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The accompanier and the accompanied in Occupied Palestine: human rights activism, and the self who intervenes

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**The accompanier and the accompanied in
Occupied Palestine: human rights activism, and
the self who intervenes**

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Abstract

This interdisciplinary study uses the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) as a case study through which to explore and critique accompaniment as a form of nonviolent, transnational, civil society intervention in the occupied Palestinian territories.

By conducting a postcolonial feminist analysis of accompaniment this thesis makes a significant contribution to scholarship on protective accompaniment and unarmed civilian peacekeeping. Focusing on the accompanier-subject, it unsettles assumptions about the nature of the self who intervenes, and challenges liberal accounts of what accompaniment seeks to be and to do. It explores the colonial continuities inherent in accompaniment by locating accompaniment praxis in the context of the longer history of British imperialism and the Christian ‘civilising mission’ and to do this archival research on a 1930’s British Quaker ‘Palestine Watching’ organisation was conducted and incorporated into the study of EAPPI. Secondly and relatedly, this thesis analyses the impact of liberal ideological framings on accompaniment praxis as it operates in occupied Palestine. It concludes that there are several ways in which accompaniment organisations like EAPPI constitute a colonial, paternalistic form of intervention which sometimes constitutes a withdrawal of support for Palestinians. This is demonstrated through EAPPI’s adoption of a ‘balanced’ approach to ‘both sides of the conflict’, its failure to understand and take responsibility for its positioning in the legacies of British imperial histories in the region, and its reliance on a paternalistic, masculinised practice of protection.

This thesis also makes a more structural argument of more general application in relation to accompaniment. It concludes that, in addition to examining the impact of colonial logics and liberal ideologies on praxis, the impact of the particular political context in which accompaniment is conducted must be considered. Ultimately, therefore, in occupied Palestine, it is the intersection of liberal discourses, and the settler-colonial context in which and against which accompaniment organisations work, that together limits the potential for a less colonial, less paternalistic form of accompaniment-intervention.

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List of acronyms used

AATW - Anarchists Against the Wall

BDS – Boycott, Divest and Sanctions movement

CPT – Community Peacemaker Teams

EAPPI - Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Israel and Palestine

EAs – Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs is the term commonly used in the organisation to individual volunteers. In this thesis I refer to them simply as accompaniers)

FH – Friends House

FW - Fieldwork

ISM - International Solidarity Movement

IDF – Israeli Defence Forces

IHL – International Humanitarian Law

LB – Lucy Backhouse

oPt – Occupied Palestinian territories

PBI – Peace Brigades International

PWC - Palestine Watching Committee

UCP- Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping

UN – United Nations

WCC - World Council of Churches

Introduction

In 2017 I spent three months living in the occupied Palestinian West Bank, witnessing something of what life is like for Palestinians under the Israeli military occupation. I went with an organisation called the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI).¹ EAPPI operates according to three main objectives: the first is to provide protective accompaniment for Palestinians in particular places and times. Accompaniers hope that by being alongside Palestinian shepherds, farmers, school children and workers in everyday situations there will be a lessening in the severity or likelihood of the Israeli military and/or settlers carrying out human rights violations. Secondly, knowing international protective accompaniment is not always successful in preventing the occurrence of such violations against Palestinians, accompaniers are also present as monitors and witnesses, recording the details of incidents when they happen. Thirdly, whilst in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) accompaniers gather testimonies about Palestinian life under occupation so that on returning to their home countries they can present these stories alongside their own eye-witness accounts as part of a programme of advocacy work. In this way they encourage others to join the campaign for, in EAPPI's words, a "just and peaceful resolution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict based on international law."² In order to reach this resolution, EAPPI calls for an end to the illegal military occupation of the Palestinian territories— an occupation now entering its 57th year.³ EAPPI is not only an organisation that I had direct experience with; it is also one that is underrepresented in the small body of literature on transnational accompaniment work despite it being one of the largest accompaniment organisations working in the oPt.⁴ In this thesis I use EAPPI as a case study to provide a postcolonial feminist critique of protective-accompaniment praxis as a form of non-violent, human rights based, civil society intervention.

¹ The term 'ecumenical' refers to the fact that it was founded as a World Council of Churches (WCC) programme; in practice EAPPI welcomes volunteers with any or no religious faith and is not a proselytizing mission organisation.

² "Our Model: Change", *EAPPI* accessed January 4, 2023 <https://eappi.org/en/our-model/change>

³ At the time of writing in 2023

⁴ EAPPI maintains a presence in a whole variety of locations across the oPt, other organisations like ISM, Operation Dove and Community Peacemaker Teams are present only in certain locations. Israeli accompaniment and human rights monitoring work slightly differently since they generally travel in and out of the oPt to engage in certain actions. By now (2022) EAPPI estimates it has trained and sent out over 1, 800 accompaniers who have all engaged in some kind of advocacy work back in their home countries. See "Where We Work", *EAPPI*, accessed December 29, 2022, <https://eappi.org/en/where-we-work>

In this thesis I demonstrate that there are several ways in which EAPPI's praxis constitutes a colonial form of intervention which reproduces hierarchies of gendered and racialised power between the accompanier and the accompanied, and which sometimes results in a withdrawal of support for Palestinians. This was evidenced through EAPPI's failure to understand and take responsibility for its positioning in the legacies of British imperial histories in the region, adoption of a 'balanced', 'impartial' approach to 'both sides of the conflict', and its reliance on a paternalistic, masculinised practice of protection. In making this critique I draw on several academic fields— Palestine studies, colonial and postcolonial studies, feminist political philosophy, human rights and peace studies, critical race and gender studies—and examine what kind of accompanier-subject is constituted through EAPPI's work. In this project I use gender as a methodological tool to unsettle assumptions about the nature of the 'self' who intervenes, and challenge liberal accounts of what that 'self' seeks to do for the Other—the object of the liberal human rights project— through their intervention. In using gender as a lens for analysis I adopt an intersectional feminist approach which understands that it is impossible to disentangle the interlocking systems of oppression which emerge through histories of imperialism, race, class, sexualities and gender.⁵ With this approach I demonstrate the ways in which colonial logics, and liberal ideologies and framings, shape the possibilities and limits of human rights accompaniment interventions. Having uncovered something of what a less colonial, less paternalistic version of accompaniment might look like through learning accompaniment's current limits, I was then able to also make the following, more structural argument of general application. I conclude that, in addition to examining the impact of colonial logics and liberal ideologies on praxis, the impact of the particular political context in which accompaniment is conducted must be considered. Because the Israeli regime seeks to shut down the space for Palestinian resistance it also deters any other interventions from acting in support of Palestinians and this also shapes the practice of organisations (including EAPPI) that use an accompaniment model. Ultimately, therefore, in occupied Palestine, it is the intersection of liberal discourses, and the settler-colonial context in which and against which accompaniment organisations work, that together limits the potential for a less colonial, less paternalistic form of accompaniment-intervention.

⁵ Kimberlé Crenshaw, 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics', *Droit et Société* 108 (1 January 2021): 465–90.

In this first chapter I describe the research questions that this project set out to answer, I locate this study of accompaniment praxis in relation to the existing body of literature on accompaniment, I explain the theoretical framings used in the thesis, the methodological choices I made, and give an overview of the arguments made in each chapter. However, before moving on to do this, section 1 will offer some explanation which relates one aspect of my own experience as an accompanier with EAPPI with my decision to focus on accompaniment in relation to British imperial history in this thesis.

1: Contemporary accompaniment praxis and British imperial legacies in Palestine

For the most part the study is based on interviews with EAPPI's programme participants, Palestinian employees, and some participant observation of EAPPI's work both in the oPt and in the UK. And, whilst I examine EAPPI as a multinational organisation which sends out accompaniers from 21 different countries, I take a particular interest in the British section of the organisation with the majority of the accompaniers interviewed in this study being British.⁶ Following postcolonial feminist methodologies, this thesis "is articulated within the politics of positionality, that is, within the location of both the theorist and the audience".⁷ Thus, my own location—the fact that I am British, and that I was an accompanier with the British and Irish section of EAPPI—has fundamentally shaped the way this project was designed and developed, and I reflect on the politics and practicalities of this at particular moments in the thesis. A postcolonial feminist approach also offers a lens which brings a particular way of seeing the connections between the colonial past and a settler-colonial present. In addition to making a study of EAPPI, as part of this project I conducted archival research on a British Mandate era Quaker organisation—the Palestine Watching Committee (PWC). I return to questions of method and methodology later in this chapter, and in chapter 2, but here at the outset I want to introduce some of the reasons for the methodological decision to focus on British accompaniers, to investigate the colonial logics still operative within accompaniment, and to conduct archival research as part of this project.

⁶ See appendix more for details on the individual participants

⁷ Ratna Kapur, *Erotic Justice: Law and the New Politics of Postcolonialism*, 1st edition (London: Routledge, 2005) 3-4

In the existing scholarship there are very few, if any, studies linking accompaniment work with Britain's colonial legacy in Palestine.⁸ Much of the literature on accompaniment in Palestine takes a Northern American perspective, with studies carried out by Sophia Stamatopoulou and Mica Pollock being excellent studies which interrogate the positionality of activists from the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), and the narratives around guilt, imperialism and white privilege found therein.⁹ In this project, I locate accompaniment praxis in Palestine in relation to the history of British imperialism in the region, and yet I do not consider that drawing links between the British imperial past and the present space/time of an Israeli military occupation was really a matter of choice.

The year I was an accompanier with EAPPI, 2017, was a year during which there was much discussion of the afterlife of British imperialism in the oPt. Because 2017 marked the centenary of the Balfour Declaration I had many conversations with Palestinians where jokes and accusations were made about Britain's historic and ongoing complicity with the current settler-colonial regime.¹⁰ And, as a British accompanier I was often asked to apologise for the current situation in Palestine. The Balfour Declaration, as Rana Barakat states, was a merging of "Great Britain's colonial aspirations in Palestine with the Zionist movement's settler colonial designs".¹¹ It was issued by the then British foreign secretary Lord Balfour in 1917, clearly stating that Britain intended to facilitate the establishment of "a national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine.¹² In regards to the Palestinian Arabs already resident in Palestine, the Declaration made no specific mention of the name of the Palestinian peoples nor of their political rights, it merely stated that "nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine". Palestine

⁸ For other anthropologies of NGOs which situate their contemporary work within historical lineages. See for example Erica Bornstein and Peter Redfield's collection of studies which also produce situated understandings of NGO's: *Forces of Compassion: Humanitarianism between Ethics and Politics / Edited by Erica Bornstein and Peter Redfield.*, Advanced Seminar Series (Santa Fe, N.M.: SAR, 2010); See also: Didier Fassin "Inequality of lives, hierarchies of humanity: Moral Commitments and Ethical Dilemmas of Humanitarianism" in Ilana Feldman et al., *In the Name of Humanity: The Government of Threat and Care* (Durham, UNITED STATES: Duke University Press, 2010), 238- 255

⁹Sophia Stamatopoulou-Robbins, 'The Joys and Dangers of Solidarity in Palestine: Prosthetic Engagement in an Age of Reparations', *CR: The New Centennial Review* 8, no. 2 (2008): 111–60, <https://doi.org/10.1353/ncr.0.0029>; Mica Pollock, 'Using and Disputing Privilege: Young U.S. Activists Struggling to Wield "International Privilege" in Solidarity', *Race / Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts* 1, no. 2 (April 2008): 227–51, <https://doi.org/10.2979/RAC.2008.1.2.227>

¹⁰ I discuss these conversations and the way I, as both researcher and accompanier, reacted to them in more detail in chapter 2

¹¹ Rana Barakat, "'Ramadan Does Not Come for Free': Refusal as New and Ongoing in Palestine', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 50, no. 4 (1 October 2021): 92 <https://doi.org/10.1080/0377919X.2021.1979376>.

¹² Note that this declaration was issued before Britain had wrested power over Palestine from the Ottomans.

transitioned from being under British military occupation to becoming the British Mandate for Palestine under the supervision of the League of Nations in 1922 and when it did so, the Balfour Declaration became official policy as part of the League's Mandate for Palestine document. The Palestinian historian, Rashid Khalidi understands the situation since 1917 as a hundred years' war against Palestinians, with Britain as the power which sanctioned it, and the Balfour Declaration as the first act of war.¹³ Khalidi says this approach

illuminates more objectively the history of the past century in Palestine, and as the Palestinians have experienced it.... [the war] was formally sanctioned and authorized by the greatest powers of the day but was mainly waged by others at different times over a century.¹⁴

The sense of a continuity of violence and disaster is also expressed in the Palestinian term the “ongoing Nakba”.¹⁵ This references 1948 when the British withdrew, Israel was formed, and more than 78 per cent of historic Palestine was taken by Zionist forces—but also describes the “continuing state of displacement, exclusion, rightlessness, and insecurity” in which Palestinians continue to live, both within and without the oPt.¹⁶

One reason I found these conversations about Balfour particularly affecting was that I knew this linked with one aspect of my own family history: my great-grandfather had fought with the British army during World War One and, as I found out from reading his diary of the war, he was present, on guard in Jerusalem the very day the British captured the city from the Ottomans. Beginning this project with his diary in hand, trying to decipher its sprawling handwriting and the names of places in Palestine that he had travelled through, acted to me as a frequent, and material reminder of the British imperial roots of this present situation. And yet, as I discuss in chapter 4, a tangible reminder of the impact of British imperialism on the current settler-colonial regime is something British accompaniers need, not Palestinians. On reflecting on the conversations I had had with Palestinians about Balfour I realised that EAPPI's British presence on Palestinian land was much more than a merely a signifier, or reminder of the British imperial past. The sense of relentless continuity between an imperial

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Rashid I. Khalidi, ‘Historical Landmarks in the Hundred Years’ War on Palestine’, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 47, no. 1 (1 November 2017): 6–7 <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2017.47.1.6>.

¹⁵ Nakba meaning catastrophe or disaster in Arabic

¹⁶ Rosemary Sayigh, ‘Silenced Suffering’, *Borderlands e Journal* 14, no. 1 (2015) 2

past and a settler-colonial present was already more than evident to Palestinians living in the occupied territories, and so the politics of contemporary British presence in the oPt cannot be disconnected from the histories and consequences of British presence there in the past, no matter how benevolent or benign that presence aspires to be. And this, then, was the starting point with which I began developing this project, with my curiosity circling around the following puzzle which I develop into a research question and explain in more detail in section 2. But for now, I wondered, despite the well-meaning intentions of accompaniment programmes and the individuals who participate in them, was there still something very colonial in the very logics and attitudes that continued to animate accompaniment praxis, and thus imprinted itself on the relationship between the accompanier and accompanied.

One way to examine this question was to focus on how EAPPI's British accompaniers related to this part of their history and to see whether it impacted on their motivations to take part in EAPPI or not; but more than this was also needed. To find out whether colonial logics continued to operate in accompaniment I decided to look to the British Mandate era archives and examine other different, but similarly 'Christian',¹⁷ British, and 'well meaning' civil society ventures into 'helping resolve the conflict'. As I will explain further in section 4:2 below, I turned to the archival documents relating to the PWC. This was a small group of British based Quakers who carried out advocacy work in the 1930's, petitioning the British government and colonial officials on behalf of peace and reconciliation in Mandate Palestine, and keeping themselves informed about events in Palestine through regular correspondence with Quaker missionaries based in the region. This archival work allowed me to gain insight into Mandate era ways of thinking in two locations: PWC members in Britain, and European missionaries based in the region. Exploring the echoes of some of EAPPI's ideology and ways of thinking in the discourse found in Quaker documents enabled me to highlight threads of colonial continuity and to see how these same logics continued to shape accompaniment praxis. In doing so, two main things become evident: firstly, that EAPPI's humanitarian conception of a responsibility to intervene in the oPt is founded on a similar set of colonial logics to the Mandate era Quakers' sense of responsibility which is likewise echoed in the League of Nations Mandate discourse; and secondly, that EAPPI's emphasis on a balanced

¹⁷ The Palestine Watching Committee was a Quaker organisation. I put Christian in inverted commas since the Quakers have complex relationship with Christianity given that not all Quakers define themselves as Christians, and historically they have positioned themselves on the outside of the institutional church.

approach to the ‘two sides’ in this situation is part of a continuity of thought stretching back to the Orientalist colonial ideologies of the ‘Christian’ ‘civilising’ mission.

2: The research questions

As I turn now to outline some of the existing literature on accompaniment and transnational solidarity, it will become clear how I worked the research puzzle as explained above into the form of the research questions which orient this thesis. In the scholarship on accompaniment praxis around the world there are several feminist, critical race scholars who have argued that the racialised and gendered hierarchies which sustain colonialism are not dismantled in accompaniment work but instead continue to be reproduced.¹⁸ For example, Sara Koopman focuses on accompaniment in Colombia as an expression of a gendered, paternalistic impulse to help racialised others, and questions whether accompaniment is not an example of what Audre Lorde called ‘the master’s tools’ and thus whether it will ever succeed in dismantling the Master’s house, or, “bring[ing] down Empire”.¹⁹ This thesis builds on the arguments made in these studies by feminist, critical race scholars of accompaniment,²⁰ and examines what EAPPI as a case study is able to tell us about the coloniality of accompaniment praxis in the Palestine context.²¹

In addition to drawing on other scholarship on accompaniment, this project was also developed in response to academic debates conducted by feminist (and decolonial) scholars

¹⁸ See for example see Rema Hammami ‘Precarious Politics: The Activism of “Bodies That Count (aligning with those that don’t) in Palestine’s Colonial Frontier’ in *Vulnerability in Resistance* ed. Judith Butler, Zeynep Gambetti, Leticia Sabsey (Duke University Press, 2016); Gada Mahrouse, *Conflicted Commitments: Race, Privilege, and Power in Transnational Solidarity Activism* (Montréal ; Kingston : McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2014) For others see note 34

¹⁹ Sara Koopman, ‘Imperialism Within: Can the Master’s Tools Bring Down Empire?’, *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 7, no. 2 (2008): 283–307.

²⁰ See below for an expanded description of these arguments and

²¹ When researching accompaniment praxis, it could be argued that accompaniers’ ability to prevent or mitigate the occurrence of human rights violations is the most urgent question to consider. Whilst other studies do tackle this important question, I decided not to confront this question directly, judging that it is hard to say exactly what would have happened in the same circumstances had accompaniers not been present. Having said that, there is anecdotal evidence which suggests that during the Covid-19 pandemic there was a rise in settler violence and some link this to the complete withdrawal of EAPPI and other international protective accompanier organisations during this time. For more on the question of the effectiveness of accompaniment work see Ellen Furnari, ‘Understanding Effectiveness in Peacekeeping Operations: Exploring the Perspectives of Frontline Peacekeepers’ (Ph.D., New Zealand, University of Otago, 2014). As a side note I would suggest that gaining a fuller, more grounded understanding of the ways in which accompaniment reproduces colonial logics is in and of itself a pursuit which can offer a contribution to discussions about the efficacy of accompaniment, and I return to consider this point in chapter 8.

working on the broader theme of transnational solidarity with Palestine.²² In relation to this body of scholarship I follow Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian who argues that seeking to understand transnational solidarity is a feminist project: “Constructing a feminist epistemology and praxis requires developing a new awareness of the physics of power. It entails understanding the nature and significance of solidarity with the dispossessed”.²³ The relationship between accompaniment and solidarity praxis is a theme that arises in several places throughout this thesis and is derived from Linda Tabar’s important analysis of the changes within transnational solidarity movements in Palestine over the last fifty years. In her work she suggests that human rights and witnessing accompaniment activism is a liberal, depoliticised version of solidarity which constitutes “imperial benevolence” rather than being an act of radical solidarity.²⁴ I situate EAPPI’s accompaniment praxis within these developments in transnational solidarity activism and am guided by Tabar’s work in my ambition to examine the extent to which “re-colonising relations” are sustained between the accompanier and the accompanied in EAPPI’s work in the oPt and the UK.²⁵

Emerging from my reading of these two bodies of scholarship are the following research questions which guided this project:

²² For examples of this literature see Simona Sharoni et al., ‘Transnational Feminist Solidarity in Times of Crisis: The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Movement and Justice in/for Palestine’, *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 17, no. 4 (2 October 2015): 654–70, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2015.1088226> which addresses the Palestine question as a transnational feminist issue; Nira Yuval-Davis’ influential contribution on antizionism and antisemitism debates in 1984 encouraged feminists to embrace the complexities of a connected world and connected struggles: ‘Zionism Antisemitism And The Struggle Against Racism’, *Spare Rib*, no. Summer (1984): 18–22; see also Feminist Review special edition which revisited this essay and responded to it Islah Jad, ‘The Anti-Zionism, Antisemitism, Anti-Racism Controversy Revisited—Controversially?’, *Feminist Review* 126, no. 1 (1 November 2020): 178–82, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0141778920942446>; On Palestine and the intersectionality of struggles see: Angela Davis and Frank Barat. *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle : Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement*. Chicago, Illinois: Haymarket Books, 2016; Afaf Jabiri “Feminist Solidarity with Palestine”, *Jadaliyya*, April 1, 2019, <https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/38510>; Nada Elia, ‘Justice Is Indivisible: Palestine as a Feminist Issue’, *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 6, no. 1 (8 December 2017) 45–63 <https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/28902>; Nour Abu-Assab and Nof Nasser-Eddin, ‘(Re)Centralising Palestine in Decolonial Feminist Theory’, *Kohl: A Journal for Body and Gender Research* 5, no. Spring (1 April 2019): 5–10, <https://doi.org/10.36583/kohl//5-1-2>. In the realm of activism it includes the work of the Palestinian Feminist Collective “Pledge that Palestine is a feminist issue” Palestinian Feminist Collective, accessed December 29, 2022, <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/pledge-declaring-palestine-is-a-feminist-issue>;

²³ Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian “Palestinian Feminist Critique and the Physics of Power: Feminists Between Thought and Practice”, *Critical Legal Thinking* (blog), 13 May 2014, <https://criticallegalthinking.com/2014/05/13/palestinian-feminist-critique-physics-power-feminists-thought-practice/>.

