

ESSAY

# “The Shape of the Wrath to Come”: James Baldwin’s Radicalism and the Evolution of His Thought on Israel

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## Abstract

This article traces the evolution of James Baldwin’s discourse on the Arab–Israeli conflict as connected to his own evolution as a Black thinker, activist, and author. It creates a nuanced trajectory of the transformation of Baldwin’s thought on the Arab–Israeli conflict and Black and Jewish relations in the U.S. This trajectory is created through the lens of Baldwin’s relationship with some of the major radical Black movements and organizations of the twentieth century: Malcolm X, Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam, and, finally, the Black Power movement, especially the Black Panther Party. Using Baldwin as an example, the article displays the Arab–Israeli conflict as a terrain Black radicals used to articulate their visions of the nature of Black oppression in the U.S., strategies of resistance, the meaning of Black liberation, and articulations of Black identity. It argues that the study of Baldwin’s transformation from a supporter of the Zionist project of nation-building to an advocate of Palestinian rights and national aspirations reveals much about the ideological transformations of the larger Black liberation movement.

**Keywords:** James Baldwin, Palestine, Israel, Black radicalism, Malcolm X, Elijah Muhammad, Nation of Islam, Black Power

I think black people have always felt this about America, and Americans, and have always seen, spinning above the thoughtless American head, the shape of the wrath to come.

James Baldwin, *No Name in the Street*<sup>1</sup>

As the state of Israel was established in 1948, James Baldwin felt the urge to flee America. Although he ended up in Paris, in *No Name In the Street* (1972) he reveals that this was actually an accident; he had “seriously considered” going to

Israel and working on a kibbutz.<sup>2</sup> Considering Israel as his possible destination for this self-imposed exile suggests that, like many other Black intellectuals—such as Paul Robeson, W. E. B. Du Bois, Bayard Rustin, and Stokely Carmichael (later Kwame Ture)—Baldwin viewed the newly established Jewish republic quite favorably. The history of connections between Black and Jewish intellectuals is defined by leftist organizations and ideologies like the Communist Party and various Marxist and socialist organizations. Baldwin was sympathetic to many of them. He was also close with the Jewish intelligentsia of New York City, specifically Saul Levitas of *The New Leader*, Randall Jarrell of *The Nation*, and Cohen and Robert Warshaw of *Commentary*. He was introduced to these editors and intellectuals by Eugene Worth in December of 1943.<sup>3</sup> These connections proved crucial for the young Baldwin's nascent career as a writer and a New York intellectual.

It is not surprising that like the Black intellectuals mentioned above, Baldwin viewed Israel in a positive light. At this point in 1948 the writer saw Israel as a sanctuary, and his view was somewhat idealistic. However, by the early 1970s, at the peak of the Black Power movement, he would come to view the state as a neo-colonial project put in place to support Western, specifically American, imperial interests in the Middle East, and would subject Israel to caustic criticism.

This article traces the nuanced trajectory of the evolution of Baldwin's thought on the Palestinian conflict in order to trace the contours of this transformation and the forces behind it. I highlight the connections between his changing discourse on the conflict and his development as a writer, intellectual, and activist as a whole. I will show how Baldwin's positioning of the American Jewish diaspora within the system of U.S. racial stratification affected the way he thought and wrote about the conflict. Lastly, I foreground Baldwin's relationship and proximity to Black Power figures and ideologies as forces that brought about the transformation of his views on Palestine and Israel as well as the significance of Palestinian liberation for a global Black struggle for freedom.

The dynamics of Black and Jewish relationships are directly related, if not defined, by the nature of Black discourse on Palestine and the political climate in the region. When the state of Israel was created in 1948, the event was celebrated by Black intellectuals as the victory of an oppressed people after an arduous struggle for sovereignty and self-determination. In the context of the devastating aftermath of the Holocaust and this victory, Baldwin wrote about a powerful sense of identification with the American Jewish diaspora: "At this point, the Negro identifies himself almost wholly with the Jew. The more devout Negro considers that he *is* a Jew, in bondage to a hard taskmaster and waiting for a Moses to lead him out of Egypt."<sup>4</sup> Even though he does not directly mention the Holocaust, he speaks of a prolonged and intimate connection based on a shared history of oppression. At this point, Baldwin framed Israel as founded by oppressed, displaced people, who had reclaimed their ancient home. Black Zionism, its history and implications are beyond the scope of this article. However, 1948 can be justly viewed as a peak of the ideology that was created by Black nationalists like Martin Delany and Edward Blyden in the nineteenth century and later reinforced by Marcus Garvey and many other Black nationalists and intellectuals alike.<sup>5</sup>

Baldwin had a long and complex relationship with the Jewish community throughout his life. He went to school with a large Jewish student population and had a lot of close connections and friendships in the Jewish intellectual circles of New York City and the Jewish left. These connections, and, of course, his prominence and recognition as a writer, intellectual, and public figure, prompted the Israeli government to issue him an official invitation in 1961. In "Letters from a Journey," Baldwin wrote about his experience in Israel, his understanding of its nature as related to its past and present, racism, and liberation. He arrived in Israel in October and his first impressions were defined by the pleasant nature of Israeli hospitality. His tone is sunny, full of optimism and excitement: "The visit seems, so far, to have been a great success: Israel and I seem to like each other."<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, even in the first entry about his visit, he is hyper-aware of the significance of this trip. He also cannot avoid questioning the realities of the newly established Jewish republic:

This is not going to be easy; and yet, since this trip is clearly my prologue to Africa, it has become very important to me to assess what Israel makes me feel. In a curious way, since it does function as a homeland, however beleaguered, you can't walk five minutes without finding yourself at a border, can't talk to anyone for five minutes without being reminded first of the mandate (British) then the war—and of course the entire Arab situation, outside this country, and, above all, within.<sup>7</sup>

Baldwin's trip to Africa was going to be a tremendously important landmark. At that point, he felt ambivalent about the Negritude movement and the meaning and implications of Africa for Black Americans, but he was also aware of the magnitude of his trip there and its potential for him as an intellectual, a Black American, and a human being. Israel as a gateway to Africa placed additional pressure on his visit, which is discussed further in his writing.

