struggle
Submitted by Joel Arendt (not verified) on Wed, 06/19/2013 - 15:34
In the USA why does the BDS not focus at community/grassroots level on the lack of support for black people on the projects whilst there are billions of dollars for Israel?
This strategy will delink the safety of the zionists when one looks at their hold on the NAACP.
It will also have to undo the understanding of the Exodus story in the African American religious conceptual map.

Palestinian Struggle is A Black Struggle
Submitted by John El-Amin (not verified) on Thu, 06/20/2013 - 01:42
Dear Sister Susan you are so right! I will write out a response asap.
I have and still forward your article to e everyone I know. Stay strong! AsSalaamAlaikum

Title
Submitted by susan (not verified) on Fri, 06/21/2013 - 18:39
I need to make it clear here that I, the author of this essay, did not choose the title. I’ve asked EI to make that disclaimer to the essay, but they refused, saying that their guidelines are clear that they retain the right to choose whatever title they like, apparently even if that title does not accurately reflect the author’s words.

Given this, I need to make it clear here (and hope the moderators will have the integrity to allow this post) that I was careful, in fact, NOT to say that the Palestinian struggle was a Black struggle because I think there is an element of appropriation of someone else’s struggle to this statement. I referred to the "essential blackness" of our struggle and said that our struggle was "spiritually and politically black" but never that it was a black struggle. there's a difference and I just need to put that out there.

It is unfortunate that the editors at EI would choose to interpret my words and then disregard my objection to attributing those words to me.

Palestinian struggle
Submitted by John El-Amin (not verified) on Sat, 06/29/2013 - 18:37
I understand and appreciate the essence of your view. I do not think the unattributed title was or is to be taken literally. Spiritual and political unity was what I understood it to be. The struggle, the history and the grim reality makes me angry as I sit here in this nation that proclaims "justice, peace, freedom and democracy" and all the while, it's treacherous behavior goes unabated.

The support and promotion of Zionism has no moral foundation. An establishment without a foundation is doomed to fail and in this case of Zionism, thankfully so.

Clear As a Bell
Submitted by Eye (not verified) on Tue, 06/25/2013 - 14:02
Just because so much of what we all stand in was formed by colonialist oppressors out only to rape lands of their resources, preserve the best of everything for themselves, and establish norms wholly within their exclusive control, doesn't mean that anything about that history is legitimate at all in terms of human welfare today.

The more successfully the voices of the human heart stand now in their natural intelligence and honesty, the more fully the life of the divine may know its own reality as maturely and honorably fulfilled.

**Thanks for finally admitting Arabs aren't White, but Black!**
Permalink Submitted by Mohamed Hared (not verified) on Fri, 06/28/2013 - 17:45
A fact I've always told to people about Arabs, now admitted by themselves in this article, that they are being bad or seen as bad or barbaric or racist by the world because they have been colonised in their own lands by either pro-Zionism dictators or Zionists and treated as animals and made to hate on others, so others can hate on them. May Allah free the Arabs everywhere from all forms oppression and illegal occupation, Amin!

**Palestinian struggle is a black struggle**
Permalink Submitted by John El-Amin (not verified) on Sat, 06/29/2013 - 18:26
Dear Readers please read The Willie Lynch letter. A guide written by a slavebreaker, to teach US slave owners how to rule slaves. This laid the groundwork for the dysfunctions so prevalent in the US black community. Self hatred was emphasized, combined with eliminating Islam and other indigenous religions Africans had.
Our history, languages and cultures were wiped out with 350 years of brainwashing.

Today, blacks are still finding themselves and see the parallels between the Palestinian struggle and their own.
We both have been and are demonized by our oppressors. Some of us act out just as planned, Reenforcing the stereotypes to aid our enemies. We have strength in our shareexperiences to guide us into the future toward Palestinian freedom and black equality.

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