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**TITOLO/TITLE:** Palestine as a Global Crossing for Culture, Politics, and Social Movements

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**ABSTRACT (1500 parole/words):**

Palestine has been for much of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries a liminal space that transcends the geographic boundaries of historic Palestine. It crisscrosses and circulates around the Arab Middle East and North Africa as well as the rest of the world as forms of political, cultural, and social relations. Palestinians within historic Palestine as well as its diasporas and supporters globally engage with the questions of occupation, anticolonial struggle, and revolutionary politics. Since the Nakba in 1948, the world bore witness to Palestine's capacity to modulate the understanding of politics, culture, society, and ideology. How does the Palestinian cause "contaminate" or "impact" communities, societies, and individuals in all spheres of life across the world? This panel seeks to investigate and unpack how the Palestinian struggle traverses national borders, upends normative Global North-South trajectories, and explore the nature of the different methodologies that focus on crossings in, through, and outside Palestine and its diasporas.

The absence of a free Palestinian state that would allow for a unified voice, at least on a macro level, allows for a multitude of varying voices from individuals, social groups, political parties, and movements that reflect the goals, hopes, dreams, and politics of Palestinians in a variety of means. Historically, we have seen this multitude of voices at critical junctures of the Palestinian movement, whether it be in the buildup to the Nakba in 1948 to the aftermaths of the Naksa in 1967 to the First and Second Intifadas to the ongoing war launched by Israel in October 2023 Bawalsa, 2022; Chamberlin, 2015; Leopardi, 2020; Sayigh, 1996). Palestinians have as individuals, groups, and political movements mobilized for their liberation cause and have found ways to circulate it beyond their national communities over time (Thomson, Olsen, Haugbolle, 2022). Likewise, non-Palestinian individuals, groups, and parties have engaged with the circulation of the Palestinian cause and how it can relate to their issues and concerns (Khalili, 2007). Following the Naksa in 1967, the Palestinian movement and its militant turn influenced how Arab political movements and individuals conceptualized their postcolonial predicament (Haugbolle, 2017). In Europe and Japan, during the long 1960s, there was a rise in student movements engaging in solidarity work with the Palestinian cause. These student movements drew upon the Palestinian experience and its militant struggle to direct their own (Coogan and Derichs, 2022; Di-Capua, 2021; Prestel, 2020). This has become evident with the cultural crossings that have taken place in Middle Eastern cultural productions such as films and music over the decades to more recent transferences in movements such as Black Lives Matter and the LGBTQ rights movement (Atshan, 2020; Bailey, 2015; Elias, 2023; Puar, 2007; Yaqub, 2018).

Since October 2023, the Palestinian cause and its struggle for liberation has reverberated across the globe. We have seen on micro, meso, and macro levels the importance of Palestine in politics, social formations, and culture. Across the globe, the Palestinian cause has impacted all aspects of life from protests linking it to other global struggles to growing calls to boycott Israel, Germany, and corporations complicit with the occupation. The years of increasing crossings and transferring the Palestinian cause to other movements generated a fierce response. Academic and cultural boycotts, an incredibly contentious practice beforehand, remain politically divisive but have seen increasing sway in specific sectors (Takriti, 2019). Likewise, agitation by individuals for changing governmental policy towards the occupation In particular, on the micro and meso levels, Palestinian solidarity has become a significant force as evidenced by ongoing actions and interventions across the globe.

This ongoing war and mobilization across the world did not happen independently of past historical precedents. This panel looks back from the present back to the 1970s to excavate the varying ways Palestine became a global cause. We consider the dynamism shown by Palestinians across historic Palestine to the conditions they

face and how their experiences transmit and circulate to other communities. The Palestinian struggle for liberation has upended the traditional norms of North-South crossings. Rather, it shows how a part of the Global South can rise up and influence the trajectories of peoples across the world. In particular, how Palestine influenced artistic, social, and political movements through the decades.

This panel considers the relationship of Palestinian voices on the micro, meso, and macro levels alongside their transmission and circulation across the Middle East and beyond. We are therefore looking for contributions that explore these two components from historical, anthropological, sociological, and cultural studies positions. We also invite explorations of the cross-cultural contaminations of the Palestinian cause that challenge the strict Global North-South dichotomy and reject the hegemonic logics that theory and praxis emerge from the Global North and then diffuse into the Global South. While the 1960s and 1970s saw the influence of Palestinian militant revolutionary politics on counterparts in Europe, the Americas, the Middle East, and Asia, the post-First Intifada shift towards peaceful non-violent resistance also directed the trajectories of individuals, groups, and parties abroad (Qumsiyeh, 2011; Vélez, 2016).

