

Hope through Steadfastness: The Journey of ‘Holy Land Trust’

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Abstract

Established in 1998, ‘Holy Land Trust’ (HLT) serves to empower the Palestinian community in Bethlehem to discover its strengths and resources to confront the present and future challenges of life under occupation. The staff, through a commitment to the principles of nonviolence, seeks to mobilize the local community, regardless of religion, gender, or political affiliation, to resist oppression in all forms and build a model for the future based on justice, equality, and respect. This article places the work of HLT in the literature of nonviolent action and amid the nonviolent movement set by predecessors in the tumultuous history of Palestinian-Israeli relations. HLT programs and projects are presented to demonstrate the progression of nonviolent resistance from lofty goals to strategic empowerment. In a region so often defined by extremes, HLT embodies the Palestinian nonviolent resistance movement.

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Introduction

Sumud, or steadfastness, is a uniquely Palestinian strategy to resist occupation by remaining present on the land despite the continued hardships experienced in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). In short, *sumud* “suggests staying put, not

giving up on political and human rights.”¹ The term gained usage after 1967 when “*Sumud* Funds” were created in Jordan to “make the continued presence of Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem economically possible” during rapid settlement building and Palestinian emigration.² *Sumud*, transformed from a top-down strategy, is “neither new nor static. Just as Israel’s policies in the [oPt] have changed, so have *sumud* policies and strategies.”³ The *sumud* strategies discussed in this paper relate to “hope-based nonviolent strategies” that highlight the power of the common citizen.⁴

The first Intifada (1987 – 1993), triggered by political inefficacy and growing restrictions on the Palestinians, was largely peaceful and incorporated nonviolence, but still resulted in over 1400 Palestinians and nearly 300 Israelis dead across Israel and the oPt.⁵ With the second Intifada (2000 – 2005), tensions unresolved from Oslo re-emerged with disastrous consequences for Israelis and Palestinians alike. In stark contrast to the first Intifada, the second Intifada was exponentially more brutal, with a figure of more than 5000 Palestinian and 1100 Israelis dead as a result of military operations, search and arrests, undercover operations, targeted killings, terrorism, and internal Palestinian political conflict.⁶

¹ Toine van Teeffelen, “Sumud: Soul of the Palestinian People” *This Week in Palestine*, 130 (2009),
² Teeffelen, 2009; Hillel Frisch, “Sumud Versus Settlements: Communal Conflict in the Holy Land,” *Jerusalem Letter*, 22 January 1984, <http://jcpa.org/article/sumud-versus-settlements-communal-conflict-in-the-holy-land/>, accessed 14 March 2013; and Toine van Teeffelen and Fuad Giacaman “Sumud: Resistance in Daily Life,” Excerpt from *Challenging the Wall: Toward a Pedagogy of Hope*, Arab Educational Institute Culture and Palestine Series, Arab Educational Institute, Bethlehem, 2008. <http://www.palestine-family.net/index.php?nav=65&hits=20&searchword=sumud&searchbtn=1&pageflip=68-18&did=4988-1&searchResult=searchResult>; accessed 14 March 2013. Jean Zaru, *Occupied by Nonviolence: A Palestinian Woman Speaks* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008), 73.

³ Frisch, “Sumud Versus Settlements: Communal Conflict in the Holy Land,” 1.

⁴ Teeffelen and Giacaman, “Sumud: Resistance in Daily Life.”

⁵ Figures from ‘B’Tselem, The Israeli Information Center on Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories,’ http://www.btselem.org/statistics/first_intifada_tables, accessed 11 May 2013. oPt is the term used by the United Nations to refer to the areas beyond the “Green Line” that are occupied by Israel, consisting of the West Bank and Gaza and includes East Jerusalem.

⁶ The end of the second Intifada is unclear. ‘B’Tselem’ statistics detail fatalities from the outbreak of the second Intifada until Operation Cast Lead in 2008. Some commentators marked the end in 2004 after the death of President Yasser Arafat, infighting occurred between Palestinian political parties, and talks between Israeli and ‘Fatah’ leaders resumed. Yet others consider 2005 the year that ended the extreme violence, following the completion of Israel’s unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip in August 2005. See ‘European Institute for Research of the Mediterranean and Euro-Arab Cooperation’ (MEDEA), “The Second Intifada,” <http://www.medeabe/en/themes/arab-israeli-conflict/second-intifada/>, accessed 23 May 2013; Inigo Gilmore, “Palestinian ceasefire ends four-year Intifada,” *The Telegraph* <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/israel/1482803/Palestinian-ceasefire-ends-four-year-intifada.html>, accessed 23 May 2013; ‘United Nations Office for the Coordination

In the face of the violence seen in the Israel-Palestinian conflict, the evidence of nonviolence can be easily overlooked. Yet the nonviolent resistance movement across Palestine and Israel is more dynamic and creative than ever. One of these organizations promoting nonviolence is ‘Holy Land Trust’, and its executive director Sami Awad. Sami was born in 1971 in the United States. His parents are both Palestinian. His father, Bishara, was nine years old when Sami’s grandfather was shot in the 1948 Arab-Israeli war and his family left their home in West Jerusalem, becoming refugees in the Jordanian-controlled Old City. Sami’s mother, Salwa, is from the Gaza Strip. When the family returned to Palestine, Sami’s uncle Mubarak Awad shaped his keen interest and involvement in nonviolence. Mubarak received a Ph.D. in counseling psychology from St. Louis University and naturalized as a citizen of the United States, and returned to Jerusalem in 1983. He returned to find that Palestinians “internalized the occupation,” blaming Israelis for anything including juvenile delinquency, poor schooling, and dirty clinics.⁷ When Mubarak advertised a 3-day workshop on “getting rid of the occupation,” hundreds arrived to either protest his efforts or as eager participants.⁸ Eventually, he caught the attention of a Palestinian academic in Washington, DC, introducing Mubarak to nonviolence scholar Gene Sharp, who then encouraged Mubarak to travel to India to learn about Gandhi. Once back in Jerusalem, Mubarak established the ‘Palestinian Center for the Study of Nonviolence’, and organized many activities to promote nonviolent resistance and activism.

Sami would frequently take part in the activities organized by his uncle before Mubarak was arrested and subsequently deported to the United States in 1988. “This was a turning point in my life. I no longer focused solely on doing good work, but began questioning why the other side was afraid of nonviolence and why the other side was resisting nonviolence. Those questions made me devote my life to studies and work in this field. The deportation of Mubarak Awad totally

of Humanitarian Affairs’ (OCHA), *Israeli-Palestinian Fatalities Since 2000 – Key Trends*, <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/BE07C80CDA4579468525734800500272>, accessed 11 May 2013; ‘Palestinian Centre for Human Rights Gaza’ *Statistics Relating to the Al Aqsa (Second Intifada*,

http://www.pchrgaza.org/portal/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3044:statistics-related-to-the-al-aqsa-second-intifada-&catid=55:statistics&Itemid=29, accessed 11 May 2013. Similar to the violence from the first Intifada, as detailed by Ronald Stockton, “Intifada Deaths” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 19/4, (1989): 101-108.