The view of Israel Baldwin expresses is not one-dimensional from the start. On the one hand, he recognizes the Zionist ideal of the state as a Jewish homeland. On the other hand, he is acutely aware of the borders and spatial stratifications of the state. He struggles to negotiate the colonial past and Western domination over the land by the British Empire with the new sense of freedom created by Israeli national mythology. Above all, he cannot ignore the instances of the mistreatment of Palestinians and Arab Israelis.

Despite this uneasy awareness of these difficulties, Baldwin is hesitant to express direct criticism. He appears to strive to understand both sides of the conflict and, at this stage, approaches the matter carefully:

I cannot blame them for feeling dispossessed; and in a literal way, they have been. Furthermore, the Jews, who are surrounded by forty million hostile Muslims, are forced to control the very movements of Arabs within the state of Israel. One cannot blame the Jews for this necessity; one cannot blame the Arabs for resenting it. *I* would—indeed, in my own situation in America, I do, and it has cost me—costs me—a great and continuing effort not to hate the people who are responsible for the societal effort to limit and diminish me.<sup>8</sup>

Here, Baldwin resonates with Zionist rhetoric again, describing Israel as vulnerable, "surrounded" by "hostile Muslims." He justifies surveillance practices and control over "Arabs"; "Palestinians" as a people were erased by the Zionist discourse and would not become a part of Baldwin's vocabulary until the 1970s. Nevertheless, he begins a very important line of thought here: drawing parallels between Palestinian and Black experience, comparing his experience as a Black man in America to the oppression of Palestinians. During the Black Power era this vision would culminate in a profound and deep sense of identification with Palestinians.

Baldwin recognizes another crucial flaw of the state of Israel, in a way more significant than its treatment of "Arabs," as he points out the unequal social stratifications among the Jewish population itself:

In spite of the fact that the nation of Israel cannot afford, and is far too intelligent, to encourage any form of social discrimination, the fact remains that there is a tremendous gap between a Jew from Russia or France or England or Australia and a Jew but lately arrived from the desert.<sup>9</sup>

What Baldwin is alluding to here is the racial stratification in Israel that privileges Jews of Western origin over Jews who immigrated to Israel from Africa and other Middle Eastern countries. This social stratification was not dissimilar to the one in the U.S., which Baldwin immediately recognized and which triggered his original suspicion.

This criticism addresses a complicated and vulnerable aspect of Israel and its national mythology: unequal racial stratification among the Jewish population of the country. It collapses the Zionist ideal of homeland, dignity, and self-determination for the Jews that Baldwin sought to affirm earlier. In a way, he echoes the ideals of equality and self-determination as propagated by Zionist ideology, calling Israel "intelligent," a wisdom stemming from centuries of oppression and antisemitism. Nevertheless, he is not afraid to point out that Arab, African Jews "arrived from the desert"—Jews who possibly looked like him—did not find self-determination, equality, or a true homeland in the fulfilled Zionist dream.

As Baldwin's reflection progresses, his ambivalence toward Israel grows. While expressing admiration of Jews and their accomplishment embodied in the founding of Israel, he writes of another significant point of contention in the country, the imperial implications of its history: "One cannot but respect the energy and the courage of this handful of people; but one can't but suspect that a vast amount of political cynicism, on the part of the English and the Americans, went into the creation of this state."<sup>10</sup> He points to the role of Western neocolonial powers embodied by the U.S. and U.K., which were defining forces that guaranteed and fulfilled the Zionist dream, from the Balfour Declaration during the British mandate, which promised the creation of the Jewish homeland, to the unconditional political and economic support of Israel on behalf of the U.S. The "political cynicism" of these powers is Baldwin's reminder that they had a very specific political calculus and self-interest in supporting Israel before and after its creation, factors

that did not align with Zionist ideas of Jewish empowerment. Baldwin would continue to speak about the impact of Western imperialism on Israel in his writing into the 1970s.

Baldwin's "Letters from a Journey" reflects a multifaceted struggle and a crisis in which he finds himself. He attempts to mollify his disenchantment but reinforces the main reason why it is impossible for him to maintain a positive attitude toward Israel, specifically its oppression of Palestinians: "Or perhaps I would not feel this way if I were not helplessly and painfully—most, painfully—ambivalent concerning the status of the Arabs here."<sup>11</sup> This is the coda of his visit.

The effect of his visit was devastating for Baldwin. His earlier idealistic approach to Israel was shattered by the country's realities and the parallels between the Black and Palestinian experiences he witnessed and described in his writing. Years before Black Power figures articulated their platform of support of Palestinians, rooted in the powerful resonance between the nature of their oppressions, Baldwin based his changing views on his firsthand experience.

The magnitude of the effect of his visit is hard to overestimate, as he poses complex and extremely difficult questions for himself and the world: "What is a Jew?" is also, for me, to ask myself "What is a Black man?" and what, in the name of heaven, is an American Negro? I have a gloomy feeling that I won't find any answers in Africa, only more questions."<sup>12</sup> Baldwin echoes a parallel between Jewish and Black experience, here expressed in the essay, "The Harlem Ghetto." His ambivalence about the definitions of the Jewish and Black diaspora and their experiences after his visit to Israel points to a serious identity crisis.

In *James Baldwin's Turkish Decade* Magdalena Zaborowska quotes Baldwin's letter to his editor that speaks to his experience of Israel after the fact in more explicit terms: "When I was in Israel it was as though I was in the middle of *The Fire Next Time*. I didn't dare to go from Israel to Africa, so I went to Turkey, just across the road."<sup>13</sup> The choice to use *The Fire Next Time* (1963) as a metaphor to describe his experience is telling. At that point in his career, the essay exemplified a series of painful epiphanies about racial relationships in the U.S., the importance of Black Islam, and some of the most complicated and urgent questions he had to ask himself and his readers. As mentioned above, Zionism was an important model for Black nationalists.<sup>14</sup> And while Baldwin was in no way a follower of this ideology, the influence of Afro-Zionism on how Black people viewed Israel was profound. His disenchantment with Israel hinted at how devastating a disenchantment in Africa might be. "Letters from a Journey" contains some of the most important questions about identity, diaspora, race, state violence, and homeland. All of these questions are informed, if not defined, by Baldwin's painful awareness of the Palestinian condition.

