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In copertina: Hamedina square (Tel Aviv), the biggest demonstration of the social justice movement in Israel
(September, 3 2011) (© Activestill)

Sabina Leoncini

On this side and beyond the wall: social movements in Israel and Palestine

1. Introduction

I do research in Israel and Palestine since 2005, dealing, over the years, with various anthropologically interesting aspects concerning this complex field of research including mobility/immobility, identity and bilingual and mixed education. Social Movements were always interconnected with my works since recently I've decided to dedicate a special reflection to that. This contribution is related to my speech as rapporteur in a conference that was held in September 2014 in Rome; that period coincided with the resumption of bombing by Israel in the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian bombing of Tel Aviv and the south of Israel. This was followed by the abduction and murder of three young Orthodox Jews in Gush Etzion and other demonstrations of mutual hatred that followed. The exposure of the following has occurred during a very delicate moment, when the media spotlight had turned once again on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, only to then lose interest a few months later. Parties, associations and movements have taken sides politically pro or against one side or the other for over sixty years; it is difficult to find a non-partisan analysis covering this conflict; increasingly, political scientists are scrambling to find new arguments to justify the reasons of either party. It is hard to reflect after observing, experiencing and having heard both parties. Until you come across the facts, the everyday life and the daily images of the people, the stories, the faces, the walls. It is equally unlikely that we will take the responsibility to admit that you cannot easily come to a conclusion, to a solution, acceptable or not, painful or less. As an anthropologist does, as I did and as many others did, I tried not to draw any conclusions, also because for the moment a conclusion cannot be reached; instead there may be a careful consideration, analysis, and interpretation of what we witness, we see, we live. Recently, I have been to the opening lecture of the academic year at the European University Institute in Fiesole where Prof. Roy said that many scholars before presenting a conference say that they're support-

ing the two state solution although at this time it is impossible. In fact, a simple map shows that there is no geographical entirety of the territory for the developing of an eventual Palestinian state. Kamel, an historian and friend, as well as the anthropologist Perugini have recently developed a reflection on this issue. So, I wonder, can we talk about Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) as two entirely separate entities, or should we take a perspective like the one that Jonas Opperskalski, a German freelance photographer, expresses in his book *the 12 million*?¹ We should then analyze these two entities, Israel and an hypothetical Palestinian state, and the movements that characterize them as two entities in conflict, but whose actors interact with each other. In fact, a critical political and historical analysis of this context is necessary to face the study of today's Israel's and Palestine's social movements. In this sense the work of Furani and Rabinowitz on the categories used to study Palestine in anthropology, give us many explanations about the concept of colonialism adapted to this complicated context (Leoncini 2015). Despite the efforts of these and many other scholars, many Palestinian political anthropologists have also signed the boycott of Israeli academic institutions in the name of an anti-colonialist sentiment² and in retrospect to a debate on the rewriting of history by the new historians. Here I deliberately do not intend to deal with this debate that would lead me too far from my goal. But I want to emphasize how much this field is controversial and requires a claim to discern a trade boycott from a question of ideas as the Israeli Anthropological association also stress³. The thoughts, said to me years ago Fabio Dei are not like oranges, you cannot stop them to move to somewhere, but obviously this is our personal position, and very questionable.

Despite that the central theme of my contribution is to describe two movements far and near to each other, through a few images and field notes, showing how they are divided by a wall, but also demonstrating that basically they refer to the same values and theoretical principles but through different modes, times and protagonists. They both fight

for the same goal, justice, but in different ways and under different labels. Maybe those movements are overshadowed by the media perhaps because they displaced one in Israel, the other in Palestine, although in reality we will see that there is a link between them. In this essay I will try to move among the field of political anthropology and ethnography of social movements to show how ethnography can strip these two movements apparently unknown between each other. As Koensler says there are two main different forms of mobilization: on the one hand “institutional” movements seeking media attention and well integrated into the existing political situation, from the other side there are other forms of activism, more “experimental”, less visible and marginal and not integrated in the political arrangements. Koensler’s categories refer to his field of research, but could also fit with the two movements that I take in consideration.

