



Crossing Borders

The Search for Dignity in Palestine

A Memoir by Christa Bruhn

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Available from physical and online booksellers worldwide.

"Christa Bruhn reveals the captivating journey of a person driven by a passion for justice. Within its pages, the exquisite essence of Palestine unfolds, inviting readers to discover a nation's profound longing to celebrate life."

-Steve Sabella, artist and author of *The Parachute Paradox* and *The Artist's Curse*

There is no shortage of books on Palestine, and yet in *Crossing Borders: The Search for Dignity in Palestine*, American author Christa Bruhn embarks on a journey that is eye-opening for those just making sense of the current situation on the ground as well as those with a deeper knowledge and understanding of the culture and history of Palestine.

The golden thread of dignity that ties this braided memoir together – a tapestry of personal experiences and historical context – has roots in her upbringing in Detroit, Michigan. Racial disparity and the dispossession of Native Americans were transgressions she immediately recognized when she traveled to Gaza and Jerusalem at the tail end of the Cold War from her father's homeland of a divided Germany while studying abroad as a student of international studies. Visiting a Palestinian refugee family in Gaza originally from Jaffa and a new Jewish immigrant family from the United States in Jerusalem, Christa was overcome with the Palestinian reality of living in Israel's shadow.

As Christa pursued degrees in Middle Eastern studies and education, and her impressive command of the Palestinian farming community's *fellahi* Arabic dialect of her extended family unfolds page by page, Christa's journey becomes increasingly intimate and personal. Through marriage and as the mother of three Palestinian Americans, Christa's unique insider-outsider perspective shines light on the ever-widening gap between the American ideals of freedom and democracy and the subjugation of her family to the "only democracy

in the Middle East." Israeli restrictions on Palestinian life and livelihood through Israel's control of borders and natural resources and the "special treatment" it affords Palestinians regardless of status – including Christa's own children – offer chilling reminders that the words of her father-in-law still ring true. *The war is not over.*

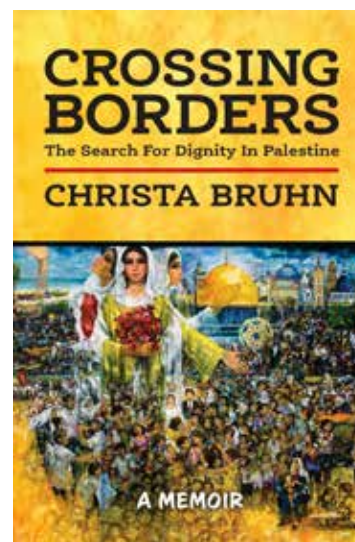
Crossing Borders, released to commemorate the 75th year of the dispossession of Palestinians from their homeland, is organized around the decades of the *Nakba* to shine light on the forgotten key to peace in Palestine: the Right of Return for Palestinians to live in their homeland. Christa uses her privilege as an American with yellow Israeli license plates to travel inside 1948 Palestine to visit the treasured cities of Jaffa, Akka, Tabariyeh, Nazareth, Beisan, and Haifa. Her appreciation for the loss of Palestine runs deep as she ventures into destroyed village sites from the *Nakba* – the Catastrophe – in 1948, and the *Naksa* – the Setback – in 1967. There Christa tunes into the hillsides, some covered in *saber* and untended fruit trees, others transformed into state parks or

renamed as nearby Jewish settlements, as they call out to her: *I have a name. I am a place. You cannot erase me.*

As Christa discovers and shares the secrets of Palestine with her children, her emphasis on life and Palestinians' deep-rooted connection to the places they hold dear are echoed in the cover art from the late Palestinian artist Ismail Shammout called *Life Prevails* (1999). While the Question of Palestine remains unanswered on the world stage and the ongoing *Nakba* continues, Christa offers the reader a rare and eloquent glimpse into the day-to-day experiences that are a testimony to the persistence of Palestine as she walks the diverse landscape and shares in traditional meals and celebrations rooted in the land that are a cornerstone of Palestinian culture.

Seeing the current situation as an arranged marriage where divorce is not an option, Christa invites the reader to imagine a future where freedom and democracy replace the systematic dispossession of Palestinians from their homeland. She writes with a sense of urgency, for the sake of both peoples who have suffered throughout history and at the hands of each other, emphasizing that the plight of the Palestinians has been ignored for far too long. Ultimately, Christa invites both sides to have the courage to acknowledge the bitter truth, that Palestinians and Israelis feel connected to the same land, that for Palestinians, Israel is Palestine, and for Israelis, Palestine is Israel, in the hope that both peoples can live a life of dignity.

Learn more at <https://christabruhn.com/>.



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