In *A Rap on Race* (1971) and later in *No Name in the Street* (1972)—both published during the peak of the Black Power movement and Baldwin's growing connections with its leaders—Baldwin displayed caustic criticism of Israel, using language much stronger than in "Letters from a Journey." It is important to acknowledge that several global movements impacted the shift in Baldwin's

attitude: anticolonial movements on the African continent, the Third World movement (that made Palestinian liberation a significant aspect of global liberation), and, more locally, the anti-imperialist implications of the anti-Vietnam War movement the author participated in actively. However, as this article argues, Black Power and its predecessors and influencers like Nation of Islam and Malcolm X impacted his rhetoric on Israel.

Baldwin's firsthand experience of the Nation of Islam and its leader Elijah Muhammad, as well as his debate with Malcolm X, were noteworthy landmarks in the development of his political thought. Black Power, the major ideological force that impacted Baldwin's view on Palestine and Israel, borrowed many ideological and structural characteristics from the Nation of Islam and was essentially inspired by the teachings of Malcolm X. Most significantly, Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam were some of the first voices to support Palestinians in a systematic and vocal fashion, as evident in the N.O.I. newsletter, "Muhammad Speaks."<sup>15</sup>

Baldwin received a unique insight into the inner workings of the Nation of Islam and the organization's leader, Elijah Muhammad, due to a somewhat unexpected dinner invitation. He provided a detailed account of this meeting in *The Fire Next Time*. The tone of the essay is somewhat cautious. Baldwin appears to be humbled by the presence of the leaders of one of the biggest and oldest twentieth-century Black organizations. Even though Baldwin had denounced the ideologies of Black religion since he had left the Pentecostal Church, he was cognizant of the political and ideological significance of Black Islamic faith:

God had come a long way from the desert—but then so had Allah, though in a very different direction. God, going North, and rising on the wings of power, had become white, and Allah, out of power, and on the dark side of heaven, had become—for all practical purposes anyway—Black.<sup>16</sup>

Baldwin is creating a powerful dichotomy here, conflating racial and religious identities. He recognizes that the Western, or white, imaginary and portrayal of God has been used to subjugate Blacks and to differentiate between Black and white Americans. This is a significant departure from the discourse of "The Harlem Ghetto," which is saturated in Judeo-Christian mythology, and toward an alignment between Jewish and Black experience and history. Baldwin's cognizance of the significance of Black Islam as a source of alternative racial identity and empowerment also creates a hierarchy of oppression predicated on religion. In this hierarchy, Judeo-Christian mythology is aligned with whiteness, and Blackness with Islam. Baldwin would continue this line of thought, aligning Judeo-Christian traditions with whiteness, later in his writing. This discourse is important because, as discussed earlier in this article, how Baldwin saw the Jewish diaspora in the U.S. within the system of white supremacy was directly related to how he envisioned the conflict between Palestinians and Israel.

It is also notable that Baldwin introduces Israel into the discussion of his meeting with the N.O.I. leader: "When Malcolm X ... points out that the cry for 'violence'

was not raised, for example, when the Israelis fought to regain Israel, and indeed, is raised only when Black men indicate that they will fight for their rights, he is speaking the truth.”<sup>17</sup> Baldwin subscribes to the Zionist idea that the land that came to be known as Israel in 1948 was “regained” and not stolen. However, he points out the hypocrisy of America celebrating Jewish insurgency while condemning the militant approaches of Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam. This is the continuation of the rhetoric begun with his musings on Black Islam. Instead of presenting Jews as victims of a prolonged history of oppression in resonance with Black experience, Israeli Jews are presented as protégés of the U.S., its racism, and its imperialism. This is the first mention of Israel in Baldwin’s writing since his trip there, and it is obvious that his criticism of the state is burgeoning and becoming sharper in the context of his recognition of the importance of the Nation of Islam on ideological and practical levels. He praises the organization for its efforts in the rehabilitation of Black community members, emphasizing that their success is unprecedented.<sup>18</sup>

*The Fire Next Time* was published the same year Baldwin debated Malcolm X. And even though at that point it is clear that their visions of the Black freedom struggle were contradictory, nine years later in *No Name in the Street* Baldwin would call Malcolm X a “genuine revolutionary.”<sup>19</sup> Some of Baldwin’s most critical statements on Israel appear in the same book. The mechanisms of this correlation can be traced through Baldwin’s further engagement with Black radicalism, and, specifically, the Black Power movement.

As “Black Power,” the slogan, politics, and ideology, were taking over the Black political stage, in 1966 Baldwin penned “A Report from the Occupied Territory.”<sup>20</sup> He had a complicated relationship with Black nationalist ideology, which was a significant Black Power tenet. Nevertheless, it didn’t stop him from using Black nationalist language in his article, framing Harlem as a Black, “occupied” land. Moreover, the concepts, patterns, and ideas he describes in the article are in strong resonance with Palestinian history and experience. Even more significantly, they echo his own experiences of the treatment of Palestinians living in Israel he had witnessed during his visit:

The police are afraid of everything in Harlem and they are especially afraid of the roofs, which they consider to be guerrilla outposts. This means that the citizens of Harlem who, as we have seen, can come to grief at any hour on the streets, and who are not safe at their windows, are forbidden the very air. They are safe only in their houses—or were, until the city passed the No Knock, Stop and Frisk laws, which permit a policeman to enter one’s home without knocking and to stop anyone on the streets, at will, at any hour, and search him.<sup>21</sup>

From referring to the roofs as “guerrilla outposts” and residents of Harlem as “citizens,” to the title describing the neighborhood as an “occupied territory,” the parallels with Palestine are significant. For one, Baldwin uses a Black nationalist trope, the idea that Harlem is a country within the United States “occupied” by the hostile police. The image of the Palestinian guerrilla fighters had captured the imagination of radicals all over the world when Baldwin was writing the essay.

Timothy Seidel discusses the significance of Baldwin's piece in "Occupied Territory is Occupied Territory":

Though written almost 50 years ago, Baldwin's observations continue to resonate with the experiences of marginalized and dispossessed communities today, indicating historical trends across geographical experiences ... Whether it is the construction of walls, militarization of borders, the confiscation of land, or the brutalization and incarceration of bodies, activists and academics are identifying commonalities across experiences that transcend national boundaries and identities. The situation in Palestine has played an increasingly significant role in mobilizing transnational solidarities that cross such boundaries.<sup>22</sup>

Rhetorically, Baldwin made Harlem a powerful microcosm of oppression. Seidel believes that Baldwin created a compelling discourse and framework for transnational solidarity: "Baldwin's claim that 'occupied territory is occupied territory' has not diminished in terms of the contentious politics and transnational solidarities that continue to carry that claim."<sup>23</sup> Seidel's article credits Baldwin not only with his contributions to the discourse of racism, but to a transnational tradition of solidarity. And while in the context of African-American politics, Du Bois and especially Black Power figures are traditionally associated with this achievement, Seidel's article foregrounds Baldwin's work in this sphere. A work that preceded and anticipated Black Power's articulations of Third World solidarity and its implications for Black liberation, "Report from the Occupied Territory" was published the same year the Black Panther Party was founded by Bobby Seale and Huey Newton in Oakland. Black Power began to gain real momentum, transforming Baldwin's discourse on American politics, as well as the way that he wrote and understood the position of the Jewish diaspora within the racial hierarchy in the U.S.