⁷ Milton Viorst (April 1988), “Letter from Jerusalem: Faced with a growing sense of hopelessness, the Palestinians try a new approach,” *Mother Jones Magazine* 13/3 (1988): 22-23, <http://books.google.com/books?id=NOcDAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA21>, accessed 14 April 2013. See also Gershom Geromburg, “The Missing Mahatma: Searching for a Gandhi or a Martin Luther King in the West Bank” *The Weekly Standard*, April 2009, 14/28, <http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/016/329fvsw.asp?page=36>, accessed 14 April 2013.

⁸ Gershom Geromburg, “The Missing Mahatma.”

changed the course of my life, and I steered my studies towards political and international studies.”⁹ Educated in the United States, Sami earned a Bachelor’s degree in politics from the University of Kansas in 1994 and a Master’s degree in International Relations, specializing in Peace and Conflict Resolution from American University in Washington DC before returning to Bethlehem in 1996. Sami founded the Palestinian not-for-profit organization ‘Holy Land Trust’ in 1998 to strengthen the community to address the present and future challenges affecting society. To do so, the organization is rooted in nonviolence and the spirit of *sumud* to empower individuals to become the positive influence on a healthier and self-sufficient Palestinian population. Lessons from past nonviolent movements, such as the collective action of Palestinian cities and villages in the first intifada, and strategic non-violence campaigns like those of Mubarak Awad, taught the organization about the necessary planning and organization to lead a truly nonviolent organization from theory into practice. While not a religious organization, HLT “aspires to learn from spiritual teachings of all faiths that bring unity to humanity” and draws special inspiration from the teachings of Jesus Christ.¹⁰

More than challenging the Israeli occupation, “when we talk about nonviolence as a form of resistance we also mean it as a way to build our society.”¹¹ The culture of nonviolence, as promoted through the popular resistance movements of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. and the nonviolent activism promoted through the works of Gene Sharp, directs the organization in its vision for individuals, the community, and Palestinian society. Incorporating nonviolence into daily life has the potential to transform the anger, weakness and helplessness seen in Palestinian society into self-reliance, strength, clarity and confidence.

Through nonviolence, HLT creates a space and the leadership for Palestinians to engage with envisioning their future. HLT has evolved into managing five main programs and overseeing various projects and collaborations between internationals and Palestinians. An organization founded on nonviolent principles requires the willingness of Palestinians to become involved in the day-to-day operations of the organization, regional cooperation within the oPt and Israel, and international partnerships for support. Ultimately, HLT is committed to a just vision of the future. Rather than being stuck in the injustices of the past or advocating a specific end result for Palestinians, HLT encourages Palestinians to become the constructive change to Palestinian society in the present. By building on past lessons of nonviolence and incorporating *sumud* into their daily work, HLT provide the practical tools and training for Palestinians to have hope in their

⁹ Sami Awad, *Interview with Just Vision*, 2007, http://www.justvision.org/portrait/76150/interview#endnote_1 accessed 11 May 2013.

¹⁰ http://www.holylandtrust.org/index.php/about_2008, accessed 14 April 2013.

¹¹ Sami Awad, *Interview with Just Vision*.

future.

Part I: Theories of Nonviolent Action in a Palestinian Context

To begin, this paper will discuss the theoretical foundations for the nonviolent movements before moving on to the specific examples found of the oPt. These are found mainly through the literature of the nonviolent action pioneer Gene Sharp, as well as Johan Galtung and John Burton in terms of conflict theory. The importance and need for nonviolence in the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine is evident. As Johan Galtung argues:

In multidimensional, protracted social conflicts like this one, where traditional approaches have consistently failed to bring peace, an alternative to deadlock led by citizen-based initiatives is imperative.¹² Furthermore, in a conflict marked by considerable power asymmetries, where the roots of the conflict are structural and based in the institutions of occupation, negotiations and problem-solving techniques alone are insufficient.¹³

Therefore, nonviolent action is vital to address the sources of conflict and to assist in developing viable options for peace. Strategic nonviolent resistance consists of techniques to allow ordinary individuals to discover and utilize their strength and power without the use of violence. Gene Sharp describes nonviolence resistance as when one “chooses to fight with superior weapons, not the oppressors’ violence but psychological, moral, socio-economic and political weapons which one’s people can be strong.”¹⁴ Nonviolence results in the empowering and strengthening of the people when clear and effective in terms of purpose, strategy and goals. Sharp identifies the main sources of nonviolent weaponry as a means to transform power relations between different groups: symbolic weapons, such as petitions, speeches, marches, and displaying flags; noncooperation, including boycotts, civil

¹² Kumar Rupesinghe, “Mediation in Internal Conflicts: Lessons from Sri Lanka,” in *Resolving International Conflicts*, ed. Jacob Bercovitch, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996), 153, as cited in Stephan, Maria Stephan, “People Power in the Holy Land: How Popular Nonviolent Struggle Can Transform the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” *Journal of Public and International Affairs*, 14 (2003), 1-26, 3, <http://www.princeton.edu/jpia/past-issues-1/2003/9.pdf>, accessed 23 May 2013.

¹³ Johan Galtung, “Cultural Violence” *Journal of Peace Research* 27/3 (1990), 291-305. And *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*, ed. John W. Burton, (London: Macmillan, 1990) as cited in Stephan, “People Power in the Holy Land,” 3.

¹⁴ Gene Sharp and Afif Safieh, “Gene Sharp: Nonviolent Struggle” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 17/1 (1987), 42. The influence of Gene Sharp on the Palestinian nonviolent movement is discussed also in the essay by Julie Norman in this issue, pp. 140-161.

disobedience, and strikes; and nonviolent intervention methods to “disrupt the operation of the system” such as hunger strikes or building new economic institutions.¹⁵ Ultimately, the theory of nonviolent direct action is “grounded in the theory of power: namely, that all rule, no matter how tyrannical, is based on the consent and obedience of the ruled. By temporarily withholding or denying crucial resources to the ruling authorities, ordinary people make occupations unsustainable and dictatorial rule impossible.”¹⁶

Through successful strategic nonviolent action, methods are carefully thought out for their practicality, participants are committed to the goals of the movement, and the risk for harm from the opponent is well understood. Violence is a tool limited to a small portion of the population, namely young men. Nonviolent struggle, however, “enables every man, women [sic], child, and older person to participate in some way.”¹⁷ While violence may accomplish short-term goals, it does so at the great detriment to public sympathy and support for the resistance. “Repression of nonviolent struggle – particularly if it is brutal and appears to be unjustified – tends to arouse great sympathy for the nonviolent resisters, and increased participation in resistance.”¹⁸ Violent resistance will lead to international isolation and allows no option but for members of the opponent group to unify against the resistance.¹⁹ Nonviolence, however, allows for members of the opponent group to consider the grievances of the resistant side, and contributes to international sympathy for repression of nonviolent struggle. Sharp describes this tactic as “political ju-jitsu, a key concept of nonviolent resistance whereby the strength of the opponent is turned back on itself and becomes a weakness and liability.”²⁰

Nonviolence is not without its criticism. The term for ‘nonviolence’ in Arabic is *la-umfb* or no-violence. “Some argue that it sounds as if it is negating something, like the right to fight back. For this reason, activists use the terms ‘civil resistance,’ ‘popular resistance,’ or ‘political defiance.’ This is important, [Sami] Awad explains, because in the Palestinian Arab culture, pacifism is seen as a sign of weakness.”²¹ Additionally, Palestinians disagree on the understanding of what represents nonviolence in the resistance movement:

There has been no agreement among Palestinians on what constitutes nonviolent actions. Some combine nonviolence with peacebuilding, avoiding stone throwing [...]. Others consider nonviolent actions to

¹⁵ Ibid., 42-44.

