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HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

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The 'Palestine poster' and everyday memoricide: Making killing memory mundane

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Abstract

This article looks at the *Liberation Graphics Collection of Palestine Posters* – a collection of 1600 'Palestine posters' submitted to UNESCO's Memory of the World programme during its 2014–2015 and 2016–2017 rounds. Despite receiving unanimous support for inscription, this nomination was effectively vetoed twice by UNESCO's Director-General. The *Collection* frames the Palestine poster as 'an essential medium through which Palestinians communicated their aspirations and international supporters expressed their solidarity'. Among these aspirations is a desire to identify and expose Israeli memoricide ('the killing of memory'). Importantly, symbols like the house-key and olive tree transform otherwise mundane objects into potent signifiers calling attention to how memoricidal processes impacted spaces beyond the high-profile. Conversely, by drawing upon Zionist posters collected within the more expansive *Palestine Poster Project Archives* online, my analysis also explores the reconstructive side of memoricide. These materials simultaneously facilitate and obfuscate the killing of memory. Memoricide becomes normalised, a mundane (and thus invisible) facet of everyday life, practised by ordinary people.

Keywords

everyday, Israel, memoricide, memory, Palestine, Palestine poster

The *Liberation Graphics Collection of Palestine Posters*, re-submitted to UNESCO's Memory of the World (MoW) programme during its 2016–2017 round, frames the Palestine poster as 'an essential medium through which Palestinians communicated their aspirations and international supporters expressed their solidarity' (Walsh et al., 2016: 2).[1] As a trans-cultural artefact, the Palestine poster has resonated across borders and cultural backgrounds, its impact on space temporary yet often powerful. It is innately concerned with space – not just that into which it projects its content but the spaces that have been lost. The lost spaces of Palestine, subject to forcible population transfer and purposeful erasure, as material traces of Palestinian presence are removed or converted in a process Grmek (2019: 158) called 'memoricide' ('the killing of memory'). However, memoricide is a phenomenon much broader and more complex than the rubble and ash of its emblematic imagery: Sarajevo's burning National Library; Afghanistan's exploded Bamiyan Buddhas; before-and-after satellite images of Syria's Palmyra.

Importantly, the Palestine poster's symbolic traditions do not quite match these spectacular optics of killing memory, highlighting seemingly mundane spaces targeted (homes) and objects left behind (land deeds, passports, house-keys and olive trees). It is, after all, residential geographies that are emphasised in the toll of the First Arab–Israeli War (1947–1948) rather than high-profile cultural spaces and heritage sites. That is, the 530 villages destroyed and many more cleared as 700,000 Palestinians were purposely and permanently exiled from what is now Israel (Morris, 2001: 252; Pappé, 2006: xii–xiii; UNRWA, n.d.b). Palestinians regard this as *al-Nakba* ('the catastrophe') and have been asserting their Right of Return since (Davis, 2011: 7; Masalha, 2012: 2).

Inscription on the MoW's International Register as documentary heritage of global significance might have afforded these icons even greater visibility. The repeated rejection of the *Liberation Graphics Collection*, however, exemplifies the 'geopolitical games' to which UNESCO's mechanisms remain susceptible (Bos, 2019). The Memory of the World

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programme, more so even than World Heritage sites, seems especially at-risk of the influence of national memory politics. A significant difference within its nomination process is the 'veto' UNESCO's Director-General effectively wields (UNESCO, 2017: 32–33). This was clear through the *Liberation Graphics Collection*'s nominations as their rejections have twice come against expert scholarly advice from within the assessment process itself that recommended inscription (Panevska, 2017). The consequence remains the exclusion of Palestinian post-memoricide iconographies from world heritage canon – a missed opportunity to stimulate global collective memory through the potential exposure that UNESCO's platform brings.

This article explores how the materials within the vetoed *Liberation Graphics Collection* make Israeli memoricide visible. However, it does so through a comparative content analysis of similar imagery that appears in Zionist artworks.[2] The 1600 entries curated in the *Collection* is a subset of the massive poster archive, currently in excess of 14,000 entries, displayed online through *The Palestine Poster Project Archives* website.[3] Interestingly, the *Archives* present Zionist political posters alongside those in support of Palestinian rights and national aspirations.[4] The 'Palestine poster' of the *Archives* is therefore a much broader genre construct than the one outlined in the UNESCO submission. This is significant as the Zionist Palestine poster had, and continues to have, a function within memoricidal processes – that is, as implements helping to *facilitate* memoricide both prior to, and following, the First Arab–Israeli War. In other words, it facilitates memoricide *outside* the context of open warfare and enforced mass displacement. The Palestine poster, then, across Palestinian and Zionist sources, serves as a rich case study for reworking memoricide's conceptual boundaries.

My analyses – made possible through the *Archives*' curation tools – demonstrate how Zionist and Palestinian iconographies inform, converse with and illuminate each other in competing 'representations of space'. Hence Lefebvre's (1991) work on the production of space provides theoretical grounding for the relationship between representation and material space. It is through symbolic interplay that the Palestine poster illuminates memoricide as a more complex phenomenon than what conventional understanding suggests. I draw upon 'landscape-as-ideology' (Cosgrove and Daniels, 1989; Mitchell, 1996, 2000) as a lens to explore how memoricide acquires everyday dimensions, which simultaneously perpetuate *and* obfuscate the process of killing memory. This further substantiates the observed interwoven-ness of represented and material landscapes while bringing this to bear on memoricide conceptually. Conversely, the making 'iconic' of mundane targets within Palestinian artworks deepens our understanding of memoricide's material scope beyond its emblematic imagery.[5]

Landscape-as-ideology and memoricide

Geographers have long recognised the inseparability between representations of space and material impacts within the spaces being represented. As Cosgrove and Daniels (1989: 1) note, 'the meanings of verbal, visual and built landscapes have a complex interwoven history'. Indeed, '[t]o understand a built landscape…it is usually necessary to understand written and verbal representations of it, not as "illustrations," images standing outside it, but as constituent images of its meaning or meanings' (Cosgrove and Daniels, 1989: 1). Landscape images and iconography have thus been explored as means of ideological naturalisation and mystification. Mitchell (1996: 4) notes that the 'unacknowledged ideological history' of landscapes was 'a history that tended to erase the politics and actuality of work from view'. In other words, 'landscape is both a work and an erasure of work' (Mitchell, 1996: 6). Such an observation resonates with this article's focus on memoricide insofar as the Zionist materials analysed erase the actuality of *memoricidal* work from view. But, insofar as the 'landscape way of seeing' is ideological and naturalises meaning, we also witness through Palestinian iconographies how 'those sedimented meanings are prized open' through 'concerted contestation' (Mitchell, 2000: xix).