These forms of activism maybe less visible as their media-centred, well-organised counterparts, but their strength lies in the ability to redefine the interpretative categories of the conflict, eluding the logic of zero-sum games and creating new crosscutting or cosmopolitan forms of belonging. These were moments of a desire to break with the existing situation; moments that seem able to change ways of thinking and collective consciousness; may be the incipient of shifting paradigms (Koensler 2015: 9).

The first is the so-called movement against the wall, whose origins and motives are described below. In particular, I have observed and studied this movement in the area of the municipality of Bethlehem, through a personal experience of ethnographic research in 2007 while I was also trying to interpret the process of developing of this movement itself as Nash suggests “As anthropologists we must also seek to capture process in our ethnographic description” (1992: 291). In this same field I later returned in several occasions: the last time was in December 2014. While in Bethlehem, the movement never attracted the attention of politicians and especially the Supreme Court of Justice of Israel, instead in *Bill’in* (near the city of Ramallah) legal controversies have become more pronounced, as well as the demonstrations themselves, and in 2009 a Palestinian boy died (Bassem Abu Rahme)⁴ because he was shot in the chest with tear gas ammunition. In 2011, his sister died of tear gas inhalation. The investigations were closed without culprit in 2013, but everywhere on the net you can find the heartbreaking video of Bassem’s murder. The victory of the movement of *Bill’in* with the change

of the route of the wall was then a partial victory, that has cost lives. The safety barrier today consists of 700 km of track, which is about 60% completed, 30% planned, 10% under construction. This movement, grew up all over the West Bank with the passing of the years and a great attention was given to how a collective action could produce and establish new social norm (Gibb 2001: 2) such as a form of shared participation to establish a different route of the barrier.

Many and many local associations in fact took part at the movement. There are Palestinians who support the movement against the wall including “Holy land Trust”, the local refugee camps, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and many others. Even the Israeli associations are numerous: *Yesh Din* (Jews for Human Rights), *Yesh Gvul* (refuseniks) former militaries who refuse to serve the army in the Occupied Palestinian Territories since 1982; “Breaking the silence”, an association that does campaign awareness about the events that took place in Hebron and in other sensitive sites during the last Intifada (2002); “Active stills” in charge of documenting through photography the demonstrations against the wall and other protesting events; *Bet ‘selem* that deals with monitoring the violation of human rights through video footage of its volunteers in the OPT; “Anarchist against the wall” participating actively in the demonstrations against the wall which take place every week around the West Bank; the well-known peace organization “Peace Now” (*shalom achshav* in Hebrew), *Machsom Watch*, is an organization of Israeli women who deal with and monitor respect for human rights in the checkpoints and the regular issuance of permits to enter Israel from the Israeli authorities, in particular the District coordination centers of reference. Finally *Zochrot* activists, concerned with raising awareness regarding the subject of the Nakba. Participating in demonstrations, are also international organizations such as the “International Solidarity Movement”, *Pope John XXIII* and many more.

2. The movement against the wall

While the second intifada (28 September 2000) left its ashes and its victims, Sharon’s government decided in the spring of 2002 to respond to terrorism by blocking the peace agreements through the operation “defensive shield” (elimination of Palestinian infrastructure through retaliation). The clashes became much worse in the Jenin refugee camp and even the main church of Bethlehem was involved and became the object of a harsh dispute

between the Israeli and Palestinian authorities. In June 2002, there were a series of attacks that opened the way to the operation “determined path”. While global war arrived in Iraq, Sharon’s government fell under the instability of Labour party support, scoring, with early elections of 2003, a turn further to the right. On the other side instead, there was nothing new in politics, if not the increase of the consent of Hamas in Gaza and the absolutism of Arafat, who continued to rule through a system based on corruption and favoritism. In May 2003, the stalemate was dislodged by a peace plan proposed by the Quartet (USA, Russia, EU, UN) which was defined “Road Map”, and foresaw the gradual formation of a Palestinian State and Israeli disengagement, through a very complex system of autonomy that was linked to results, and marked by territorial division under Israeli or Palestinian control. After signing the agreements there were many critical points evidenced by both sides. Even if the peace agreements talked about a separation of the independent Palestinian state, however in reality the attacks continued without ceasing and the West Bank was now controlled by the Israeli army, scoring new boundaries.