²⁴ Some accompaniment organisations would describe themselves as forming part of a solidarity movement, others would not. I discuss this further in chapter 1 and return to the question of framing throughout the thesis

²⁵ Tabar, ‘From Third World Internationalism to “the Internationals”’. 427; see the following chapter for more on this context

- *What can a case study of EAPPI tell us about the ways in which human rights accompaniment praxis in Palestine constitutes a colonial, paternalistic form of intervention?*
- *To what extent would it be possible for accompaniment interventions in Palestine to take less colonial forms, and what would accompaniment as a less colonial, less paternalistic form of intervention would look like?*

3:1 The approach: A focus on the accompanier-subject

In order to examine the above questions this thesis places the focus on the accompanier-subject, investigating the narratives accompaniers tell about themselves, and the subject-positions which are constituted both through these narratives and accompaniment work itself. The way I examine the accompanier subject is from two different but related perspectives: as a colonial subject and as a liberal subject. These two subjectivities have been linked not only historically but also conceptually. David Theo Goldberg describes liberalism as the “defining doctrine of self and society for modernity”.²⁶ In the age of the ‘Enlightenment’, a time of unparalleled European exploration, trade, colonial conquest and expansion across the globe it was liberal ideology that provided Europe with the tools needed to craft new definitions of self and society in a time of unprecedented change.²⁷ Lisa Lowe argues that the colonial archive should be considered “intrinsic to the archive of liberalism”, and shows how the same racist and exclusionary logics, and the same the language of Universal humanity underpins both liberal and colonial ideology.²⁸ In this thesis I draw on this scholarship and also follow the approach of postcolonial feminist scholars who, seeing the colonial and the liberal subject position as inherently interlinked offer their critique of the liberal project from this vantage point.²⁹ For the present moment however, for the sake of analytical clarity, I will separate the

²⁶ David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (Blackwell, 1993) 4

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (North Carolina, UNITED STATES: Duke University Press, 2015) 6 <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/detail.action?docID=2079177>; For other scholars who explore the entanglements of liberalism and empire see Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought* (University of Chicago Press, 2018) and Jeanne Morefield, *Empires Without Imperialism: Anglo-American Decline and the Politics of Deflection* (Oxford, UNITED STATES: Oxford University Press USA - OSO, 2014), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1653214>.

²⁹ See for example Kapur, *Erotic Justice*.

liberal subject from the colonial subject in order to better understand the ways in which I use these theoretical frames in this thesis.

Firstly, the colonial subject. Here, I draw on settler-colonial/indigenous studies literature, as well as scholarship on colonial and postcolonial encounters, and the colonial self.³⁰

Examining the accompanier subject through this colonial lens enables me to shed light on the power dynamics in the relationship formed between the accompanier and the accompanied in the oPt. Thinking with Edward Said, I work with the premise that narratives told by the coloniser about the self and the Other are stories that wield power, and reproduce racialised, gendered and classed hierarchies between the coloniser and the colonised. Said writes:

...stories are at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about strange regions of the world; they also become the method colonized people use to assert their own identity and the existence of their own history. The main battle in imperialism is over land, of course; but when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it...these issues were reflected, contested and even for a time decided in narrative. ...The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism....³¹

For those accompaniers who are structurally positioned to identify with the settler rather than the colonised,³² asking questions about the way in which one enters territories which have been settler-colonised should lead to a heightened awareness of the kind of hierarchies being

³⁰ Nancy Lea Stockdale, 'Gender and Colonialism in Palestine, 1800–1948: Encounters among English, Arab and Jewish Women' (Ph.D., United States -- California, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2000), <https://search.proquest.com/pqdtss/docview/304588192/abstract/5C526CC49B7C4C3CPQ/1>; Gabriel Polley, *Palestine in the Victorian Age: Colonial Encounters in the Holy Land* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2022); Hagar Kotef, *The Colonizing Self: Or, Home and Homelessness in Israel/Palestine*, Theory in Forms (Durham : Duke University Press, 2020); Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London, UNITED KINGDOM: Routledge, 2007), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/detail.action?docID=324986>.

³¹ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (Random House, 1994) Xiii

³² With reference to the idea of presenting this as a binary choice see Barakat's commentary on Patrick Wolfe's introduction to *The settler-colonial complex: recuperating binarism in settler studies* and the politics of positionality. Rana Barakat, 'Writing/Righting Palestine Studies: Settler Colonialism, Indigenous Sovereignty and Resisting the Ghost(s) of History', *Settler Colonial Studies* 8, no. 3 (3 July 2018): 354–356, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2017.1300048>; For a slightly different take on Wolfe's ideas here see also Yuval Evri and Hagar Kotef, 'When Does a Native Become a Settler? (With Apologies to Zreik and Mamdani)', *Constellations* 29, no. 1 (March 2022): 3–18, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.12470>.

reproduced in the encounters with the colonised in that place.³³ Hence the image of a ‘postcolonial’ encounter between Palestinians and British activists is central to my analysis. As queer and feminist postcolonial scholar Sara Ahmed highlights, the proximities of the contemporary globalised world are linked to histories of European colonisation. She writes:

It is our task to think through the different modes of proximity we may have to strangers in contemporary contexts without assuming that the stranger was distant in the past. We need to ask how contemporary modes of proximity reopen prior histories of encounter.³⁴

In the contemporary Palestine context the proximity of accompaniers and Palestinians is achieved through activists travelling to the oPt; a practice which invokes the prior histories of imperial British travel, and encounters with Palestinians;³⁵ and this fact endows accompaniers with a certain type of responsibility to remain accountable for those histories.³⁶ I argue that this consideration should form the basis of both scholarly and activist reflection on practices of transnational accompaniment in the oPt. Better understanding how EAPPI both thinks it is entering and is perceived to be entering the oPt—as an ally, a friend, an impartial monitor, or colonial representative is thus an integral part of this project.

Examining the accompanier-subject in relation to colonial subjectivities also allows me to investigate the links between accompaniers’ sense of self and what it is that accompaniment actually does as a form of intervention.³⁷ In Diane Nelson’s anthropological study of human rights accompaniment work in Guatemala she focuses on the self-fashioning practices of those who travel to the global south as human rights accompaniers. Aware of the pitfalls of paternalistic benevolence, and the assumed innocence of the ‘good’ and ‘helpful’ activist, Nelson stresses the need to remain both self-conscious of, and resistant to “the privilege that makes benevolence possible.”³⁸ To do this she suggests it is necessary both to examine the

³³ See Corey Snelgrove, Rita Kaur Dhamoon, and Jeff Corntassel, ‘Unsettling Settler Colonialism: The Discourse and Politics of Settlers, and Solidarity with Indigenous Nations’, *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 3, no. 2 (2014) 4

³⁴ Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (London, UNITED KINGDOM: Routledge, 2000) 13, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1122972>.

³⁵ See chapter 2 for more on this

³⁶ One which I theorise in chapter 4

³⁷ In particular see chapter 5 for more on this

³⁸ Diane M. Nelson, *A Finger in the Wound: Body Politics in Quincentennial Guatemala* (Berkeley, California; London: University of California Press, 1999) 70

ways in which accompaniment work is complicit in colonial regimes of oppression, and to understand what kind of accompanier-subject is constituted through the work.³⁹

Barbara Heron's study does something similar in the realm of development work when she examines identity formation among Western aid workers in the global south.⁴⁰ Heron shows how Western development workers participate in colonial continuities through their "desire to help" the global south. In her historization of what she names as a gendered impulse to travel and to participate in development work, Heron explains how during the time of Empire women used overseas travel and humanitarian work in the colonies as a way of to find acceptance and recognition as a bourgeois Subject. As both insiders and outsiders to Bourgeois subjectivity, women found that enacting a certain type of moral goodness on the imperial world stage was one way of staking a claim in that idealised subjectivity and so, travelling to the colonies as missionary, teacher or nurse offered them a way of gaining status, respect, acknowledgement and freedom in a way which they struggled to at home. The problem was that this entry into subjectivity was achieved (if it ever was fully) at the expense of the gendered, racialised, colonized Other. Heron argues that today the gendered aspect of this performance of morality in the global south has altered rather than disappeared entirely, and that the Western aid worker can still be seen to operate in a colonial continuity where the same striving for full inclusion in the category of Subject manifests in a desire to help the racialised, 'distant' Other. In order to investigate the accompanier-subject as a colonial subject I use this concept of colonial continuities in this project, and I explain what this meant for me methodologically in section 4. Heron describes colonial continuities as "deeply racialized, interrelated constructs of thought [that] have circulated from the era of empire, and today remain integral to the discursive production of bourgeois identity."⁴¹ Colonial continuities are therefore *constructs of thought*, but they are also *ways of being*, to borrow Stoler's language in relation to her idea of 'imperial dispositions'. Stoler describes these as being "at once ways of living in and responding to, ways of being and seeing oneself, ways of

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Barbara Heron, *Desire for Development Whiteness, Gender, and the Helping Imperative* (Waterloo, Ont. : Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2007) 6 <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/detail.action?docID=685670>. However this term used by many scholars including most notably by Derek Gregory in *The Colonial Present* Derek Gregory, *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq /* (Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub., 2004).

⁴¹ Heron, *Desire for Development* 6.

knowing that shape which sentiments are activated, and the affective states which circumscribe what one can know.”⁴²

Sara Koopman’s work brings me to the second way in which I view the accompanier-subject in this project: as a liberal subject. Koopman is a scholar who advocates for raising awareness of structures of power and privilege being reproduced in accompaniment as a way for volunteers to “discern how to use privilege without always reinforcing the systems that give it to some and not others”.⁴³ One’s view of self and the role that self plays has significant impact on accompaniment she argues: “These politics of identity affect our ability to change geopolitics”.⁴⁴ She describes her research as “an attempt to push solidarity activism toward an ever more feminist sort of grassroots alter-geopolitics, using not only our bodies, but our very sense of self, to work for broader security for all.”⁴⁵ In making this argument Koopman refers specifically to the impact of a liberal ‘sense of self’ and in the literature on accompaniment one of the most significant aspects of the liberal self that has already been examined is discourses of disembodiment in relation to race: “We risk reentrenching the racialized systems of domination that give us privilege when we operate from, and reinforce, the liberal notion of Self”.⁴⁶ However, before this statement can be fully understood in relation to accompaniment, and before I continue to explain the ways in which I examine the accompanier-subject as a liberal subject, it is necessary to clarify exactly how racialised hierarchies of power function within the protective accompaniment strategy.

3:2 The racial dynamics of the protective-accompaniment model

In their seminal text on accompaniment, early activist-theorists of human rights accompaniment Liam Mahony and Luis Eguren explain that “The accompaniment volunteer is literally an embodiment of international human rights concern”.⁴⁷ Whilst they do not explore the racial dynamics in depth they hint at the fact that in addition to the companions’ symbolic representation of international humanitarian law, it is the embodied, racialised

⁴² Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Commonsense* / (Princeton, NJ : Princeton University Press, 2009). 255; See more on this in chapter 3.

⁴³ Sara Koopman, ‘Making Space for Peace’:., *Antipode* 42, no. 1 (January 2010): 233 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2009.00740.x>; see also Pollock, ‘Using and Disputing Privilege

⁴⁴ Koopman, ‘Imperialism Within: Can the Master’s Tools Bring Down Empire?’ 301

⁴⁵ Ibid. 300

⁴⁶ Ibid. 289

⁴⁷ Luis E. Eguren, and Liam Mahony, *Unarmed Bodyguards: International Accompaniment for the Protection of Human Rights* (Bloomfield, UNITED STATES: Kumarian Press, 2004)1 <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3328885>.

presence of Western activists as “unarmed bodyguards”⁴⁸ that is intended to deter the Israeli military and settlers from carrying out violations of Palestinian human rights:

Most accompaniment volunteers have been Western European or North American and white. The primary explanation for this is that all these [accompaniment] NGOs were conceived and based in Northern countries, but this tendency is compounded by the common perception that the supposed immunity and protective power of the volunteers is based on their skin colour or national background.⁴⁹

However, more critical scholars delve deeper into this issue and note the problematics of a strategy which is based on hegemonic systems of racial hierarchies, questioning whether accompaniment can work to break said hierarchies down, or whether it merely endorses systems of racialised inequality.⁵⁰ Rema Hammami’s study is, to the best of my knowledge the only Palestinian scholar to focus on Israeli and Euro-American accompaniment work in the West Bank whilst centring Palestinian communities’ voices and perspectives.⁵¹ Hammami explains how accompaniers, who are valued as grievable, rights-bearing subjects by sovereign powers, come to live alongside Palestinian locals to make visible their ‘invisible’ suffering.⁵² The so-called higher value of white, Western bodies is deemed able to provide protection for the ‘non-grievable’ bodies of those they accompany. However, if the world only pays attention to Palestinian suffering because a white Westerner is present, the Palestinian cause might gain visibility, but Palestinians themselves are reminded that their own visibility is firmly contingent on the apparently ‘more valuable’ internationals’ presence; and their own lives continue to be seen as unequal in value. Nothing then is done to challenge the racial hierarchies which undergird settler-colonial violence and on which the accompaniment strategy is reliant.

⁴⁸ Term used by Mahony and Eguren but not by EAPPI

⁴⁹ Eguren, and Mahony, *Unarmed Bodyguards*. 251

⁵⁰ This subset of studies includes but is not entirely limited to: Teodora Todorova, author. *Decolonial Solidarity in Palestine-Israel: Settler Colonialism and Resistance from within / Teodora Todorova*. London: Zed Books., 2021; Pollock, ‘Using and Disputing Privilege: Young U.S. Activists Struggling to Wield “International Privilege” in Solidarity’, Sophia Stamatopoulou-Robbins, ‘The Joys and Dangers of Solidarity in Palestine: Prosthetic Engagement in an Age of Reparations’; Gada Mahrouse, *Conflicted Commitments: Race, Privilege, and Power in Transnational Solidarity Activism* (Montréal ; Kingston : McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2014); Koopman, ‘Imperialism Within: Can the Master’s Tools Bring Down Empire?’

⁵¹ Hammami ‘Precarious Politics: The Activism of “Bodies That Count (aligning with those that don’t) in Palestine’s Colonial Frontier’ 167-190

⁵² Using Butler’s concept of grievable and non-grievable lives in Judith Butler, *Precarious Life : The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London : Verso, 2004).

Gada Mahrouse's study of accompaniment in Iraq and Palestine,⁵³ finds that despite the way white privilege is employed strategically in accompaniment very few companions see their privilege (in terms of mobility and protective powers) in classed, racialised, gendered, or in any way embodied terms.⁵⁴ These discourses of disembodiment, argues Mahrouse, derive from historically formed liberal ideologies of the self. Charles Mills explains that while race has "underpinned the liberal framework from the outset" it also played a highly contradictory role.⁵⁵ At the time of widespread European imperial expansion and the birth of Enlightenment thought, at the same time as there was a growing commitment to the notion of equality, and universal principles were declared applicable to all, regardless of the differences between them, definitions of self and Other were drawn up using racist logics of exclusion and inclusion. Simply put, this resulted in a paradox at the heart of liberalism; whilst the differences between individuals were being claimed as inconsequential and liberal tolerance for difference was loudly proclaimed, simultaneously, the concept of race as a marker of difference was gaining more and more traction and marked out more and more exclusions from "the circle of acceptability".⁵⁶ In Liberal ideology, the general response to racial difference was to count race as a moral irrelevance all the while attempting to hide its "attendant histories of racist exclusions",⁵⁷ thus ensuring the proliferation of discourses of disembodiment and colour-blindness. These discourses were, and continue to be, deeply problematic since in failing to acknowledge race they simply allow racism to exist unchecked.

When companions acknowledge the power of their passports to grant them mobility but neglect the power of whiteness, race (and gender and class) remain concealed behind the disembodied concept of nationality.⁵⁸ As Mahrouse notes, it is ironic that liberal discourses of racialised and gendered disembodiment flourish in organisations whose tactics work with systems dependent on the inequality of, and protective abilities of, different bodies.

Accompaniment is a particularly useful arena for uncovering the

⁵³ *Conflicted Commitments*: This is a study which uses interviews with Canadian and American companions working in a range of organisations including EAPPI

⁵⁴ The critiques of discourses of disembodiment in accompaniment extend to gender as well as race in Mahrouse's study as will be discussed in chapter 7.

⁵⁵ Mills, Charles W. 'Racial Liberalism'. *PMLA/Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 123, no. 5 (October 2008) 1382

⁵⁶ Goldberg, *Racist Culture* 6

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 6-7

⁵⁸ *Conflicted Commitments*.145.

seductive pull and force of liberal discourses of universalism because it reveals how raceless discourses persist even when racialized differences are consciously deployed. Indeed this illustrates just how remarkably regenerative and virtually inescapable the paradigm of liberal universalism is.⁵⁹

Yet there is more at stake here than whether or not the ironies or pervasiveness of liberal discourses are noted. Rather than emphasising passport privilege, accompaniment organisations need to be more explicit about how the accompanier and accompanied are situated differently in racial terms as a first step towards challenging the racial hierarchies and dehumanising logics upon which settler-colonialism rests. And this is one of the key arguments which forms the building blocks for my approach: ultimately the impact of discourses of the disembodied Universal Subject is that they limit the transformative potential of accompaniment praxis: “so long as activists work from a raceless premise, the anti-racist potential of accompaniment-observer activism is limited”.⁶⁰

3:3 Liberal conceptions of selfhood in EAPPI

The impact of the disembodied, racially unaware, a-gendered, ‘innocent’ helper-self has already been explored to some degree in some studies of accompaniment.⁶¹ This study builds on and extends this work by looking more in depth and more systematically at several aspects of liberal subjectivity, investigating how liberal conceptions of selfhood manifest in EAPPI, and also finding ways in which these conceptions of self might also constitute colonial continuities.⁶²

Goldberg’s definition of the liberal Subject provided me with a guide in my task, and I return to this quote more than once in this thesis. He writes:

⁵⁹ Ibid. 144

⁶⁰ Ibid. 146

⁶¹ See studies noted in the above section and in addition, for example see Sasson-Levy and Rapoport who note the presence of gendered discourses of disembodiment in their focus on an Israeli anti-occupation movement, 21st Year. In relation to the way the organisation justified its involvement in protest they noted that: “the body was unmarked... both because it was “a-gendered” and particularly because it was employed for the sake of ideas, rather than carrying a message of its own.” Orna Sasson-Levy and Tamar Rapoport, ‘Body, Gender, and Knowledge in Protest Movements: The Israeli Case’, *Gender and Society* 17, no. 3 (2003): 389

⁶² <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1172277>; Ilana Feldman, ‘The Quaker Way: Ethical Labor and Humanitarian Relief’, *American Ethnologist*, no. 4 (2007): 689–705.

Basic to modernity's self-conception then, is a notion not of social subjects but of a Subject that is abstract and atomistic, general and universal, divorced from the contingencies of historicity as it is from the particularities of social and political relations and identities. This abstracted, universal Subject commanded only by Reason, precisely because of its purported impartiality, is supposed to mediate the differences and tensions between particular social subjects in the domains of market and morality, polity and legality.⁶³

For example, Goldberg notes how the liberal self pretends to an impartial perspective precisely because it is seen to be dislocated from its positioning in History, and from the particularities of a social context.⁶⁴ This impartial perspective is one which I explore in particular in chapters 6.

Liberal thought presupposes a fragmented 'mind-based' part of the self which is said to take priority over other components which, together, are thought to delineate the 'self'.⁶⁵ Hagar Kotef notes that the Cartesian mind/body split is the structure which forms a link between the liberal Universal subject and Donna Haraway's concept of the "eye from nowhere", and false ideas of detachment and objectivity.⁶⁶ The "ideologies of objectivity" Haraway says, "deny the stakes in location, embodiment and partial perspective".⁶⁷ And as chapters 3, 4 and 5 explore, the view of the self as located, and even constituted by an attachment to a specific time and space is radically at odds with a liberal self-perception, one cloaked in universalising notions of personhood and constituted by disembodiment and abstraction.