Lefebvre's (1991) theoretical framework for the production of space remains useful in understanding this dynamic. Lefebvre segments the spatial production process into three overlapping yet distinct 'spaces': conceived, perceived and lived space. Conceived space encompasses representations of space – the knowledge concerning how space is and how it should be (Lefebvre, 1991: 38). Perceived space comprises how such knowledge is transferred onto 'real' space. These take the form of policies and practices informed by the content of conceived space (Lefebvre, 1991: 38–40). Finally, there is lived space: 'the space of everyday experience' (Penny, 2010: 7). This is the product of the convergence of conceived and perceived spaces although its content does not necessarily follow predictably what is prescribed by them.

Lefebvre did not intend a rigid model for the production of space. It is not a straightforward procession from conceived to perceived resulting in a lived space that actualises, or is actualising, the initial content of the conceived space. Competing meanings exist; as does resistance and subversion – even simple endurance of social existence. Indeed, Lefebvre (1991: 52) warned *against* homogenising tendencies, claiming they possess 'awesome reductionistic force *vis-à-vis* "lived" experience' and a 'frightening capacity for violence'. We witness this over and again with the 'imaginative geographies' produced by and for imperialistic and settler-colonial projects – from Orientalism and 'a land without people, for a people without land' in Zionism to *terra nullius* in Australia (Gregory, 2004; Said, 1992, 2003). Thus lived space rarely – if ever – reflects a singular conceived space. It is, rather, the open-ended (and uneven) product of a *multiplicity of conceived and perceived spaces*. This article

situates itself within that multiplicity – specifically conceived spaces (or 'spaces of representation) as they pertain to the landscape of Israel and Palestine – by exploring the contrasting iconographies across Palestine posters produced by Zionist and Palestinian sources. Importantly, they do so in a way that contributes to the conceptual reworking of 'memoricide'.

Grmek first proposed memoricide as a concept in 1992 to label the 'broader political strategy aimed at systematically destroying all traces of the Croatian past' during the War of Independence (1991–1995) (Lambrichs cited in Grmek, 2019: 157). The sustained mortar-shelling of Old Dubrovnik in 1991, a UNESCO World Heritage site, was an infamous moment but far from an isolated act (Grmek, 2019: 157). Grmek's concept quickly entered the vocabulary describing other campaigns within the broader Yugoslav Wars (1991–1999) – especially the Bosnian War (1992–1995). The destruction of the National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina – locally known as the *Vijecnica* – during the Siege of Sarajevo was notably salient. Halilovich (2016: 83) argues that such imagery 'has become Sarajevo's intimate collective memory, a shared emotion, of the burning *Vijecnica*'. It has also morphed into a general sense of what memoricide is, what it looks like – an emblematic atrocity.

I argue, however, that a fixation on the 'iconic' has been a *limitation* for memoricide's previous applications. Kemp (2012: 3) notes that 'an iconic image is one that has achieved wholly exceptional levels of widespread recognizability and has come to carry a rich series of varied associations for very large numbers of people across time and cultures'. Indeed, as Stapleton and Viselli (2019: 8) remark, the 'unseen icon would therefore be an oxymoron'. The iconic is certainly relevant to memoricide insofar as the iconic image has a function within collective memory's frameworks. The repetitions that gradually winnow and refine collective memory ultimately produce images that can become iconic (especially if incorporated into artistic traditions). Moreover, many targeted structures and objects are widely renowned and valued for various reasons. Importantly, though, memoricide is concerned with more than the exceptionally recognisable. There was little that was widely noteworthy about the mundane residential geographies targeted during the First Arab–Israeli War and the Bosnian War. In fact, it is only *through* the memoricidal processes they were subjected to that these spaces became noteworthy on a wider scale in the aftermath – producing, among other things, the Palestinian iconographies covered in this article.

Memoricide is therefore *not* a synonym for iconoclasm. It is also *not* a synonym for cultural genocide. The relationship between the two concepts is seemingly close. Indeed, Grmek (2019: 158) initially conceived of memoricide as a term to replace cultural genocide: 'I suggest that memoricide is a concept more appropriate to describe this reality, knowing that in ancient Latin, the term *memoriae* means not only memories but also historical monuments'. It is true that

memoricide can align with several war crimes. However, positioning it as a base crime for one or more of them is restrictive. It holds the killing of memory as an extraordinary circumstance, as a dimension of the 'crime of crimes' in genocide (Haračić, 2012: 254), and potentially limits its recognition to the exceptional scenario of war. Conversely, as my broader research argues, it is a phenomenon that exists well beyond these extreme contexts and any dramatic *raison d'être* against history or memory. It can be normalised, a mundane (and thus invisible) facet of everyday life, practiced by ordinary people. The landscape's ideological mystification as presented by Zionist Palestine posters demonstrates this. These posters figure as implements that help internalise everyday memoricide through enlisting individuals as (usually oblivious) practitioners.

Memoricide takes as its target, not a group's entire cultural existence, but rather *memory*. So, while Grmek (2019: 158) pointedly notes that its Latin etymology includes historical monuments within its scope, it is worth noting that memoricide is not necessarily limited to physical interventions within space. It is worth inverting Grmek's emphasis, then, to remind us that *memoriae* includes not only historical monuments but *memories* as well. But what is meant by 'memory'? It is a question that has provoked diverse cross-disciplinary interpretations. Indeed, no conception of memory is universally valid, which is true across cultural contexts as well as academic disciplines (Eckstein, 2018). Roediger and Wertsch (2008: 10) advise that 'the term is almost always most useful when accompanied by a modifier'. What *modifiers* are most useful for memory in a discussion about memoricide?