Wissam, a West Bank licensed tour guide said in an interview:

I do not think we can find any significant changes regarding the freedom of movement before and after the construction of the wall. I need the permit now as I would need it years ago to go to Jerusalem, since 1992. Prior to the construction of the wall many Palestinians could go and work out of the border while now they cannot. If a Palestinian was found without permission though, in either Jerusalem or Israel, he would get arrested. Today is exactly the same, nothing changed. The defense wall makes Israelis feel safe. But in my opinion, a simple barrier is not as effective as they all think: It will never stop terrorists from taking revenge (interview, 24/06/2007).

However, the fence was provisionally delimited in some areas by a real and concrete wall nine meters high: the so-called *Geder afrada* (Separation fence in Hebrew), *the jiddar* (the wall in Arabic). The idea, of separation, was proposed by the Labor government of Barak many years before and was seen by some scholars as the only possibility of existence of Israel facing the demographic war. Among the many measures of international level on the issue of the wall, perhaps the most significant is the opinion of the International Court of Justice. The court was asked an advisory opinion (Advisory opinion) on the legal issue of the barrier, and the

first request was sent from the Syrian Arab Republic, in October 2003, on behalf of the League of the Arab states. After three weeks the General Assembly adopted the resolution A/RES/ES-10/13 which requires the Israeli government to stop the building of the security fence. The following December the General Assembly adopted a new resolution asking again a legal opinion to the International Court of Justice about the legal consequences arising from the construction of the barrier in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, in light of international law, the Fourth Convention of Geneva and previous resolutions of the Security Council and of the General Assembly. The resolution, it is important to clarify, did not intend to ask the court to comment on the legality of the barrier, but to clarify its legal status, as it was built inside the occupied territories for the 80% of the track. In February 2004, twelve states participated in the hearings, two international organizations and a delegation of the Palestinian Authority. The advisory opinion was issued by the court on July 9, 2004 and brings into doubt the impartiality of the request of the General Assembly; instances that invite the court to not answer. The court instead decided to respond and to articulate that response through various arguments including: legal status of the occupied Palestinian territories; the applicability of the principles of international law; the legal justifications for the construction of the barrier. The court in its response also included the observation that the construction of the barrier affected the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people; it also points out that the area included between the Green Line and the barrier, called closed area, lies where there are 80% of Israeli settlers. The settlement policy violates Article 49.6 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the resolution 446/1979 of the Security Council.

Legal actions are also really common in the West Bank as many people say:

Q: Were you asked an opinion about the check point before it was built?

A: No, they never asked for our opinion. My uncle, who is a lawyer, said that the village already spent more than 150.000 NIS (approximately 30.000) on this case. Also, there are people whose houses have been demolished. They had to rely on their neighbors’ hospitality (interviewed, 27/06/2007).

As I mentioned, numerous associations of Bethlehem have formed a committee to organize non-violent demonstrations against the construction of the barrier in the Bethlehem area. In this area, the

main coordinator is the Holy Land Trust Association, but internally the local representatives have a fundamental role in the local villages belonging to the city of Bethlehem. In particular the three villages of Arthas, Umm Salumona, and Al Walaja. The main objective of the Committee is to put pressure on the Israeli public, especially on the government and the Supreme Court of Justice, so that the path of the security fence could be changed. These three villages in fact suffer significantly due to the negative effects of this construction⁵.

Between the inhabitants, one kid from Ayda Refugee camp said:

Child: The wall has changed my life, before the construction of the wall we used to play in a garden with my friends, near the camp, and now we can no longer play there. Before, when I went to school and sat in my class, I could see from the window a piece of land full of olive trees, but now I only see a piece of concrete. [...] When the Israelis were building the wall, there was a piece of land where we played where one of the boys got shot and then taken to hospital. [...] Since we lived in a refugee camp, we did not have anywhere to play. Since they built the wall we play in our homes and in the streets [...] (interviewed, 25/06/ 2007).