Locating liberal subjectivity in a so-called non-corporeal capacity for rational thought means that discourses of protection (a notion central to that of accompaniment) operate in particular ways. These will be explored in chapter 6 and 7 as I explore the tension between an understanding of protective-accompaniment that acknowledges the role of the body and

⁶³ Goldberg, *Racist Culture* 4

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Hagar Kotef, *Movement and the Ordering of Freedom: On Liberal Governances of Mobility* (North Carolina, UNITED STATES: Duke University Press, 2015) 62 <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1964309>

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Haraway, Donna. 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective'. *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 584

hence mobilises the accompanier-body's vulnerabilities for political ends, and those, like EAPPI's which see protection as more reliant on the moral impact of being present than the impact of one's body standing between a victim and an aggressor. In particular, chapter 7 explores the gendering of EAPPI's understanding of protection and the body. Referring to the John Locke's well-known formulation that "every man has a property in his own person" Carole Pateman explores this liberal structure of thought as "the patriarchal construction of the individual as masculine owner".⁶⁸ Here the subject is constructed as masculine, detached from and superior to that which he owns and presumes to have the responsibility to protect. This divide between a masculine subject/mind (owner)— that nevertheless presents itself as universal and disembodied— and a feminised object/body (property) facilitates the conception of the Universal subject as detached, paternalistic protector.⁶⁹ In this thesis, whilst these gendered discourses of protection are explored in detail in one chapter, broadly speaking it is this paternalistic, hierarchical relationship between subject and object, masculine and feminine, protector and protected, accompanier and accompanied is the subject of my critique throughout.

This all being said, while I focus on liberalism as a political and philosophical ideology, and while I refer to Goldberg's definition of the liberal self, I do not intend to suggest that liberalism offers a fully coherent or stable vision of subjectivity, nor do I suggest liberalism as an ideology can be divorced from its practice.⁷⁰ And here I follow Kotef's lead when— rather than seeing abstractness as a characteristic of liberal subjectivity she examines abstractness as a project or ideal. Broaching the plethora of critiques of liberalism which assume that the claims of universalism act as a fig leaf for the particularities of the gendered, classed, racialised subject, Kotef argues that abstractness is not simply a liberal myth that requires only to be debunked. Instead, abstractness is "a *political artefact*", a "regulative ideal that is never actualised but still cannot be thought of simply as a façade."⁷¹ Thus, in this thesis when I refer to impartiality, universalism, abstractness, disembodiment or ahistoricism as simultaneously liberal characteristics and liberal fictions, I do not mean to infer that such

⁶⁸Second Treatise of Government, John Locke, quoted in Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Cambridge : Polity Press, 1988)13; Ibid. 14

⁶⁹ See Marion Young, Iris, 'The Logic of Masculinist Protection: Reflections on the Current Security State', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 29, no. 1 (2003) 1–25; Judith Butler, *The Force of Nonviolence: An Ethico-Political Bind* (Brooklyn: Verso Books, 2020).

⁷⁰ Kotef, H. 'On Abstractness: First Wave Liberal Feminism and the Construction of the Abstract Woman'. *Feminist Studies* Vol. 35, no. No. 3 (Fall 2009)

⁷¹ Ibid. 499, 496

understandings of the self are *only* illusionary and are thus easily dismissed or counteracted. In many of the chapters I draw attention to moments in which a particular aspect of the Universal liberal subject is revealed to be fictional. These moments of revelation are most often the result of companions finding themselves in a situation of encounter with the Palestinians they accompany—those inhabitants of and resisters to the settler-colonial context. Sometimes these moments of revelation manifest in the form of Palestinian accounts of history, Palestinian anger, Palestinian refusals, Palestinian invitations to action or Palestinian calls for EAPPI to reassess their current praxis, and each of these moments bring the illusionary nature of liberal and colonial narratives of selfhood to light. Thus, it is often the testimony of Palestinians and the addresses they make to EAPPI’s companions which challenge and disrupt the fictional narratives of liberalism. The colonizing self cannot be entirely separated from liberal ideology, and vice versa, the “ideology and theory of liberalism is forged within conditions of settler-colonialism”.⁷² It is therefore understandable that it is those who work to resist settler-colonialism who are best placed to reveal the fictions of the colonisers’ liberalism.

I present these moments of revelation as points of limit; they mark the places in which liberal conceptions of self and Other constrain accompaniment praxis, but this means they are also pregnant with the possibility for change—they show up as places of interpellation, moments in which EAPPI is being called to a different way of *both acting and being*. However, these moments which indicate the route towards a new direction for EAPPI, moments which appeal to a different understanding of self, are often insufficient to dislodge investments that have been made in ideology, and affective attachments to particular subject positions or forms of intervention.⁷³ In saying this, my understanding of the workings of these ‘fictions’ of liberal ideology is supported by Said’s description of Orientalist discourse. He writes “One ought never to assume that the structure of Orientalism is nothing more than a structure of lies or of myths which, were the truth about them to be told, would simply blow away”.⁷⁴ Therefore, I highlight the investments that have been made in particular ways of conceiving of the companioner-self, the relationship between ideology and practice, and the ways that ideology

⁷² Hagar Kotef, *The Colonizing Self: Or, Home and Homelessness in Israel/Palestine*, Theory in Forms (Durham : Duke University Press, 2020) 75

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1979) 6

is both productive of and *preventative* of certain subjectivities and certain modes of intervention.

4:1 Methodology: Gate-keepers, roadblocks and re-routing into the archives

Throughout this research project I have kept in mind a question that the activist and anthropologist Diane Nelson poses. She asks: “How am I to understand the dissonance between what I think I am doing (whether that is social science or solidarity) and what we are understood to be doing?”.⁷⁵ Seeing the importance of exploring this question in relation to EAPPI’s work, initially I had planned to carry out extended periods of fieldwork in the oPt to gather a range of Palestinian perspectives on EAPPI’s work as well as offering me opportunity to engage closely and critically with EAPPI’s work on the ground. While all research methods are dependent on a multitude of external factors which lie beyond the researcher’s control, ethnographic research is especially dependent on such things – it is “a mode of knowing that depends on the particular relationship formed by a particular anthropologist with a particular set of people in a particular time and place”.⁷⁶ As a former EAPPI accompanier, my insider status was a definite advantage for this project. It provided me with the ability to recruit participants and be allowed to spend time with accompaniers both in the UK and in the oPt. It allowed me to nurture relationships of trust both with the organisation and with the accompaniers I interviewed and spent time with. On the other hand, the dual elements of my positioning as a researcher/ex-accompanier could not then be untangled on demand. When on my way to conduct fieldwork in the oPt I presented at the Israeli passport control needing the Israeli authorities’ permission to access to occupied Palestine. However, as an ex-EAPPI volunteer, I was read as a pro-Palestinian activist, despite all EAPPI’s efforts to *not* present as pro-Palestinian, and I was not allowed entry into the oPt. Following six or seven hours of being detained at the airport and being threatened with deportation, I was finally given permission to stay in Israel but not to enter the occupied West Bank.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Nelson, *A Finger in the Wound*. 68

⁷⁶ Ruth Behar, *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart* (Boston : Beacon Press, 1996). 5.

⁷⁷ A significant number of activists are prevented from entering Israel and the oPt every year. As well as the ban on entry for individuals or organisations suspected of supporting the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign (BDS), many others are simply refused entry without an exact explanation of the reasons why. Some reports indicate that the frequency of those being barred entry is higher for people of colour and those with a Muslim sounding name, and on anecdotal evidence this appears to me to be true. For me however, on this specific occasion, my white privilege and a British passport was not enough to grant me entry. Jakril Hoque

Anthropologists use the language of gate-keepers to name those who control access to interlocutors or a particular field site. Here, the Israeli border force were quite literally the gate-keepers, preventing my access to a field site which they hold under military occupation, and forcing me to reroute my research plans. Because most of the work that EAPPI teams carry out is in the West Bank, only being able to stay on the Israeli side of the green line effectively put an end to most of my fieldwork plans for that trip. I stayed in Jerusalem doing as much as was possible from there, and then returned home. A reluctance to try my luck again, combined with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns a few months later meant that I did not return to conduct further research in the oPt.

The “the absence of the Palestinian voice is reminiscent of the elimination of the Palestinian body” writes Barakat;⁷⁸ a concern to avoid the reproduction of such logics of elimination through this thesis has formed an ethical issue with which I have spent a considerable amount of time and emotional energy wrestling over the course of the project.⁷⁹ One of the main unfortunate consequences of these events was thus that I was only able to provide a very limited Palestinian perspective on EAPPI’s work. In order to counteract this problematic, wherever possible I have tried to provide the reader with moments of encounter with the fragments of Palestinian voice which emerged in my findings, despite the Israeli regime/COVID-related odds stacked against me gaining access to it. Sometimes this Palestinian voice became audible as I tried to read the colonial-era archives against the grain— that is to say in the silences or through what was side-lined or barely present; on other occasions it was audible in the few interviews I was able to conduct with a very limited number of Palestinians whilst in the oPt; at other times the Palestinian voice was present but heard second hand, gleaned from a careful reading of the narratives companions told me about their experiences in the oPt. In this way, along with attending to the politics of citation, throughout this text I have endeavoured to place an emphasis on a number of connected but different calls, requests, invitations and utterances made by Palestinians to EAPPI the

“Israel denied me entry on the basis of my skin colour and religion”, *The Electronic Intifada*, July 27, 2014, <https://electronicintifada.net/content/israel-denied-me-entry-basis-my-skin-color-and-religion/11536>

⁷⁸ Ibid. 353

⁷⁹ See Katherine Natanel, ‘Affect, Excess & Settler Colonialism in Palestine/Israel’, *Settler Colonial Studies*, 18 August 2022, 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2022.2112427>.

for more on the ethical anxieties of writing on Palestine without reproducing settler-colonial logics and recentring a Zionist narrative

organisation and to individual accompaniers. Paying attention to the presence of Palestinian voices in my empirical material and the scholarship wherever possible, is, as I see it, a way for non-Palestinian accompaniers and scholars to form what Haraway called a “web of connection” with a subjugated viewpoint. This entails accepting that one’s view is always partial “always constructed and stitched together imperfectly, and *therefore* able to join with another”, but in drawing close to the perspective of those who are oppressed, it is then possible to obtain a more complete, more objective understanding.⁸⁰

4:2 The search for colonial continuities

I do not reference these fieldwork difficulties as an attempt to exceptionalise my experiences. As anthropologist Kamala Visweswaran recounts, failure and limitation are inescapably part of ethnographic labour and might also be experiences which are potent with opportunity for learning.⁸¹ And indeed they have been. After returning from Jerusalem, I was even more alert to the extent to which Israeli state power dictates the terms on which Palestine is engaged with by international solidarity and accompaniment activists. Although in theory I knew this without having had this experience, having learnt it in this very embodied way meant it was an issue that altered my thinking and changed the way I analysed the materials gathered throughout the project. Nonetheless, these events shaped the project in very practical ways. Spending many hours finding an alternative route to circumvent a newly erected military roadblock is a familiar and exhausting feature of everyday life for Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank. For me, this is not my daily reality, but in these circumstances, a lack of access to the West Bank meant I was forced to find a new and productive route towards what I had been hoping to achieve in this research.

This searching led me to a new field site, one situated in a temporally rather than spatially distant locality which allowed me to add another dimension to the research. The archives enabled me to find evidence of liberal ideologies of selfhood in the British Mandate era and see how these modes of self-fashioning connected to discourse found in EAPPI of the 21st century. I thus sought evidence accounts of colonial actors who talked about their role in

⁸⁰ Donna Haraway, ‘Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective’, *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988) 586

⁸¹ Kamala Visweswaran, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography* (Minneapolis, UNITED STATES: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/detail.action?docID=310282>. This being said, Visweswaran does not celebrate failure simply as an opportunity for success. She does not see failure in such a romantic hue as this.

Mandate Palestine in a way that connected with the ‘constructs of thought’ and ‘ways of being’ that I was finding in EAPPI’s discourse and practice. In juxtaposing the ethnographic materials from EAPPI with the archival documents from the Mandate era and searching for liberal ontologies of selfhood in both of them, I was able to examine the ways in which accompaniment praxis reproduces and/or disrupts regimes of imperial, gendered, racialised power that run like threads from the imperial past to the settler-colonial present.

My approach to this search was deliberating quite random and unstructured. I scavenged⁸² for the evidence I sought, working on the understanding that, as explained above, since liberal ideologies and philosophies themselves emerged during the era of European colonialism, the liberal self was therefore also a colonial self. This means that liberal discourse could permeate any and every colonial account of intervention into the colonies, and so could feasibly be found anywhere in colonial era accounts of intervention in whatever capacity. Thus, my method was initially one of wide reading, searching and scavenging in a number of different locations and archival collections. I began by searching for accounts written by any kind of British individual who played a role in the British Mandate era in Palestine, hoping to see in their writings how they articulated what it was they were doing and how they conceived of the relationship between themselves and the various inhabitants of Palestine. I kept an open mind about the type of role and the exact time frame I was interested in (except for ensuring accounts were written pre-1948). I read letters of British missionaries working with Christian Missions Society in the late 19th- early 20th Century,⁸³ I scoured diaries, letters and photograph albums of British soldiers and policemen serving in Palestine the 1920’s-1940’s.⁸⁴ I read some British parliamentary debate on Palestine from the 1930’s.⁸⁵ I also spent time transcribing my great-grandfather’s diary, searching for ways in which a British soldier in the pre-Mandate era saw himself and his role as part of the British army in relation to the place in which he was ‘intervening’. In the accounts written by politicians, soldiers and policemen I had found amongst other things discourses of British impartiality, friendship with ‘both sides’, the privileges of mobility, and discourses of moral superiority. And, while

⁸² Halberstam, Jack. *Female Masculinity*. Durham, UNITED STATES: Duke University Press, 1998. Halberstam writes about “scavenger methodologies” as a queer research methodology needed when circumstances dictate that one must craft a methodology out of what is available in politically sensitive circumstances.

⁸³ The Christian Mission Society archive in The Cadbury Research Library, The University of Birmingham

⁸⁴ The Imperial War Museum Collection, The Imperial War Museum, London

⁸⁵ Found on *Hansard, UK Parliament*, <https://hansard.parliament.uk/>

my reading of these other colonial era texts continued to influence my analysis⁸⁶ and some became part of this text, ultimately, I felt that the PWC documents were of most relevance to this study of accompaniment.⁸⁷

The PWC and EAPPI shared a number of similarities. Although EAPPI is a WCC programme, in the UK and Ireland it is facilitated by the Quakers.⁸⁸ In the following chapter I also explain how the accompaniment model itself was influenced by Quaker thinking and practice. Thus, both the PWC and EAPPI are connected to the Quakers,⁸⁹ and both carried out advocacy work. In a similar way to which EAPPI accompaniers gain an eyewitness testimony of the situation in Occupied Palestine and then advocate for an end to the occupation, the PWC engaged in advocacy work on the basis that they had a direct line to the “real facts of the case”⁹⁰ thanks to their missionary informants, a wide reading of newspapers and reports (including translations of Arabic language papers) and making visits to the region. They then sought to keep the British public informed about “the position between Arabs and Jews in Palestine”⁹¹ and this dispersal of information extended to members of parliament as they petitioned the Prime Minister and colonial officials in Westminster on

⁸⁶For example, in chapter 2 I reflect on the experience of reading of my great-grandfather’s diary and the connections which formed between his travels, the travels of a member of the PWC and my own travels to Palestine as an accompanier and a researcher. In chapter 5 I rely on my reading of parliamentary debate from the time of the Arab Revolt in the later 1930’s to evidence the connections I make between a discourse of moderation and a discourse of impartiality and peace and reconciliation.

⁸⁷ Which co-incidentally, were archived in a library based in the same building in which EAPPI Britain and Ireland has its offices. This process of searching was also broken short by the outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic in March 2020.

⁸⁸ The Quakers are not part of the WCC.

⁸⁹ In fact the EAPPI training programme takes place in the same building that the PWC archives are housed in Friends House, London. There was also a large amount of British Quaker involvement in the set up of the whole international EAPPI programme in the early 2000’s.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ ‘Report of conversation which Arnold S Rowntree and John H. Robson had with his Excellency The High commissioner of Palestine’, 25.10.1934, TEMP MSS 637/5, folder 5, Lucy Backhouse Papers, The Library of the Society of Friends, Friends House, London (hereafter cited as LB Papers, FH) Despite the problematics of some of the terminology used in the archives, for example ‘Arab’ and ‘Jew’, I have chosen to use the language of the archives when referring to archival material rather than imposing my own categories and terminology on the way that the writers saw the world at that time. I acknowledge that the use of these categories is problematic on several counts. It is discourse which has constructed contemporary understandings of the situation in Israel and Palestine as a conflict between two opposing sides, one of which is defined primarily by its religion rather than its politics. It suggests that the population of Palestine at that time can be easily divided along the lines of those who are not Jewish and those who are; and those who are, and are not Arab, is if there is nothing specific about Arabs from Palestine as opposed to Arabs from Syria or Egypt. It is also language which obscures the presence of indigenous Arab-Jews in Palestine during the Mandate era. As Kotef and Evri explain, during the years of the Mandate, along with Arab Palestinians there were Zionist Jews and Palestinian Jews, native Jews and Jews that immigrated from Europe; and entirely strict lines of division between such groups cannot always be easily nor simplistically maintained. For more on this see Yuval Evri and Hagar Kotef, ‘When Does a Native Become a Settler? (With Apologies to Zreik and Mamdani)’, *Constellations* 29, no. 1 (March 2022): 3–18, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.12470>.

various matters. Yet, there are of course vast differences between the two groups: the PWC was not a protective accompaniment organisation, it was more overtly spiritual or religious and worked with Quaker missionaries, and unlike EAPPI was not against engaging in proselytising activities. It also had very particular aims and objectives as an arm of Quaker peace and social action rooted firmly in the pacifist tradition.

This archival research was carried out at the same time as conducting and transcribing interviews with EAPPI accompaniers. Reading and analysing both EAPPI and the PWC documents simultaneously helped me be particularly attentive to the connections which appeared when one source was allowed to ‘speak’ to the other. In Chandra Frank’s work on archival methodologies she explains how she juxtapositions two different archives from different locations and eras. I followed this approach as like her I sought the formation of new connections “across oceans, buildings, boxes and folders.”⁹² For Frank, connections were drawn between the materials from different collections because she allowed for their aliveness in the moment of reading, arguing that the texts are not “fixed in the moment of their production”.⁹³ As I traced connections between the archives and the interview data I also tried to learn a particular attentiveness to the materials themselves. On the one hand to notice when there were no connections. And on the other, to remain aware that, as Stoler reminds us, while imperial dispositions have “tenacious presence” they often manifest themselves in “less obvious ways”.⁹⁴ When detecting the impact of the colonial past on the present Stoler says:

Its impress may be intangible, but it is not a faint scent of the past. It may be an indelible if invisible gash. It may sometimes be a trace but more often an enduring fissure, a durable mark. One task, then, is to train our senses beyond the more easily identifiable forms that some colonial scholarship schools us to recognize and see.⁹⁵

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Chandra Frank, ‘Sister Outsider and Audre Lorde in the Netherlands: On Transnational Queer Feminisms and Archival Methodological Practices’, *Feminist Review* 121, no. 1 (March 2019): 17 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0141778918818753>.

⁹⁴ Ann Laura Stoler, *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* (Duke University Press Books, 2016) 4
Barbara Heron, *Desire for Development Whiteness, Gender, and the Helping Imperative* / (Waterloo, Ont. : Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2007), <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/detail.action?docID=685670>.

⁹⁵ Ibid. 5

These words have been a guide for me, preventing me from being too swift to grasp hold of what appeared at first glance to constitute a ready-made connection between the past and the present; I tried instead to sift carefully through what I was reading, remaining alive to the context in which those PWC documents originated and yet also allowing the connections between materials to speak in the moment of reading, as Frank advises they should.⁹⁶

5: Overview of the thesis

My critique of accompaniment in this thesis covers 5 different areas of EAPPI's work. I begin with looking at the sense of responsibility to intervene in the oPt that underpins EAPPI's work. Next, I move on to discuss the politics of British accompaniers' presence in the oPt and implications of that on the accompanier-accompaniment relationship. The next chapter examines the political climate in which EAPPI seeks to operate both around the world and in the oPt. Fourthly, I examine the way accompaniment works according to EAPPI's notion of 'principled impartiality', and lastly, I examine accompaniment as the endeavour to provide protection for Palestinians.

Before beginning this analysis, the following two chapters provide further introduction and context for what follows. In **chapter 1** I introduce EAPPI as an accompaniment organisation. Via the accounts of accompaniers who participated in this project I give a brief overview of the various aspects of the accompaniment role in the oPt and the UK, and provide some Palestinian perspectives on these different activities. I also locate EAPPI's position as an accompaniment organisation in the longer and wider picture of transnational solidarity with Palestine, and examine EAPPI's founding narrative as a World Council of Churches (WCC), initiative created in response to a request from Palestinian churches. The WCC has its own history of intervention into Palestine which helps us understand some of the ways in which EAPPI frames itself as a humanitarian, non-partisan, apolitical intervention. Overall, this chapter argues that even though accompaniment praxis on some levels defies straightforward categorisation, in the context of the oPt accompaniment praxis can be understood both as one of a variety of types of intervention within the more general category of transnational solidarity activism, *and* as a form of humanitarian intervention.