Memoricide appears to expunge the content of what can be termed 'cultural' or 'social memory' (Haračić, 2012: 237). Halbwachs' (1992, 2011) observations on 'collective memory', and the social frameworks by which we remember, provide a conceptual anchor. Our memories, even individual memories that seem so intimate and unique, are socially constructed (Halbwachs, 1992: 53). They are made legible (or illegible) through the interpretive frames we acquire socially: language, norms, 'knowledge' (Halbwachs, 1992: 173). Moreover, memories are triggered by cues in our interactions with people, spaces and objects (Halbwachs, 1992: 38). Repetition of such interactions generates memories more prominently than those triggered less frequently (Coser, 1992: 24; Halbwachs, 2011: 141). Otherwise memories become 'less accessible because the groups that carry them are more remote and intermittent in contact with us' (Halbwachs, 2011: 141). Memoricide, then, obstructs this repetition by intervening upon the external interactions – with people, places, objects – that sustain memories.

Memories are continually revised through repetition. Indeed, 'to remember is to reconstruct the past', typically (and often unconsciously) shaped to suit present purposes (Halbwachs, 1992: 224). Memories gradually shed their individual idiosyncrasies to form an 'idealized image'

subsumed as collective memory 'tradition' (Hutton, 1993: 7). This process is incremental and often difficult to perceive by those immersed in them (Halbwachs, 1992: 201). Commemoration meanwhile becomes 'a self-conscious effort … to stay or at least to disguise the process' of gradual change (Hutton, 1993: 79). Tradition, then, becomes subject to memory politics – conscious efforts to shape or, indeed, invent collective memory. This knowledge, however, is often (perhaps inevitably) reliant upon the erasure of inconvenient or contradictory memories. Memoricide, insofar as it obstructs repeated interactions that sustain such memories, therefore serves an important function in *'cultivating'* and *'regulating'* collective memory. It is *necessarily reconstructive*, even *creative*, rather than solely destructive. Hence, it is not enough for analysis to focus on the act of memory erasure alone.

By situating memoricide within unfolding processes of collective memory and as necessarily reconstructive, it may prompt the sense that memoricide is *inevitably* part of our memory dynamics and means of place-making. Or, to return to Mitchell (1996, 2000), is not landscape always an ideology predicated upon erasure (of politics, of labour, of struggle)? A response to these important questions cannot rely upon memoricide as being consciously deliberate or intentional acts either. I argue that memoricide can be normalised, which necessarily eschews what deliberate intent looks like. It becomes part of the unconscious fabric of social life – including taking on the *appearance* of being a natural process. But, as feminist, Marxist and postcolonial literature asserts, what may *seem* natural is actually the product of long-running ideological mystification and normative prejudice. These tend to reinforce power structures and disproportionately impact already marginalised groups. Memoricide, then, serves as a critical and political injunction designed to confront 'common-sense' understandings of the 'organic' fade of memory. Indeed, to 'de-naturalise' norms and mystification is to provoke a conversation about what we can (and should) do with this knowledge. In this sense, my conceptual reworking of memoricide ties into ongoing debates about the 'right to memory' (Reading, 2012) and 'ethics of forgetting' (Connerton, 2008).

UNESCO's Memory of the World and the 'Palestine poster'

Memory of the World

UNESCO launched its Memory of the World (MoW) programme in 1992. This was framed in response to the perilous 'state of preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage' across the globe (UNESCO, 2020). 'Documentary heritage' is deployed as a 'collective term' for 'those single documents – or groups of documents – of significant and enduring value to a community, a country or to humanity generally, and whose deterioration or loss would be a harmful impoverishment' (UNESCO, 2017: 71). Examples include 'text items' (manuscripts, books, posters, etc.), 'non text items' (maps, drawings, music scores, etc.), 'audiovisual items' (photographs, films, magnetic tapes, etc.) or 'virtual digital documents' (webpages and websites) (UNESCO, 2017: 71). In other words, material (and digital) cultural forms left outside the spatial emphasis of UNESCO's World Heritage site listings.

Interestingly, nominations can be made by 'any person or organisation', bypassing obstacles pertaining to member state consent (UNESCO, 2017: 31). This would seem to mitigate national memory politics filtering the process. However, priority is extended to nominations made through National or Regional Memory of the World Committees (which entail member state backing) (UNESCO, 2002: 23–24).[6] Nominations are assessed by an advisory panel, the Register Subcommittee (RSC), which comprises members appointed by several independent organisations with subject matter expertise on documentary heritage (UNESCO, 2017: 18). Nominations that satisfy criteria for world significance are then recommended by the RSC to the International Advisory Committee (IAC) for inscription (UNESCO, 2017: 32).[7] The 14 members of the IAC, appointed by UNESCO's Director-General, meet biennially to review these recommendations (UNESCO, 2017: 17). The Director-General then 'makes the final decision' on inscription (UNESCO, 2017: 32–33). It is this discretionary power that seems to have prevented the inclusion of the *Liberation Graphics Collection* during both the 2014–2015 and 2016–2017 rounds. The *Collection* had otherwise passed through the entire process twice, confirmed in its relevance and import by scholars within the fields of documentary heritage, and therefore endorsed for inscription by the RSC (Banerjee, 2016; Panevska, 2017).

The *Liberation Graphics Collection* was not the first set of political posters to be submitted or the first to be 'controversial' (Silver, 2015). Moreover, that inscription does not entail endorsement is made abundantly clear in 2.3.2 of the *Revised General Guidelines* (UNESCO, 2017: 9):

> UNESCO does not enter into disputes concerning the interpretation of historical events, nor does it take sides. It does not necessarily endorse the ideas or opinions expressed in any items of documentary heritage accepted for register assessment and/or inscription. Further, it does not necessarily endorse the content of the nominations themselves: UNESCO's acceptance of a nomination does not in any way imply automatic agreement with its content.[8]

Yet Director-General Irina Bokova seemingly exercised her discretionary powers to prevent inscription. No formal statement has been issued by the Director-General regarding the reasons behind this decision. Bokova has been quoted, through correspondence with news outlets during the RSC phase of the 2014–2015 round, claiming that the *Collection* had potential to fuel incitement and anti-Semitism (Ahren,

2015; JTA, 2015). This is clearly stated through Bokova's (2015) letter correspondence with Daniel Walsh, curator of both the *Collection* and the wider *Archives,* made public on the latter's website:

> I stand by the substance of the interviews that I gave to several media outlets regarding my concerns with the posters included in the nomination of the *Liberation Graphics Collection of Palestine Posters*. I remain convinced that UNESCO should not take measures that might fuel hatred and lead to anti-Semitism and violence, as this would run counter to the values at the heart of the Organisation.