The year 1967 marked a dramatic transformation in Black discourse on the Arab-Israeli conflict. The major landmark in this transformation can be traced to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's (S.N.C.C.) publication of a pro-Palestinian article in its newsletter in the aftermath of the 1967 war, which established the unequivocal military dominance of the Jewish republic. Many historians, including Clayborne Carson, saw this moment as a point when a majority of Jews who supported the civil rights struggle left the movement and thus propelled the growing popularity of Black Power and its separatist agenda.<sup>24</sup>

Years later Stokely Carmichael, chairman of the S.N.C.C. at the time of the 1967 publication, mused about the incident. He believed that the backlash against the organization's publication in particular, and his own support of the Palestinian cause in general, created a lot of hostility toward him. He recalled his strong ties to the Jewish community and culture and refused the accusations of antisemitism. Instead he created a complex narrative of how he became familiar with and invested in the Palestinian cause. He cited the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X, and, above all, Ethel Minor as the main causes of his interest in Arab-Israeli conflict. Minor was the one who encouraged the publication of the newsletter. However,

this was not an isolated instance of the S.N.C.C.'s interest in Palestine and Israel. Carmichael claimed that by the time he had become chairman, the S.N.C.C. caucus would read "a book a month" on Palestine as well as Zionism.<sup>25</sup> Carmichael concludes his narrative about the history of his own support for the Palestinian cause with a passionate statement: "So I can tell the world: I am not now, have never been, nor can ever be anti-Semitic or anti-Judaic. However, I am, and will be unto death, anti-Zionist."<sup>26</sup> Carmichael was instrumental in introducing and popularizing Palestinian liberation as an integral part of Black struggle waged by Black Power. Baldwin's relationship with the S.N.C.C. and later the Black Panther Party, as well as the pro-Palestinian newsletter, must be cited as contributing forces that changed his discourse on Palestine.

The year 1967 also marked Baldwin's publication of "Negroes Are Anti-Semitic Because They're Anti-White" in the *New York Times* magazine. In the essay, Baldwin explored the relationship between race and gentrification and how it affected Jewish racial positionality within the U.S. racial order. Keith Feldman connects this phenomenon directly to the Middle Eastern political climate:

[The essay] maps the relationship between racism and ghettoization at a time of heightened tension in Israel-Palestine. If in 1948 Baldwin saw Jews living in the midst of Harlem ghetto, by 1967, Baldwin suggests that anti-Semitism emerged because not only had American Jews become assimilated into a national ideology of exclusion, predicated on race ... they had embraced a spatially stratified whiteness.<sup>27</sup>

Feldman argues that Baldwin saw Jewish withdrawal from the houses and streets of Harlem as a point of integration into a mainstream American national narrative, and, essentially, whiteness. He also echoes Carson's stance on the effect that the S.N.C.C.'s pro-Palestinian newsletter had on Black and Jewish relationships during the civil rights movement. It would be inaccurate to claim that the Jewish community embraced Israel wholeheartedly and did not display any of the concerns voiced by the newsletter. Nevertheless, an astounding majority of Jewish S.N.C.C. members perceived the newsletter as hostile and the organization lost almost all of its Jewish membership in the aftermath of the incident.

Once again, a strong resonance between Black and Jewish relationships and Black politics on Palestine resurfaced and was reflected in Baldwin's writing. It would be an overstatement to claim that the S.N.C.C. newsletter was the only catalyst for the cleavage in Black and Jewish relationships. The overall shift to embrace the Third World ideology by several groups and outlets at this time implied a critical stance toward Israel.

The Black Power movement was defined by opposition to the policies, ideas, and ideals of the civil rights movement and its leaders. It was one of the major reasons why the relationship between Black Power and James Baldwin was tumultuous at its early stages. But Baldwin was antagonized by the movement not only because he was perceived as a poster child of the civil rights movement and white liberalism. The hostility was also fueled by the blatant homophobia of the Black

Power leaders. Douglas Field discusses the nature of Baldwin's relationship with the movement, and its leaders, their contours, and their transformations in "Looking for Jimmy Baldwin: Sex, Privacy, and Black Nationalist Fervor." He points out that once Baldwin joined the civil rights struggle, he became a member of both the Congress of Racial Equality and the S.N.C.C., which were major direct-action organizations of the movement.<sup>28</sup> The latter organization is important for this discussion because of the S.N.C.C.'s (in)famous 1967 newsletter, mentioned above.

According to Field, Baldwin constantly came under harsh criticism from Black Power figures like Eldridge Cleaver and was accused of political ineffectiveness. This criticism not only came from a place of disapproval for the civil rights movement and its tactics, but was, above all, a result of homophobia. In Cleaver's eyes, Baldwin's homosexuality prevented him from being a powerful speaker or defender of Black freedom. The movement appeared to launch a campaign against the writer and even published a hateful homophobic cartoon meant to undermine his sexual prowess and thus his authority as a leader.<sup>29</sup>

Despite these acts of hostility on behalf of the Black Panthers and Cleaver, Baldwin grew interested in the revolutionary youth of the movement, and specifically Stokely Carmichael. He expressed admiration for the S.N.C.C. chairman and began to challenge the myth that Black Power preached hatred and violence. According to Baldwin, Carmichael's ideology originally held no hate and only developed a more blatant, militant tone out of necessity. Along with other Black Panther icons such as Bobby Seale, Huey Newton, and Eldridge Cleaver, each of whom Baldwin would later come into close relationships with, Carmichael was responsible for integrating Palestinian solidarity deeper within the fabric of the ideology of his organization and Black Power discourse as a whole.