The means used by this committee is a non-violent demonstration which takes place every Friday in the three villages of Arthas, Al Walaja and Umm Salumona. These demonstrations began on January 4th, 2007 and are still in place today. Since 2007 I have followed the evolution of the facts in this area and right through my last stay in December 2014 I have seen the changes over the years. The main goal of the movement is to put pressure on the Israeli society in order to change public opinion. In particular, it is working to influence the Supreme Court of Justice through proposed amendments through the route of the security fence in order to have a less acute effect on the daily lives of those living in the affected area. The consequences are particularly noticeable in the following areas: tourism, economy, roads, agriculture (expropriation of farmland), transport, career, school, academic, health and trade. The barrier is therefore an emblem of conflict and embodies many meanings and implications as confirmed by Weizman (2009) who says that the fight between the Israelis and Palestinians is a game of tug-of-war.

3. The case of Bill'in

The village of Bill'in is an example of what has been happening through the years, in a context of non-violent demonstrations. In the summer of 2005, the village located near the city of Ramallah, began to pursue the demonstrations, which addressed the decision of the Israeli Supreme Court in their favor, on August 2007. In 2011, the Israeli army dismantled the fence in that area. According to the lawyer Michael Sfard, the new route will restore about 650 *dunams* (65 acres) of land belonging to farmers in Bill'in on the part inside the barrier of the *West Bank*. However, about 1,300 *dunams* of private farmland will still be on the Israeli side. The petition against the route segment that crosses the farmland of Bill'in was presented by Ahmed Yassin, head of the village council, on the 5th of September 2005. Among other things, the petitioner claimed that part of the route was designed to protect the new neighborhood of Modi'in Illit, known as Matityahu East, although no one was living there. Even though housing construction was started in the western part of the district, there weren't any plans for the near future to build homes in the east part. In other words, the safety barrier had been designed to protect nonexistent people.

But how are these demonstrations usually being organized?

- The meeting point is in a particular place near the site of the demonstration;
- Some representatives of the organizing committee explain the reasons of the protest;
- A human chain is formed which step by step reaches the barrier where the soldiers of the Israeli army are usually placed;
- Songs or prayers are sung;
- Time is spent close to the soldiers offering them products from the confiscated land;
- The human chain is undone and everyone leaves, concluding the event.

It is like a boxing match. We won the first round, but we haven't won the game. There will still be a struggle, albeit in a nonviolent way until we shall have all our territories back? (Interview with the chief of the village of Umm Salumona August 2007)

4. The movement of July 14, Ha mechaat haohalim (the Protest of the Tents) and its economic framework

The financial movements of each person are constantly monitored by the control mechanisms

that surround us and, as a consumer, contribute to the functioning of a system that is essentially based on capitalism. Ordinary people negotiate moral frames in search of a better life, often through informal operations and situations that are atypical, usually because they are losing, or have already lost, economic stability, social and family functions that were once a milestone in their lives. Therefore a strange flexibility comes into play. On one hand, they are “forced” to seek non-traditional career paths and opportunities outside of the norm, but on the other hand, all the conditions exist to create something completely new, which challenges the statistics and the existing categories and allows them to regain trust in their own territory; this also transpires through movements such as those considered in this paper. Obviously one cannot overlook the definition of the geometry of the power that controls the distribution patterns and access to resources that fuel the informal economy, injustice and illegality, they allow no room for creativity, or endorsing products to consumers. The current economic model, at least in capitalist economies of Western countries, is moving further and further away from economic reality that everyone experiences in everyday life (Ferguson 2007). In such fertile land social movements arise, which can be studied exhaustively by anthropologists, because the situation of “extraordinary” crisis and injustice have created a change in our ordinary lives, also consolidating and altering the habits of each of us and these facts are observable only in everyday life. Sharing is not compatible with individualism and competition, which inevitably creates conflicts. We rather must consider the consequences that the sharing of “good practices” have within the economic sphere and try to avoid simply creating a new kind of more intelligent capitalism, comparing only collective choices, rather than considering individual human beings as consumers or on the move. In this sense, the studies of some economic anthropologists are a fundamental tool to interpret these lines of research. In light of the studies on the movement “Occupy”, we can consider the essays of Graeber and the work of Hann and Hart in their recent “economic anthropology”, shedding light on the problems related to the emergence of new informal economies, also discussed in Friedman (2003). In recent years, studies of financial anthropology have multiplied, particularly Maurer, who studied Islamic finance as well as other contemporary versions of traditional finance, even considering offshore banks. Today conducting anthropological research in financial centers seems almost obvious. In this sense, it should be noted that Ho has put his ethnographic work (2009), in the context of a broader