The Palestinian Authority (PA) itself was initially supportive of the first nomination but ultimately withdrew due to the Director-General's clear opposition (Silver, 2015). The PA's Ministry of Culture, however, co-nominated the *Collection*'s second submission (Walsh et al., 2016: 3). Bokova's stance belies the notion that UNESCO does not endorse or interpret the content of inscribed documentary heritage. The lack of transparency extends to the overall rejection of the *Collection* despite it being common practice to amend submissions following advice before re-submission (UNESCO, 2017: 33).

The Liberation Graphics Collection

The *Collection* is curated with materials published between 1965, starting with the Palestine Liberation Organization's (PLO) first four posters, and 2000. The end-date, meanwhile, 'coincides with the emergence of digital design and production' (Walsh et al., 2016: 2). The 'Palestine poster' in its hard-copy form is 'intrinsically ephemeral' (Walsh et al., 2016: 12). It is designed to be displayed publicly which, in many cases, meant exposure to the elements. Artefacts produced after 2000 are therefore considered less 'at-risk' because they have been disseminated digitally. The year bracketing (1965–2000) is explained as additionally important for it aligns with 'the point in time when Palestinians asserted control over their own national institutions' (Walsh et al., 2016: 2). The posters are framed as documenting 'Palestinian responses to invasion, war, displacement, diaspora, occupation, and imprisonment, as well as Palestinian self-assertion and resistance' (Walsh et al., 2016: 6). They, therefore, provide an enriched representation of Palestinians and their culture.

The 'Palestine poster', however, is a *transcultural* artefact. Walsh et al. (2016: 7) argue 'that in the second half of the twentieth century the Palestine poster genre served as an extraordinary source of inspiration for artists from a diverse range of geographic locales, political affiliations, nationalities, and aesthetic perspectives'. Artists from a variety of national backgrounds 'have cross-fertilized their own creativity and national iconographies with those of contemporary Palestine – borrowing, fusing, and remixing' (Walsh

et al., 2016: 11; Walsh, 2011: 70). The *Collection* also includes dozens of Zionist and Israeli posters as well, though as indicated by the nomination form, they are predominantly derived from 'a large traveling exhibit of Palestinian-Israeli artists entitled "Down With the Occupation" …'. This consequently provides only a partial picture of the rich dimensionality Walsh (2011) identifies in the broader 'Palestine poster' genre.

The Palestine Poster Project Archives

The Palestine Poster Project Archives began as curator Walsh's (2011: 1–2) private collection. He amassed about 200 posters by the conclusion of his Peace Corps tenure from PLO offices in Morocco, France, the United Kingdom, Spain, Germany, Holland and Italy (Walsh, 2011: 2). These posters notably drew interest from fellow American Peace Corps volunteers: 'I did not realize at that time that I had happened upon something unique and something that resonated with Americans' (Walsh, 2011: 2). Such interactions provided a glimpse into the posters' appeal across national and cultural lines. Over time, and as Walsh's collection grew, they coalesced into a proposed genre – the 'Palestine poster'. This is distinguished from Radwan's (1992) 'Palestinian political poster', which tied its emergence to the 5-year period following 1967s Six-Day War. Walsh (2011: 36) argues that 'Radwan's term is accurate to describe the posters produced by the PLO, its member organizations, and other political groups; however, it cannot be used to describe the Wellspring in all its current complexity'. Walsh (2011: 15) expands the Palestine poster genre's scope to accommodate a wider range of sources as well as a different origin point:

- all posters with the word 'Palestine' regardless of language, source and time period;
- all posters 'created or published by any artist or agency claiming Palestinian nationality or Palestinian participation (including Zionists in the 1897-1948 period)"';
- all posters published within the geographic boundaries of historic Palestine including modern-day Israel;
- all posters 'by any source which relates directly to the social, cultural, political, military or economic history of Palestine';
- all posters 'relating to Zionism or anti-Zionism in any language, from any source, published after August 31, 1897'.

By contrast, the Palestine poster in the UNESCO submission is oriented around 'solidarity with the quest for Palestinian liberation and self-determination' (Walsh et al., 2016: 2). This clearly privileges certain threads, over others, within the broader genre constructed for the *Archives*. The MoW program requires nominations to be 'a self-contained group of individual documents that have been brought

together by a particular circumstance' (UNESCO, 2017: 71). This means it is extremely difficult to accurately capture the Palestine poster in its fullest scope.

Clear from the *Archives'* original genre boundary is that the label 'Palestine' does not necessarily denote a particular geopolitical perspective – such as one sympathetic towards the national aspirations of Palestinians. It includes those that would deny Palestine's historic existence as well as its sovereign future. Walsh (2011: 15–16) claims that these various threads individually hindered awareness of a broader genre because they were catalogued in other collections under different terms – such as 'Zionist', 'Israeli', 'Eretz Israel', 'Holy Land', 'the Promised Land', 'Arab' and 'Jewish'. The contemporary geopolitical baggage of 'Palestine' might arguably continue this, albeit on a surface level, as it prompts an assumed position and no doubt provokes resistance from certain quarters. However, the 'Palestine' that Walsh anchors the genre label in is 'historic Palestine'; the geographic region that was covered by the British Mandate (1918-47) and the Ottoman Empire prior to that. By doing so, the Palestine poster 'reveals a more complex and complete history of modern Palestine' (Walsh, 2011: 16).

The inclusion of Zionist posters is a key strength of Walsh's proposed genre for the *Archives*. It recognises these materials as essential parts of the ever-unfolding symbolic language of the region. These symbols, in many ways, are interconnected and 'in-conversation' with each other. Their inclusion within one genre, encouraging comparative and parallel studies of Zionist and Palestinian iconographies, provide a richer picture of one of modern history's longest unresolved conflicts. Significantly, this includes materials that performed active roles in *furthering* the memoricide of Palestinian cultural history *alongside* iconographies that emerged in memoricide's wake as a means of remembering. In other words, not just a denser symbolic site of struggle including depictions of memoricide in action, but documentary *evidence* embedded within the memoricidal process itself.

Memoricide and the Palestine poster

The content analysis within this article is a sample of the broader analysis I conducted for my doctoral thesis. The process of photographing and digitising the posters led to their categorisation into thematically consistent piles (size, logo, date, artist, content, etc.) (Walsh, 2011: 28). This became the central organising mechanism for the *Archives* – being able to 'curate' collections based on criteria selected by the user (including iconographies). Four distinct sources, or 'wellsprings', came to light through this process based on the geopolitical identities of the artists as well: the 'Palestinian Nationalist', 'Arab/Muslim', 'Zionist/Israeli' and 'International' wellsprings (Walsh, 2011: 25). These 'wellsprings' are formalised within the online *Archives* as searchable categories.