This panel seeks to bring together scholarship from an array of disciplines. We invite contributions that privilege Palestine as a transnational framework of crossings; that are mindful of the ways that Palestine impacts on micro, meso and macro registers; and that pay attention to intersectionality of Palestine with gender, sexuality, race, and nationality. In situating Palestine's struggle for liberation as a cause that traverses national borders and communities, we also invite contributions that locate the Palestinian struggle's impacts in contexts outside Palestinian activism. In particular, we are interested in papers that focus on the cinematic and musical crossovers with Palestine as well as queer movements and Syrian-Palestine revolutionary engagements. We welcome papers that build upon the manners in which the Palestinian cause o 'overturn' and 'decolonize' a hegemonic diffusionist narrative of mobility reliant upon North-South relational models as well as those that look to the Palestinian cause to understand other forms of oppression. Together, the panel will aim to excavate the multitudes of transmission, circulation, and contamination of the Palestinian cause in Arab, European, Asian, and other regions as well as its impacts in individual, social, political, and cultural movements.

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#### Individual Abstracts:

Jeremy Randall: "Palestine in Film as a Site of Crossings"

The late 1960s and 1970s saw a plethora of films made with the PLO and the PFLP that interrogated the linkages between the occupation of Palestine, imperialism, and capitalism that speak first and foremost to their contemporary conditions but also provide templates to analyze present conditions. In particular, these films circulate the Palestinian cause on micro, meso, and macro levels in the Middle East, Asia, Europe, and beyond. Building upon earlier works that analyze cinema's role in imagining the Palestinian nation, I draw upon texts published by the PLO and the PLFP as well as films by Christian Ghazi, Kassem Hawal, Fouad Zantout, Mustafa Abu Ali, Jean-Luc Godard, and Adachi Masao and Wakamatsu Koji to explore the liberatory powers of critique made via film. This body of work provides an aesthetic, political, and theoretical transmission and circulation of ideas within the question of resistance and revolution toward constructing a future radically different from earlier failed attempts. The corpus of films analyzed for this paper demonstrates how the Palestinian cause upended normative North-South interactions as it was the Palestinian cause that provided instruction to the Global North on revolutionary ideology and praxis.

Sophie Chamas: "Palestine, Transnationalism, Futurity"

This paper will focus on three dimensions of activism that have emerged in response to the genocide in Gaza. Firstly, it will examine the ways in which Palestinians in Gaza, anticipating their deaths in the face of an Israeli onslaught determined to find, target, and snuff them out, requested that the world give them a political afterlife and become 'other', become revolutionary, in conversation with their ghosts. I will think through the productivity and specificity of Palestinian haunting and the insistence to live on even after death in relation to the project of Palestinian liberation.

Secondly, this paper will examine the relationship that non-Palestinian queer Arabs have cultivated with Palestine and its liberation struggle, and their refusal to surrender queerness for Palestine or Palestine for queerness in ways that have and can transform our understandings of both.

Thirdly, I will examine the ways in which non-Arab solidarity with Palestine, particularly that which has emanated from the Global South, has invigorated the publics of Arab countries and prompted them to rage against the stifling of their own voices and political activism, thinking with the potentiality of a renewed South-South political consciousness that has the ability, if we dare to dream, to transform the world.

Insia Malik: "'Ana Dammi Falastini': Palestine and the Vocal Talent Competition Arab Idol"

In 2013, Muhammad 'Assaf, a Palestinian singer hailing from Gaza, made international headlines when he became the newest winner of Arab Idol: a popular vocal talent competition and offshoot of the global Idols franchise. This paper will highlight how 'Assaf's compelling backstory, vocal talent, and ultimate victory on Arab Idol allowed him to embark on a successful career associated with his Palestinianness. In particular, I bring attention to one of 'Assaf's most famous songs to emerge from his record deal prize: "Ana Dammi Falastini" (My blood is Palestinian). The song not only played a role in Arab Idol's amplification of Palestine in later seasons but has also gained increased salience in the present-day. Especially since October 2023, "Ana Dammi Falastini" has become canonized in the musical repertoire of Palestinian resistance and is performed across the globe at demonstrations in support of ceasefire and the Palestinian cause. This paper argues that the breakthrough of a Palestinian reality show contestant a decade ago has had reverberations not just for the commercial trajectory of Arab Idol but also beyond: in the realm of pro-Palestinian activism.