⁹⁶ For more on listening to materials in archival work see also Mariam Motamedi Fraser, 'Once upon a Problem', *The Sociological Review* 60, no. 1_suppl (June 2012): 84–107, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2012.02118.x>.

Chapter 2 focuses on the process of carrying out research and writing. In the first section I detail the methods used in the project and provide information on the research participants and the Quaker archive material. In the second half, I reflect on my own positionality within the research project, and explore parts of my own process of reckoning with implication in relation to both reading my great-grandfather's diary, and a map I found in the archives. This analysis is then used to comment on the way these experiences shaped my approach to the writing of this thesis.

Chapter 3 examines what it is that motivates accompaniers to involve themselves in the situation in Palestine and to choose to become an accompanier with EAPPI. The reason for beginning my empirical chapters with this analysis is to better understand the sense of responsibility to intervene which undergirds EAPPI's approach to its work and which then impacts on the accompanier-accompanied relationship. In this chapter I shed light on the colonial logics being reproduced in accompaniers' desires to 'make a difference' and examine discourses of moral responsibility found in the PWC archives. I argue that liberal and colonial discourses of an abstract self, de-territorialised from a particular social and political location currently limits EAPPI's imaginings of responsibility and suggest that a different conceptualisation of responsibility to intervene is needed. The conceptualisation of responsibility which I propose instead is one that relies firstly on a more structural understanding of injustice of the situation into which accompaniment intervenes; and secondly, on a more collective, political conceptualisation of the accompanier subject.

Chapter 4 moves to the oPt, focusing on what I call Balfour Conversations, where Palestinians ask British accompaniers to apologise for the impact of British imperialism in the oPt. This chapter explores the ways in which accompaniers respond to the call to reckon with their implication as a result of British imperial histories and by extension contemporary Israeli settler-colonial violence. To understand accompaniers' reactions of defensiveness, shock and anger I show how liberal discourses of the disembodied, objective and ahistorical self, and EAPPI's framing of itself as an anti-occupation organisation limits accompaniers' willingness and ability to see themselves as implicated subjects. I argue that in these Balfour Conversations EAPPI is being invited to listen carefully to the subaltern point of view, to accept a different understanding of the Palestinian past and present and to let listening be a practice which grounds accompaniment work in a less paternalistic, less hierarchical accompanier-accompanied relationship.

Chapter 5 considers the difficulties accompaniment organisations face when they send activists to the oPt and when they advocate for Palestinian rights back at home. EAPPI's balanced, non-partisan approach is shown to be one way in which EAPPI avoids campaigns of delegitimization and false accusations of anti-Semitism, but such an approach cannot be simply read as strategic, it is also a process of subjectification. Having highlighted the impact of conceptions of the individualised, morally autonomous, ahistorical and disembodied accompanier-self as in the previous chapters, this chapter explores the impact of the belief that 'balance' is a liberal good. Through a consideration of the way the Other is used to craft the EAPPI's and the accompaniers' own identity, and through recourse to the PWC archives, I show that there are colonial and Orientalist continuities in the discourses of balance and moderation which impact on those who are seen as Other to the accompanier self. While avoiding appearing pro-Palestinian might be a pragmatic approach in many ways, self-fashioning as balanced and moderate is shown to have a detrimental effect on the reputation of those groups and actors who are indeed Palestinian, and so equates to a failure to challenge settler-colonial logics which seek to eradicate Palestinians and to destroy the Palestinian struggle to remain. Finally, connecting back to the humanitarian subject positioning explored in chapter 3, an epilogue draws on fragments from the archives to ponder what a so-called 'moderate' Palestinian from the 1930's might have to say about EAPPI's 'moderate' stance today.

Chapter 6 links to the idea of balance by exploring EAPPI's non-partisan stance, this time focusing on their 'principled impartiality' statement which explains EAPPI's reliance on a human rights and international humanitarian law framing.⁹⁷ Discourses of abstraction and disembodiment take centre stage in this chapter, exploring how accompaniers' understanding of solidarity is understood as a disembodied notion of support for human rights. However, rather than an abstract ideal, principled impartiality is also an embodied mode of intervention in the oPt. It is evident that, regardless of how EAPPI's impartiality is intended to be perceived, as an *ideal* which becomes practice, it has a very real impact on the Palestinian struggle. This chapter thus outlines the ways in which principled impartiality as both a discourse and a practice places limits on EAPPI's support for and friendship with

⁹⁷ "We are not pro-Israeli or pro-Palestinian and we do not take sides in the conflict. We are pro-human rights and international humanitarian law" "Key Principles of Accompaniment", *EAPPI* accessed January 4, 2023 <https://eappi.org/en/our-model>

Palestinians. In this chapter I highlight a Palestinian request which calls EAPPI away from a benevolent version of support, a stance still embroiled in colonial, racialised and gendered hierarchies of power, and invites them into a different kind of more relational, more participatory, Palestinian led form of intervention.

Chapter 7 is the last main empirical chapter and here I further explore the dynamics of the relationship between Palestinians and companions by examining the logics upon which EAPPI's protective presence practice is based. The chapter discusses instances of cross-racial sexual violence in the oPt, but this is not the main focus, instead the chapter is centred on what the discourses surrounding sexual violence reveal about understandings of and practices of protection in accompaniment. I suggest that the concept of protection operative within accompaniment is a gendered one which creates a paternalistic dependency rather than acknowledging the protected subject's capacity for interdependency with companions. I argue that the discourse of the invulnerable, independent, masculine protector limits the possibilities for a less paternalistic, more interdependent notion of protection in accompaniment praxis. I propose the need for a renegotiation of the power dynamics between the 'protector' and the 'protected' but also raise questions that challenge all that EAPPI's protective presence accompaniment strategy is based on, raising the possibility that it might be time to more fully reassess both EAPPI's claims to be offering Palestinians' protection, and more widely, the future of transnational accompaniments' role within the Palestinian struggle.

Chapter 8 concludes the thesis by offering a summary of the arguments I have made in the thesis. This allows me to reflect on the limitations of this study and finally, to think practically about what accompaniment organisations like EAPPI might be able to put into practice as a result of this research.

Chapter 1: What is accompaniment? Who is EAPPI?

This thesis takes accompaniment as its object of study, examining EAPPI as a case through which to better understand the politics and impact of accompaniment praxis in the oPt context.⁹⁸ However, despite my conviction that accompaniment praxis is a subject worthy of study, it is important to note that accompaniment is not always a clearly defined form of international intervention. Firstly, there are substantial variations in both ideology and practice between organisations using accompaniment, and secondly there are many organisations which do not use the term ‘accompaniment’ but carry out similar forms of intervention. As Julian and Schweitzer emphasise, in every place in which this type of intervention is used, the work is very “context specific; it is adapted and developed by the people who work on the ground.”⁹⁹ Therefore, this study should primarily be read as a study of how accompaniment operates in the oPt rather than making claims on behalf of accompaniment practices more generally, even though the study does have implications for accompaniment in wider contexts.

In order to help set the scene, this chapter provides some background information on the ecumenical organisation which set EAPPI up, the context of the early 2000’s when EAPPI began its work in the oPt, and variety of roles played by EAPPI accompaniers when in the oPt and their home countries. Firstly, drawing on interviews with past and current EAPPI activists, the EAPPI website and mission statement, and scholarly accounts of transnational solidarity and human rights activism, I describe accompaniment in relation to both EAPPI’s public-facing descriptions and Palestinians’ experience of accompaniment. I do not pretend that this adds up to a comprehensive account of accompaniment; rather, it forms a series of snapshots which will become something more complete when viewed alongside the ensuing descriptions in subsequent chapters. Secondly, this chapter positions the EAPPI programme

⁹⁸ For examples of studies of accompaniment activism in Palestine see for example Matthew P. Eddy, “‘We Have to Bring Something Different to This Place’: Principled and Pragmatic Nonviolence Among Accompaniment Workers”, *Social Movement Studies* 13, no. 4 (2 October 2014): 443–64 <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2013.833853>; Patrick G. Coy, ‘Nonpartisanship, Interventionism and Legality in Accompaniment: Comparative Analyses of Peace Brigades International, Christian Peacemaker Teams, and the International Solidarity Movement’, *International Journal of Human Rights* 16, no. 7 (October 2012): 963-981; Marlaina A. Leppert-Wahl, ‘Pacifist Activists: Christian Peacemakers in Palestine 1995-2014’ (Ph.D., United States -- Ohio, University of Cincinnati, 2014), <https://search.proquest.com/pqdthss/docview/1619354829/abstract/27B3377DE5F4412FPQ/6.>;

⁹⁹ Rachel Julian and Christine Schweitzer, ‘The Origins and Development of Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping’, *Peace Review* 27, no. 1 (2 January 2015): 1 <https://doi.org/10.1080/10402659.2015.1000181>

in the wider context of both transnational solidarity activism in the oPt and in the context of its institutional history by examining the World Council of Churches (WCC)'s historic humanitarian work. In telling these two stories I begin to make a case—which will be further developed across the thesis—that despite the difficulties of categorising accompaniment, EAPPI's accompaniment praxis should be understood within the wider, more general category of transnational solidarity activism *and* as a form of depoliticised, humanitarian intervention.

1.1 What do accompaniers do?

The accompaniment model was initially developed by an organisation called Peace Brigades International (PBI) in the 1980's when international volunteers were sent to offer protective accompaniment for local human rights activists vulnerable to acts of state violence in Guatemala and Nicaragua. Accompaniment is a practice which PBI say draws on both the traditions of the Quakers and of Mahatma Gandhi. "The Quaker belief in personal service and the Gandhian philosophy and practice of nonviolence come together in the notion of accompaniment".¹⁰⁰ One of the ideas is that international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights legislation act as a moral and legal justification for bringing foreign nationals into situations of violence, hoping that their unarmed presence will shame those perpetrators of human rights violations out of violent actions. Accompaniment scholars, Eguren and Mahony, describe accompaniment as deterrence and explain the rationale in very straightforward terms:

A state concerned with its political and economic relationships with other more powerful nations presumably wants to minimize the political cost of its human rights practices. Embarrassing actions witnessed by foreigners can result in economic and political pressure. So those who are accompanied by foreigners are less likely to be attacked.¹⁰¹

In the oPt, a number of international and Israeli organisations use an accompaniment approach. This includes the Community Peacemakers Teams (CPT), the International

¹⁰⁰ Liam Mahony, *Human Rights Defenders Under Attack*, London, Peace Brigades International-UK, marking PBI's 25th anniversary, 2 <http://www.peacebrigades.org/publications/books-from-pbi/>.

¹⁰¹ Eguren, and Mahony, *Unarmed Bodyguards* 84

Solidarity Movement (ISM), the International Women’s Peace Service, Operation Dove and Ta’ayush among others, and among these organisations there is a certain amount of variation in practice and ideology.¹⁰² Charmaine Seitz remarks that ISM resists “tidy packaging” and that in relation to other international activist groups in the oPt “for most Palestinians, the groups are lumped together under the catch all “ajanib” (foreigners) rather than distinguished by the array of confusing acronyms in the field.”¹⁰³ As Mathew Eddy noted, organisations using accompaniment in the oPt might work together on a daily basis, but they also wrestle while doing so with the many “heterogeneous tactical and ideological orientations” that different ones of them take.¹⁰⁴ This variety is also reflected in the variety of terminology used by both scholars and practitioners of protective accompaniment. Rachel Julian uses the term Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping (UCP) as an overarching term for a range of activities practiced by a range of organisations; what unites them, she and Russell Gasser note, is that these groups hold to common principles. “The terms practitioners use for UCP include: peace teams, accompaniment, unarmed civilian protection and third party nonviolent intervention.”¹⁰⁵ The three principles they refer to are those of non-violence, the fact that peace-keeping is done by civilians not the military, and that teams work in consultation with the local community.¹⁰⁶ Other scholars emphasise the fact that observation and witnessing are also an important part of the tactics adopted by many of these organisations. Some refer to accompaniers as “Unarmed observers” or “Human rights observers”,¹⁰⁷ and others speak of “accompaniment-observer solidarity” activists.¹⁰⁸ My use of the terms *accompaniment* and *accompaniers* comes from EAPPI’s reliance on the PBI accompaniment model, and the fact

¹⁰² For more on the many similarities and differences between EAPPI and the work of other international solidarity organisations working in oPt see Marwan Darweish and Andrew Rigby, *Popular Protest in Palestine: The Uncertain Future of Unarmed Resistance* (London, UNITED KINGDOM: Pluto Press, 2015) For an overview of the differences between these organisations see Coy, ‘Nonpartisanship, Interventionism and Legality in Accompaniment: Comparative Analyses of Peace Brigades International, Christian Peacemaker Teams, and the International Solidarity Movement’.

¹⁰³ Charmaine Seitz, ‘ISM At the Crossroads: The Evolution of the International Solidarity Movement’, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 32, no. 4 (1 July 2003) 51

¹⁰⁴ Matthew P. Eddy, “‘We Have to Bring Something Different to This Place’: Principled and Pragmatic Nonviolence Among Accompaniment Workers’, *Social Movement Studies* 13, no. 4 (2 October 2014) 444

¹⁰⁵ Rachel Julian and Russell Gasser, ‘Soldiers, Civilians and Peacekeeping – Evidence and False Assumptions’, *International Peacekeeping* 26, no. 1 (January 2019): 28, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2018.1503933>;

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. for more on an overview of UCP see also Julian and Schweitzer, ‘The Origins and Development of Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping’ and Rachel Julian, ‘The Transformative Impact of Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping’, *Global Society* 34, no. 1 (2 January 2020): 99–111, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2019.1668361>.

¹⁰⁷ Eddy “‘We Have to Bring Something Different to This Place’: Principled and Pragmatic Nonviolence Among Accompaniment Workers’

¹⁰⁸ Mahrouse *Conflicted Commitments*

that EAPPI's initials stand for the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme and its name for those who volunteer for the programme Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs).¹⁰⁹

1:2 EAPPI's accompaniment – in theory and practice

EAPPI's overall aim is to help bring about an end to the Israeli occupation and they use the accompaniment model to do so. Accompaniment praxis encompasses a range of different activities and elements, but how does EAPPI, the accompaniers themselves and the accompanied understand this varied role?

EAPPI summarises some of the different principles which guide their work on their website. One important one is **Protective Presence**. This is described in the following way:

Our presence makes the costs of human rights abuses more apparent to the perpetrators, persuades them to act differently, and deters attacks on civilians.¹¹⁰

This means that on a daily basis accompaniers are present in spaces where Palestinians are especially vulnerable to settler-colonial violence, for example when they go shepherding or picking olives, or walking to school. One example of the human rights violations that EAPPI seeks to deter or mitigate is the Israeli block on Palestinians' freedom of movement. Accompaniers monitor checkpoints in the hope that their presence will make a difference, hoping for example that their presence ensures Palestinians are not prevented from passing through on arbitrary pretences. There is also the hope that there might be fewer delays for Palestinians, or that in a general sense Palestinians are 'treated better' if accompaniers are present. One accompanier, Becky, told me a story which indicates how EAPPI's presence at checkpoints is appreciated by some Palestinians. The EAPPI team had been absent from their normal position monitoring a checkpoint between Bethlehem and Jerusalem:

... we [the EAPPI team] weren't there for a week [away for training] and we came back with our petty cash cheques, sat in the bank [in Bethlehem] and got chatting to a

¹⁰⁹ For the sake of simplicity, throughout the thesis I refer to EAPPI participants as accompaniers, whether I am referring to their work in the oPt or in the UK. In the language used by the organisation participants are referred to as EAs and whilst I do not use this term, it will appear in some of the excerpts from interviews with accompaniers.

¹¹⁰ "Our Model", *EAPPI* accessed January 4, 2023 <https://eappi.org/en/our-model>

woman. And she said ‘Where have you been all week? I work in a school in Jerusalem, and I got a warning because I was late for work, and I think you make a difference.’¹¹¹

Another of EAPPI’s accompaniment tasks is that of **monitoring of human rights violations**. Their website says:

When presence cannot completely halt human rights violations, we are there to monitor and report these abuses to the United Nations and other human rights agencies.¹¹²

This means accompaniers report on everything that happens which could be described as a human rights violation: they will show up when Palestinian homes have been demolished by the Israeli army or in the aftermath of an army raid on a Palestinian community in order to collect information and file reports. Sometimes accompaniers emphasised this element of the role over and above their ability to provide protection or to minimise the likelihood of violations occurring in the first place. In this quote another accompanier, Anna, is clear that the role at the checkpoints was one of monitoring and reporting. She told me about a Palestinian woman who had not been allowed through a checkpoint from the West Bank into Jerusalem for Friday prayers, and had got frustrated with the accompaniers that they could not help her in the way she wanted:

We were at the checkpoint one time and she [a Palestinian woman] came over. I think she had gotten the wrong idea of what EAPPI could do at the checkpoint, I think she thought we could get her through to pray on a Friday and I was trying to tell her we are here to monitor, and we put it in a report. And we said we could give you this number [of a humanitarian phone line] or different things like that, but she thought we could like physically bring her across, and we had to say no, we can’t help you that day....But as time went on we knew that those figures went into a report...and that we can’t actually help the people at the checkpoint. But we did get the humanitarian gate open a few times to allow people to cross.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Interview with Becky, UK, February 2020

¹¹² “Our Model”, *EAPPI* accessed January 4, 2023 <https://eappi.org/en/our-model>

¹¹³ Telephone interview with Anna, UK, February 2020

In an interview I carried out with a Palestinian teacher in Jerusalem's old city, both EAPPI's report writing, and protective presence action was emphasised:

Somehow the EAPPI and the other organisations they give us hope, in some ways, it is not a big hope, but it is a slight hope, and we deal with this. And some of the people [Palestinians] in the old city, they told me: where is the EAPPI? Where is the foreign people who come here to write reports, to protect the children about [from] the Israeli soldier and how they [the soldiers] behave with our students or our sons?¹¹⁴

However, one accompanier, Carolina, told me about her conversations with Palestinians who expressed more mixed feelings about accompaniers' requests for information:

In terms of [Palestinian] communities, and I think this goes for the [Palestinian EAPPI team] drivers as well, they are so tired of telling the same story over and over and not seeing any change. It was several villages we visited, and where: 'Oh internationals and foreigners come, and they take notes and they write things down and then they leave and we never' ...and they were like and what are they [accompaniers/foreigners] doing with that information, 'who are they going to tell that to? And it doesn't make any difference in my life, I haven't seen any change.' And then in the same meeting I remember one particular [man], he was 19 or 20 years old...and 20 minutes later we were talking and [he said] 'no really, thank you for coming, it gives us so much resilience and hope that you are here, and we can really appreciate that you are here and that you are not forgetting about us and that you are trying at least to tell the world.'¹¹⁵

It is very important to note that the accompaniment role is dependent on the co-operation of Palestinians. Many Palestinians all across the West Bank and Jerusalem give a great deal of their time, knowledge and hospitality to help accompaniers collect information for reports and stories for their 'eyewitness' testimonies of Palestinian life under occupation.

Palestinians have been asked to provide evidence of their own oppression for many, many

¹¹⁴ Interview, Jerusalem, October 2019

¹¹⁵ Interview, Jerusalem, October 2019

decades now, since the early days of their colonisation under the British when the first commissions began their investigations into the situation in Palestine.¹¹⁶ As Lori Allen writes, Palestinians “have tried to present their political demands for liberation in ways that those with final say over their fate might hear and understand their position...But more often than not, their demands have fallen on deaf ears.”¹¹⁷ On the one hand, in the above mentioned teacher explained that he saw his work with EAPPI as a role he could play in the Palestinian struggle: the fact that Palestinians continue to comply with accompaniers’ requests for information indicates that their faith in amassing proof of their oppression has not entirely been lost; but on the other hand, it may also be an indication of the lack of choices Palestinians actually have.

A third principle of accompaniment is **standing with local peace and human rights groups**. EAPPI writes:

We help focus global attention on the activities of Israeli and Palestinian peace groups, thereby increasing their credibility and capacity to work for reform.¹¹⁸

In practice this means that some EAPPI teams attend weekly stop the occupation demonstrations organised by an Israeli group of Women in Black activists in West Jerusalem, and other accompaniers help with activities organised by Ta’ayush, a coalition of Israelis and Palestinians working together using non-violent direct action methods. Accompaniers also visit a wide range of Palestinian and Israeli NGOs operating in the West Bank to learn more about their work.

EAPPI also places an emphasis on accompaniers’ roles as **witnesses**:

¹¹⁶ The first British colonial commission was a report on the Jaffa Riots in 1921 led by Sir Haycraft. One accompanier George in fact embodied this colonial continuity to some degree— his participation in the EAPPI programme is preceded by his great uncle’s leadership of one of the British commissions in Mandate Palestine in the 1920’s.