A cultural studies approach to content analysis is interested in how text and context are mutually constitutive. It avoids misrepresentative contextualism, which assumes context as 'exterior' to the text – such as 'behind' or 'before' it (Grossberg, 1997: 321). This form of content analysis is therefore not solely concerned with aesthetics and representation patterns. As Saukko (2003: 103) argues, such a focus 'tends to miss the small shifts and variations, historical details and contexts, which often account for much of the appeal of these stories'. Important for the purposes of this analysis is both mindfulness of the context in which the posters were produced – with their emerging variations and shifts in salience – but also the *re*-contextualising effects of their inclusion in a digital archive. The ability to curate collections that bring posters side-by-side from a diverse range of time periods, cultural and political backgrounds inevitably has an impact on analysis or interpretation. This, however, does not devalue or disqualify the resultant meanings produced. Cultural texts constantly enter into new dynamics, informed by new understandings, which generate new negotiated meanings which certainly can continue to be *meaningful*.

I began by investigating patterns of representation across the predominantly Palestinian posters included within the *Collection*. The *Archives'* curation tool enabled me to divide the *Collection* by iconography and focus on those most relevant to material practices of memoricide: Bulldozer/Tractor/ Heavy equipment/Plows; Key; Olives/Trees/Branches. Aesthetic and thematic connections and divergences were noted across the posters before my search expanded to the larger Palestinian Nationalist, Arab/Muslim and International wellsprings using the same iconography categories. This was intended to note trends and variations beyond the *Collection*. I then applied this method to posters within the Zionist/ Israeli wellspring. I used the same iconographic categories to trace aesthetic and thematic commonalities and contrasts with the previously surveyed Palestinian posters. Overall approximately 5000 posters were examined as part of this comparative content analysis. The 21 posters selected for analysis in this article are held to be representative (albeit hardly comprehensive) of broader artistic trends observed in the *Archives*. I was largely dependent on the information provided within the *Archives* about artist, publication year, publisher as well as translations of Hebrew and Arabic text.

Jamming 'Visit Palestine'

A prominent aspect of the dynamic between Palestinian and Zionist posters is what is termed 'culture jamming' (Klein, 2002: 280). Klein (2002: 280) defines this as 'the practice of parodying advertisements and hijacking billboards in order to drastically alter their messages'. Klein's focus was culture jamming of corporate marketing that invaded public space – such as manipulating Nike billboards. It is relevant to the

Figure 1. Franz Krausz's 1936 poster 'Visit Palestine' (left), Amer Shomali's 2009 poster 'Visit Palestine' (middle), and Ahmed Abu Nasser and Mohamed Abu Nasser's 2014 poster 'Visit Gaza' (right). *Source*: The Palestine Poster Project Archives.

Palestine poster, however, insofar as it is a form of marketing that utilises public space. Indeed, as Bar-Gal (2003: 12) observes, the Jewish National Fund (JNF) sought to permeate both private and public domains with its posters using explicit rhetoric likening it to 'commercial propaganda'. Klein (2002: 285) notes that sophisticated jamming involves 'meshing' with the target, thereby 'borrowing visual legitimacy from advertising itself'. We can see this dynamic at work with the culture jamming of 'Visit Palestine'.

Franz Krausz's 'Visit Palestine' poster from 1936 presents an example that has been jammed heavily across source categories (see Figure 1). Krausz was an Austrian-Jewish artist prominent within the Zionist poster category although, ironically, he is perhaps best known for the iconic 'Visit Palestine' poster (Davis and Walsh, 2015: 47). The poster itself was designed for Zionist purposes insofar as it was published by the Tourist Development Association of Palestine 'to promote Jewish immigration to create Palestine as a homeland for Jews (seeing the native population as Arabs and not as Palestinians)' (Davis and Walsh, 2015: 48). The original poster saliently depicts the Islamic Dome of the Rock in Old Jerusalem – an image that has been frequently jammed since David Tarkakover, another Israeli artist and critic of Israel's Occupation, revived its circulation in 1995 (Davis and Walsh, 2015: 47). Amer Shomali (n.d.) notes the appeal of Krausz' poster for Palestinians:

> The Palestinians, in effect, are taking advantage of the ironies embodied in the provenance of 'Visit Palestine' to thumb their noses at the Israeli government that for decades claimed there had never been such a place.

In other words, it undercuts Zionist denialism that 'Palestine' and 'Palestinians' ever existed, by using artwork initially produced *for* Zionist aims. The scene is also often re-appropriated to emphasise various aspects of Israel's Occupation such as the Separation Wall in Shomali's own 'Visit Palestine' and an Israeli drone strike in Ahmed and Mohamed Abu Nasser's 'Visit Gaza' (Figure 1). Both represent different mechanisms through which Palestinian space continues to be compressed, expropriated and/or violently controlled while borrowing the visual legitimacy of Krausz' 'Visit Palestine'.

Bulldozers and heavy machinery

The contrast between image sets, which are not necessarily in *deliberate* conversation with each other, can also be illuminating. Walsh (2011: 52) notes this regarding the bulldozer, an icon that has undergone 'shifting ownership' and distinct tonal change between sources. 'Bulldozer', in this instance, serves as an umbrella term that also covers other heavy equipment or machinery that transform the earth (tractors, diggers and so forth). Importantly, they are seemingly mundane objects, as opposed to the drama of war machinery. The Zionist posters in Figure 2 exhibit a pioneering spirit as fields are ploughed and cultivated. They originate from the JNF and clearly depict harmonious kibbutz life untroubled by contested land ownership. Patchwork cultivated fields spread across rolling hills in scenery reminiscent of European rural settings.

These types of 'scenes' were integral to the JNF's strategies in securing participation and financial support for their

Figure 2. Mitchell Loeb's (circa 1960 poster) 'Progress Despite Crisis' (left) and P. Mouchel's 1974 poster 'We Shall Conquer the Land and Blossom the Wilderness' (right). *Source*: The Palestine Poster Project Archives.

activities – and hence their underlying memoricide. Bloch (2018: 48), in fact, describes the JNF as 'one of the most normalised and significant structural elements underpinning Zionist Israel'. This is achieved through the ubiquity of its various implements – tree certificates, stamps, blue boxes, posters – within spaces frequented by Jews and their numbing effect: 'As a child I never really thought about what happened to that money. All I knew was that it went to Israel, land of/for the Jews, and that it was collected to help Jews settle there' (Bloch, 2018: 48). Such is the way of everyday memoricide.