¹⁶ Stephan, “People Power in the Holy Land,” 6.

¹⁷ Sharp and Safieh, “Gene Sharp: Nonviolent Struggle,” 46.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Stephan, “People Power in the Holy Land,” 6.

²¹ Arian O’Sullivan, “Palestinian non-violent resistance catching on,” *The Jerusalem Post*, February 15, 2012, www.jpost.com/LandedPages/PrintArticle.aspx?id=257932, accessed 17 February 2013.

exclude firearms, but they accept stones as legitimate means for intimidating rather than causing bodily harm. Some groups are satisfied with conducting nonviolent education and nonviolent training; and a fourth cluster links nonviolent resistance with the boycott against Israelis, including boycotting universities and the Israeli Peace Camp, and calling for divestments and sanctions with Israel.²²

Similarly, a debate continues on Palestinians engaging ‘the other’ on international, national, and interpersonal levels – e.g. Arab states recognizing Israel, diplomatic meetings between Israeli and Palestinian officials, people-to-people initiatives that bring individuals from either side together, or Palestinians taking part in trade with Israelis. Anti-normalization is a “term that gained strength in the 1980s against accepting the status quo of the occupation,” says blogger Aziz Abu Sarah.²³ It is a topic that regularly is debated within the Palestinian community. “In the Palestinian context, ‘normalization’ (*tabi’a* in Arabic) has been defined as ‘the process of building open and reciprocal relations with Israel in all fields, including the political economic, social, cultural, educational, legal, and security fields.’”²⁴

When we seek to normalize this relationship by giving each other equal standing and equal voice, we project an image of symmetry. Joint sports teams and theatre groups, hosting an Israeli orchestra in Ramallah or Nablus, all these things create a false sense of normality, like the issue is only a problem of recognizing each other as human beings. This, however, ignores the ongoing oppression, colonization, and denial of rights, committed by one side against the other.²⁵

In commemoration of the anniversary of the *Nakba*, we the undersigned Palestinian youth: [...] Refuse to take part in whitewashing Israel's public image and therefore reject any Israeli-Palestinian meetings that do not

²² Omri Arens and Edward Kaufman, “The Potential Impact of Palestinian Nonviolent Struggle on Israel: Preliminary Lessons and Projections for the Future” *Middle East Journal*, 66/2 (2012): 231-52, 249.

²³ Aziz Abu Sarah, “What is Normal about Normalization?,” *+972 Magazine* 21 December 2011. <http://972mag.com/what-is-normal-about-normalization/31262/>, accessed 14 April 2013.

²⁴ Walid Salem, “The Anti-Normalization Discourse in the Context of Israeli-Palestinian Peace-Building Varying attitudes towards anti-normalization exist among both Palestinians and Israelis” *Palestine-Israel Journal* 12/1 (2005), <http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=334>, accessed 16 March 2013. For more information on ‘normalization’ please see *+972 Magazine’s* article “What is Normalization?” December 21, 2011, <http://972mag.com/what-is-normalization/31368/> accessed 14 April 2013.

²⁵ Omar H. Rahman, “Co-existence vs. Co-resistance: A Case Against Normalization,” *+972 Magazine*, 9 January 2012, <http://972mag.com/co-existence-vs-co-resistance-a-case-against-normalization/32076/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

recognize our inalienable rights, and explicitly aim to resist Israel's occupation, colonization and apartheid. Israeli-Palestinian meetings that are not committed to such principles give a false picture of equality between the two parties by ignoring and legitimizing Israel's oppression of the Palestinian people. We will not contribute to any event that undermines our rights, or portrays Israel as anything but what it really is: an apartheid state.²⁶

The anti-normalization discourse, however, is inconsistent in definition and practice. Islam, Arab Marxism, Arab nationalism, Palestinian nationalism, and a blend of ideological groups that subscribe to resisting 'cultural normalization' inform Palestinian perspectives of anti-normalization.²⁷ Four attitudes on anti-normalization are described by Rimán Barakar and Dan Goldenblatt, co-CEOs of the 'Israel Palestine Center for Research and Information': (1) no dialogue, contact or relations with Israelis as they are the enemy, (2) no dialogue until the occupation has ended, (3) no relations with the Israeli government, but engagement with Israeli activist groups that work in tandem with Palestinian solidarity yet *not* people-to-people ventures, or (4) open coordination between Israeli and Palestinian organizations.²⁸ Such diversity in opinion results in contradictory descriptions and guidelines for anti-normalization efforts locally, regionally and internationally. Yet the continued debate has revived the focus on Palestinian frustrations at the perpetuation of the occupation and discussions on how to best achieve the goal of Palestinian self-realization.

These concepts and debates over of nonviolent action are a basis for what would emerge in the Palestinian nonviolent movements since the second Intifada.

Part II: The Emergence of 'Holy Land Trust' in the Context of Palestinian Nonviolence

²⁶ 'Palestinian Youth Against Normalization' <http://pyan48.wordpress.com/>, accessed 11 May 2013.

²⁷ Salem, 2005.

²⁸ Rimán Barakat and Dan Goldenblatt, "Coping with Anti-Normalization" *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics & Culture* 18/2/3 (2012), 90-91. Further, "One can perhaps place these different anti-normalization positions on a continuum or see them as a mixture of attitudes which include anti-dialogue, anti-status quo, the BDS [Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions] campaign and other derivatives of those positions" (89). It is important to note that IPCRI is considered by many anti-normalization activists to be a 'normalizing' organization, though the organization rejects this in the above article.

National liberation movements around the world in the 1960s and 1970s “advocated the use of extreme forms of violence, including killing non-combatants.”²⁹ As Arens and Kaufman note, “But in the last decades, particularly since September 11, 2001, such violent strategies, while gaining media attention, did not lead to victories.”³⁰ Palestine was no exception. Despite the bloodshed by combatants and the fruitlessness of political negotiations following both intifadas, nonviolent resistance has gained momentum across the oPt. Within the oPt, the history of the nonviolence movement has been in the form of creative resistance and civil disobedience since the 1930s, albeit alongside armed struggle, in the struggle against Zionism.³¹ The literature of Gene Sharp and the liberation movements led by Gandhi or Martin Luther King, Jr. have influenced the modern nonviolent resistance movement in the oPt.³² Sharp described nonviolent resistance as a strategy for transforming societal attitudes, institutions and power relations between different groups.³³ The nonviolence movement in the oPt has employed a variety of methods to address the occupation through grassroots initiatives. Maria Stephan reasons:

By far the most impressive and strategically significant element of the first Intifada was the role played by grassroots organizations and local committees in mobilizing the Palestinian population to resist occupation.³⁴

While it is disputed whether the first Intifada was “essentially a spontaneous outburst” and as such, lacked identifiable leadership in the beginning stages,³⁵ the early phase of the first Intifada was “a highly decentralized uprising consisting of local initiatives, led by local activists who acted upon the instructions handed down by the secular and Islamic groups leading the resistance (the ‘United National Command’ (UNC) and ‘ Hamas’).”³⁶ The primary goals of the first Intifada were to seek negotiation to lead to the end of the occupation and the establishment a Palestinian state.³⁷ Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza strategized to sever economic ties with Israel, build institutions to provide public services, to engage in civil disobedience towards military authority, and to promote

²⁹ Arens and Kaufman, “Potential Impact of Palestinian Nonviolent Struggle,” 232.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Mubarak Awad, “Non-Violent Resistance: A Strategy for the Occupied Territories” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 13/4 (1984), 22 and Sharp and Safieh, “Gene Sharp: Nonviolent Struggle,” 41.