Jack McGinn: "Syria as a cleavage in the Palestine solidarity movement, its echoes in the past, and the problem of solidarity"

With cleavages emerging around the destruction in Syria the global Palestine solidarity movement fractured, with supporters of the Assad government's role in the axis of resistance on one side, and opponents (a more

heterogeneous array of Islamists, anti-authoritarian Leftists, liberals and neoconservatives) on the other. Palestinians themselves, especially those with links to Syria, were also divided. Though many voices spoke up for the necessity of internationalist solidarity with all oppressed peoples – a significant segment of the Left globally has opted for a Realist logic, prioritising maintaining the supply lines of the axis of resistance at the expense of the Syrian revolution.

This paper will explore the historical echoes of this moment in the global Left's reception to the Palestinian revolution in 1936-9, where many of the same issues were faced by Western socialists, anarchists and communists, split between support for the early kibbutzim's Leftist credentials and the stated commitment to defend indigenous and dispossessed populations against colonial violence. The paper will look at critical engagements with the problem of solidarity, exhibited in the above examples among others, particularly as interrogated in Atshan's *Queer Palestine and the Empire of Critique*.

Yasmeen Mekawy: "Making Solidarity Sexy: Palestine, Politicization, & Social Media"

The issue of Palestine has historically mobilized contentious politics in the MENA region and has functioned as a "gateway to dissent" (El Kurd 2021). The current genocide in Gaza will play a similar politicizing role for gen Z youth and subsequent generations who are watching massive numbers of civilians be massacred in real time with impunity for Israel. The shift from legacy to networked media has produced a meme-ification of politics, whereby the gravity of events is leavened by humor, and tragedy sometimes trivialized in the process. What effect does the current saturated media environment and the meme-ification of political conflict and war have on the politicization of youth in the region? What emotions does it mobilize, and what types of solidarity and political engagement does it facilitate and foreclose? This paper examines youth engagement with the ongoing genocide through social media, particularly the case of the "Hot Houthi," a viral microcelebrity depicted as a young, attractive Yemeni pirate ostensibly involved in the Houthi rebels' hijacking of commercial ships in the Red Sea to leverage a ceasefire on Gaza. Rashid el Haddad, also known as "Tim-Houthi Chalamet" quickly became a symbol of regional resistance of the underdog, making solidarity "sexy."

#### PROFILO ACCADEMICO DEL/DELLA/DEI/DELLE PROPONENTE/I – SHORT BIO OF PROPONENTS

Dr. **Jeremy Randall** is the Orient-Institut Beirut postdoctoral fellow and the associate director of the Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center at The Graduate Center, City University of New York. He is a historian of leftism in the Middle East with a focus on Palestine as well as leftist critiques of sectarianism and capitalism in postcolonial Lebanon. He is currently preparing a monograph on the alliance between the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and international leftist groups as an example of internationalism and solidarity with the Palestinian revolution in the 1970s and 1980s.

Dr. Sophie Chamas is Lecturer in Gender Studies at SOAS University of London. Her research sits at the intersection of feminist and queer political theory, Middle East Studies, political economy, and cultural studies. Her work is focused on the study of the life, death, and afterlife of the radical political imagination in the Middle East and its diaspora. She draws on queer and feminist speculation to rethink what constitutes worthwhile or effective political praxis in neoliberal times, as well as to highlight the potentiality of modes of contention that might appear, at first glance, as ineffective, insignificant, or counter-productive.

Dr. Insia Malik earned her Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology from the Graduate Center at the City University of New York in 2022. Insia has been invited to the Manhattan School of Music and New York University to speak about Middle Eastern musics and history as well as to demonstrate concepts of music theory and performance on the violin. Insia is an Assistant Editor at RILM (Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale).

Jack McGinn is a PhD Candidate in Sociology at London School of Economics. His PhD research seeks to outline how and why Syrian activists involved in the popular uprising of 2011 chose to organise on a non-hierarchical 'horizontal' basis, eschewing traditional leadership and party models to build widespread and resilient grassroots popular resistance networks. In doing so, he asks what lessons can be learned from the trajectory of this decentralised revolutionary social movement.

Yasmeen Mekawy is an assistant professor in the Liberal Arts Program. She received her PhD in political science from the University of Chicago with a concentration in the comparative politics of the MENA region. Mekawy's research and teaching examines social movements and revolution, digital media and popular culture, and affect and emotion. In her research, she examines the role of emotions in mobilizing and demobilizing collective action, as well as the ways in which affect circulates through social media and popular culture. She is currently working on her book project on emotions in the 2011 Egyptian revolution.

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