analysis of the political economy, considering problems of distribution, such as the system of allocations of large bonuses to bank employees. There is definitely a strong link between investment banks and the current crisis and this has forced scholars to consider the economic idea that an economy can thrive only if markets are exempt from politics. Perhaps now may be the time to create a synthesis between anthropology, history and economy? The economy can only be saved by economists working in collaboration with other disciplines. To this end, it is essential to take into account all the studies that examine physical mobility and immobility, economic, social, and psychological⁶ in order to ascertain how economic practices are related to equal social and career development (Atwood 2008); in this sense, the study of Bernandi on the influence of professional development is the key to describe a theoretical background of movements who demand social justice. On the other hand the issue of immobility is interdisciplinary, and can be found in contexts which are near and far between themselves, and that in this contribution is found in the background of a land where violence, injustice and violation of human rights are on the agenda.

This movement begins after an increase of the prices occurred from 2005-2011 reaching approximately 50% increase of property prices in the area of Tel Aviv and Gush Dan (the neighboring area of Tel Aviv). The “protest of the cheese” against the rising of food prices, was born in June 2011. In July 14 2011, Daphne Leef, a Tel Aviv video editor, pitched her tent in Rothschild Boulevard, a symbol of the streets of Tel Aviv and Unesco heritage. For three months, the squares and the streets of Tel Aviv were invaded by demonstrators. The issues of the movement were mainly due to the financial cuts to education, public services, public constructions, and the cost of living compared to wages.

At that time I was living in Israel but I didn’t interview any protester, however every friend I had and many young relatives in my boyfriend’s family were going to demonstrations and explaining me about the reasons of the movement. Gal for example, my sister in law at that time, told me that she was going to demonstrations because she couldn’t afford the price of the foodstuffs and of the house where she was living, about 1000 euros for a 60 meters apartment but almost in the center of Tel Aviv. She wouldn’t leave Tel Aviv as her boyfriend was working there as a freelance moviemaker and she got a job as junior architect. As many other people, both of them come from a kibbutz in the North where is less lucky to find such jobs. Despite their sensitivity and confidence with me on certain political issues, none of them would have thought to

mention in our long talks, the position of Israeli Arabs in the protests. Nationwide, social justice for all was claimed from the movement, even for Israeli Arabs and Eastern Arabs (*Mizrachi*). The key issue is in fact the position of the Palestinians living in Israel (especially residents of Jaffa) who started to support the movement on September 2011. The Indignados however, the well-known Spanish movement, declared the lack of support to the movement July 14 despite the proximity not only politically but chronologically in the formation of the two movements. Monterescu writes:

These initiatives have been equally ignored or repudiated by most of the protest movements internationally. In this sense, the messages sent by the Spanish indignados in support of the Israeli's protest have quickly given way to a critique of the latter front, refusing to recognize the legitimacy of the end until the protracted injustice in the form of military occupation and apartheid was not taken into consideration (Monterescu, Shaindinger 2013: 163).

Monterescu then argues that the movement July 14 is an example of situational radicalism, or rather a movement less radical and less dramatic in response to that of Tunisia and Egypt where tensions caused numerous deaths. On the 3rd of October 2011, the tents on Rothschild Boulevard were dismantled with no real threat to the stability of the government. As of June 2012 Daphne Leef was arrested in the fury of the protesters.

On July 14th, 2012 Moshe Silman, a fifty-four year old activist who has long lived in extreme poverty, committed suicide by setting himself on fire during one of the demonstrations⁷. At the funeral numerous activists participated, but the movement had died and there was no reaction.