³² See Stephan, “People Power in the Holy Land.”

³³ Ibid., 5.

³⁴ Ibid., 7.

³⁵ Rashid I. Khalidi, “The Uprising and the Palestine Question” *World Policy Journal* 5/3 (1988), 501.

³⁶ Stephan, “People Power in the Holy Land,” 7.

³⁷ Khalidi, “The Uprising and the Palestine Question,” 503.

Palestinian solidarity.³⁸ Palestinians practiced civil disobedience by disobeying curfew or orders from the Israeli military, enacting an economic boycott by refusing to pay taxes and declining to work on settlements, as well as “nonviolent demonstrations, sit-ins, marches, displaying the Palestinian flag, and mock-funerals.”³⁹ Nearly all Palestinians were capable and willing to participate in the first Intifada, through protest, strike, and improvisation, due to its “nonviolent nature”⁴⁰ as Ackerman and DuVall have argued.

Khalidi notes a marked change of leadership during this time from previous nationalist notables, and included segments of civil society affected by “detention and recruited into the various Palestinian nationalist groups,” including students, young professionals, and workers.⁴¹ Women’s committees, youth and student movements, prisoner organizations, trade unions, as well as medical, educational, and agricultural work committees developed during this time.⁴² The decentralized nature of the community organizing included grassroots organizations such as “village, quarter, and camp popular committees, medical relief committees, agricultural production initiatives, and other new structures” that commanded powerful local support.⁴³ Popular committees allowed for participation in “backyard agricultural production, distribution of food and money, emergency medical services,”⁴⁴ preparing “Palestinians for the nonviolent resistance by distributing literature on the theories of nonviolence.”⁴⁵ Establishing alternative institutions was an indication of the self-sufficient capacity of the resistance and the strength of civil society.

The new leadership also made use of the underground local structures of the PLO, in particular the four major groups: “Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), and the Palestinian Communist Party – and their affiliated youth, medical, and social universities.”⁴⁶ These networks, developed in the focal points of Palestinian-

³⁸ Shaul Mishal and Reuben Aharoni, *Speaking Stones: Communiques from the Intifada Underground*, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1994), as cited in Stephan, “People Power in the Holy Land,” 6.

³⁹ Souad Dajani, *Eyes Without a Country: Searching for a Palestinian Strategy for Liberation*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 69.

⁴⁰ Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall, *A Force More Powerful*, (New York, St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 420, as cited in Julie M. Norman, *The Second Palestinian Intifada: Civil Resistance*, (London: Routledge, 2010), 24.

⁴¹ Khalidi, “The Uprising and the Palestine Question,” 501.

⁴² Stephan, “People Power in the Holy Land,” 7; Sara Cady, “Strategic Nonviolent Resistance in Palestine,” *Journal of International Service* 19/2 (2010), 54; Khalidi, “The Uprising and the Palestine Question,” 501.

⁴³ Stephan “People Power in the Holy Land,” 7.

⁴⁴ Khalidi, “The Uprising and the Palestine Question,” 502.

⁴⁵ Cady, “Strategic Nonviolent Resistance in Palestine,” 54.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Israeli confrontation, such as universities and prisons, had pre-established means of communication and trusted affiliates. Local leadership, therefore, by and large “generated its own legitimacy.”⁴⁷

Among the campaigns of these committees were pamphlets distributed throughout the oPt alerting Palestinians that “action was better than inaction, nonviolent resistance was less destructive than armed struggle and within the limited capacity of the disarmed Palestinians, and fighting with political weapons could be more effective than violence for redressing fundamental injustices.”⁴⁸ These fliers were later credited to American-educated Palestinians Mubarak Awad, a psychologist schooled in the nonviolent techniques of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mohandas Gandhi, and Awad’s cousin Jonathan Kuttab, a Palestinian lawyer who founded ‘Al-Haq’, a Palestinian human rights organization. As the nonviolent movement gained momentum, Awad and Kuttab offered nonviolent resistance workshops, published booklets, and distributed the work of Gene Sharp on addressing power and civilian strength.⁴⁹

Awad’s “Non-Violent Resistance” article in 1984 was informed by Sharp. In this piece, he outlines nonviolence as the most realistic strategy for resisting occupation due to then-present factors which placed limits on violent alternatives: (1) the 1.3 million Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip at the time were not a trained military and cannot legally possess weaponry, (2) Palestinians are under the authority of the Israeli military and the structure includes economic dependency on Israel, (3) Palestinians face a lack of leadership with the PLO representation because they have been expelled from Jordan, to Lebanon, or Tunisia, (4) the Israeli plan for the oPt is the change the character and demography of the landscape through imposition on land, water, institutions, and the rights of Palestinians, (5) Palestinians feel impotent to the changes to their land, (6) current prospects for the liberation of the oPt does not exist and cannot be expected from outside Arab countries or the PLO. Therefore, change must come from within. Nonviolence, importantly, removes the fear of ‘Arab violence’ in Israeli society and thereby makes the country less defensive about their Palestinian neighbors. Awad was firm with his promotion for direct nonviolent resistance, stating “For the Palestinians who are living in the West Bank and Gaza during this period, the most effective strategy is one of non-violence.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Mary King, *A Quiet Revolution: The First Palestinian Intifada and Nonviolent Resistance*, (New York: Nation Books, 2007), 127 as cited in Norman, 2010, 25.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Awad, “Non-Violent Resistance,” 24.

The nonviolent resistance approach, according to Awad, is “a total and serious struggle, nothing short of real war” and “not an easy alternative.”⁵¹ As such, it requires training, discipline, and a high degree of organization to complete. The collective suffering during nonviolent resistance can be a tool for unifying Palestinians through “moral superiority.”⁵² Awad recommended several tactics to be used in future nonviolent resistance by Palestinians that were inspired by Sharp, including: demonstrations, obstruction, noncooperation, harassment, boycotts, strikes, support and solidarity, alternative institutions, and civil disobedience. These tactics could only be successful if engaged by those who were fully committed to a non-violent struggle.