As the popularity of the Black Panther Party burgeoned, Baldwin became more and more curious about them and their potential for improving the lives and freeing the minds of Black people. He befriended one of the founders of the Black Panthers, Bobby Seale, and later hosted a fundraiser for Huey Newton to raise money for his legal fees while he was in jail. He spoke of Newton with extreme admiration and reverence, praising his "bright dignity," and describing his imprisonment as a microcosm of Black oppression. Baldwin went on to praise the Black Panther Party for its ability to define and address the needs of the Black community directly, citing the multitude of Black Panther community programs.<sup>30</sup> His argument had a powerful resonance with the point he made in writing about the Nation of Islam, praising it for effective social programs and direct positive impact on the everyday lives of Black people.

It is curious that besides these efforts, Baldwin was in direct ideological alignment with Newton on the basis of socialism: "Huey believes, and I do, too, in the necessity of establishing a form of socialism in this country—what Bobby Seale would probably call a 'Yankee Doodle type' socialism. This means an indigenous socialism, formed by, and responding to, the real needs of the American people."<sup>31</sup> Baldwin had flirted with leftist ideas and organizations since before his rise to literary stardom. Douglas Field has provided a comprehensive history of the writer's

connections to them, from his membership of the Young People's Socialist League, to his self-identification as a Trotskyite, to his relationships with the leftist editors, activists, and intellectuals in New York.<sup>32</sup> It was thus natural that various strains of Marxist and socialist ideologies shared by him and Black Panthers became a common ground on which to identify with Newton and his ideals and political goals.

Newton was also instrumental in embedding the Palestinian cause in the fabric of Black Power's vision of liberation. In 1974 he traveled to Beirut and met with Yassir Arafat, the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and visited Palestinian refugee camps. In the aftermath of his travels, he wrote "Position Paper on the Middle East," with a complex analysis of the conflict in the context of Arab politics and supporting Palestinian human rights.<sup>33</sup> Along with Carmichael and Amiri Baraka, Newton became important for Baldwin as a new generation and new age of Black liberation. Following Newton's career and embracing him in the way Baldwin did would have been impossible without at least considering his politics and the significance of Palestine.

In *No Name in the Street*, Baldwin not only celebrated Black radicals like Newton, Carmichael, and Malcolm X, but he also rethought several other stances on Black politics. Originally overtly critical of armed violence as a means of resistance, Baldwin came to understand its place. Field highlights Baldwin's admission to having to rely on his armed friends and associates for protection, for example.<sup>34</sup> Baldwin writes about the place of violence in Black psychology in *No Name in the Street* in a way that substantially contradicts his earlier philosophy: "It is not necessary for a Black man to hate a white man, or to have any particular feelings about him at all, in order to realize that he must kill him."<sup>35</sup> This view cannot be divorced from his immersion in the ideology of Black Power generally, and his close relationship with the Black Panthers specifically. The contrast between his view of violence during his civil rights era and after Black Power took center stage in Black politics is indeed striking. Scholarship commonly discusses Baldwin's literary and intellectual accomplishments, as well as his direct involvement in the Black struggle, in the context of the civil rights movement. The ideas expressed in *No Name in the Street* suggest instead an understanding of the importance of a militant approach, Third World politics, socialism, pan-Africanism, and the profound positive ideological, political, and practical effect of the Black Panther Party. These all define Baldwin as a powerful voice of Black liberation, a voice that has not been given enough attention until recently.

Aside from Baldwin's relationships with Black Panther leaders like Newton, Seale, Cleaver, and Carmichael, Baldwin became close to Amiri Baraka. Baraka founded the first Black Arts organization, the Black Arts Repertory Theater and School, in 1965, and, like many Black Arts figures, he was also a Black Power leader and founded the Congress of Afrikan People. In the introduction to a collection of documents and speeches from the conference organized by the Congress of Afrikan People, Baraka wrote: "There will be Congresses until we meet in Congress as one people, whether in Harlem or Johannesburg, whether resisting the oppression of Israelis or Quakers, one people, one flag, one leadership, one

identity, purpose and direction."<sup>36</sup> Baraka remained a vocal supporter of the Palestinians throughout his life, dedicating both writing and activism toward the cause. Along with the Black Panther Party, Baraka created and solidified the Black and Palestinian solidarity movement during the Black Power era. This movement created and propagated an ideology that drew parallels and highlighted connections between South African apartheid and Israel, articulating Black and Palestinian oppression through a colonial framework, an ideology that would find its way into the mind and writing of James Baldwin.

Scholarship exploring Black Power's relationship with the Jewish diaspora in the U.S. and the history and forces behind the movement's embrace of the Palestinian cause is relatively new. Eric Sundquist outlines the history of shifting attitudes toward Zionism and Israel in *Strangers in the Land* (2005). He explores the forces that contributed to the alignment between Black Power and the tactics and cause of the Palestine Liberation Organization and connects the changing landscapes of Black/Jewish relationships and rhetoric of liberation to the conflict. He reveals how powerful the influence of Jewish experience and history had been for how Black people envisioned their own oppression, drawing notable parallels between the Holocaust and Black experience, and how dramatically this discourse changed after the 1967 war:

Alignment with Arab anti-Zionism or the ideology and tactics of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) by definition committed Black Power to a rejectionist stance toward Israel in which resentment of Jews abroad became entangled with resentment of Jews at home and in which the lessons of Holocaust were put to very different use.<sup>37</sup>

Sundquist's argument resonates with the one articulated by Keith Feldman, who explores the impact of Middle Eastern politics on Black-Jewish relationships, especially after the Six Day War. Feldman's *A Shadow Over Palestine* (2015) explores the significance of the ethno-racial relationships between Blacks and Jews in the U.S. in the context of Black politics on Palestine and Israel. Alex Lubin's map of Black and Palestinian solidarity is larger than that of the aforementioned authors, and spans the entire Middle East, as reflected in *Geographies of Liberation* (2014). Nevertheless, he highlights Palestine as an especially significant location for Black liberation: "Palestine was a generative site for Black American diasporic political imaginaries that confronted the dehumanizing politics of race within Europe and United States."<sup>38</sup> These authors, however, pay very little attention to Baldwin and his role in the shaping of Black discourse on Palestine.

