



## BOOK OF THE MONTH

### Life in Occupied Palestine



**Biography,**  
**Volume 37, Number 2, Spring 2014**  
**Life in Occupied Palestine**  
**Edited by Cynthia Franklin, Morgan Cooper, and Ibrahim Aoudé.**  
**University of Hawai'i Press,**  
**February 2, 2015, \$15.00**

The *Biography* special issue titled *Life in Occupied Palestine* is a significant and unique collection of 17 articles, interviews, and literary pieces from 19 contributors and 3 guest editors. These pieces beautifully and powerfully capture both the mundane and the extraordinary of life in occupied Palestine. As contributor Honaida Ghanim writes in her piece: "My village's border stories revolve around infiltrations, and its infiltration stories revolve around recapturing the 'ordinary' and mundane ways of living that, hindered by the borders, became extraordinary. There is nothing more mundane than bringing in a doctor from a nearby village or bringing eggs from a nearby city; and of course, there is nothing more normal than a mother visiting her son or a husband his family. Once upon a border, the mundane and the heroic were one and the same; listening to these stories, we can retrieve their heroism for times present as well as past." This is true for so many of the pieces in the special issue.

The issue begins with a four-part introduction written by co-editors Cynthia Franklin, Morgan Cooper, and Ibrahim Aoudé. Largely composed between Honolulu and Ramallah, the

introductions locate each editor in relation to Palestine and the special issue, against the backdrop of Israel's 2014 summer massacre of Gaza. "Borders, Journeys, and Home," the first section, goes on to explore forms of resistance and creativity that allow Palestinians to move through the daunting obstacles that define everyday life. The second section, "Invasions, Incarcerations, and Insurgent Imagination," focuses on how Palestinians resist the violence of occupation and colonization through art and other acts of creative expression. In the third section, "Reciprocal Solidarities and Other Revolutionary Relations," contributors demonstrate the possibilities of life narratives that do not allow for empathy to be enough. Instead, contributors advance and enact forms of solidarity and witnessing through genres that include letters, social-media postings, autobiography, and travel narrative. The special issue concludes with attention to a concrete and forward-looking form of action – the nonviolent BDS movement – that so many contributors have highlighted as a way the international community can act in solidarity with Palestinians.

The diversity of articles, topics, and voices testifies to the editors' intention of shaping a collection from across Palestine in rejection of colonial divisions of West Bank and Gaza Strip which demarcate the settler-colonial state of Israel. The diversity in the

collection also insists on the myriad of ways the Israeli occupation *occupies* Palestine and Palestinian lives and the greater ways in which Palestinians resist and insist on defining their own lives.

In addition to giving attention to space and forms of violence and resilience, the special issue also offers reflection on time and trajectories of colonialism in Palestine. Ruanne Abou Rahme, in an interview, deals with her recovery work on the incidental insurgent Abu Jildeh whom she reads as a precursor to the 1936 Arab Revolt against the British Mandate. Abou Rahme connects to the present moment: "When you read about what went on in the 1930s, it's

not surprising, because you find you're living the same thing now. As in the 1930s when we were under British control, a Palestinian elite benefits from the occupation of Palestine and is invested in maintaining this structure."

The personal narratives, excavations of incidental lives, testimonies, and other interventions included in this special issue work together to offer deep analyses and a shared vision for a just future for Palestine.

*A series of panels, events, and discussions is planned in Palestine, the US, and the UK in March 2015. For more information, see <https://www.facebook.com/biographypalestine>.*

## Second Session

### Evening Arabic Courses

Following its first successful evening courses in colloquial Arabic, PAS will launch its second evening session starting in February 2015.

BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY

**Course Details:**

- Colloquial Arabic (Jerusalem dialect) students will be placed according to the results of a placement test.
- Modern Standard Arabic students will be placed according to the results of a placement test.
- Classes will be two days a week for three hours a day, for a total of 45 contact hours.

**Cost:** Price per course is USD \$550 (to be paid on the first day of classes)

**Time:** between 4pm - 8pm

**Venue:** Center of Continuing Education, Al-Irsal Street, Al-Masa Building, 6<sup>th</sup> floor, Ramallah

First meeting and placement test will take place on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

To complete your application, please send an email to [pas-isp@birzeit.edu](mailto:pas-isp@birzeit.edu)