Awad’s writings presented nonviolent resistance as an accessible, practical strategy for ordinary Palestinians. In 1985, he established the ‘Palestinian Center for the Study of Nonviolence’ (PCSN) in East Jerusalem to continue his work on promoting nonviolent action and began a village outreach campaign in the spirit of Gandhi’s “constructive program.”⁵³ “Social and political problems of a protracted nature require a long-term response,” thus alternative institutions.⁵⁴

Most significant for Awad, Gandhi’s village-based work program was a concrete way to proceed toward a new social order in the midst of the old, meaning that even while the Palestinians were still living under a belligerent occupation, they could create self-reliance through the establishment of institutions that were beyond Israeli control. The alternative institutions would rival previous entities and ultimately replace them, and the Palestinians would take charge through noncooperation and by creating new structures. The popular committees that would sustain the first intifada were alternative institutions.⁵⁵

Awad adapted Gandhi’s constructive programs, including a “Library on Wheels’, translating and spreading lectures and books advocating nonviolence to children across the West Bank and East Jerusalem” and clean up campaigns to protest closures of municipalities.⁵⁶ In early 1986, Awad was asked to demonstrate the nonviolence that he advocated and led the first successful march through the village of Taqu’ to protest the appropriation of land by Israeli settlers. This is a small hamlet 12km south of Bethlehem, not far from the modern-day Gush

⁵¹ Ibid., 25.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Mary Elizabeth King, *A Quiet Revolution*, 145.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 145-146.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 146.

⁵⁶ Arens and Kaufman, “Potential Impact of Palestinian Nonviolent Struggle,” 236.

Etzion settlement block.⁵⁷ Through the participation of over 300 local villagers, Israeli peace activists, foreign guests and PCSN staff in a nonviolent march, Palestinians who took part felt empowered, even if this experience did not change the status of the oPt.⁵⁸ A significant step for the Palestinian nonviolent resistance, “In the public record, this was the first time that a West Bank village recovered land that had been appropriated.”⁵⁹ Soon after, villages facing similar issues sought out the nonviolence training of PCSN.⁶⁰ Nonviolent marches and protest involving Palestinians as well as Israeli and foreign participants have become a staple of the modern Palestinian nonviolent resistance. In the West Bank village of Budrus, nonviolent activists successfully protested the building of the security fence/wall on much of their agricultural land, and their story was captured in the ‘Just Vision’ film *Budrus*.⁶¹ Protests occur often in villages across the West Bank and East Jerusalem where Palestinian land is threatened: Bil’in, Nabi Saleh, Sheikh Jarrah, al-Walajah, Al-Masarah, among many others.⁶²

In 1988, six months after the start of the first Intifada, Mubarak Awad was charged with “fomenting a rebellion against the state” and deported to the United States on a technicality of overstaying a three-month visa.⁶³ “Private messages from President Reagan and Secretary of State George Shultz flickered over the airwaves to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir concerning Awad’s case. The US Ambassador to Israel told Shamir, ‘You need more Awads in Jerusalem, not fewer.’”⁶⁴ Awad’s deportation only lent more credibility to his vision and further spread his methods of practical nonviolent resistance.⁶⁵

Communities across the oPt began to implement nonviolent resistance tactics. In

⁵⁷ There is an Israeli Tekoa settlement included in the Gush Etzion settlement block, which is located beside the Arab village of Taqu’ (also spelled Taqu,’ Tekoa, or Teqoa). For a different view on some of the settlers from Tekoa and peace activism, see the essay by Cristiana Calabrese in this issue, pp. 101-123.

⁵⁸ King, *A Quiet Revolution*, 147-148.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁶⁰ Cady, “Strategic Nonviolent Resistance in Palestine,” 54.

⁶¹ Arens and Kaufman, “Potential Impact of Palestinian Nonviolent Struggle,” 247. ‘Just Vision’ is a not-for-profit and non-partisan organization based in Washington DC, New York, Jerusalem that promotes Israeli and Palestinian nonviolence through film and media.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 246-247.

⁶³ Charles M. Sennott, *The Body and the Blood: The Middle East’s Vanishing Christians and the Possibility for Peace*, (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Book Group, 2001), 157. Mubarak, a US citizen, had his Jerusalem residency revoked by Israel during the time he was in the United States and therefore was designated a foreign national.

⁶⁴ Catherine Ingram, *In the Footsteps of Gandhi: Conversations with Spiritual Social Activists*, (Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, 2003).

⁶⁵ Cady, “Strategic Nonviolent Resistance in Palestine,” 55.

Beit Sahour, Palestinians welcomed the participation of Israeli Jews and Palestinian women in ways that were not seen before in the Intifada.⁶⁶ Dialogue groups took place to encourage encounters between ordinary Israelis and Palestinians for discussions on how to bring about peace. The typical scenes of the Palestinian nonviolent resistance movement were demonstrated through the boycott of Israeli goods, illegally flying the Palestinian flag, ignoring military orders, destroying Israeli ID cards to enter Israel, and educating their children in underground schools, backyard gardening and secret dairy farms.⁶⁷

Among the most notable acts of collective civil disobedience was the tax revolt in Beit Sahour for six weeks in October and November 1989. Beit Sahour, a prosperous and predominantly Christian village located beside Bethlehem, employed the motto “No Taxation Without Representation” as individuals withheld taxes and several hundred small businesses refused to pay the value-added-tax to Israel, to protest their taxes being used to finance the military occupation.⁶⁸ “In interviews many men said they would not pay taxes because they did not wish to finance their own occupation and, anyway, saw no benefit from the money they had already paid.”⁶⁹ In response, the Israeli army put the village under siege and began to seize property in lieu of unpaid taxes. The siege ended after 42 days of defiance. The success of the Beit Sahour tax revolt lies in the creativity of the plan, the discipline of the residents, and the effective use of media to their benefit.⁷⁰ Yet not all Palestinian villages have the advantages of Beit Sahour, which is “a relatively wealthy Palestinian city located close to Israel with good access to Israeli peace groups and media.”⁷¹

⁶⁶ Sennot, *The Body and the Blood*, 155-157. For more on the complexity of Palestinian women’s participation in activism, see Rabab Abdulhadi, “The Palestinian Women’s Autonomous Movement: Emergence, Dynamics, and Challenges” *Gender and Society*, 12/6 Part 1 (1998), 649-673.

⁶⁷ Michael N. Nagler, Tal Palter-Palman and Matthew A. Taylor, *The Road to Nonviolent Coexistence in Palestine/Israel*, March 2007, www.matthewtaylor.net/nvcoexistpalisfinal.pdf, accessed 1 May 2013.

⁶⁸ Stephan, “People Power in the Holy Land,” 8; Anne Grace, “The Tax Resistance at Bayt Sahour” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 19/2 (1990), 101; Nagler, Palter-Palman and Taylor, *The Road to Nonviolent Coexistence in Palestine/Israel*.

⁶⁹ Alan Cowell, “Beit Sahur Journal; In a Tax War, Even the Olivewood Dove is Seized,” *The New York Times*, 11 October 1989, <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/10/11/world/beit-sahur-journal-in-a-tax-war-even-the-olivewood-dove-is-seized.html?n=Top%2fReference%2fTimes%20Topics%2fSubjects%2fT%2fTaxes>, accessed 23 May 2013.

⁷⁰ Stephan “People Power in the Holy Land,” 8.