The movement July 14 is considered the biggest public protest in Israel's history (equivalent to "the protest of four hundred", which took place after the massacre of Sabra and Shatila in 1982⁸) and is considered an example of *global street* (Sassen 2011): a social space that problematizes the relationship between lack of power and the claim to rights. Probably this is an example of an awakening of people that for years had been silent with respect to a share that had been much more active in the years following the Oslo treaty and hope in resolving the conflict. Koensler confirm that in his recent book saying that many voices acknowledge a deep crisis or the end of the institutionalized peace movements after the failure of the Oslo Peace Accords became evident. (Koensler 2015)

Beyond the politics of numbers, for the first time in the history of Israel mass mobilization from below is described as "in" the Middle East and "of" the Middle East. From the Arab world, through the Spanish movement, symbolic networks of solidarity have come down to the economic capital's trendy Jewish state, Tel Aviv. Among the slogans there were "Egypt is here", "Rothschild boulevard corner of Tahrir Square", "Walk like an Egyptian". Some Palestinian radical voices have identified in the Arab Spring an historic opportunity for dialogue with the Arab world in identifying local struggles for the liberation of Palestine and for the right to housing a common regional revolt against colonial oppression and capitalist domination. In the "Israeli Spring" (the movement July 14) has then created an opportunity for dialogue with the Palestinian side; an example is the joint statement of September 2011 when the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Israeli Communist Party claimed to support a popular struggle joined by Israelis and Palestinians against the occupation (Matar 2011). Despite the numerous efforts of parties, organizations and associations in expressing solidarity, these initiatives have remained rather at the margins of the Israeli public, ignored, or denied just as supported by the Spanish movement above. The movement July 14 still remained rooted to a radical and ethnic root, Jewish, and political, that of Zionism, shifting the emphasis from universal human rights, of any ethnicity, religion or origin. The ethnographic analysis offered by Monterescu and Shaindinger (2013), one of the few scientific essays that have dealt with this movement, retraces the steps of the failed attempts done by the movement at the national level to involve the Arabs of Jaffa⁹ and the Jewish neighborhoods of southern Tel Aviv, today as already in 2011, a degraded area, in which the rate of immigration, especially coming from Africa is getting higher¹⁰. Comparing the movement of July 14, to that experienced in the Arab world, we can definitely say that in Israel the mobilization was far less dramatic and more reformist, as you can guess by the slogan that we have seen, regarding a symbolic modification of the slogan calling for the fall of the Egyptian regime than a vague appeal to social justice. As I will explain later through the interview with the Professor Zvi Shuldiner, protests in Israel have developed as a form of rebellion against a neoliberal development bringing on social level political and identity issues. In the humid summer of 2011, when the number of protesters had grown to a million, there were about 90 camps across the country and a sense of euphoria and sharing among the protesters camps prevailed. The call with the French Revolution was

spontaneous thanks to a coincidence in time with the movement of July 14. The artist A. Kleiner installed a guillotine scale in the middle of the avenue Rothchild, which was then removed in the following months¹¹. In late summer the camp in this area was dismantled and the movement slowly dissolved. Ultimately, we can say that it has not impacted as a real threat to the stability of the government policy, but it created a spontaneous form of collective mobilization, which is trapped in a charismatic stadium and pre-institutionalized. It was unable to bring concrete changes beyond the affirmation of their existence. Some of the leading exponents of the movement remained the symbol of a momentary uprising, reabsorbed by the tactics of hegemonic demobilization, co-optation, intimidation (Cohen 2012)¹². When I have personally spent my longest period on the field (July 2012-February 2013), the space in front of the train station of Arlozorov, one of the key hubs of the city, was still occupied by the tents of the protesters. In public, on the streets, in the narrow circle of acquaintances, the idea of bewilderment was still circulating against exorbitant prices of food, particularly the “cottage cheese” (in Italian the least known *fiochi di latte*) that in Israel, is one of the most sold and most common cheeses, produced exclusively on an industrial scale. Due to the boycott of 2011, the price had fallen by 12%. Today, it is difficult to rule with respect to what was achieved by the movement, but more and more, it looks like a memory, especially among luxury café’s in Tel Aviv, or the splendid promenade that connects to Jaffa¹³.