However, the bulldozer icon is framed in the other categories, especially the Palestinian Nationalist one, with a more 'menacing and destructive tone' (Walsh, 2011: 52); they become instruments of war. Interestingly, a thread within Zionist poster art also mirrors this framing. Several posters from Israel's first years as an independent nation conflate so-called 'pioneering imagery' with images of war (see Figure 3). Both of the depicted posters were published by the Israel Defense Force (IDF). A sword becomes overlayed with a wheat crop in P. Shtayer's poster 'Plow!' The Hebrew subheading text reads 'to rid the land of desolation' (Liberation Graphics, n.d.e). Meanwhile tractors are likened to tanks in Ankorion's poster 'Our Goal – The Village and Agriculture'. The latter's translated title suggests that the tractor is a representation of what the tank is fighting for (as is the relationship between the sword and wheat in 'Plow!'). But the tractor can also be interpreted as *an extension of* the tank – an interpretation that is certainly encouraged in how

Palestinian sources deploy the icon. This imagery, then, has the added (and unintentional) potential in calling attention to mundane practices as weapons of memoricide.

Once the bulldozer enters the Palestinian iconographic lexicon we witness a resonance with these Zionist materials (see Figure 4). Bulldozers still clear the landscape – albeit, this time, it is Palestinian structures and olive trees being removed. These depict Israeli physical memoricide in action, displacing and erasing, leaving flattened nothingness in their wake. In other words, they reveal the actuality of memoricidal work. 'Ashkelon Prison Series – 7', included in the *Collection*, portrays this in action. Homes, an olive tree, cacti and even doves are crushed by the heavy machinery. Displaced Palestinians begin to walk away from a landscape that no longer bears signs of their presence. This tonal shift carries over into non-Palestinian wellsprings as well. Reuven Zahavi's poster, part of the 'Down With the Occupation' travelling exhibit, spotlights the bulldozer's role in house demolitions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). The empty landscape behind, again, highlights the bulldozer's role in actively producing 'a land without people'. Michel Kichka's 'Is This Acceptable?', meanwhile, provocatively depicts memoricide in-between destruction and reconstruction. The bulldozer's blade is overflowing with Islamic-coded architecture such as crescent-topped minarets and domed ceilings. The sign declares in Hebrew what is to be built in its place: 'Expropriation for public use! Immigrant housing to be built here' (Liberation Graphics, n.d.d).

Figure 3. P. Shtayer's 1949 poster 'Plow!' (left) and Ankorion's 1949 poster 'Our Goal – The Village and Agriculture' (right). *Source*: The Palestine Poster Project Archives.

Roots and rootlessness

Walsh (2011: 52–53) claims 'the way Palestinians and Zionists depict [trees] opens a window into the struggle over the visual, physical and metaphorical landscape'. Palestinians frequently identify with the olive tree – a locally cultivated crop, which requires years to fully mature, but produces for a long time afterward even in harsh conditions. Ross (2019: 1) observes that the olive tree is 'identified with the

Palestinian people's steadfast attachment to land that is constantly at risk of seizure or theft'. Walsh (2011: 61), meanwhile, claims that olive tree symbolism for Palestinians has become 'an iconic representation of their national revolutionary spirit' signifying 'rootedness'.

The loss of one olive tree, yet alone an entire field or grove, is devastating. It is simultaneously catastrophic damage to Palestinian livelihoods and their presence on
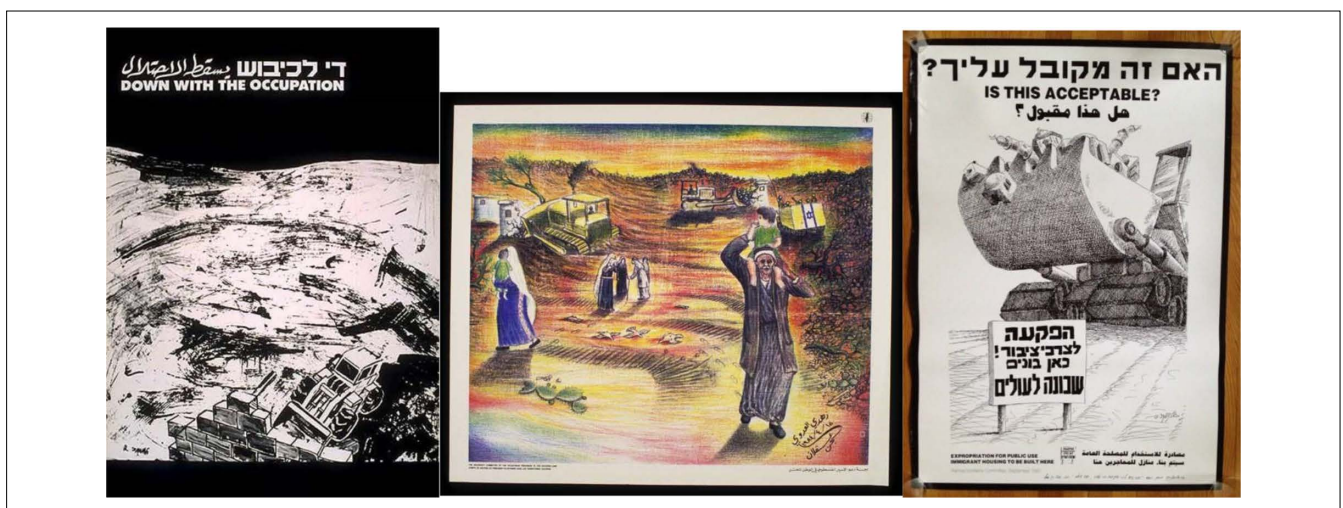

Figure 4. Reuven Zahavi's 1987 poster 'Down With the Occupation' (left), Zuhdi Al Aduwi's 1984 poster 'Ashkelon Prison Series – 7' (middle), and Michel Kichka's 1991 poster 'Is This Acceptable?' (right). *Source*: The Palestine Poster Project Archives.