⁷¹ Ibid.; the Beit Sahour tax revolt was problematic for the PLO and Yasser Arafat. While Arafat aimed to take control of the intifada, an independent revolt like the one in Beit Sahour was seen as potentially divisive for Palestinians and could weaken the PLO’s abilities to negotiate with Israel. Within the PLO, suspicions also arose with whether the Christian population of Beit Sahour were taking part in this resistance as a Western plan to destabilize the Intifada (Sennot, *The Body and the Blood*, 158).

Thus, the history of the HLT follows the history of the region: evolving out of the need for community empowerment in a time of extreme political, economic and social hardships. Sami Awad, the executive director, founded HLT in the midst of the dissatisfaction amongst Palestinians following the Oslo accords and preceding a violent second Intifada. HLT was born out of the combination of two programs: a continuation of the work of the PCSN in Jerusalem, and the 'Journey of the Magi', a pilgrimage throughout the biblical cities after the birth of Christ.

Upon completing his university education in the United States, Sami returned to Bethlehem and his vision to continue his uncle's work came to fruition when PCSN moved from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. Further, a partnership formed with Robin and Nancy Wainwright of 'Middle East Fellowship' (MEF), who had met with Sami in 1996 to discuss their vision to travel through the biblical cities for the millennium celebrations of the birth of Jesus. As a result, HLT and MEF had its first joint program in October 2000 through the 'Journey of the Magi pilgrimage', in conjunction with the 'Middle East Council of Churches'. Three groups of international pilgrims retraced the path of the Biblical 'wise men' over 1,200 miles through modern-day Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Israel and arriving in Bethlehem for Christmas with the intention to forge friendships between the pilgrims and their hosts. These pilgrims were among the only international visitors to risk entering Bethlehem during the turbulent time of the Second Intifada. Gifts were exchanged in honor of the occasion, and HLT arranged the donation of 2,000 olive trees to the people to replace those uprooted by military raids.⁷² This was the start of a strong relationship between MEF and HLT to serve the communities of the Middle East in creative and nonviolent ways. MEF serve as a sister organization to HLT to provide support, in particular to the 'Palestine Summer Encounter Program' detailed in the subsection of 'Travel and Encounter', and to assist in overall fundraising for HLT in the United States.

For Sami, the commitment to nonviolence is also a means to build a stronger Palestine by enabling individuals to envision and create an independent, democratic society. To address the weaknesses in local society, the organization developed tools for empowering the local community: nonviolence programs, leadership programs, travel and encounter experiences, and independent media. Each of these programs engages with the community – both Christian and Muslim – in ways that support the themes of nonviolence whilst challenging individuals to become a source for change. Inspired by the nonviolent resistance movements in the past, Sami and the staff at HLT incorporate the strategies of nonviolence for

⁷² Journey of the Magi Website, *The Contemporary Story of the Journey of the Magi*, <http://www.magijourney.org/contemporary.html>, accessed 11 May 2013.

the contemporary needs of Palestinian society.

Part III: Active Nonviolence Today: Programs & Projects of ‘Holy Land Trust’

HLT has internalized the successes and failures of past nonviolent movements. Among the successes of nonviolence in the uprising: focusing on the centrality of the Palestinian people and Israel; raising the financial, moral and public relations cost of the occupation and shattering the illusions regarding the irreversibility of changes introduced by Israel in the oPt since 1967; building the self-confidence and sense of unity of Palestinians to create economic infrastructure, self-reliance, and developing an understanding of nonviolent methods; and altering the Palestinian image and the occupation in international and Jewish public opinion, making prolonged occupation appear less attractive and sustainable.⁷³ There were also lessons in the failures of the nonviolence movement, including the need for practical strategies and attainable goals, the requirement of long term leadership and group cohesion to the nonviolent methods, and most importantly, the ability to neutralize Israeli fear.⁷⁴ “To be effective and truly facilitate change... Palestinians needed to remove the Israeli fear of Arab violence.”⁷⁵ Resistance must be understood as “directed at the unjust policies and practices of the Israeli government, not at the physical well being of the Israeli people.”⁷⁶ The second Intifada greatly challenged the ability to spread this message, but with the resurgence of nonviolent activism, it is possible to convey this message once again. With these teachings, Sami Awad founded HLT. No longer concerned with the criticisms of ‘normalizing’ relations with Israel or Israelis, HLT has reached an awareness of nonviolent resistance that focuses on the needs of the Palestinians while inviting the participation of Israelis and internationals when possible and appropriate. This form of engagement has been described as “co-resisting” rather than “co-existing” – that is, welcoming the inclusion of Israelis for the purpose of promoting Palestinian rights and to encourage the end of the occupation.⁷⁷ The organization is represented by the spectrum of the community: refugees, villagers and city dwellers; Christians and Muslims; women and men; as well as the young, the old, and the handicapped. Nonviolence is available to all. HLT provide a myriad of services from their offices designed to strengthen the ties within the

⁷³ Khalidi, “The Uprising and the Palestine Question,” 506-508; Cady, “Strategic Nonviolent Resistance in Palestine,” 57.

⁷⁴ Cady, “Strategic Nonviolent Resistance in Palestine,” 57-58.

⁷⁵ King, *A Quiet Revolution*, 213; Cady, “Strategic Nonviolent Resistance in Palestine,” 58.

⁷⁶ Stephan, “People Power in the Holy Land,” 15.

⁷⁷ Rahman, “Co-existence vs. Co-resistance.”

community and extending collaboration across borders. Nonviolence, leadership, and healing are the guiding principles to their work, and all of their projects address at least one of these values.

The work of HLT is supported by a range of donors, including governments, Christian organizations, charitable international development organizations, and individual donations or program fees.⁷⁸ Among the 15 donors listed in HLT's latest annual report, the organizations fell into the broad categories of direct government assistance for good governance, agricultural development, and youth development programs, Christian-centered aid, international development.⁷⁹ A sampling of specific donors include: the 'National Endowment for Democracy', a US-based non-profit that supports programs that promote democratic ideals and values; the 'Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace', an international development organization of the Catholic Church that addresses poverty, unfair social, political, and economic structures, and human dignity; 'Resource Center for Nonviolence', an American peace and social justice organization committed to nonviolent social change; and 'Wilde Ganzen Foundation', a Dutch organization that funds small-scale projects in disadvantaged communities with a Dutch partner.⁸⁰

This section will highlight three of HLT's projects that are made possible through the funding by donors and the management by HLT staff: Nonviolence, Travel and Encounter, and the Non-Linear Development Program.

A. Nonviolence

A centerpiece of HLT is the commitment to nonviolence, and the staff believes that it is a lifestyle of consciousness. Internalizing the themes of nonviolence has been a challenge, and for many staff members, it is a lifestyle that requires an appreciation for theories of Jesus, Martin Luther King, Jr., Gandhi, and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (the 'Muslim Gandhi') as much as direct action, mobilization, and community outreach.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Interview of the A. with Muhammad Ali, 17 April 2013. Specific financial contributions of each organization was not provided.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ These organizations can be found online: 'National Endowment for Democracy,' www.ned.org, 'The Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace,' www.devp.org/en; 'Resource Center for Nonviolence,' <http://rcnv.org>; Wilde Ganzen (Wild Geese in English), www.wildgeenzen.nl, websites accessed 12 May 2013.