¹¹⁷ Lori Allen. ‘Determining Emotions and the Burden of Proof in Investigative Commissions to Palestine’. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 59, no. 2 (April 2017) 387

¹¹⁸ “Our Model”, EAPPI accessed January 4, 2023 <https://eappi.org/en/our-model>

First and foremost, our Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs) witness life under occupation. They have been invited by the local Heads of Churches to witness and accompany all those suffering in Palestine and Israel.¹¹⁹

Some Palestinians were said to express ambivalence about the witnessing aspect of internationals' presence. Anna told me about the following visit made by her team:

A: we went to a town outside of S... we had gone to meet the mayor, but he wasn't happy with us, he wanted concrete results. He said, 'if you wanted to see us you could have stayed at home in Australia or Ireland and looked at it [the impact of settler-colonial infrastructure on the town] from google maps.' He said he was very tired of telling people about this and he wanted to see action done.

BE: in terms of protective presence?

A: Yeah, I think they have a lot of problems with road closures, there used to be five roads in and out of the town and they are down to one and they [the Israeli military] lock it a lot of the time. I think the last time was for three months, so it really starves the town of education and employment opportunities and he said, 'that is the main issue that effects the town and I've seen nothing done about it.' He said, 'I am sick of talking to groups – you are all very, very welcome and I am glad that you are here, but I am sick of telling you this really.'

BE: just frustrated?

A: Yeah, no, he completely is, and we agreed with him as well.¹²⁰

It might appear fair to question the line between what is referred to as occupation tourism, and the witnessing aspect of accompaniment work.¹²¹ EAPPI stresses that there is an important point to this witnessing role given that **advocacy** is the final element of the accompaniment praxis. They say "EAs monitor and report human rights violations, bringing eyewitness accounts to the world's attention."¹²² And,

¹¹⁹ "Our Model: Witness", *EAPPI* accessed January 4, 2023 <https://eappi.org/en/our-model/witness>

¹²⁰ Telephone interview with Anna, February 2020

¹²¹ Jennifer Lynn Kelly includes analysis on this in her excellent book *Invited to Witness: Solidarity Tourism across Occupied Palestine*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1215/9781478023920>.

¹²² "Our Model: Engage", *EAPPI* accessed January 4, 2023 <https://eappi.org/en/our-model/engage>

When they return home, EAs use their first-hand experiences to open the eyes of the world to the realities of occupation and campaign for a just and peaceful resolution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict based on international law.¹²³

Yet, the following interview excerpt reveals the frustration many Palestinians felt about companions' witnessing/listening/story collecting role. Becky told me about meeting someone who had just had his restaurant demolished by the Israeli military and who wanted a more concrete offer of help:

We [Becky and her team] went to follow up on the demolition of a restaurant in B. And we talked to the owner, and various people had come out to talk to him and he was like 'what are you going to do for me, are you going to give me any money – no? All you can do for me is listen'...and he was really frustrated, and I absolutely sympathised with him. 'You know you can tell my stories all you want but it is not going to help me get my income back'. ...he said his dream had been taken away. His dream was, 'you know we've got fertile land here – we grow our own food, we employ local people to cook the food and we are trying to develop the tourist industry, and no one can help me, various agencies have been out but [sentence left unfinished]',¹²⁴

For EAPPI, gathering stories about life under occupation is considered an important and effective part of the companioner role. On their return to their home countries companions are expected to inform others of what they have seen and heard in the oPt, writing blogs and giving presentations at public meetings to encourage others to get involved in campaigning for an end to the occupation. And some Palestinians see this as an important avenue for their voices to be heard by the rest of the world. A study carried out by Darweish and Rigby found that Palestinian activists largely welcomed internationals who provided protective presence and reported on human rights' violations. One Palestinian participant in their study describes the benefits of advocacy work:

Since 2002 we have been using the international community. I realised the significance of this when on a speaking tour in Sweden and in one place a pro-Israeli member of the

¹²³ "Our Model: Change", *EAPPI* accessed January 4, 2023 <https://eappi.org/en/our-model/change>

¹²⁴ Interview with Becky, UK, February 2020

audience raised a point, and before I could answer someone else in the audience rebutted him. This showed how Europeans are better informed about the situation here, especially compared with Americans who can have no idea that there is an occupation.¹²⁵

Likewise, in a study of Palestinian women's opinions of human rights organisations, Shalhoub-Kevorkian and Khsheiboun noted that advocacy was seen to be much more effective than efforts to offer protection:

Some felt that human rights actions and organizations were successful in raising global awareness of their experiences, empowering them tremendously in allowing them to voice their claims....But they were not sure about the effectiveness and ability of such activism to stop human right violations, to prevent future atrocities, or even to change or to aid current victimization.¹²⁶

Having seen some of what accompaniment entails, and how the various parties involved understand the different aspects of the role, the following section moves to situate EAPPI's emergence in 2002 in relation to two aspects of the historical context. Firstly, I examine EAPPI in the wider context of changes in the transnational solidarity movement in Palestine. Secondly, I suggest that to better understand the ideological underpinnings of the EAPPI programme it is necessary to understand something about EAPPI as a WCC project. Therefore, in the last section I trace EAPPI's humanitarianism back within the longer trajectory of ecumenical Christian transnational interventions in Palestine since 1948.

2:1 Setting EAPPI in context: responding to a Palestinian call for help

In the oPt, from 2000 until 2005, Palestinians staged a full-scale uprising against Israeli settler-colonialism, events which are commonly referred to as the Second Intifada or the Al-Aqsa Uprising. One response to the increasingly violent repression of this movement of Palestinian resistance was for Palestinian NGOs to issue invites to Western internationals to come and witness and report on the violence. ISM was one organisation which was set up to

¹²⁵ Marwan Darweish and Andrew Rigby, *Popular Protest in Palestine: The Uncertain Future of Unarmed Resistance* (London, UNITED KINGDOM: Pluto Press, 2015) 154

¹²⁶ Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian and Sana Khsheiboun, 'Palestinian Women's Voices Challenging Human Rights Activism', *Women's Studies International Forum* 32, no. 5 (September 2009): 359, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2009.07.012>.

facilitate this in 2001.¹²⁷ ISM, as a Palestinian led movement, was closely involved with the Palestinian popular resistance movement and encouraged activists to join in non-violent direct action instigated by Palestinian communities.¹²⁸

The EAPPI programme was created not long after ISM in 2002 in response to an invitation issued by the heads of churches in Jerusalem. EAPPI is still proud of its founding narrative, and as Paul Dean notes, it can be used to justify EAPPI's presence even many years afterwards, thus deflecting away from the need to reflect on the possible colonial nature of such an outside intervention.¹²⁹ The story goes like this: in November 2000, two months after Ariel Sharon's provocative visit to al-Haram Al-Sharif which sparked the Second Intifada, the thirteen Jerusalem heads of churches put out a statement requesting help from churches and friends of peace worldwide.¹³⁰ The wording invoked the language of non-violence, human rights and IHL, calling for the world to come and help Palestinians in their struggle for freedom, peace and statehood. With the situation continuing to worsen, the following March they sent another message, and this time the request for international assistance was more urgent and more specifically a call for protection. They wrote:

We believe that the violence which has intensified over these past months will only end when both parties in the conflict make a determined effort to respect each other's rights whilst affirming the dignity and worth of every human life (man, woman and child)...We would respectfully request protection for all our people in order to assist the reestablishment of mutual trust and security for Israelis and Palestinians. Further we would call on all peace-loving people from around the world to come and join us in a manifestation of just peace.¹³¹

¹²⁷ For more on its founding see Linda Tabar, 'From Third World Internationalism to "the Internationals": The Transformation of Solidarity with Palestine', *Third World Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (1 February 2017): 421 <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2016.1142369>. ISM has had to reduce its numbers significantly in the last decade or so. See Charmaine Seitz, 'ISM At the Crossroads: The Evolution of the International Solidarity Movement', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 32, no. 4 (1 July 2003): 50–67 <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2003.32.4.50>; see also "About ISM" *International Solidarity Movement*, Last accessed January 4, 2023 <https://palsolidarity.org/about/>

¹²⁸ Seitz, 'ISM At the Crossroads'. 52

¹²⁹ Paul Dean, 'Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI): A Study in Ecumenical Theology and Praxis' (Ph.D., King's College London, 2018) 81

¹³⁰ "All thirteen Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Churches of Jerusalem: A Faithful Appeal," 9 November 2000 cited in Dean, 'Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)'. 58

¹³¹ "Appeal from the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem 24 March 2001", Last accessed November 9, 2020 and now no longer available online <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/international/palestine/conflict10.html>

The WCC responded and EAPPI was created and officially launched a year later.¹³²

Linda Tabar writes about this moment in which Palestinians, often as representatives of Palestinian NGOs, invited internationals to the oPt. This marked a significant shift in what constituted transnational solidarity with the Palestinian cause.¹³³ Previous to this point in time, transnational solidarity activism was instead linked to revolutionary politics and Third world Internationalism. From the 1960's onwards, during an era of global struggle for decolonisation, the Palestine Liberation Organisation connected with many and varied anti-imperial and anti-colonial liberation struggles. Groups from across the globe joined in with the Palestinian struggle receiving training, exchanging ideas, learning from each other and then returning to their own struggles back home.¹³⁴ But by the time of the Second Intifada the context in which solidarity took place had changed significantly and with it, the idea and practice of solidarity changed. By the early 20th century, international solidarity had become focused on individual acts of witnessing, or “‘private acts of rebellion’, in which First World activists consume the political experiences of the colonised”.¹³⁵ Solidarity witness-activists who came mainly from Western countries became known as *el dawleyeen*, ‘internationals’ in Arabic. Tabar offers insight on how this linguistic shift from ‘internationalism’ to ‘internationals’ emphasises “‘the ability of privileged Western actors to cross national borders”¹³⁶ and indicates the individualism within which the ideology of these new types of intervention were rooted – away from collective acts of solidarity and towards witnessing activism which was primarily understood as a humanitarian rather than political act. Drawing on Randall Williams work on the politics of human rights, Tabar argues that within this liberal framing, any strategy which espoused armed struggle or radical decolonising work became seen as ‘extreme’ and too political.¹³⁷ And, with its connectedness to Palestinian

¹³² See Dean, ‘Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)’ for more on this story and how EAPPI was designed.

¹³³ Tabar, ‘From Third World Internationalism to “the Internationals”’: The Transformation of Solidarity with Palestine’; Linda Tabar, ‘Disrupting Development, Reclaiming Solidarity: The Anti-Politics of Humanitarianism’, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 45, no. 4 (1 August 2016): 16–31, <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2016.45.4.16>.

¹³⁴ Tabar, ‘From Third World Internationalism to “the Internationals”’ 417

¹³⁵ Ibid. 421

¹³⁶ Ibid. 415

¹³⁷ See also Randall Williams, *Divided World: Human Rights and Its Violence* (Minneapolis, UNITED STATES: University of Minnesota Press, 2010)

NGO's who were often the ones issuing the invites, this shift can also be seen as part of what Islah Jad has called the NGOisation of the Palestinian struggle.¹³⁸

In her critique of accompaniment in Iraq and Palestine, Mahrouse comments that activists from organisations like International Women's Peace Service, ISM, EAPPI and CPT often make clear distinctions between the work their own and other organisations do along the lines of a perceived liberal/radical divide. This was often done, she claims, in order for accompaniers to reassure themselves about the ethics or efficacy of the particular type of approach they had chosen to commit to.¹³⁹ However, regardless of this being the case, we have seen here that many transnational accompaniment organisations in the oPt fit into a larger, general pattern of shift towards a more liberal, more humanitarian and less 'political' forms of transnational solidarity intervention.¹⁴⁰ In chapter 5 we shall see how the ideological and practical shifts within the transnational solidarity movement described here are incarnated in EAPPI's praxis and result in much energy being spent protecting EAPPI's image as a liberal, moderate, non-radical organisation. The section that follows turns to explain, from a different angle, why EAPPI's ideological approach to its work is one that is better understood as humanitarian and liberal rather than as liberationist or decolonial.

2:2 1948 and the World Council of Churches (WCC)

The WCC describes itself as an organisation focused on "serving human needs, breaking down barriers between people, seeking justice and peace".¹⁴¹ It was created with the intention of bringing unity to a dispersed, fragmented worldwide Church in the aftermath of two world wars, and since its inception in 1948 the WCC has encouraged its members to be involved in peace and humanitarian initiatives, embodying what Cohen has called a "new activist Christianity".¹⁴² Humanitarianism is a form of intervention which tends to be motivated by a

¹³⁸ Islah Jad, 'NGOs: Between Buzzwords and Social Movements', *Development in Practice* 17, no. 4/5 (2007): 622–29 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2554826>

¹³⁹ Mahrouse, *Conflicted Commitments*. 107

¹⁴⁰ Anna Bernard discusses the differences between solidarity activism and human rights advocacy, billing this as a divide between groups with liberationist visions of solidarity with the Palestinian cause, and those with more humanitarian aims. Anna Bernard, 'You Start Where You Are: Literary Spaces of Palestine Solidarity', *Human Geography* 14, no. 3 (November 2021) 323

¹⁴¹ See "About the WCC", *Oikoumene*, Last accessed December 29, 2022, <https://www.oikoumene.org/about-the-wcc>

¹⁴² G. Daniel Cohen, 'Elusive Neutrality: Christian Humanitarianism and the Question of Palestine, 1948–1967', *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 5, no. 2 (2014): 184 <https://doi.org/10.1353/hum.2014.0016>.

desire to help those who are suffering, often through what are construed to be non-political means.¹⁴³ In his influential writings on the foundational principles of humanitarianism, Jean Pictet said that politics was a “poison” and directed humanitarians to “reckon with politics without becoming a part of it”.¹⁴⁴ However, as will become clear through several chapters of this thesis, following Barnett and Weiss, I am persuaded that it is neither “possible nor desirable to separate humanitarianism and politics”.¹⁴⁵ And yet, this is exactly what the WCC has long tried to do in relation to its work with in both Palestine and Europe.

The WCC’s inaugural conference took place in Amsterdam at the end of August 1948, gathering together 351 mostly protestant US and European church delegates.¹⁴⁶ In their discussions they decided that calling for the protection of human rights was one of the principal ways in which the group hoped to contribute to a peaceful world order.¹⁴⁷ The WCC and the UN had already begun to establish a working relationship when churches associated with the WCC played a significant role in the establishing of the UN charter,¹⁴⁸ and the WCC would go on to maintain a presence at the UN headquarters in New York and Geneva.¹⁴⁹ WCC leaders believed that “a UN world-community needed to become spiritually united in a “global ethos”” and “the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights eventually became the creedal expression of that ethos.”¹⁵⁰

As well as marking the founding of the WCC and the year of the Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 was significant for other reasons, of course. A matter of months before the

¹⁴³ For an important gendered analysis of the humanitarian impulse and its unwanted repercussions in Israeli accompaniment activism, see Hagar Kotef and Merav Amir, ‘(En)Gendering Checkpoints: Checkpoint Watch and the Repercussions of Intervention’, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 32, no. 4 (June 2007): 973–96, <https://doi.org/10.1086/512623>

¹⁴⁴ Pictet cited in Bronwyn Leebaw, ‘The Politics of Impartial Activism: Humanitarianism and Human Rights’, *Perspectives on Politics* 5, no. 2 (2007): 223–39 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20446421>

¹⁴⁵ Barnett and Weiss, *Humanitarianism in Question*.

¹⁴⁶ “About the WCC- History”, *Oikoumene*, Last accessed 7, January 2023, <https://www.oikoumene.org/about-the-wcc/history> Whereas at the start it was comprised of mostly Western Protestant churches, it now claims to represent more than 500 million Christians in 110 countries worldwide. See Claudia Baumgart-Ochse, ‘Claiming Justice for Israel/Palestine: The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Campaign and Christian Organizations’, *Globalizations* 14, no. 7 (10 November 2017): 1179

¹⁴⁷ Bastiaan Bouwman, ‘Universal Rights in a Divided World: The Human Rights Engagement of the World Council of Churches from the 1940s to the 1970s’ (Ph.D., London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), 2018) 10

¹⁴⁸ John Nurser, ‘The “Ecumenical Movement” Churches, “Global Order,” and Human Rights: 1938-1948’, *Human Rights Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (2003): 845 <https://doi.org/10.1353/hrq.2003.0049>.

¹⁴⁹ Baumgart-Ochse, ‘Claiming Justice for Israel/Palestine: The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Campaign and Christian Organizations’ 1179

¹⁵⁰ Nurser, ‘The “Ecumenical Movement” Churches, “Global Order,” and Human Rights: 1938-1948’ 845

WCC conference, on the 14th May 1948, the State of Israel was declared. During the years of 1947-1948, including the months which followed directly after the 14th May, 530 Palestinian towns and villages were destroyed, and at least 750,000 Palestinians were made refugees. In the West at that point in time the term “displaced persons” referred primarily to East European refugees in Germany and Austria, and the WCC, even before it was officially inaugurated, was already offering them aid. Therefore, in the aftermath of May 1948, the WCC discussed their responsibility towards both Palestinian refugees, and the predominantly Jewish East European refugees,¹⁵¹ and realised it presented them with a political problem. Their solution to managing what was seen as two sets of conflicting interests was to frame the Palestinian refugee disaster as a humanitarian rather than political tragedy, and to attempt to remain impartial in their dealings with both sets of refugees.¹⁵²

In a 1948 document the WCC carefully crafted this statement:

On the political aspects of the Palestine problem and the complex conflict of "rights" involved we do not undertake to express a judgment. Nevertheless, we appeal to the nations to deal with the problem not as one of expediency—political, strategic or economic—but as a moral and spiritual question that touches a nerve centre of the world's religious life.¹⁵³

The situation in Israel and Palestine was thus reduced to a moral and spiritual question rather than an imperial, political or economic one. A stance of political neutrality was taken up at that point, and to a certain extent continues to be what guides the WCC and EAPPI's approach.¹⁵⁴ In an insightful piece on this era of ecumenical humanitarian missions' history,

¹⁵¹ It is also interesting to note that the post-Holocaust moment produced in Europe what is referred to as a ‘philo-Semitic turn’, with sympathy for Jewish suffering becoming a “core virtue of liberalism” in the aftermath of events which shook the liberal West and their sense of moral superiority vis à vis the rest of the world. Lori Allen *A History of False Hope: Investigative Commissions in Palestine, A History of False Hope* (Stanford University Press, 2020), 103-104 <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781503614192>.

¹⁵² Cohen, ‘Elusive Neutrality’

¹⁵³ Report of committee IV presented at the inaugural WCC conference in the Netherlands in 1948 “Concerns of the Churches – The emergence of Israel as a state” *The World Council of Churches*, Last accessed January 4 2023 <https://archived.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/1948-amsterdam/concerns-of-the-churches-the-emergence-of-israel-as-a-state.html>

¹⁵⁴ The extent to which EAPPI continues to be informed by a spiritual mind set is an argument open to debate, see Paul Dean, ‘Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) : A Study in Ecumenical Theology and Praxis’ (Ph.D., King’s College London, 2018), [https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/en/theses/ecumenical-accompaniment-programme-in-palestine-and-israel-eappi\(e62386ff-1ec0-47ec-a5b5-a37cef59fd9d\).html](https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/en/theses/ecumenical-accompaniment-programme-in-palestine-and-israel-eappi(e62386ff-1ec0-47ec-a5b5-a37cef59fd9d).html).

Cohen notes that what had previously been framed as a conflict between supporting Jewish rights and Palestinian rights was resolved to a certain degree after the events of 1967 and the Israeli annexation of the West Bank. Because the “‘occupied territories’ now constituted a space in which human rights violations could be monitored or condemned without challenging the legitimacy of the existence of Israel”,¹⁵⁵ it became more straightforward for the WCC to advocate for Palestinian rights without fears of appearing anti-Zionist. Calling for a ‘just peace’ by calling for an end to the occupation “softened the antagonism between philo-Semitism and compassion for the Palestinian tragedy.”¹⁵⁶ The occupation became the new enemy and the WCC believed itself able to continue trying to help Palestinians in a humanitarian capacity without being forced to address the politics of Zionist settler-colonialism.

Moving forward to the 21st Century, this pro-human rights, anti-occupation framing continues to be that which EAPPI relies upon and in doing so accompaniers are strongly discouraged from using words like settler-colonialism and apartheid to describe the situation in the oPt. I would argue that through EAPPI the WCC is continuing in this humanitarian spirit, even if accompaniment might not easily fit into the category of what is often thought of as humanitarianism.¹⁵⁷ In my use of the term humanitarian I draw on Erica Bornstein and Peter Redfield as they describe the cross over between human rights activism and humanitarianism. Broadly speaking both forms of intervention want to “ameliorate and improve aspects of the human condition” however, while humanitarianism seeks to alleviate instances of physical and psychological suffering, human rights advocacy work “seeks to confront general wrongs usually identified through specific violations”.¹⁵⁸ I would suggest that EAPPI’s accompaniment praxis seeks to alleviate the suffering of *all those* who are impacted by the Israeli occupation as well as confronting the illegality of that occupation, and advocating for its end.