5. *Conclusions (or attempts to conclude)*

The speech, talking, requires immediacy and a degree of natural and visceral emotion that interferes with the usual distance required for scientific analysis and writing. Because of the nature of the topic, I find it impossible to carry out my job in a detached and objective way (Scheper-Hughes 1990: 546).

Can we imagine the ruling classes who demand “social justice”, without addressing the most serious internal injustices? What does the term “social justice” mean if so many people who do not enjoy this are left out? We protest against the exorbitant cost of housing – but why call this “social justice”, if the crux of social justice, namely the equality, is not there? Could Israelis face a revolution of social justice, not to mention the rights of people who occupy and control?¹⁴ Koensler and Rossi argue, as in this case, that social changes and emerging prac-

tices are fundamental issues to study. This is possible through the observation of daily practices with the privileged tools of anthropology but profiting from the more general perspectives of the other disciplines. Anthropology approached in fact the social movements only in recent years, mainly due to a distancing of anthropologists from the political sphere in which the movements are involved. They in fact claim that: “For example, in many ethnographic analysis the political sphere is still considered separately from that of the culture” (Koensler-Rossi 2012: 53) But how does an anthropologist arise to this, in the study of the movements? On the one hand occur a mediation/negotiation between actors who promote their version of the facts, on the other hand there is collaboration/confrontation that is inevitable when the anthropologist seeks to observe activists, but mix with them, and becomes one of them, coming across/colliding with other activists and with the hegemony which is contradicted. Koensler and Rossi claim that:

More than any other category of scholars, ethnographers are ‘caught’ from the goals of the movement being researched. This real lack of distance can be approached in different ways. For some ethnographers taking a position in the name of the movement is not problematic and is derived from the ethical and political assumptions. Others seek to develop, with great effort, methodologies to keep the distance. (Koensler-Rossi 2012: 55)

The problem of being part of the movement or keep the distance is a great methodological issue to reflect on. As humans, we experience the field as our ordinary life and we cannot hide from embracing political opinion as we are political beings. Everything we do it has a political meaning, for example buy a house in a settlement or work in high tech company or go to demonstrations against the wall. I personally decided to observe both of the movement, one in a deeper way, maybe because I felt myself more involved in this way of struggle and resistance. Marshall Sahlins (1993: 17) has called resistance “the new functionalism”, dedicated to «translating the apparently trivial into the fatefully political». Michael Brown (1996), in a devastating article entitled *On Resisting Resistance*, argues that the study of resistance has become virtually obsolete. I disagree with that and I will briefly explain why. There are so many issues that a young researcher could dedicate his/her studies but having no future in the academia, as is it the reality for many of us, the only satisfaction one could reach, is actually to be part of the resistance, to be part of the struggle and to use energies and passion

trying to give the voice to somebody that has no voice. This can be done by observing and taking notes but also with practical actions. Every day we spend in our life is a day of resistance and if we stop to resist a collapsing system, there won't be justice, never. So this is why probably I felt myself at that time in the condition to participate to the nonviolent movement against the wall but not to do that directly in the tent movement.

So finally, we come to the conclusion that brought me to have an interview with Zvi Shuldiner. He's professor of politics and public administration at the Sapir Academic College (Ashkelon, Israel) and he reveals how these events were related to the capitalist ideal studied by Groeber. This is clear in the interview with him that I conducted in 2012, when surrounded by pessimism we reflected on our lives and on how much our lives and our habits influence the political and social power to which we object. He brings to the interview, in fact, a strong critic to the movement suggesting that we should deal with solidarity and future without reducing the demands of the present goals of the movement, concerning with public housing instead of being concerned with the price of the houses, since we should consider the right to housing a right for all (Leoncini 2012: 30). Here you come to the end of our reflection, I try to raise through the words of Prof. Shuldiner the question that brings us back to the premise of this paper and its objective.

Sabina Leoncini: I do not see a connection, it would be desirable, between this movement and the peace movement.