⁸¹ Unlike the more notable figures of Jesus, King and Gandhi, Khan was a Muslim nonviolence practitioner from a region known for some of the most violent tribal societies in the world. Khan was a contemporary and friend of Gandhi. As a devout Muslim, he was profoundly inspired by his faith to create a 'nonviolent army' called The Khudai Khidmatgars ("servants of God") to renounce violence in response to British oppression in the remote Northwest Frontier of modern-

According to Mubarak Awad, there are many reasons to employ nonviolence, including: (1) it creates a constructive outcome, (2) it is a 'weapon' available to all, and (3) it is the surest way to achieve public sympathy.⁸² HLT provides training to a variety of Palestinian organizations, villages, refugee camps and individuals of all religious denominations in nonviolent methods and strategies to involve the broader community.

Ongoing projects within the Nonviolence Department are creative methods to engage Palestinians in nonviolence training through local and international partnerships. These trainings occur multiple times a year, extending over a few days and can include 30-40 participants at each gathering.⁸³ Many of the nonviolence projects address the need for education programs for children and youth, as there are many affected by violence and trauma. In a recent UNICEF report, Palestinian children reported experiences of violence in amongst family, in school with peers and teachers, and with Israeli soldiers on their way to school.⁸⁴ Therefore, programs were developed to counteract the ill effects of violence and of the occupation on childhood by creating a culture of nonviolence in homes and schools. The aim of these programs is to generate a society that cherishes nonviolence from a young age and to encourage nonviolent behavior into adulthood.⁸⁵

day Pakistan. It was an unlikely collective at a time when British regarded the Pashtun tribes as 'savages,' but at "its height, Khan's Khudai Khidmatgars numbered more than 80,000." Khan served a total of 30 years in prison for protesting military dictatorships. Tim Flinders, "A Muslim Gandhi?" Badshah Khan and the World's First Nonviolent Army," *PeacePower: Berkeley's Journal of Principled Nonviolence and conflict transformation*, 1/1 2005, http://www.calpeacepower.org/0101/muslim_ghandi.htm accessed 23 May 2013.

⁸² Thomas Weber and Robert J. Burrowes, *Nonviolence: An Introduction, Section 2: Reasons for Nonviolence*, <http://www.nonviolenceinternational.net/seasia/whatis/book.php>, accessed 22 May 2013.

⁸³ See for example these published articles about HLT Nonviolence Training: *Nonviolence Communication Training in Bethlehem* <http://www.holylandtrust.org/index.php/news/778-nonviolence-communication-training-in-bethlehem>; *Nonviolence Training with the Palestinian Medical Relief Society (Health Clubs) in Dar-Salah*, 21 June 2010; <http://www.holylandtrust.org/index.php/news/22-nonviolence-programs/586-nonviolence-training-with-the-palestinian-medical-relief-society-health-clubs-in-dar-salah>; *Nonviolence Training for Women in Beit Jala*, 10 June 2010, <http://www.holylandtrust.org/index.php/news/28-other-activities/581-nonviolence-training-for-women-in-beit-jala>, all accessed 12 May 2013.

⁸⁴ See 'United Nations Children's Fund' (UNICEF). *The Situation of Palestinian Children in the Occupied Territory, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon*, http://www.unicef.org/oPt/PALESTINIAN_SITAN-final.pdf, accessed 12 May 2013. For an analysis of Israeli women's NGOs and domestic violence see the essay by Valérie Pouzol, pp. 50-72.

⁸⁵ For more information on collaborations between HLT and charities dealing with children and youth, trauma and education, see 'Musicians Without Borders,' www.musicianswithoutborders.org, accessed 12 May 2013 and HLT Website, *Peacebuilders: Educating for Peace in Palestinian Schools*,

B. Travel and Encounter

Travel and Encounter was established in 2000 to support the coordination for the 'Journey of the Magi'. Through an established partnership with MEF, HLT has been able to raise international awareness by providing cross-cultural and experiential learning opportunities in Palestine and Israel. Programs are tailor made for spiritual pilgrimages, olive harvests, spring break programs, volunteerism, or fact-finding missions, as well as the annual programs of Palestine Summer Encounter, Summer of Service (a Christian-centered program) and the Home Rebuilding Program. Its main aim is to establish personal connections through tourism between Palestinians and internationals to develop mutual respect and understanding.

Palestine Summer Encounter

Palestine Summer Encounter (PSE) is a joint project between HLT and MEF, creating the opportunity for internationals to become exposed to the Palestinian community and familiarize themselves with the politics, the people, the issues facing the local community, and be inspired to share this message when they return home. PSE invites internationals to live in Palestine over one, two, or three months. Each year since 2004, Bethlehem has welcomed between 30-75 international participants. MEF assists in promoting PSE, processing participant registration, as well as payments and scholarships for the program. Program costs for 2013 are US\$2,030 for one month, US\$3,390 for two months, and US\$4,160, and are paid to MEF and then distributed to HLT. These fees pay for housing with Palestinian families, excursions, classes, medical insurance, basic mobile phones during the program, and materials for participants. Participants range in age, religious or secular backgrounds, and include students, professionals, and retirees. A majority of participants are from the United States, with the remaining numbers from Canada, Europe and Australia. The home stay is selected through consideration of participant requirements: language ability, proximity to volunteer placement, and requests to live with a family of a particular religious background or socioeconomic status such as a refugee camp. The host families are considered through their ability to host an international and economic need.

“Every participant serves their host community through a volunteer placement at a nonprofit organization, summer camp, municipality, school, hospital, church or community center.”⁸⁶ The opportunity to learn from the community through a volunteer placement, up to five days per week, allows participants to gain further

accessed 1 July 2012.

⁸⁶ PSE Website, *Volunteer Opportunities*, <http://www.palestinesummer.org/volunteer>, accessed 12 May 2013.

insight to daily life in Bethlehem.

PSE exposes participants to the perspectives of academics, diplomats, politicians, religious educators, and those working for peace. These voices are diverse, and include lectures on theology of the land, introductions to the Abrahamic faiths by Jewish, Christian and Muslim teachers, nonviolence in Palestine, the history of Zionism, and regional politics. PSE also exposes participants to Israeli and Palestinian human rights organizations (for example: ‘Al Haq’, ‘B’Tselem’, ‘Rabbis for Human Rights’), activist groups (‘Christian Peacemaker Teams’, ‘Stop the Wall Campaign’), community development organizations (refugee camp organizations, ‘Freedom Theatre Jenin’), a Jewish educational and conflict transformation organization (‘Encounter’), and a prisoner support and human rights organization (‘Addameer’).⁸⁷ The program has also met with Israeli settlers in Ephrat and Hebron for opinions in stark opposition to what participants might be exposed to in Bethlehem. But PSE does not cater to extremes. The thrust of the program centers on the promotion of nonviolence, education, and mutual respect. Aside from hearing the perspectives of activists, development workers and academics, participants also study Arabic in the colloquial dialect so that participants may be better able to communicate and develop relationships with Palestinians.