¹⁵⁵ Cohen, ‘Elusive Neutrality’ 204

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ EAPPI does refer to itself as part of the humanitarian sector at times See for example “Our Model”, *EAPPI* accessed January 4, 2023, <https://eappi.org/en/our-model>

¹⁵⁸ Erica Bornstein and Peter Redfield “An introduction to the anthropology of humanitarianism” in *Forces of Compassion: Humanitarianism between Ethics and Politics*, Edited by Erica Bornstein and Peter Redfield., Advanced Seminar Series (Santa Fe, N.M.: SAR, 2010) 6; Michael Barnett and Thomas Weiss also note that humanitarianism is now used to refer to a wide range of initiatives including development, human rights, gender equality, and peace building. Michael Barnett and Thomas G. Weiss, *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics* (Ithaca, UNITED STATES: Cornell University Press, 2011) 6, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3138168>.

It is also evident that through EAPPI, the WCC continues to see the “Palestine problem” as “a moral and spiritual question” which impacts on “the world’s religious life”.¹⁵⁹ Hence, for EAPPI, a humanitarian type of intervention is associated with a view on the situation through a moral and spiritual lens. In Britain EAPPI is careful of its relationship with the Church of England and the British-Jewish community, although it is not always able to avoid criticism from both these quarters. The support of church leaders is considered especially important as EAPPI engages in advocacy work, and since Anglican Bishops sit in the House of Lords which gives them a degree of political influence, their opinion of the EAPPI programme is of considerable import. In 2012 there was a debate in the Anglican General Synod over a decision to endorse a number of organisations working in Palestine and Israel including EAPPI. The motion passed, but not without serious opposition: influential figures such as the then Archbishop of Canterbury were among the many who supported an amendment seeking to remove EAPPI’s name from the endorsement. This incident was especially significant for EAPPI since it provoked the ire of some parts of the British Jewish community. The Board of Deputies of British Jews accused EAPPI of being “an inflammatory and partisan programme”¹⁶⁰ which promoted “very partisan but very motivated anti-Israel advocates who have almost no grasp of the suffering of normal Israelis.”¹⁶¹ Some of the UK’s leading newspapers covered the story, including the debate over EAPPI’s credentials, and this inevitably caused damage to EAPPI’s reputation, and provoked upset over Christian-Jewish relations in the UK. Some of the implications of these events and the way they impact on EAPPI’s operations in the UK will be explored in chapter 5.

Conclusion: Accompaniment as transnational solidarity and a humanitarian intervention

In this chapter I have explained some of the complexities of taking accompaniment as my object of analysis. I have shown the various roles and activities which are included within EAPPI’s version of accompaniment and the various ways in which Palestinians and accompaniers emphasize different elements of the role at different times. This chapter has also examined how EAPPI fits into the wider landscape of transnational solidarity activism in

¹⁵⁹ “Concerns of the Churches – The emergence of Israel as a state” *The World Council of Churches*

¹⁶⁰ Vivian Wineman cited in Giles Fraser, “Should the Church of England Remain Silent on Israel-Palestine?”, *The Guardian*, 12 July 2012, Opinion, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2012/jul/12/church-of-england-silent-israel-palestine>.

¹⁶¹ ‘Church Synod Vote in Support of EAPPI Motion’, *The Jewish Chronicle*, 9 July 2012, <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk/church-synod-vote-in-support-of-eappi-motion-1.34272>.

the oPt, and the ways in which this movement has become part of a shift away from radical politics and towards something more individualistic, humanitarian and liberal. I have also shown how the WCC's history of apolitical, religiously motivated attempts to help Palestinian refugees since 1948 has shaped the nature of EAPPI's approach to its accompaniment work.

As part of the ensuing analysis in this thesis I question the borders between definitions and practices of human rights activism, solidarity and humanitarianism and consider the ways accompaniment, as a transnational practice, fits within all three of these categories in different ways, however untidily. In saying this, I stress that I understand humanitarianism and solidarity to be unstable, contested terms whose meanings fluctuate in the ways those terms are used, and the ways they are enacted in practice. In chapter 3 I examine companions' motivations to intervene in relation to humanitarian desires and responsibilities. In chapter 6 I discuss the fact that EAPPI frames its work more frequently using the language of 'support' for Palestinians rather than 'solidarity'. This chapter has argued that EAPPI's accompaniment praxis can be described *both* as a humanitarian, human rights based form of intervention, and within the broader category of transnational solidarity praxis. However, as we saw above in section one, there are Palestinians who dispute the effectiveness of various aspects of accompaniment praxis, and companions who understand what it is they are doing in a variety of ways. In consideration of this, and as I will go on to argue and demonstrate in the ensuing chapters, there are several ways in which accompaniment in its current form, despite what might be intended, constitutes in fact a withdrawal of support for Palestinians.

Chapter 2: Research methods and reflections on being an implicated researcher

This chapter provides further information about, and reflection on the process of researching and writing this thesis. The chapter is divided in two halves. In the first section I give further details relating to the methods used and material analysed in this project, providing some background both to the EAPPI participants who took part in the research and to the Palestine Watching Committee (PWC) archives. The purpose of the second section is to reflect on a couple of particular moments in the research and writing process, and to show how my own family history connected me to what I was finding in the archives, and the ways in my own life became an additional place in which I sought evidence of imperial dispositions. Through telling some of this story here I also demonstrate the ways in which my own growing sense of implication in British imperial histories and the current regime of settler-colonialism in Palestine impacted on the writing of this research project.

1:1 Overview of methods used

The material used for analysis all comes from using several types of qualitative research method between 2019 and 2022. In addition this study relies on retroactive participant observation for background knowledge.¹⁶² Given my focus on the accompanier-subject in this project I decided it was more important to gather accompaniers' account of their work than to base this study on interviews with EAPPI managers and staff who are not the ones actually practicing accompaniment themselves.¹⁶³ Alongside participants' accounts I placed the official discourse EAPPI uses in materials made widely available to the public. This was to investigate how theory and practice converged or bifurcated away from each other; any tensions between the theory and practice of accompaniment were then explored as a way of beginning to analyse the impact of accompaniment as a practice—something which would have been impossible had I only examined the organisations' rhetoric. To analyse EAPPI's public discourse I referred to two of EAPPI's English speaking websites (the EAPPI international and the EAPPI Britain and Ireland one).¹⁶⁴ I also reviewed the blogs written by

¹⁶² I was also able to draw on knowledge of EAPPI gleaned through my own three months of experience as an accompanier with EAPPI a year prior to the start of the research project.

¹⁶³ I also decided that individual accompaniers would provide me with answers that were less freighted with concern to present a particular impression of the organisation because their jobs depended on it.

¹⁶⁴ "The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel" *Quakers in Britain* accessed May 26, 2023 <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/eappi>; "EAPPI" <https://eappi.org/en/> Last accessed May 26, 2023 Although I also had access to materials made available to accompaniers training to work with EAPPI due to my

the British and Irish companions who I had interviewed which are kept on an official EAPPI blogsite.¹⁶⁵ I also carried out a limited amount of participant observation of EAPPI's accompaniment and advocacy work in the UK and the oPt. The other area for analysis was to see whether the ways in which EAPPI companions talked about themselves and their role in the oPt carried colonial continuities; to do this I examined discourse used by civil society actors in the British Mandate era. Thus, archival research was conducted on letters to and from the PWC and other documents produced by members of that group such as meeting minutes. A fieldwork diary of this archival research was kept as it was throughout the entirety of 2019-2021. The archives were considered as much a field site as anything related to EAPPI, as explained in the introductory chapter.

1:2 The interviews and research participants

Individuals were identified for participation in this project with the help of the EAPPI office in the UK and Ireland, and EAPPI employees based in Jerusalem. In total there were 13 EAPPI companions who were interviewed two or three times, both before beginning work as companions in the oPt and on their return. Interviews were carried out in the UK, in Jerusalem and using video-conferencing platforms.¹⁶⁶ All but two of these 13 were also present in the oPt during my 6 weeks of fieldwork there and so informal conversations with these companions during this time also formed part of the research.¹⁶⁷ 8 of these participants were British, 2 were Irish, 1 Swiss and 2 Norwegian. Ages ranged fairly between 70 and 26. (See appendix 1 for more details on participants.)

In addition to these 13 participants, a further 22 companions participated in the research project in a variety of ways (also explained more fully in appendix 1). These companions came from Australia, Canada, the Netherlands and Sweden, in addition to the countries of origin already mentioned. Whilst in the oPt I also interviewed four Palestinians. This included current and former EAPPI employees and a teacher who was what EAPPI would

own involvement in the programme, my analysis did not rely on these materials but rather those that EAPPI makes available to the general public.

¹⁶⁵ "Eye Witness Blogs" <https://www.eyewitnessblogs.com/> Last accessed May 26, 2023

¹⁶⁶ Interviews were transferred online at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. The pandemic stopped EAPPI being able to send its companions to the oPt for over a year, meaning that some of those who had been interviewed prior to travelling to the oPt, and who I had intended to interview on their return were not able to travel until after this research project ended. Others whom I had interviewed before going had to leave the oPt and come home early.

¹⁶⁷ See fieldwork diaries for notes

call a 'programme contact' who worked in a school that has links with EAPPI. I do not include personal details about these participants in the appendix in order to safeguard their anonymity as far as possible. While I was not able to officially interview any of the EAPPI staff members from the UK and Ireland branch, and while I cannot claim that the project was designed collaboratively, their readiness to allow me access in other ways was in response to a series of emails and meetings in which I explained and discussed my research plans with them between 2017-2019.

Interviews with accompaniers were semi-structured, with different questions being asked depending on what stage in the EAPPI journey the interview was being carried out. During the interviews I formed questions related to the following main points of enquiry:

- How do EAPPI participants understand and articulate what they do as accompaniers in the oPt and as advocacy activists in the UK?
- What drew participants to taking an interest in Palestine and to applying to EAPPI in the first place?
- How effective did accompaniers feel their time in the oPt was? What did they think Palestinians appreciated about their work?
- *For the British accompaniers:* How do British accompaniers position themselves and their work in relation to British imperial history in the region? Did this impact on their motivations to get involved in Palestine/EAPPI?

In addition to the 'before and after' interviews, I interviewed a subset of accompaniers about their experiences writing blogs. Finally, not knowing who had had conversations about Balfour and British imperial history with Palestinians but being curious about how many accompaniers had done, I sent out a request for reports of these conversations to a large group of accompaniers which included those who had participated in EAPPI over ten years ago. After receiving some written reports of these conversations, I then followed up with an informal conversation about these reports.

When I transcribed interviews with those accompaniers and Palestinians for whom English was not their first language, I kept as closely as possible to the direct wording, but on occasion, in order to make their statements more easily understandable when writing up for this thesis I have made minor adjustments to the wording used.

1:3 The research participants: race, gender, religion and nationality

While the gender mix of participants roughly reflects the balance of males and females who usually take part in EAPPI¹⁶⁸— in this project 16 identified as male and 19 as female—this sample of participants is not reflective of the racial diversity of EAPPI’s accompaniers and the variety of their religious backgrounds. Of those 35 accompaniers who participated in the project only two individuals identified as mixed race, everyone else identified as white. In this study all participants came from countries referred to as the global north, and all accompaniers identified as either Christian, Quaker, Jewish and/or not religious. It would have been helpful to have been able to interview more non-white accompaniers, more Muslim accompaniers and accompaniers from other religious backgrounds, and also more accompaniers from countries representative of the global south. However, I was only able to work with those who put themselves forward from amongst the group recruited for EAPPI in the cohorts going to the oPt in 2019/2020. The reasons why there were no participants in this research project from countries in the global south is also structural. At the time when I was in the oPt and met the autumn 2019 cohort there had been issues with EAPPI’s funding in Latin America and South Africa and no accompaniers were able to participate in EAPPI from those countries that year.

The concept of whiteness is sometimes used in this thesis, and when it is, I employ it to denote the way that accompaniers are racialised in the accompaniment context rather than as a literal descriptor of skin colour. Despite the lack of racial diversity among participants in this study, not all accompaniers who participate in EAPPI are white and not all accompaniers come from the global north.¹⁶⁹ However, because of their participation in an international NGO even activists of colour are racialised as part of the dominant group to varying degrees.¹⁷⁰ That is to say, accompaniers, whether from Latin America, South Africa or Europe are racialised differently in Palestine from how they would be in other contexts. I acknowledge the importance of using an intersectional lens when thinking about the impact of accompaniers’ presence in the oPt. As Mahrouse comments, race interlocks with class in accompaniment as international “activists’ bodies represent relative wealth as part of their

¹⁶⁸ On anecdotal evidence

¹⁶⁹ EAPPI also sometimes sends teams of accompaniers from South Africa, Uruguay, the Philippines, Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador.

¹⁷⁰ Mahrouse, *Conflicted Commitments*. 18

racialized power”¹⁷¹ and companions’ mobility and ability to access the oPt is dependent on having certain level of economic and cultural privilege. Using the concept of whiteness to describe the racialised hierarchies upon which accompaniment depends thus reveals the way the companioner and the accompanied exist in a “relational positioning which comprises a complex combination of factors including citizenship, religious identity and political economics”.¹⁷²

Lastly, given that I frequently focus on a subset of British participants in this thesis, a note is needed on my use of ‘Britain’ and ‘British nationality’ as a marker with which to identify companions. I see ‘British’ as an intersectional category, with those claiming its identity having multiple other identities and histories; varying ethnicities, migration histories and religious, sexual and gender identities.¹⁷³ The concept of implication in British imperial history in Palestine is important to this thesis.¹⁷⁴ I return to this concept in the second half of this chapter and then more in chapter 4, but suffice it to say here that since implication is a subject position not an identity, it is not a clear-cut positioning and is not the same for every companioner who is part of the EAPPI team. Within a group of British participants, individuals are positioned differently in relation to implication because of their heritage, geopolitical location, migration trajectories, race, class, gender and so on.¹⁷⁵ This fact does not render implication a redundant concept with which to work, but it does mean that it needs to be thought about with an intersectional lens. As Rothberg explains, implication is an effect of systems of oppression which interlock, meaning that individuals occupy “particular, dynamic, and at times clashing structures and histories of power”.¹⁷⁶ It is important also to note that the concept of implication is complicated by these different positionings, some of which a number of participants in this study embodied, and are themselves the product of histories of the British empire and its afterlife. Among the British companions in this research project were those with histories of post-empire migration to Britain within their families, in addition

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.14

¹⁷³ I acknowledge that all British citizens have a different relationship to both national identity and British imperial history dependent on their own family’s migration histories among other factors; and this was born in mind when participants were asked about their relationship to British nationality and history.

¹⁷⁴ See Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject*.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. 37

¹⁷⁶ *ibid*:8

to those who had parents living in situations of ongoing settler-colonialism.¹⁷⁷ This means when focusing on a sense of accountability to specifically British histories of injustice in Palestine it is essential to theorise a sense of collective responsibility which does not erase different histories of colonisation and their afterlives among those who currently live as part of the British nation. I note here that there are opportunities for further reflection on this important aspect of theorising responsibility for injustice in relation to particular national histories.

1:4 Participant observation

The main aim of conducting participant observation research was to gain a more grounded understanding of how the EAPPI programme operates in the oPt and the UK, to reflect on the relationship between participants' descriptions of their role and what the role looked like in practice, and to observe how accompaniment work is received by various groups including Palestinians, Israeli settlers and the Israeli army. As described in the Introduction chapter, in the end I only spent 6 weeks in Jerusalem rather than the extended period of fieldwork in the West Bank that I had planned.¹⁷⁸ However, during these 6 weeks I had the opportunity to spend a few days accompanying EAPPI teams as they monitored the Old City in Jerusalem, visited a youth community project, accompanied children to school and attended Israeli and Palestinian non-violent protests in both West Jerusalem and Sheik Jarrah, East Jerusalem. I interviewed some of the EAPPI staff based in the oPt and observed some of the training that the new team received on arrival. Back in the UK I observed 6 advocacy presentations carried out by returned accompaniers, some of which were on-line and some in person. I also attended a UK based training day where 5 participants who had just returned from the oPt gave practice advocacy presentations to a small group of former accompaniers.

1:5 The Lucy Backhouse Collection

As explained in the introductory chapter, this thesis incorporates archival research on Quaker missions and peace advocacy work during the years of the British Mandate. The archival

¹⁷⁷ For example, two participants in this project have mixed heritage—British and Indian, and Irish and Canadian first-nations. Their reactions to the concept of implication was thus quite rightly somewhat complicated by this fact.

¹⁷⁸ In addition to difficulties getting into the West Bank because of the Israeli authorities, the COVID-19 pandemic also began halfway through my fieldwork year. This prevented any return to Israel or Palestine and other fieldwork which involved what has become known as 'in-person' activities. I was able to transfer my interviews on-line, but the majority of the advocacy meetings I had been planning to attend in various locations around the UK did not take place.

documents concerning the PWC were found in a collection of private papers belonging to a British Quaker, Lucy Backhouse who was clerk of the group from 1934-41.¹⁷⁹ The PWC was active during these years, resumed after a break, and then ran from 1944 until 1951. I had no access to material concerning this second timeframe.¹⁸⁰ Backhouse's collection of papers contained letters written to and from Quaker missionaries based in Palestine and Syria, letters from other Quaker members of the PWC in Britain (along with copies of letters they had received from Palestine), letters from other civil society actors involved in peace work in Palestine or advocacy work in the UK, newspaper clippings about Palestine and PWC meeting reports. These documents were read and analysed at the same time as I conducted, transcribed, and analysed interviews with EAPPI companions.

This thesis is reliant on Backhouse as curator of knowledge about the PWC during the 1930's because this private collection of papers is separate to the official archives of the PWC. Chandra Frank notes the importance of developing an archival consciousness by asking "who's archiving and why, and for whom?".¹⁸¹ This is a classed, gendered and racialised question and one that I have kept in mind throughout the analysis. Lucy Backhouse appears to have been a committed internationalist, extremely active Quaker and dedicated letter writer. She sat on numerous committees including the Friends Service Council,¹⁸² Friends Committee for Refugees and Aliens, the Armenia Committee and was also member of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. What Backhouse collected was partly dependent on her own choices about what to keep and what to discard, but the letters she received were also a reflection of her presumably fairly comfortable financial status: many of those Quaker missionaries with whom she maintained a correspondance were those she supported financially.

Among those who are given voice to speak in Lucy Backhouse's collection of letters, documents and newspaper clippings are those who speak frequently and at length, and those

¹⁷⁹ A few months after having begun archival work in London, in March 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic shut the doors of the Quaker archives and for a variety of reasons they did not then reopen for a further two and a half years. Fortunately, I had already photographed many, although not as much as I would have liked, of the documents I needed. This collection of photographed documents then became in effect its own collection within a collection and the archival work took an even more prominent place in the research than I had ever previously anticipated that it would.

¹⁸⁰ I was in the process of gaining access to this material when interrupted by the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020

¹⁸¹ Chandra Frank, 'Sister Outsider and Audre Lorde in the Netherlands' 17

¹⁸² This was the committee which oversaw the overseas missionary and relief work done by the British Quakers

whose contribution is more modest. The most audible are male, the less audible are female Quaker missionaries and UK residents, or Palestinian letter writers. Those entirely absent are Palestinian female voices. The majority of the correspondence from missionaries is written by David Oliver, Marshall Fox and Heinz Kappes. Daniel Oliver founded and ran an orphanage in present day Lebanon. He also acted as an unofficial diplomat and upon recommendations of the PWC, he was funded to travel to Iran, Iraq, Syria, Transjordan and Palestine, allowing him to meet with several Arab political and royal leaders in the name of peace and reconciliation. Marshall Fox lived in Beirut where he and his wife regularly welcomed missionaries from around the region. Previously the couple had been the principals of the Quaker boys' and girls' schools in Broumana, Syria.¹⁸³ Heinz Kappes was a German Quaker. He ran an orphanage near Jerusalem and was also lauded by other Quakers for his work bringing Jews and Arabs together in his home where he held informal peace and reconciliation gatherings. There are also a small number of letters in the collection from Rosina Harvey, a British Quaker working at St George's Anglican school in Jerusalem, where she worked a myriad of roles from administrator to nurse resulting in letters which are often full of apologies for being too busy not have not been able to reply sooner.¹⁸⁴ British based PWC member letter writers include Mary Pumphrey who was a teacher at a Quaker school in Birmingham. She wrote letters back to the committee during her visit to Quaker missions in Lebanon and Palestine. Lastly, another frequent PWC letter writer is Walter Ayles, secretary of the British Commonwealth Peace Federation. He always wrote on letter-headed paper from the Federation whose motto read: "To unite the Empire for World peace and progress".¹⁸⁵

Having provided more information about the materials and the approach taken to gathering these materials during the fieldwork stage of this project, the following section turns now to reflect on some of the ethical issues which arose during both the fieldwork and the writing up stages.

¹⁸³ For more on the Quaker mission in Syria see H. J. Turtle, *Quaker Service in the Middle East : With a History of Brumanna High School 1876-1975* (Friends Service Council, London, 1975).