*A Rap on Race* was published at the peak of the Black Power era. It demonstrates Baldwin's changing stance on the issues of race, racism, and liberation in a way that strongly resonates with those articulated and solidified by Black Power. The book documents the writer's conversations with anthropologist Margaret Mead, covering a variety of subjects, tied together by the thread of race and racial relationships in America. Aside from the book, a recording of Baldwin and Mead's

conversation was released the same year. As Feldman points out in the introduction to *A Shadow Over Palestine*, the section on Palestine and Israel was completely removed from the recording. I do not intend to explain this erasure; rather, I seek to highlight Baldwin's remarks on Palestine and Israel and place them within the larger context of his political discourse.

Baldwin makes one of his most uncompromising statements on Israel in his dialogue with Mead: "However bitter this may sound, no matter how bitter I may sound, that I have been, in America, the Arab at the hands of the Jews."<sup>39</sup> This statement transcends his earlier sentiments that read like sympathy toward "Arab" oppression. Instead, the writer articulates his experience as a Black man in America *through* the Palestinian experience in Israel. This belief is in direct contradiction with the sentiment and view expressed in 1948 in "The Harlem Ghetto", which drew identical alliance with the Jews in America. Even though the discussion of Palestine and Israel is brief, Mead's reaction—emotionally condemning Baldwin's statement—and the fact that this piece was eliminated from the recording speak volumes about the impact it made.

Along with his views on Black Power, Malcolm X, the implications of capitalism for justice and liberation, and the Third World movement, *No Name in the Street* also marked Baldwin's changing stance on Palestine. Reflecting on his place in the world as an American and a Black man, Baldwin found himself thinking about his place in Palestine and Israel: "And if I had fled, to Israel, a state created for the purpose of protecting Western interests, I would have been in yet a tighter bind: on which side of Jerusalem would I have decided to live?"<sup>40</sup> Envisioning Israel as a neo-colonial force is something Baldwin expressed on multiple occasions. However, questioning whether he had a place in the Jewish republic is something that was not explored in his earlier essays. Jerusalem was a dividing line between Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories as Baldwin was writing this in 1972. By positioning Israel as a part of the colonial project of which he saw himself to be a victim, Baldwin denied himself a place in the country, in a way seeking a place for himself among the Palestinians. This was a big transformation for someone who considered Israel as a potential place of sanctuary and refuge in 1948, when the state was established. Baldwin's question was larger than seeking a place between Palestine and Israel, however. He saw Israel as a Western invention and a symbol of the West, a symbol of the colonial and imperial status quo. Palestine thus became its antithesis, representing the colonized peoples of the Third World. Israel was initially considered a symbol of the victory of the oppressed, as envisioned by many Black intellectuals, including Baldwin himself. They saw it as a people originating in the Middle East triumphing against Western aggression and the horror of the Holocaust. Baldwin challenged this geography with a bitter doubt about being welcomed in Israel.

In the concluding pages of *No Name in the Street*, Baldwin speaks about the relationship between Black and Third World struggles:

And, of course, any real commitment to Black freedom in this country would have the effect of reordering all our priorities, and altering all our commitments, so that, for

horrendous example, we would be supporting Black freedom fighters in South Africa and Angola, and would not be allied with Portugal, would be closer to Cuba than we are to Spain, would be supporting the Arab nations instead of Israel, and would never have felt compelled to follow the French into Southeast Asia.<sup>41</sup>

This statement represents an ideology that was tremendously important for the Black Power movement and swayed Baldwin in that direction in the same fashion it swayed him to take an interest in Black nationalism and to come to understand the significance of violence for Black liberation. Aside from emphasizing the importance of embracing Third World struggles in order to achieve true liberation in the U.S., Baldwin specifically addressed the conflict between the Palestinians and Israel. He highlighted the issue as one of the central locations of world radicalism and other locations directly related to the Black liberation struggle.

Seven years after *No Name in the Street*, in 1979 Baldwin published an article in the *Nation*, “Open Letter to the Born Again.” The article is the most extensive discussion of Palestine in Baldwin’s writing. An aspect of his philosophy that has not yet been discussed here is the importance of theology and his Christian upbringing as a framework for formulating his vision. And even though Baldwin realized that Christianity was not his pulpit early on, it would be a mistake to dismiss the impact that religious iconography and mythology made on his writing and his vision of Palestine and Israel. His early writing is saturated with references to the Judeo-Christian tradition, and even though these examples do not express any kind of religious fervor, this framework must be taken into consideration. In fact, it resurfaces in “Open Letter” in the concept of “born again” and in the phraseology of the discourse.

The article was prompted by the scandal that emerged after Andrew Young was stripped of his position as the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations as punishment for a brief meeting with the P.L.O. representative Zehdi Terezi. The prominent civil rights leader and politician was the first Black man to hold this high post. He was asked to resign by President Jimmy Carter, a decision met with outrage from the Black community. Indeed, the incident sent ripples throughout the Black leadership, and made them question their stance on Palestine and Israel. For example, in the aftermath of this incident, a group of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Southern Christian Leadership organization members, led by Revd. Joseph Lowery, traveled to Lebanon to meet with Yassir Arafat and visit the Palestinian refugee camps.<sup>42</sup>

Baldwin approached the issue with a degree of expertise and a firsthand experience of the region and its politics unavailable to many other Black intellectuals. From the opening lines of the article Baldwin demonstrates that he was not only familiar, but was also well informed about the conflict and its history:

Jews and Palestinians know of broken promises. From the time of the Balfour Declaration (during World War I), Palestine was under five British mandates, and England promised the land back and forth to the Arabs or the Jews, depending on which horse seemed to be in the lead. The Zionists—as distinguished from the people known as

Jews—using, as someone put it, the “available political machinery,” i.e., colonialism, e.g., the British Empire—promised the British that, if the territory were given to them, the British Empire would be safe forever.<sup>43</sup>

Introducing the issue in terms of the colonial framework not only implied a powerful criticism of the Zionist project, but also strongly resonated with the ideological approach to the issue designed and voiced by Black Power leaders. The fact that Baldwin framed it as a colonial issue defied the Zionist approach and made it a matter of economic and political convenience for neocolonial powers rather than serving justice to an oppressed people. It is also significant that Baldwin drew a distinction between Jews and Zionists, dismantling another aspect of Zionist ideology that has claimed to speak for the interests of Jews worldwide. He continues this line of thought when he states: “But absolutely no one cared about the Jews, and it is worth observing that non-Jewish Zionists are very frequently anti-Semitic.”<sup>44</sup>