Figure 5. The Palestinian Peasants Union's (circa 1990) 'If the Tree Knew' (left), Raised Fist Collective's 2010 poster 'However Beaten Down She Stands Back Up' (middle), and Khaled Fanni's 2013 poster 'Land Day Moonrise' (right). *Source*: The Palestine Poster Project Archives.

the land (UN OCHA, 2011, 2019). The olive tree is, therefore, a significant site over which the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is fought. It is especially emblematic of suffering under Occupation in the West Bank although it remains highly relevant to *Nakba*-era memoricide as well. The constant reuse of the image 'If the Tree Knew' is further evidence of the olive tree's resonance among Palestinians. The original, published by the Palestinian Peasants Union around 1990 and shown in Figure 5, depicts a woman despairingly clinging to an olive tree that has had its branches sawn off. The poster references Mahmoud Darwish (cited in Liberation Graphics, n.d.c), regarded as Palestine's national poet: 'If the tree knew its planter, its oil would become tears'.[9] The image has been re-imagined since such as in the Raised Fist Collective's 'However Beaten Down She Stands Back Up' and Khaled Fanni's 'Land Day Moonrise'. The former, sourced from the Arab/Muslim source wellspring, also demonstrates how the icon is recognised beyond Palestinian communities. To erase olive trees is to erase a long-term presence on the land. In this way, this iconography stresses how such actions constitute memoricide, despite not conforming to its conventional imagery of destroyed human structures.

In contrast to Palestinians and the olive tree, tree symbolism in Zionist posters focus on the pine tree and its 'ease of transplantation' (Walsh, 2011: 61). Walsh (2011: 61) describes this as 'a metaphor for immigration and settler colonialism'. Israelis – especially children as seen in Figure 6 – are frequently depicted in the process of planting flora. Walsh (cited in Liberation Graphics, n.d.a) observes that these posters' subtext is that 'as these

saplings grow into the soil so will the children who planted them grow into a new identity, one inseparable from the land'. The Israelis are establishing their presence whereas olive trees bespeak generations of prior inhabitation by their Palestinian cultivators.

The planting of trees is also a key tool for Israeli memoricide. Pappé (2006: 154–155) writes that it is 'pine trees … that today cover many of the destroyed Palestinian villages, hiding their remains under vast "green lungs" planted by the Jewish National Fund for the purpose of "recreation and tourism"'. Zochrot (2014) claims that two-thirds of the JNF's artificial forests are planted over the sites of destroyed Palestinian villages. Those that are not remain part of the 'ecological mission' that has been tainted as a green-washing campaign. JNF Forest posters tend to depict lush, thick tree lines – typically, though not always, pines (Figure 7). Pappé (2006: 227) observes that the JNF preferred 'conifers instead of the natural flora indigenous to Palestine'. Ostensibly, the preference for cypress and pine trees was framed as a means of bolstering the fledgling nation's wood industry although they have other advantages: expedited growth cycles and a so-called 'European look' (Pappé, 2006: 227; Ross, 2019: 12). These forests are also named for key Zionist figures (Herzl and Weizmann), institutions (Defenders/IDF) and/or tied to Jewish traumas (Holocaust victims). Through this signification these forests inscribe within Israel's toponymy meanings that resonate primarily with its Zionist and Jewish demographics. Therefore Zionist tree symbolism presents the 'other side' of the memoricidal process – its reconstructive function within collective memory.

Figure 6. J. Wellner's 1934 poster 'Young Palestine' (left) and David Zak's (circa 1966) poster 'Grow Up My Young Seedling' (right). *Source*: The Palestine Poster Project Archives.

Figure 7. Franz Krausz' 1949 poster 'The Herzl Cedar Grove (left) and Noah Bee's (circa 1960) poster 'The Promised Land' (right). *Source*: The Palestine Poster Project Archives.

House-keys and return

> He felt the key as he felt
> His limbs, and was reassured.

‘The Eternity of the Prickly Pear’, Darwish (2014: 12)

Foremost among Palestinian iconographies that respond to memoricide is the house-key. This artefact is significant within Palestinian memory practices – both at a familial *and* national level. Many *Nakba* refugees kept their house-keys, with the expectation of returning to their properties after the First Arab–Israeli War, only to be permanently prevented from doing so (Bshara, 2010: 6). Negotiations over the Right of Return have been consistently neglected and postponed in successive peace talks. Presently, it seems more imperilled than ever, as living memory of *al-Nakba* fades amid American pressure on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to alter eligibilities for refugee status. That is, the UNRWA’s policies and definitions – which remain consistent with international law – that include descendants of refugees *as* refugees themselves (UNRWA, n.d.a, n.d.b).[10]

The house-key, typically skeletal in design, has become a mnemonic tool within Palestinian refugee families. The key is handed down to younger generations – signifying the inheritance of not only the physical object but also the obligation of securing Return. The house-key is therefore especially emblematic of *al-Nakba* refugees. It is often deployed

to specifically advocate their rights, which has witnessed the key directed at Israel, the international community *as well as* Palestinian authorities and negotiators (Bshara, 2010: 6–7). The latter were said to arguably neglect Palestinian refugee rights during the Oslo Peace Process, which led to a surge in key symbolism in the 1990s (Bshara, 2010: 6–7).

But the key has also been subsumed within Palestinian art, both visual and literary, as a means of transposing its embedded meanings to Palestinian society broadly (Bshara, 2010: 6–7). The key artefact itself will not be inherited by everyone and therefore the symbol functions as a surrogate in its place (see Figure 8). The *Collection*’s earliest two posters featuring skeletal keys – Abdel Rahman Al Muzain’s ‘Beginning of the Hijra’ and ‘Our Armed Struggle Is Our Way to Liberate Palestine’ – demonstrate this. Both posters depict a man and woman handcuffed together with a white dove in between. Doves frequently carry, or remain in close proximity to, keys suggesting that peace will come with Return. The woman holds the key in the first, the burden shared in the second, while Old Jerusalem’s Dome of the Rock is centred in both posters. The joined figures signify that all of Palestinian society – men and women – contribute to Palestine’s liberation. Yasser Arafat appears as the fifth figure from the left in ‘Beginning of the Hijra’ (Liberation Graphics, n.d.b). He remains one Palestinian, almost indistinct, among many upholding the aspiration of Return.

The object has thus transformed from a family heirloom to a national public icon with varied resonances across social

Figure 8. Abdel Rahman Al Muzain’s 1979 poster ‘Beginning of the Hijra’ (left) and his 1980 poster ‘Our Armed Struggle Is Our Way to Liberate Palestine’ (right). *Source*: The Palestine Poster Project Archives.