¹⁸⁴ For more on the history of Quaker missions work in Palestine see Maia Carter Hallward, 'The Ramallah Friends Meeting: Examining One Hundred Years of Peace and Justice Work', *Quaker Studies* 18, no. 1 (September 2013): 76–95, <https://doi.org/10.3828/quaker.18.1.76>; Gallagher, Nancy. *Quakers in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: The Dilemmas of NGO Humanitarian Activism*. Cairo ; New York : American University in Cairo Press, 2007. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3114756>

¹⁸⁵ 10.12.1937, TEMP MSS 511box 2, folder 3, LB Papers, FH

2:1 The implicated researcher - On discovering my connections to an imperial world

In her work on accompaniment's reproduction of colonial logics Koopman locates imperialism in an intimate register. "Empire is global" she writes "but it depends on the intimate. Many of us carry imperialism within. The good helper role is one that white middle-class women have classically played, and which solidarity activists more widely now may fall into."¹⁸⁶ Here I reflect on a couple of moments in my journey through this research project as I grew to understand my implicated positioning in relation to British imperial history in Palestine— as a British EAPPI accompanier, a PhD researcher, and as the great-granddaughter of a first world war soldier who participated in the British campaign to capture Palestine from the Ottomans. I then conclude by explaining what this process of reckoning with implication has meant for the writing of this thesis.

Growing up, I had been told snippets of stories about my great-grandfather, William Clever, the man whom my mum fondly called Pop. His diary—a battered, burgundy, pocket-sized notebook, its gold-edged leaves mostly faded, and spine flattened by the many miles it had been pocketed and carried— has lingered at the back of my mind, thus also around the edges of this project for the past few years. In it, William recounts the journey his regiment made from the UK, across France, through Egypt to Palestine in 1917. Although much of the diary reads as a documentation of somewhat mundane aspects of daily life as a soldier, a couple of entries take on greater significance when read alongside more global histories of the same days and months. For example, by October 1917 William's regiment had reached southern Palestine. On Wednesday 31st October they were on their way to Beersheba, but he writes: "*During the march we heard that Beersheba had fallen that we were going there but stopped about 9 miles from Beersheba and rested till daylight*". Back in London, probably much earlier on in the day, the war cabinet had been meeting to put together the final wording of the Balfour Declaration. However, because at that point in the day the outcome of battle for Beersheba had not yet been decided, the publication of the declaration was delayed until the following week.¹⁸⁷ A month later, William's regiment had marched further north, leaving Bethlehem behind they made their way to Jerusalem. As a devout Christian, William records his feelings being in Bethlehem during Advent:

¹⁸⁶ Koopman, 'Imperialism Within: Can the Master's Tools Bring Down Empire?' 284

¹⁸⁷ According to Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate* (London: Little, Brown, 2000) 49

Sunday 9th December 1917

What a privilege to be able to march from Bethlehem to Jerusalem on the 2nd Sunday of Advent. The folks crowded the streets of Bethlehem. But we were nearly the first in Jerusalem and all quiet except for bombs exploding and machine gun fire. Stand to at 5am all wet through, marched off at 9am with camel escort through Bethlehem, to Jerusalem station, on guard searching for Turks' ammo.

Surely unknown to William as he hunted for enemy ammunition in the rain, that year the day of the 9th December carried far more significance than simply the annual marking of the second Sunday of Advent. It was also the same day that Jerusalem officially fell into British hands.

It was only after my three months of volunteering with EAPPI in the oPt that I began to understand the importance of these events for the contemporary inhabitants of Israel and Palestine. 1917 marks the year of the British capture of Jerusalem, and the year of the infamous Balfour Declaration which opened the door to Zionist settler-colonialism in Palestine. The culmination of those British Mandate years was the events of 1948, the year in which hundreds of thousands of Palestinians lost homes and access to their homeland and have still not been granted right of return. I travelled to the oPt with EAPPI as an accompanier exactly one hundred years after the Balfour Declaration in 2017. There I met with many Palestinians whose attitude to Britain's imperial interventions was unambiguous. I cannot remember just how many times I had conversations with Palestinians who were angry about the legacy of the Balfour Declaration and who accused British accompaniers of therefore also being complicit in the ongoing regime of settler-colonialism. Some Palestinians qualified this demand for our apologies with the acknowledgement that it was not ordinary British people but the British government who was to blame; others did not. Knowing I had a loose personal connection to this history through my connection to William and his diary made these conversations seem all the more poignant to me. Having travelled to Palestine hoping to be able to leave feeling I had helped change the situation for the better, instead I came back to the UK with additional feelings of guilt; I felt the uncanniness of a connection with my great-grandfather and Palestine which stretched to exactly one-hundred years, and I felt I needed a guide to help me think through the ethics of my British,

'humanitarian' presence in Palestine. In some ways, writing this thesis became an attempt to find such a guide.

Later, during my fieldwork in the Quaker archives, I came across the travel diaries of Margret Emmott, a British Quaker who travelled to Syria and Palestine to visit various missionaries in the Quaker community.

Figure 1: Margret Emmott Travel diary, Thomas Cook map



Margret would later go on to become a member of the PWC. Neatly folded up to fit within the pages of the diary was a map which had been cut out of a larger Thomas Cook tourist leaflet (see figure 1 above).¹⁸⁸ On the back of the map was a sample itinerary of a tour of Palestine, Syria and Galilee which included a donkey ride around Jerusalem city walls and a motor car ride from Jerusalem to the River Jordan.

As I sat, on the first day of research in the Society of Friends library, housed in the same building where I had attended EAPPI programme interviews and training some years ago, I felt the perennial chill of the reading room in stark contrast to the pleasant autumnal warmth of the Jerusalem I had just returned from, and realised I was sitting with this map in front of me with tears in my eyes.¹⁸⁹ Having learned from reading Mariam Motamedi Fraser's work

¹⁸⁸ Margret Emmott Travel Diary 1926-1927, MSS109, box 5, item 28, Margret Emmott papers, The Library of the Society of Friends, Friends House, London

¹⁸⁹ FW notes, November 2019

to pay attention to the way archive materials move the researcher or opens one up, I reflected afterwards on the meaning of this response.¹⁹⁰ I came to thinking about mobility and privilege, and that my response was related to my recent experiences being barred from entering the West Bank and to the conversations I had had in 2017 with those Palestinians who asked for a British apology. In short, something about this map provoked me, teaching me something uncomfortable about my relationship to, and positioning in British imperial lineages.

The map I had found was not drawn by Arab nor non-Arab Palestinians, not by Christian, Muslim nor Jewish Palestinians, and not by Zionist Jews; instead it belonged to the imperial powers of the day. And I saw there were many layers of narrative that could be read within the lines on the map—some of which I found something of myself within.¹⁹¹ Firstly, I could trace parts of the journey my great-grandfather William made as he travelled through the region as a foot soldier with the British army from 1917-18. The events I read in his war diary about his journey from the UK to Alexandria, through Gaza to Jerusalem and back again came to life with a new-found clarity when I had the map in hand. As I looked at the map I realised that what I had been struggling to decipher in William’s sprawling handwriting was Kantara, a British military camp in Egypt. I could see that a railway connected Kanara to Gaza where William records being drafted in to help at a big water dump. These pumps were manned by the Royal Engineers who travelled with the army, and sourced water from Kantara to supply the British forces as they travelled north through Palestine.

¹⁹⁰ Mariam Motamedi Fraser, ‘Once upon a Problem’, *The Sociological Review* 60, no. 1_suppl (June 2012): 84–107, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2012.02118.x>.

¹⁹¹ Maps communicate their meaning in a particular way. Palestinian poet Jehan Bseiso remarked that she found drawing maps “a way of creating narratives and stories not in a linear fashion, but in a way that is much more physical that enables a different type of creativity”. ‘Reclaiming Language Inside Out: Our maps, words, bodies and roots’ *Funambulist Magazine*, December 16, 2019 <https://thefunambulist.net/articles/reading-colonial-landscapes-in-algeria-and-palestine-jehan-bseiso-karim-kattan%e2%80%a8>; Reading scholarship in the field of critical cartography I began to think about how maps are imbued with psychological, affective and narrative meaning. Yair Wallach writes that maps are discursive artifacts whose meaning does not remain stable. This means some viewers can find a reassuring sense of familiarity in the names, lines and shapes drawn, while simultaneously others can view the same map and feel alienated. It was reflecting on this that helped me better understand my personal responses to the map. See Yair Wallach, ‘Trapped in Mirror-Images: The Rhetoric of Maps in Israel/Palestine’, *Political Geography* 30, no. 7 (September 2011): 358–69, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2011.07.004>. See also FW notes, March 2020

My attention being drawn to this imperial infrastructure, I also saw connections between William Clever and Margret Emmott's stories. The 1926 mapping highlighted the material realities of Mandate Palestine, some of which had been constructed by the invading British army: roads and railway tracks that beckoned the privileged traveller to let themselves be carried from the coast inland, towards and in between tourist and religious attractions, from Beirut to Haifa or from Jerusalem to Gaza; journeys that are impossible today. In the weeks after the British capture of Jerusalem William describes having to help with roadmaking in the Hebron area, perhaps the very roads Margret Emmott had travelled on a decade later, now marked with thick black lines on the map.¹⁹²

According to her travel diaries, Margret's travels took her right across both present day Lebanon and Palestine as she visited the various Quaker mission schools and orphanages and other tourist destinations, travelling to meet with the authors of the letters I had been reading, letters addressed to the members of the PWC in England. Rebecca Stein writes that travel narratives are "instruments of colonial conquest, discursive tools intimately related to the more violent projects of resource extraction, settlement, and colonial governance".¹⁹³ Maps, like this one pasted into the pages of Margret's record of her travels, are also discursive artifacts, reminders of the classed, racialised and gendered privileges of both historic imperial, and contemporary patterns of mobility (and immobility) in and out of Palestine. Margret Emmott: a white, English speaking, middle class, Quaker, British woman, not all that different to me, had presumably used that map to facilitate her travel, just as the roads and railways enabled her to travel.

Thirdly, I found my own travels in this map. During my research interviews, one British accompanier talked to me about some of the reasons why he thought Palestine was such a popular cause in the West. He spoke in terms of access and travel. "Yeah...I mean I think it is a very accessible conflict right? I mean you can go there on EasyJet".¹⁹⁴ When the British researcher and the EAPPI activist travels to the oPt, regardless of the different modes of transport used, they take paths already opened up to them prior imperial histories of travel.

¹⁹² While religious pilgrims and other travellers had been coming to the region for centuries, it has been noted that tourist travel increased significantly as a result of the construction of the Suez canal in 1869 and the development of railways across the region. Rebecca L. Stein, *Itineraries in Conflict: Israelis, Palestinians, and the Political Lives of Tourism* (North Carolina, UNITED STATES: Duke University Press, 2008) 10

¹⁹³ Ibid. 12

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Michael, UK, December 2019

Stein's study points to something comparable when she says that contemporary Israeli tourism and travel itineraries across the oPt during the Oslo period are situated within older histories of both mobility and spatial incarceration in the region. It is evident that the travel practices of organisations like EAPPI which engage in "travel activism"¹⁹⁵ are, to borrow Stein's phrase, "historically enabled" by prior travel practices and by prior infrastructural building projects.¹⁹⁶

Such histories of travel are deeply racialized and gendered. Even the act of orienting oneself in the direction of travel towards a colonised land is to adopt a racialised positioning shaped by colonial histories. Ahmed explains:

...what is reachable is determined precisely by orientations that have already been taken and that have been repeated over time....Acts of domestication are not private; they involve the shaping of collective bodies, which allows some objects and not others to be within reach. ¹⁹⁷

Over the years Britain engaged in many such 'acts of domestication' as they oriented themselves towards the Middle East, repeatedly turning their energies and resources towards it through conquest, trade, mandated rule, religious mission, and more. Such acts of domestication shaped the collective British subject and enabled a collective feeling of entitlement to make oneself at home elsewhere since "whiteness allows bodies to move with comfort through space, and to inhabit the world as if it were home".¹⁹⁸ The advent of budget airline travel to Israel is then only a recent addition, further facilitating the 'accessibility' of the 'conflict' for white Western travellers, provided they are not seen to be 'too' supportive of the Palestinian struggle.

¹⁹⁵ A phrase used by Sophia Stamatopoulou-Robbins, who, in 2008, estimated that over 6 thousand people have travelled to Palestine for these purposes: 'The Joys and Dangers of Solidarity in Palestine: Prosthetic Engagement in an Age of Reparations'. *CR: The New Centennial Review* 8, no. 2 (2008) 117, 129

¹⁹⁶ Stein, *Itineraries in Conflict*, 14

¹⁹⁷ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology : Orientations, Objects, Others*, E-Duke Books Scholarly Collection. (Durham : Duke University Press, 2006). 117

¹⁹⁸ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 136; See also Sharon Sullivan argues that "white ontological expansiveness" is a function of white privilege which enables white people to imagine that all spaces "are or should be available for them to move in and out of as they wish" (cited in Barbara Applebaum, *Being White, Being Good: White Complicity, White Moral Responsibility, and Social Justice Pedagogy* (Lanham, MD, UNITED STATES: Lexington Books, 2010) 19 <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/detail.action?docID=500762>

As an individual—British, female, able-bodied and white— I am also part of what Ahmed referred to as the British “collective body”, shaped by imperial histories and desires. And, in addition to the ways the activist/humanitarian is implicated in imperial legacies, as a researcher, I cannot fail to acknowledge that this thesis was produced within the structures and support of a British university which was established for explicitly imperial purposes, its history being bound up with those who travelled to extract knowledge from the colonies, acts of domestication which enabled Britain to better appropriate those distant, but very much already occupied lands.¹⁹⁹

2:2 The implications of implication

The Latin roots of the word ‘implicated’ are linked to concepts of entanglement, involvement and close connections; more precisely it can be said that the implicated subject is defined as those who “inhabit, inherit, or benefit” from specific “regimes of domination” but cannot be held *directly* responsible for such regimes.²⁰⁰ This entanglement creates what Rothberg calls the implicated subject – a “participant in histories and social formations that generate the positions of victims and perpetrator”.²⁰¹ While I do not suggest that British citizens born long after the events of 1917 and 1948 can be held directly responsible for Britain’s historic actions, this thesis begins from the premise that they are implicated in settler-colonial violence in Palestine in a particular way because of Britain’s historic and contemporary complicity with Zionist settler-colonialism. Throughout the researching and writing of this thesis I have been reminded of and often not known what to do with both my growing understanding of, and feelings about my own positioning as an implicated subject. One of my responses has been to follow the example of the plethora of feminist ethnographers and indigenous scholars whose interrogation of their own positionality has informed their research, committed as they are to practices of reflexivity in their work.²⁰² Another response

¹⁹⁹ For a history of SOAS see Ian Brown, *The School of Oriental and African Studies: Imperial Training and the Expansion of Learning* / (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); In addition, I argue that SOAS remains complicit with contemporary settler-colonialism in many ways—for example the fact that it refuses to join the BDS movement and suspend its relationship with Israeli institutions such as the University of Haifa.

²⁰⁰ Michael Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject* 1

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² For examples of studies which particularly inspired me in this regard see Behar, *The Vulnerable Observer*; Samar Kanafani and Zina Sawaf, ‘Being, Doing and Knowing in the Field: Reflections on Ethnographic Practice in the Arab Region’, *Contemporary Levant* 2, no. 1 (2 January 2017): 3–11, <https://doi.org/10.1080/20581831.2017.1322173>; Helena Nassif, ‘To Fear and to Defy: Emotions in the Field’, *Contemporary Levant* 2, no. 1 (2 January 2017): 49–54, <https://doi.org/10.1080/20581831.2017.1322227>; Amal Equeiq, ‘From Palestine to Mexico (and Back): Reflections of a Literary Scholar’, *Contemporary Levant* 2, no. 1

has been to seek out theory which helps in what Stephen Frosh calls a turning towards rather than away from reckoning with implication in violence. However, writing about the role of the third party as witness to Israeli attacks on Gaza in 2014, Frosh warns of the ambiguous nature of the academic turn towards theory:

Theory can aid the process of denial; it can be a means of further distancing, a way of recovering control when events and investments threaten to topple us, to make it impossible to stay out of the fray. On the other hand, the right kind of theory – theory that challenges us to confront our own position in violence – might be a way of engaging, of turning back to face the thing itself. . . . But the danger still stands: theory tends to move us into the position of one who knows, who can make sense, and as such is potentially a defensive psychic and political strategy.²⁰³

Attempting to remain in a place where I challenged myself to confront rather than avoid learning about implication, one theorist I have turned to is Gayatri Spivak and her work on representation and hyper-reflexivity, albeit via the insights of Ilan Kapoor as she translates Spivak’s thought into the context of development studies. Kapoor draws out Spivak’s point that the fact that it is one’s implication in the discourses being critiqued that provides the very means of possibility for deconstruction; and that it is a deconstructivist approach which should lead to a more ethical encounter with the subaltern. Spivak writes “The only things one really deconstructs are things in which one is intimately mired. It speaks you. You speak it”.²⁰⁴ Rather than feeling entirely inhibited by one’s complicity, critique she argues, is only really possible from one’s position within the very discourse, institutions and cultures being interrogated. This means remaining “unscrupulously vigilant (ie hyper-self-reflexive) about

(2 January 2017): 61–66, <https://doi.org/10.1080/20581831.2017.1322301>; Lila Abu-Lughod, ‘Commentary on “Ethnography as Knowledge in the Arab Region” by Lila Abu-Lughod’, *Contemporary Levant* 2, no. 1 (2 January 2017): 67–70, <https://doi.org/10.1080/20581831.2017.1322230>; Tiffany Page, ‘Vulnerable Writing as a Feminist Methodological Practice’, *Feminist Review* 115, no. 1 (1 March 2017): 13–29, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41305-017-0028-0>; Sheldon, *Tragic Encounters and Ordinary Ethics*: Brah, A, ‘The Scent of Memory: Strangers, Our Own and Others’, *Feminist Review* 100 (2012): 6–26; Katherine Louise Natanel, ‘*Active (Dis)Engagement : The Gendered Production of Political Apathy in Israel*’ (Ph.D., SOAS, University of London, 2013), <http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/18067/>; Corey Snelgrove, Rita Kaur Dhamoon, and Jeff Cornthassel, ‘Unsettling Settler Colonialism: The Discourse and Politics of Settlers, and Solidarity with Indigenous Nations’.

²⁰³ Stephen Frosh, ‘Beyond Recognition: The Politics of Encounter’, *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society* 20, no. 4 (2015): 318

²⁰⁴ Spivak in Ilan Kapoor, ‘Hyper-Self-Reflexive Development? Spivak on Representing the Third World “Other”’, *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (2004): 640

our complicities” which helps “temper and contextualise one’s claims, reduces the risk of personal arrogance or geoinstitutional imperialism, and moves one toward a non-hierarchical encounter with the Third World/subaltern.”²⁰⁵

In chapter 4 of this thesis I reflect on the consequences of the Palestinian call for accompaniers to reckon with their implication in structures of injustice, but in order to do that with any sense of integrity, I must first acknowledge my own implication. Part of this is about acknowledging the power dynamics of the position of benevolent accompanier, or the (attempting to be) critical researcher, acknowledging that to be able to give, whether one’s protective presence, or one’s critique in the service of social and political change, is in itself a powerful position.²⁰⁶ As will be explored in this thesis, intervening can and does reinforce unequal power dynamics between the accompanier and the accompanied, the researcher and their subject. This thesis grapples with the question of whether this necessarily *has* to be the case or whether other forms of intervention can begin to break these down. But the task for the implicated researcher is to approach this task without dwelling in, nor ignoring one’s own positioning within (and feelings of guilt about) these histories and ongoing structures of injustice. Spivak’s notion of unlearning our privileges involves attentive listening to the Other in a way that acknowledges, but is not entirely immobilised by, such dynamics. “Serious and meaningful learning from the subaltern requires an anterior step: learning to learn. I have to clear the way for both me and the subaltern before I can learn from her/him”.²⁰⁷ This is a process which leads the activist and the researcher to a place of openness to the Other in a “process of not defining them, but listening to them name and define themselves”.²⁰⁸ This is a stance that as a researcher I have endeavoured to remain in whenever possible. But that I would also seek to raise defences against such a vulnerable stance is not surprising; the masculinist, liberal account of self as sovereign, impregnable and autonomous demands constant defensive work to keep it in place. And, whiteness is not accustomed to being challenged, as Di Angelo’s work on white fragility helps us understand.²⁰⁹ Part of maintaining this “seemingly sturdy and self-centred form of the

²⁰⁵ Ibid.641

²⁰⁶ Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh, UNITED KINGDOM: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1767554>.

²⁰⁷ Ilan Kapoor, ‘Hyper-Self-Reflexive Development?’ 641

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Robin Diangelo, *White Fragility: Why It’s so Hard for White People to Talk about Racism* / (London : Allen Lane, 2019)

thinking ‘I’” requires maintaining control rather than moving towards others and being open to the uncomfortable things they have to say.²¹⁰ In the chapters that follow I have tried to think with scholarly works that helped me to turn, in openness, towards what the Other might have to say, and that has included remaining open to those Other, and unknown, uncomfortable parts of myself.²¹¹ And yet undoubtedly, along with many of the companions I met as part of this project, I am surely only just *beginning* to learn how to unlearn.

²¹⁰ Judith Butler, “Rethinking Vulnerability and Resistance” in *Vulnerability in Resistance* Butler et al. eds. (Duke University Press, 2016) 24

²¹¹ Julia Kristeva argues that we are partly “strangers to ourselves”, part of us is always Other. See *Strangers to Ourselves* (Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991).