Many Black Power leaders like Stokely Carmichael, Huey Newton, and Eldridge Cleaver expressed criticism of the neocolonial nature of Israel. Not many, however, explicitly addressed the high price the Palestinians had to pay so that the dream of the Jewish republic could be fulfilled:

But the state of Israel was not created for the salvation of the Jews; it was created for the salvation of the Western interests. This is what is becoming clear (I must say that it was always clear to me). The Palestinians have been paying for the British colonial policy of “divide and rule” and for Europe’s guilty Christian conscience for more than thirty years.<sup>45</sup>

Here Baldwin complicates the conflict between Palestine and Israel and expresses the fact that economic and political interests behind the establishment of the state of Israel were also ideological and framed by the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Lastly, the article makes an almost unprecedented political intervention when Baldwin emphasizes the significance of Palestinian agency, speaking about their importance for the peace process: “Finally: there is absolutely—repeat: *absolutely*—no hope of establishing peace in what Europe so arrogantly calls the Middle East (how in the world would Europe know? having so dismally failed to find a passage to India) without dealing with the Palestinians.”<sup>46</sup> This point of view was unpopular as far as mainstream U.S. discourse on the conflict was concerned. It emphasized the importance of Andrew Young’s decision to meet Zehdi Terezi. Terezi served as the first Palestinian ambassador to the United Nations from 1974 until 1991 and would provide a necessary insight for a dialog that was embedded in the concept of a peace process. Baldwin understood this very well and criticized President Carter and the people who pressed for Young’s dismissal for their arrogance and lack of insight.

The article was a powerful letter of support advocating for the importance of Young’s role in the Middle East process. More importantly, the article’s ideological

framework had strong resonance with the discourse formulated by the Black Power movement, framing Black conditions in the U.S. and Palestinian conditions in Israel through the lens of colonial and postcolonial theory. Oppression rooted in the colonial past and present was the bedrock on which Black Power formulated a sense of solidarity with the Palestinians. Baldwin adopted this discourse, inspired by his proximity to the movement and its leaders.

Baldwin's own writing and thinking on Palestine extended into the last years of his life. In his 1985 open letter to the South African anti-apartheid and human rights activist Desmond Tutu, he writes about his ambivalence:

I may be ambivalent concerning the physical purposes of the state of Israel, but American Jews are, in the main, indistinguishable from American white Christians: and I would not like to be an Arab in Jerusalem. And, Israel is, also, an ally of South Africa—which Western nation, indeed, is not? (And it is worth pointing out that the ANC [African National Congress] is as homeless as the PLO, for the same reasons.)<sup>47</sup>

Here he continues a few lines of thought demonstrated in his writing about the position of the Jewish diaspora in America within the racial system in the U.S. He sees Jews as an integral part of the white and Christian system which also makes them a part of the system of white supremacy. He repeatedly uses Jerusalem as a microcosm of Palestinian oppression, echoing his argument in *No Name in the Street* discussed above. Further, echoing the rhetoric of many Black Power figures, Baldwin highlights Israel's role in South African apartheid. In several of his writings in the 1970s, he criticizes the Jewish republic for its support of Western nations and their neocolonial projects in the Middle East and Africa, which also resonates with his argument in the letter. Finally, Baldwin echoes the ideology created by Black Power that drew powerful parallels between Palestinian and global Black liberation struggles, when he compares the P.L.O. and the A.N.C. In his discussion of race and power and the place of Israel within the system of white supremacy, Baldwin evokes arguments that were made by Black Power figures like Hoyt Fuller, Amiri Baraka, and Stokely Carmichael, figures who envisioned Palestinians as a people of color, if not an African people. The impact that U.S. involvement in Palestine had on ethno-racial politics in the country deserves sustained discussion.<sup>48</sup>

As discussed above, racial and ethnic tensions between Black and Jewish communities in the U.S. reached their peak in the twentieth century due to changes in racial stratification and the integration of the Jews into American mainstream society and whiteness. James Baldwin is one of the foremost Black authors to have written about this matter. Discussion of the issue goes back to the beginning of his career, with his 1948 essay "The Harlem Ghetto." In this piece, he targeted Jewish landlords in Harlem and accused the community of perpetuating Black dispossession. In *Black Power and Palestine: Transnational Countries of Color* Michael Fischbach provides a comprehensive context of the history of Black and Jewish tensions in the mid-twentieth century, highlighting Baldwin's writing on the matter and citing "The Harlem Ghetto" and "Negroes Are Anti-Semitic Because They're

Anti-White.” Fischbach reveals that Baldwin echoed Black writers and intellectuals like Kenneth Clark, Harold Cruise, and even Amiri Baraka in their attacks on Jewish participation in Black oppression and rejection of the parallels between racism and antisemitism.<sup>49</sup> The nature of the aforementioned writers’ sentiments toward the Jewish community is beyond the scope of this article. But presenting Baldwin’s writing on the issue as a matter of unjustified hostility and the prejudice of antisemitism would be too simplistic and unfair.

Baldwin rejected the idea that Black and Jewish tensions are rooted in a supposed implicit bias against the Jews; instead, he said that these are a result of the complex conflicts rooted in Black and white relationships in America, positioning Jews as an integral part of the white supremacist system. Baldwin understood that the Jews were not a homogeneous community. While he was suspicious of the Jewish community in Harlem and their sometimes unfair practices toward its inhabitants, his connections to a leftist Jewish scene and decades-long friendships with Jewish editors were instrumental in his career.

There is a tradition of Black politics that embraces the Palestinian cause in times of political resurgence that dates back to the Black Power movement. The Black feminist movement that followed the Black Power era was marked by the amazing pro-Palestinian activism and writing of June Jordan, and the activism of Alice Walker and Angela Davis. Not dissimilar to the incident with Andrew Young’s firing from his post with the U.N., Davis was disinvited from joining the Birmingham Civil Rights institute. Just like the incident in 1978 that prompted Baldwin to write “Open Letter to the Born Again,” this event caused a major uproar among the Black community and led to an article by Michelle Alexander in the *New York Times*. Davis’s book *Freedom is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement* (2016) is a powerful testament that explains the ideological, political, and historical past and present of Black and Palestinian struggles. Focusing on the prison-industrial complex, Davis explains how U.S. and Israeli surveillance practices and state violence define the Palestinian and Black experience of oppression, and thus how a truly unified struggle can bring about both people’s true freedom.