Figure 9. M. Ahmed's 1983 poster 'The Key of Our Home' (left) and Jaroslaw Jasinski's 1980 poster 'Demand Self-Determination For Palestinian People' (right). *Source*: The Palestine Poster Project Archives.

groups. This is especially notable among those impacted by Occupation-era house demolitions in the West Bank. Their uptake of key symbolism connects the practices of a military occupation, which exploits the manufactured building permit scarcity to appear as a regular bureaucracy enforcing planning and zoning policies (Halper, 2010), to the same memoricidal processes of *al-Nakba*. Indeed, like *al-Nakba*, these house demolitions work to contain Palestinians outside of territory desired for eventual integration within the Israeli nation-state (Halper, 2010). Unlike *al-Nakba*, however, it is taking place in a context that is not open warfare.

The key is therefore *the* symbol of Israeli memoricide and of prior Palestinian inhabitation of a supposedly 'empty' land. But importantly, it is also *the* symbol of memoricide's mundane-ness specifically. The Palestinian house-key references domestic spaces that are indistinct to all but those that once called them home. It therefore counterposes memoricide's emblematic imagery of famed heritage sites, priceless artefacts and archives under attack. Its symbolism, however, not only recalls mundane targets but also processes that aspire to *project mundaneness* in their routine operation. Ultimately the key icon, as it intersects with other iconographies, communicates that redressing historic and ongoing memoricide is central to just peace. But, as seen in Figure 9, they can also intersect with signs of armed resistance as well as be enveloped by Palestine's national colours. The Palestinian aspiration for nationhood and self-determination is incomplete without refugee return.

Conclusion

The International Register is not about 'good' and 'bad' documents. It is about unique and irreplaceable documentary heritage, that has had great influence – whether positive or negative – on the course of history.

Bos (2019) Chair of the Register Subcommittee

The repeated rejection of the *Liberation Graphics Collection* nomination prevented Palestinian post-memoricide iconographies from achieving world heritage canonisation. In other words, artistic traditions that might have used such a platform to highlight the connections between representations of space and the material practice of memoricide. This article drew upon the concept of 'landscape-as-ideology' (Cosgrove and Daniels, 1989; Mitchell, 1996, 2000) in order to explicate this relationship and enrich our understanding of what is meant by memoricide: 'the killing of memory' (Grmek, 2019). Specifically, it highlighted how memoricide is both necessarily reconstructive and not limited to the spectacular optics of high-profile destruction. I further argued, using a comparative content analysis of Palestine posters from both Palestinian and Zionist sources, that memoricide can become normalised. The Zionist Palestine poster figures as one tool, among many, that contributes to this normalisation, to this 'everyday' memoricide.

Mitchell (1996: 4) notes the self-obfuscating function of landscape-as-ideology. I focused this lens to explore how Zionist landscapes in Palestine posters were both a work and an erasure of work – specifically, an erasure of *memoricidal* work. That is, the work of physically displacing Palestinians and erasing material traces of their historic presence. In this way, both through the Zionist poster's ubiquity and its seemingly mundane representations of pastoral scenes and tree-planting, memoricide acquired 'everyday' dimensions for the poster's target audience that mystified the connection between the landscape presented and the actuality of memoricidal work required on-the-ground. As such, landscape-as-ideology highlights how memoricide is necessarily reconstructive, as opposed to solely destructive, in its practice. Analysis of memoricide, therefore, cannot be limited to rubble and ash.

However, insofar as the 'landscape way of seeing' is ideological and naturalises meaning, this function can also be deconstructed and revealed through contestation (Mitchell, 2000: xix). It is this – the making *visible* of Israeli memoricide – that UNESCO's veto of the *Liberation Graphics Collection* diminished. The Palestinian artworks analysed – selected from both the *Collection* and the broader *Palestine Poster Project Archives* online – demonstrate this point. Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad of 'conceived', 'perceived' and 'lived space' provided a theoretical lens. Indeed, lived space never straightforwardly reflects the representations that entail conceived space, being a product of a *multiplicity* of conceived and perceived spaces. It is within that multiplicity – specifically, the multiplicity of conceived spaces pertaining to the landscape of Palestine and Israel – that this article's analysis is situated. What the symbolic interplay between these competing landscapes unlocked is an enriched understanding of memoricide that is not limited to its emblematic imagery. Indeed, as the Palestinian artworks revealed, Israeli memoricide fixated on the non-iconic and the ordinary. Palestinian iconographies – the house-key, the olive tree, the Israeli bulldozer – transform the seemingly mundane into the significant. In this way, Palestinian landscapes intervene on the ideological mystification of Zionist landscapes, revealing the memoricidal work that underpins them.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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Notes

1. The *Collection* can be viewed online through *The Palestine Poster Project Archives*' website: http://www.palestineposterproject.org/liberation-graphics-collection-of-palestine-posters-memory-of-the-world-nominated
2. The word 'Zionist' here denotes artworks that endorse and promote the political ideology of the Zionist movement. That is, the nationalist movement that sought the establishment of a Jewish homeland on the territory of historic Palestine – which roughly corresponds with the historic Jewish kingdoms (Morris, 2001: 49; Pappé, 2014: Chap.1). It should not be equated with 'Jewish' or 'Israeli' identity.
3. The entire poster archive can be viewed here: https://www.palestineposterproject.org/list_posters
4. From this point on, *Collection* means the *Liberation Graphics Collection* submitted to UNESCO, while *Archives* refers to the larger *Palestine Poster Project Archives* website.
5. This is significant for considering the destruction of other *seemingly* 'natural' or 'non-artificial' spaces – such as the colonial negation of Indigenous cultural landscapes across a variety of contexts.
6. The applicable National or Regional Memory of the World Committees are also invited to comment on third-party nominations (UNESCO, 2017: 31).
7. The IAC describes itself as representing 'the disciplines and schools of thought of the Member States' (UNESCO, 2017: 17).
8. These guidelines were released *after* the *Liberation Graphics Collection* was rejected for a second time. The decision is currently subject to an appeal push given it clearly violates this premise.
9. Rochelle Davis and Tamim Barghouti surmise a possible transcription error between 'know' and 'remember', although Walsh suggests this could be deliberate (cited in Liberation Graphics, n.d.c).
10. The total number of registered Palestinian refugees now reaches 5,000,000 with communities in the OPT, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria as well as further afield internationally (UNRWA, n.d.b).

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