Zvi Shuldiner: As I said this movement does not denounce what is the heart of the problem, the foundations of the system. We speak of a country where 40% of the economy goes for weapons. It is hard to imagine what directions the protests will take. In Hebrew it is customary to say that the prophecy is in the hands of a fool. We are experiencing one of the worst moments of our history. [...] But most of these people do not want to be interviewed on the issue of the Palestinians: they are afraid of losing their popularity, to be identified with the left wing, those who sympathize with and support the Arabs [...] Evidently the tactics of the movement is to not politicized, to remain a-political. They repeated that they are not a political movement, that they are not left, but how can you not be political, not playing politics when doing a protest? (Leoncini 2012: 31)

Movements are not made only from the territories over which they move, but also by the multitudes, as Mondher Kilani said in his speech at the

last AISEA conference (Rome, September 2014). In this case, the July 14 movement and the multitude of people who took part of it, are not dead but still live in the demonstrations against the wall on Friday morning. This analysis is only possible if we use the tools of anthropology including the empathy, explained in his contributes from Piasere (2002) while in the attention to not be seduced by the stories of the conflicts which we witnessed (Dei 2005). This danger is not risked for sure from journalists and policymakers that don't live on the field for long periods, so that they are not so involved in the local life. Observing the everyday, thinking holistically might have changed the fortunes of this paradoxical situation in which both peoples however suffer although in different sizes and shapes injustices (occupation for Palestinians, terrorism for the Israelis).

Notes

¹ See <http://www.jonasopperskalski.com/the-12-million>.

² See <https://anthroboycott.wordpress.com/2015/05/15/palestinian-anthropologists-speak-2-randa-farah/>

³ See the letter from the IAA to the AAA <https://sites.google.com/site/anthropologistsletter/>

⁴ Cfr. <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=93657> e <http://972mag.com/idf-closes-investigation-into-bilin-killing-without-indictment/78725/>

⁵ On this subject will be held in Munich in July 2015 a conference entitled "Im-mobilities and boundaries: an ethnographical approach" organized by Leoncini, Hackl, Gutekunst, Schwartz, Goetz and will follow a book with the same title, forthcoming in 2016.

⁶ See Dei, Di Pasquale 2014.

⁷ See <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/hundreds-attend-social-activist-moshe-silman-s-funeral-1.452833>

⁸ The massacre took place in the homonymous refugee camp is narrated in the film *Waltz with Bashir* by Ari Folman directed, written and released in 2008.

⁹ See <http://www.tarabut.info/en/articles/article/summer-of-protest-2011/>

¹⁰ See Numerous articles on the subject, including <http://tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/158935/migrants-in-south-tel-aviv>.

¹¹ See <http://www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2011/10/27/roy-arad/the-rothschild-guillotine/comment-page-1/>

¹² See Cohen 2012.

¹³ See <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/05/lapid-is-a-naive-capitalist.html#>

¹⁴ See <http://972mag.com/the-protest-movement-neither-social-justice-nor-revolution/19918/>

¹⁵ Out of this of 2012 all the other interviews were realized by Leoncini S. in 2007 with informants (24-26/06/2007).

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1. Al Walaja (2007): A demonstration before the construction of the wall
(© Sabina Leoncini)



2. Al Walaja (2007): A demonstration before the construction of the wall
(© Sabina Leoncini)



3. Al Walaja (2014): The wall and the settlement inside (*Har Gilo*) (© Sabina Leoncini)



4. Al Walaja (2014): The wall and the settlement inside (*Har Gilo*) (© Sabina Leoncini)



5. Arthas (2007): Soldiers during a demonstration (© Sabina Leoncini)



6. Umm Salumona (2007): Expropriated fields where people make demonstrations (© Sabina Leoncini)



7. Umm Salumona (2007): A moment of prayer during a demonstration
(© Sabina Leoncini)



8. Bil'in: Explanatory Map (available at:
<https://insidethemiddle.wordpress.com/2012/12/24/home-movies-as-newsreel-the-story-of-palestinian-non-violent-resistance/map>)



9. Bill'in (2011): Bulldozers dismantling the wall after the decision of the Supreme Court of Justice (© Activestills)



10. July 14, 2011: Campsite of protesters at the station Arlozorov (© Activestills)



11. July 14, 2011: Demonstration near the Azrieli shopping center
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12. July 14, 2011: Demonstration near Rothschild Avenue (© Activestills)



13. July 14, 2011: Demonstrations in Rabin Square at Tel Aviv (© Activestills)