Palestine was not only a metaphorical, ideological terrain through which Baldwin and other Black intellectuals, leaders, and radicals articulated their visions of Black liberation. Besides Baldwin, Malcolm X, Jesse Jackson, and Martin Luther King, Jr. all visited Palestine.<sup>50</sup> The effect of these journeys is beyond the scope of this article, but this detailed study of Baldwin’s visit and the impact it had on his discourse on freedom and justice presents a compelling case for further studies of this kind.

## Notes

1 James Baldwin, *No Name in the Street* (New York, Dial Press, 1972), p. 172.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 39.

3 Douglas Field, “James Baldwin’s Life on the Left: A Portrait of the Artist a Young New York Intellectual,” *ELH*, 78:4 (2011), p. 837.

- 4 James Baldwin, “The Harlem Ghetto,” in *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison (New York, Library of America, 1998), p. 49.
- 5 Benyamin Neuberger, “Early African Nationalism, Judaism and Zionism: Edward Wilmot Blyden,” *Jewish Social Studies*, 47:2 (1985), pp. 151–6.
- 6 James Baldwin, “Letters from a Journey,” in Herbert Hill (ed.), *Soon, One Morning: New Writing By American Negroes, 1940–1962* (New York, Alfred Knopf, 1968), p. 38.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 39.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 41.
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 42.
- 13 Magdalena Zaborowska, *Baldwin’s Turkish Decade: Erotics of Exile* (Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2009), p. 28.
- 14 Zionism and its implications have evolved since its inception in 1897 by Theodor Herzl. At its nascent stage its goal was the establishment of Israel. After 1948, and until the present day, Zionism has implied the protection and development of the Jewish republic. Despite its ideological and epistemological connections to Judaism, Zionism must not be conflated with Jewish identity. For a detailed analysis of the relationship between Zionism and Judaism, see Gil Hochberg, *In Spite of Partition: Jews, Arabs, and the Limits of Separatist Imagination* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2007).
- 15 Melanie McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, & US Interests in the Middle East Since 1945* (Los Angeles and Berkeley, University of California Press, 2005), p. 94.
- 16 James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (New York, Dial Press, 1963), p. 46.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 58.
- 18 *Ibid.*, pp. 50–1.
- 19 Baldwin, *No Name in the Street*, p. 178.
- 20 The article was dedicated to the aftermath of an incident that was later referred to as the case of the Harlem Six. Six residents of Harlem, Wallace Baker, Daniel Hamm, William Craig, Ronald Felder, Walter Thomas, and Robert Rice, were wrongfully accused of the murder of Margit Sugar and Frank Sugar. For more on Harlem Six, see Arnold H. Lubasch, “Ruling to Throw Out Conviction In ‘Harlem Six’ Case Reversed,” *New York Times*, 8 February 1974, p. 38.
- 21 James Baldwin, “A Report from the Occupied Territory,” in Morrison (ed.), *Collected Essays*, p. 784.
- 22 Timothy Seidel, “‘Occupied Territory is Occupied Territory’: James Baldwin, Palestine and the Possibilities of Transnational Solidarity,” *Third World Quarterly*, 37:9 (2016), pp. 1644–60, [www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01436597.2016.1178063](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01436597.2016.1178063) (accessed 4 June 2020).
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 Clayborne Carson, “Blacks and Jews in the Civil Rights Movement,” in John H. Bracey and Maurianne Adams (eds.), *Strangers & Neighbors: Relations Between Blacks and Jews in the United States* (Amherst, MA, University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), p. 584.
- 25 Stokely Carmichael, *Ready for Revolution: The Life and Struggles of Stokely Carmichael* (New York, Scribner, 2003), pp. 557–61.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p. 563.
- 27 Keith Feldman, “Representing Permanent War: Black Power’s Palestine and the End(s) of Civil Rights,” in Manning Marable and Hisham Aidi (eds.), *Black Routes to Islam* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 85.

- 28 Douglas Field, "Looking for Jimmy Baldwin: Sex, Privacy, and Black Nationalist Fer-  
vor," *Callaloo*, 27:2 (2004), p. 460.
- 29 *Ibid.*, p. 463.
- 30 Baldwin, *No Name in the Street*, pp. 174–5.
- 31 *Ibid.*, p. 174.
- 32 Field, "James Baldwin's Life on the Left".
- 33 Alex Lubin, *Geographies of Liberation: The Making of an Afro-Arab Political Imaginary*  
(Chapel Hill, NC, University of North Carolina Press, 2014), p. 127.
- 34 Quoted in Field, "Looking for Jimmy Baldwin," p. 466.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 468.
- 36 Amiri Baraka (ed.), *African Congress: A Documentary of the First Modern Pan-African  
Congress* (New York, Morrow, 1972), p. xix.
- 37 Eric Sundquist, *Strangers in the Land: Blacks, Jews, Post-Holocaust America* (Cambridge,  
MA, Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 312.
- 38 Lubin, *Geographies of Liberation*, p. 19.
- 39 James Baldwin and Margaret Mead, *A Rap on Race* (Philadelphia, J.B. Lippincott, 1971),  
p. 132.
- 40 Baldwin, *No Name in the Street*, p. 42.
- 41 *Ibid.*, p. 178.
- 42 Ronald W. Waters, "The Black Initiatives in the Middle East," *Journal of Palestine Studies*,  
10:2 (1981), pp. 2–9.
- 43 James Baldwin, "Open Letter to the Born Again," in Morrison (ed.), *Collected Essays*,  
p. 787.
- 44 *Ibid.*, p. 785.
- 45 *Ibid.*, p. 786.
- 46 *Ibid.*
- 47 James Baldwin, "An Open Letter to Desmond Tutu," qtd. in Leah Mirakhor, "The Hoodie  
and the Hijab: Arabness, Blackness, and the Figure of Terror," *Los Angeles Review of Books*,  
6 June 2015, [https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/the-hoodie-and-the-hijab-arabness-  
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- 48 A notable example of such scholarship is Keith Feldman, *A Shadow Over Palestine: The  
Imperial Life of Race in America* (Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota Press, 2015).
- 49 Michael Fischbach, *Black Power and Palestine: Transnational Countries of Color* (Stan-  
ford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2019), pp. 73–6.
- 50 *Ibid.*, pp. 32–4.

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