C. Non-Linear Leadership Development Program

After the death of Yasser Arafat, there was a tangible absence of leadership in Palestinian society and politics.⁸⁸ The Making the Impossible Possible Campaign (MIPC) began in 2007 to facilitate developing and implementing a vision for the future through supporting emerging community leaders. HLT believes that “any true breakthrough in ending violence and achieving peaceful coexistence based on equality and justice requires a leadership committed to making what seems to be impossible a real possibility for both the Palestinian and Israeli communities.” Therefore, HLT facilitates the emergence of new leaders who will support a nonviolent and transformative change towards lasting peace in both Israeli and Palestinian communities.

⁸⁷ The websites of following organizations were all accessed on 1 July 2012. ‘Al Haq’ (www.alhaq.org); ‘B’Tselem’ (www.btselem.org); ‘Rabbis for Human Rights’ (<http://rhr.org.il/eng/>); ‘Christian Peacemaker Teams’ (<http://www.cpt.org/>); ‘Stop the Wall Campaign’ (<http://www.stophewall.org/>); ‘The Freedom Theatre’ (<http://www.thefreedomtheatre.org/>); ‘Addameer’ (<http://www.addameer.org/>); ‘Encounter’ (<http://www.encounterprograms.org/>), accessed 14 March 2013.

⁸⁸ Dennis Ross, “After Arafat, What?” *Washington Post*, 5 November, 2004. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A26838-2004Nov4.html>, accessed 22 May 2013; Lior Akerman, “Their Loss is Our Loss,” *The Jerusalem Post*, 9 May 2013, <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-Ed-Contributors/Their-loss-is-our-loss-312707>, accessed 22 May 2013.

As a first step in the MIPC, HLT launched the Non-Linear Leadership Development Program (LDP). LDP was developed in 2010 as a personal development program to counter this vacuum of vision and to mend the divisions caused as a result of the absence of leadership. It coaches leaders from political, social and business sectors into a ‘non-linear’ leadership program. The methodology of the non-linear development program connects individuals with their potential for leadership, rather than building this practice from past (linear) experiences. The LDP generates participant leadership through energizing their creativity, intelligence, commitment and self-responsibility. Through creating visions and strategies of leadership and understanding what a leader does, the participant moves to serve the community as a member of a network of other budding leaders. The purpose of LDP is to give a voice to the moderate majority in Palestine who want a just peace, to establish initiatives that promote peaceful coexistence, and to rally the population to end resignation to the status quo.⁸⁹ The LDP provides the coaching for women and men, training on visions and practical strategies of leadership, and connects those trained in LDP through network meetings to build on ideas and methods to bring about constructive change.

Since 2010, “more than 225 participants continue to engage and support each other through [HLT’s] non-linear network of leaders.” Further, an impact of LDP’s success has been the engagement of emerging women leaders. “The year 2012 featured the Women Leadership Development Project (WLDP) as an extension to our Non-linear Leadership Development Project (LDP), and around 560 women have participated in this project.”⁹⁰ The interest amongst youth to become involved in and empowered through leadership development and nonviolence continues to grow.

⁸⁹ Multiple polls support this assertion. A joint poll by the ‘Program on International Policy Attitudes’ (PIPA) and ‘Search for Common Ground’ (SFCG) showed that two years into the second Intifada in 2002, “80% of Palestinians would support a large-scale nonviolent protest movement and 56% would participate in it. (...) A 2008 study by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) complemented the SFCG survey, indicating that 70% of Palestinian young adults believed that the use of violence to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was not very helpful. More recently, a 2010 ‘Fafu’ poll confirmed the sentiment expressed in the 2002 PIPA/SFCG poll in favor of nonviolent resistance. Seven in ten thought that Palestinians should resist Israel by putting more weight on civil, nonviolent means. Also, the poll found that a larger share of the population favored a halt in rocket attacks from Gaza at the time of the survey than a year previously (61%, up from 53%).” Arens and Kaufman, “Potential Impact of Palestinian Nonviolent Struggle,” 243. The 2010 Fafu poll is taken from the Fafu Institute for Applied International Studies, “Key Results from an Opinion Poll in the West Bank (February) and Gaza Strip (May) 2010,” http://www.fafu.no/ais/mideast/opt/opinionpolls/palestinian_opinions_2010/Summary_2010_EN.pdf, accessed 23 May 2013.

⁹⁰ Interview of the A. with Muhammad Ali.

These programs provide an insight into the strategic framework HLT has employed for empowering Palestinians in nonviolence, to open their world with others and to develop leadership capacity for the present and future.

Conclusion: The Vision of Holy Land Trust and Palestinian Nonviolence

Every Friday at HLT, Sami Awad convenes a “vision meeting.” Within this space, and through Awad’s leadership, the organization is reminded of their commitment to community empowerment and development of a culture of nonviolence. The meetings are never structured the same, and visiting volunteers are welcome additions to Vision. While such meetings can serve to ensure each department is on task and organizational goals are discussed and met, Vision is also a time for introspection, reflection, active listening, support, guidance, and organizational strength. With the chaos of the office environment within the current circumstances, establishing this time as routine has resulted in a genuine office community.

The strategic plan of HLT is seen through their articulated tenets, namely nonviolence, leadership, and healing. They remain cognizant of the effects of the occupation on the occupied and the occupier, and they honor those who continue to work in the name of nonviolent action. Through their programs and projects, HLT are improving the nonviolent movement by having a vision, making attainable goals, and empowering the community to be a part of shaping their future.

As HLT continues to grow, it will undoubtedly change and develop their strategies as necessary for the community’s needs. Nonviolence training is showing to be more important than ever.

The history of nonviolent resistance in Palestine is established and yet innovating. While it is unclear that a ‘white Intifada’ of a nonviolent nature will emerge as some academics suggest, the adaptation of nonviolence is part of the broader political interest of the Palestinian Authority.⁹¹ In recent years, “nonviolent resistance became a reiterated official policy (...). This represents a positive shift in the instrumentality of a strategy that coincides with the goal of two states living in

⁹¹ Shaul Mishal and Doron Massa, “Pre-empting a White Intifada,” *Haaretz*, 22 February 2010, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/preempting-a-white-intifada-1.266068>, accessed 14 March 2013, as cited in Arens and Kaufman, “Potential Impact of Palestinian Nonviolent Struggle,” 240.

peace next to each other.”⁹² The increased interest and involvement of local nonviolent resistance at the official levels of the Palestinian Authority is encouraging, and shows that the *sumud* of the people has not gone unnoticed. Whether this results in a return to negotiations between the two peoples is unknown, but the dynamics of resistance are changing toward more peaceful, less threatening, and more empathetic messages.

Nonviolence has the potential to unite the people under a just cause without threatening their opponent. With continued uncertainty in the region, the leadership of Sami Awad and the work of all who serve for HLT provide the encouragement, training and support to maintain hope through steadfastness. The history of nonviolence in the oPt, and in particular HLT, is a glimpse into power of creativity when used to promote nonviolent resistance. Through their ongoing programs and projects, HLT enables the Palestinian community to discover their strengths and their voice. There is a viable and effective alternative to violence.

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How to quote this article:

Erin Dyer, *Hope through Steadfastness: The Journey of Holy Land Trust*, in “Quest. Issues in Contemporary Jewish History. Journal of Fondazione CDEC,” n.5 July 2013
url: www.quest-cdecjournal.it/focus.php?id=333

⁹² Ibid.