Chapter 3 The responsible humanitarian

What does it mean to acknowledge the Indigenous territory you're on? Are you coming to community, place-based relationships as a settler or as an Indigenous person? Additionally, how are you entering Indigenous homelands – as an invited guest, uninvited, trespasser, visitor, resident, immigrant, refugee etc.? How you situate yourself and your level of awareness about colonial occupations of Indigenous homelands brings new responsibilities to the forefront.

– Jeff Corntassel²¹²

For many in the contemporary age, to be a humanitarian is to respond to the suffering of others regardless of their identity, to act selflessly, to do what can be done to save lives, and to place humanity above all other considerations. Stated differently, it rebels against a world that typically orbits around interest, politics, and power and communicates through violence, destruction, and bloodshed. Not without good reason, aid workers are routinely celebrated as righteous heroes, as the “last of the just.” Humanitarianism is treated as a symbol of what is good about the world, as the world’s superego, as suggestive of the possibility of a more humane world.

— Barnett and Weiss²¹³

As Jeff Corntassel says in the above epigraph, the way one situates oneself in relation to colonial histories and the way one then enters indigenous territories brings with it certain responsibilities. This chapter examines volunteers’ motivations to travel to Palestine as an accompanier as a way of critiquing the way EAPPI situates itself and understands its responsibilities for historic and ongoing injustices in Palestine and Israel. Building on the history of the World Council of Churches (WCC), and EAPPI’s founding narrative set out in chapter 1, here I argue that one of the ways in which EAPPI’s version of accompaniment can be seen to be a colonial form of intervention in the oPt is that EAPPI’s very *raison d’être*

²¹² Corey Snelgrove, Rita Kaur Dhamoon, and Jeff Corntassel, ‘Unsettling Settler Colonialism: The Discourse and Politics of Settlers, and Solidarity with Indigenous Nations’, *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 3, no. 2 (2014) 4

²¹³ Michael Barnett and Thomas G. Weiss, *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics* (Ithaca, UNITED STATES: Cornell University Press, 2011) 6, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3138168>.

rests on colonial logics. After demonstrating that companions bring an individualistic, humanitarian, often apolitical conception of responsibility with them to EAPPI I conclude that a different conceptualisation of responsibility is needed— one which relies on a more structural understanding of the situation of the violence and injustice into which companions intervene, and one which is accountable for British histories of imperialism in the region.

As I examine EAPPI's understanding of responsibility in this chapter, and investigate the type of companion-subject which is constituted through this conceptualisation, it will become apparent how attached companions are to the idea of being able to 'make a difference' and do something to alleviate the suffering of others. I refer to humanitarianism here not to designate a category of aid work, but rather to indicate a feeling of responsibility to "alleviate the suffering of distant others".²¹⁴ Following Bornstein and Redfield I see humanitarianism as a "structure of feeling" and "a cluster of moral principles" presented as a "secular good" but which also "invokes religious categories and legacies of the sacred".²¹⁵ As the second epigraph to this chapter notes, often this desire to do good is rooted in fantasies of heroic selflessness and an ability to be able to remain set apart from the world of power and politics while carrying out one's good deeds. In this chapter I trace continuities between EAPPI's contemporary sense of responsibility and that of the 1930's Quaker missionaries and PWC members and demonstrate the ways in which the same colonial logics, and the same reliance on an abstract notion of humanity are/were being reproduced in both temporal spaces. Thus, I situate humanitarian desires and dispositions (ways of being) within the contexts (both the 1930's and the contemporary moment) in which they unfold and within the "larger histories they draw upon",²¹⁶ pointing out similarities and differences between these different moments and expressions of moral (and religious) desires and responsibilities.

One important theoretical point of departure for this chapter is an argument made by Ida Danewid in her work on global north to global south humanitarian work. Danewid insists on a reconceptualization of global ethics based on something more specific and grounded than an abstract understanding of a sense of shared universal humanity. She argues for an historic

214 Ayten Gündoğdu, *Rightlessness in an Age of Rights: Hannah Arendt and the Contemporary Struggles of Migrants* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2015) 79

215 Bornstein and Redfield "An introduction to the anthropology of humanitarianism" 17

²¹⁶ Ibid. 27

rather than abstract theorisation of the human subject which shows how the humanitarian actor subject position is shaped by specific imperial histories which continue to connect humanitarians to the suffering of others in so-called distant countries.²¹⁷ In a different, more common understanding of global ethics, an abstract notion of humanity contributes to “an ideological formation that disconnects connected histories and turns questions of responsibility, guilt, restitution, repentance, and structural reform into matters of empathy, generosity, and hospitality. The result is a colonial and patronising fantasy of the white man’s burden...”²¹⁸ Alternatively, by understanding one’s reasons for intervention in ways which foreground “the shared, intertwined histories that arise out of the colonial past and the neo-colonial present”²¹⁹ imperial hierarchies of power are attended to rather than erased, and this is, I concur, a far better, more ethical basis for transnational accompaniment work.

This chapter is structured in the following way. Firstly, I draw a picture of the main ways that accompaniers describe their reasons for wanting to volunteer in the oPt. Through this, a humanitarian desire to do good emerges as the most frequently cited reason for involvement and on these terms the events of the British imperial past often appeared irrelevant. This is followed by section 2 which considers the colonial continuities in the Quaker’s and EAPPI’s conception of their responsibilities and demonstrates the ways that discourses of universal humanity, and an abstract, apolitical, individualistic conception of self shapes understandings of responsibility. Section 3 explores what a notion of collective responsibility for past injustice could look like, theoretically. I propose that Iris Marion Young’s social connection model (which forms a response to Hannah Arendt’s work in *Collective Responsibility*) is a useful way of understanding a more historically accountable kind of collective responsibility. This social connection model would enable EAPPI, as a collective group of accompaniers, to better understand their collective, political sense of responsibility to intervene, which would, in turn, lead to a form of accompaniment which is based upon more ethical, and less paternalistic foundations.

1: ‘Making a difference’, ‘doing some kind of good’

²¹⁷ See also Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* 117

²¹⁸ Ida Danewid ‘White Innocence in the Black Mediterranean: Hospitality and the Erasure of History’, *Third World Quarterly* 38, no. 7 (3 July 2017): 1675

²¹⁹ Ibid. 1683

When I began asking accompaniers about their motivations to apply to the EAPPI programme it was prompted my interest in the ways in which British accompaniers engaged, or failed to engage personally with the ongoing impacts of British imperial history in the region. Only one British accompanier said that their motivations to join EAPPI and travel to the oPt were to any extent connected to their feelings about British history in Palestine. This was Richard, a retired history teacher, and his answers reveal a degree of ambivalence and uncertainty over the issue. On the one hand, reflecting on his experiences in the oPt in written form, he said that “everyone [in Palestine] knew about Balfour and I never really felt that just because I was British that I shared part of our collective responsibility”. But immediately following this he added that he thought “part of my motivation for applying to the programme in the first place arose out of that sense of guilt and it did feel significant that it was clearly central to the Palestinians' own narrative.”²²⁰ Later, in a follow up interview, Richard seemed to be battling with the idea of whether national guilt over past injustice made any sense at all. Richard admitted that “the fact that it was a British action means that there is an increase in responsibility on the part of Britain, which sadly I think the government eschews largely” but in this interview the idea that this meant anything for him personally had dropped out of his narrative.²²¹

Another volunteer, Jackie, seemed dismissive of the suggestion that past was of significance to the urgency of what needed to be done in the present: “that was the way of the world then... that’s how the world worked then, but we have a chance to do something about it *now*, and the world works slightly differently now, so let’s try to do something.”²²² Pete puts a similar emphasis on the need to be active in the present: “...regardless of whether my country was or wasn’t involved, to my mind *that is in the past, the situation is now*, these people are being horrendously oppressed and I am trying to make a difference to their suffering.”²²³ The thrust of what both participants communicate here is that their desire to do the EAPPI programme was to be active, to help alleviate others’ suffering in the urgency of the present and not to get distracted from this by thinking about the past. In an attachment to this sense of themselves as able to help, dwelling on the past is seen as a distraction from

²²⁰ Email from Richard, March 2020

²²¹ Telephone interview with Richard, April 2020

²²² Interview with Jackie, UK, September 2019

²²³ Interview with Pete, UK, March 2020

their responsibility to help.

An examination of the other motivations discussed by accompaniers from a range of countries will further illuminate these general trends and offer a better understanding of the types of people who volunteer with EAPPI. While much more critique could be offered in relation to each of the following interview excerpts, I present them here without much analysis, mainly to demonstrate that the majority of accompaniers, regardless of age and nationality, spoke in terms of wanting to offer something, to contribute, and most often, to “make a difference” to those lives that are impacted by the occupation. What will be significant to my argument as it unfolds is that sometimes this sense of responsibility was articulated in particularly Christian, spiritual or Quaker terms, and sometimes it was not.

Firstly, a number of volunteers aged over forty talked about wanting to give something back for the good life they had lived. Joan, who was retired, said for a long time she had had the feeling that she could do something “worthwhile” or “useful” but had not got around to it, being as she was so busy with other charity work. She talked about wanting to do something that was useful because of having had a fairly nice life and coming from an “ok background”.²²⁴ Jackie, cited above also said “I started looking and thinking well I have had a good life, what can I give back you know I wanted to give back something and... Palestine and its suffering, and its people are suffering a lot, and so I started looking and I found EAPPI...” Later in the interview Jackie continued to emphasise her desire to do something good: “I would just like to try to make a difference in some way, it doesn’t have to be big, it doesn’t have to be spangly— and all signing and all dancing— even just to make somebody smile, to give someone a bit of hope.”²²⁵

For many of the accompaniers under forty years old, taking part in EAPPI was part of a wider desire to work in a humanitarian or human rights based career. When asked about this Michael said: “Yeah I think it is very, very important...I mean I think it is in terms of working in the field, I hate— I don’t like saying that but...it [EAPPI] is something I know is going to set me up for this kind of work.”²²⁶ Thus, EAPPI was seen as an ‘opportunity’ and good experience, but was also one which reflected a more general desire to ‘do good’ in the

²²⁴ Interview with Joan, UK, January 2020

²²⁵ Interview with Jackie, UK, September 2019

²²⁶ Interview, UK, December 2019

world. For example, when asked about whether his decision to apply was related to their career plans or not, Nils said “I would lie if I didn’t say I believe the experience is good for me at the end of the day, and I think there is nothing wrong with it, as long as you do something good at the same time, that you believe in”.²²⁷ Likewise, Julia said it was both about getting some kind of “conflict related experience” *and* a desire to “make a difference in some way”.²²⁸ Owen talked about his previous work experience in human rights:

my family has...always been interested in the Middle East and works in human rights and international development and this kind of thing, and I had visited quite a lot of the Middle East previously – I have worked in human rights myself.

He also spoke of wanting to contribute and that EAPPI provided the ideal platform through which to both do that, and to have an interesting experience:

...through people I have spoken to from that kind of world [the programme] is very well thought of, so this kind of made me think what a great kind of opportunity to contribute in a way that is— you know— feasible, without having to move out here and get a job which is very competitive. I don’t have any Arabic, and frankly yes, it is just an amazing opportunity to live in somewhere so unique for three months and to try and play your part in human rights-y field work.²²⁹

James said something similar about the reputation of the programme, saying he was “really excited, based on what I know about the programme...that I will have been able to change the situation for the better.”²³⁰

There was mixture of the extent to which participants saw themselves and EAPPI’s work as political. Joan told me that she had never done much of what she might call activism, except going on a few marches, and so was surprised that she had been accepted onto the programme. Jackie told me that she had got interested in wanting to help in Palestine as a result of living many years in Egypt and through the years of the Arab Spring: “I wasn’t

²²⁷ Interview, Jerusalem, October 2019

²²⁸ Interview, Jerusalem, October 2019

²²⁹ Interview, Jerusalem, October 2019

²³⁰ Interview, Jerusalem, October 2019

really politically minded or anything like that, and then the revolution in Egypt happened, and then I saw what happened there and what is continuing to happen... and then there was the Gaza event in 2014.”²³¹ Many stressed what it was not politics that interested them: For example Emma said: “the focus for me is anyway the humanitarian side and how it is affecting people’s lives— and human rights and international law which I suppose is getting a bit political, but the human side is how I have always thought about it.”²³² Martin said something similar whilst also endorsing EAPPI’s church connections, “I don’t want to be so political for myself, it is the humanitarian situation I want to focus on...and also that it is a church programme, is interesting for me.”²³³

The idea of wanting to help those who were suffering was sometimes linked to companions’ spiritual and religious beliefs. In talking about this, Alex emphasised the relational aspect of EAPPI and how this appealed to his ideas about compassion for suffering: “I have been taught this since I was a kid, when someone is suffering, I mean you can’t fix them, but you can walk with them.”²³⁴ Pete told me he was motivated by an experience he had had of the Palestinian refugee crisis when travelling in Lebanon in the 1960’s. He talks vividly about the poverty he witnessed there: It was

just after the war – the 67 war, and the main road into Beirut was just mile upon mile of dereliction and filth and squalor it was just lined with concrete shacks, derelict buildings, bits of wooden pole with tarpaulin stretched along the top, filth and squalor and thousands upon thousands of people living like this, and at first I thought it was just part of Beirut – then I realised you know trying to find out, that these were all the Palestinian refugees who had been forced out by Israel in ‘48, and ever since then, so I was 17 then, for the past 50 years, the Palestinians have been on my heart and I have never done anything about it. And then the past years I became a Christian, it gave me the kick up the backside to try and do something about it. And it is really difficult to do something, because what does one individual do?²³⁵

²³¹ Interview, UK, September 2019

²³² Interview, UK, March 2020

²³³ Interview, Jerusalem, October 2019

²³⁴ Interview, Jerusalem, October 2019

²³⁵ Interview, UK, March 2020

Pete went on to say that when he found out about EAPPI he thought it was the best way he could “try and make a difference. Because I really want to make a difference to their suffering and that is really my underlying idea.” Becky spoke about EAPPI being an expression of her Christian faith saying there is

a way of life, a principle within our community that is about hospitality, about serving others...it is about living more freely...and stepping out, living a life more of service, without counting the cost, so this [EAPPI] is part of this experiment.²³⁶

Emma was a Quaker who had connections to charity work in Palestine through her family’s involvement in a charity which facilitated teacher exchanges with Palestinian and British teachers. When Emma found out about EAPPI through her Quaker meeting she said, “I wanted to engage a bit more directly in sort of issues that people are facing there and so the idea of sort of being that peaceful presence and working in solidarity, yeah there were lots of aspects to the programme that really appealed.” She added, “without wanting to sound self-righteous, I think in everything I have done and tried to do, and I think again it is going back to family influence, it is wanting to do some kind of good.”²³⁷

2:1 Keeping an eye on the British Mandate

As these interview excerpts show, the impulse to respond to suffering, to “make a difference”, to “change the situation for the better” and do “some kind of good” is a significant factor in motivating participants to travel to the oPt and join EAPPI. Sometimes this desire was inspired by religious faith and sometimes not; sometimes this desire recognised the political nature of this intervention, often it did not. As a way to better understand these companions’ sense of responsibility as a desire to do good this section turns to connect this to a particular history of Christian, British third-party intervention into Palestine. Using the PWC archival materials I will explore one specific point within this history and examine the extent to which the 1930’s Quaker conception of responsibility is linked to the perceived responsibilities of the colonial ‘civilising’ mission. I examine how the Quakers understood their relationship with imperial Britain and how they viewed themselves as moral actors charged with holding Britain to its Mandatory promises. In doing so, some of

²³⁶ Interview, UK, September 2019

²³⁷ Interview, UK, March 2020

the colonial logics still active in EAPPI's conceptualisation of responsibility will be highlighted.

Included among letters sent to the PWC are several from a German member of the Quaker missionary community in Palestine, Heinz Kappes. In 1936 Heinz urges the PWC to be 'watchmen', quoting from a verse in the Bible which says, "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman".²³⁸ This is undoubtedly an apt metaphor for a group of activists who organised themselves as the Palestine Watching Committee. However, Heinz does not only see the Quakers' role as keeping an eye on Mandate Palestine itself, instead he positions the Quakers as monitors of all three groups —the British alongside the Arabs and the Jews. "Nations have something like a conscience" writes Kappes, "Let us penetrate in deeper spheres behind the surface of political struggle of interests. Let us try and find a basis from which the conscience of the three partners may be challenged!" He encouraged the Quakers to allow the "soft and gentle" voice of conscience to "be heard by all responsible British people"; "...never forget that we Friends are installed as watchmen and guardians for the soft and gentle voice of conscience!".²³⁹

In this Quaker understanding of responsibility there was a feeling of duty to use their privilege and their class proximity to those in positions of power to advocate for peace and justice in Mandate Palestine. At the time of Kappes' writing in 1936, Mandate Palestine was in the middle of a general strike which then developed into the Arab Revolt which lasted from 1936 to 1939. Britain's reputation and authority in Palestine was under pressure to an extent that it had not been before, and Britain responded by repressing the insurgency with a heavy hand. One of things the Quakers felt strongly about was the high number of executions of Palestinian rebels by the British. A number of letters testify to the Quakers' advocacy work around this issue.²⁴⁰

²³⁸ Referencing Ezekiel 3, 17-21 'Letter from Heinz Kappes to the PWC, 25.6.1936, MSS 637, folder 6, LB Papers, FH

²³⁹ Ibid. In the same letter Kappes alludes to the fact that Britain had strategic interest in Palestine even before the Balfour Declaration when the British High Commissioner McMahon made promises of independence to Sharif Hussayn in their correspondence between 1915-1916. However, these promises made by the British were never honoured.

²⁴⁰ For example, see Christopher B Taylor letter to Lucy Backhouse 18.1.1938, TEMP MSS 511, box 2, folder 4 LB Papers, FH. In this letter Taylor, as representative of Warwick Society of Friends writes very concerned about this issue and asks Lucy whether the PWC are already acting on this matter yet. "perhaps someone who knows the Prime Minister Personally might try and have a word with him."

According to another missionary, Marshall Fox, Britain's actions during the Arab Revolt were, "unBritish".²⁴¹ Therefore part of the Quaker role was to restore Britain back towards what they believed was more essentially 'British' behaviour. PWC members were asked to "appeal to the 'other England', to the Christian England".²⁴² In their attempt to steer Britain back to what they saw as its true course of good Christian behaviour the Quakers also reasserted their own definition of what it meant to be British along Christian, pacifist and humanitarian lines. According to Emily Baughan, to a certain degree, this understanding of Britishness had been part of the context of post-World War I moment, and the spirit of Internationalism which was flourishing at that time:

Virtues such as peacefulness and fairness were extolled as quintessentially British. At a moment when the meaning of Britishness was being softened and feminised Britain's global power was presented in terms of concern for humanity, rather than conquest and domination. Britain's participation in "internationalism," such as its leading role in the League of Nations, was presented by politicians and the press as a natural extension of the collaborative and compassionate virtues that had animated the British Empire.²⁴³

In the face of what was occurring during the years of the Arab Revolt the Quakers saw themselves as tasked with fighting for a return this romanticised humanitarian and peace-loving version of Britain.

In addition to these concerns about Britain's 'unBritish' behaviour during the Arab Uprising, the Quakers were also concerned that Britain was failing to fulfil their promises of self-determination to the Arabs and was thus failing in its commitment to the League of Nations as the guardian of the Mandate for Palestine. "The responsibility of the Mandatory countries is great indeed" wrote Kappes. "The right of self-determination cannot be denied to people of

²⁴¹ Marshall Fox uses this word several times when talking about violent response of the British to the Arab Revolt. For example in a letter entitled 'Light and Shade in the East', 6.6.1938, TEMP MSS 511 Box 2, folder 4: "we have seen enough to sympathise with those who are matching Arab terrorism with an unBritish equivalent. We know how the difficulties of the situation are accentuated by the heat and dust of a strange country, but ignorance of the people and their psychology, all tending to shortness of temper and hopeless misunderstanding."

²⁴² 'Letter from Heinz Kappes to the PWC, 25.6.1936

²⁴³ Emily Baughan, *Saving the Children: Humanitarianism, Internationalism, and Empire* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2021) 45

such great historical traditions”.²⁴⁴ The Quakers’ moral imagining of responsibility accrued both to themselves as watchmen, and to Britain as a (so-called Christian) Mandatory power; and these notions of religious, humanitarian responsibility are clearly articulated in the language of the League of Nations Covenant. The aim of the League of Nations Mandate system was that European powers should eventually cede governance to the local populations, when— and this subclause is poignant— it was felt the time was right, with such a time being in the power of the Mandate authorities to decide. Article 22 of the Covenant instructed the mandated powers to ensure the “well-being and development” of those natives “not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world” and gave this responsibility as a matter of “sacred trust” to “advanced nations”.²⁴⁵ This language of humanitarianism and religious responsibility, ringing out in a strong, paternalistic tone, would have appealed to many different Christian-missionaries at the time, the Quakers included.²⁴⁶ The Mandate was seen to encapsulate the benevolent spirit of the civilizing mission in which imperial-era Christian missionaries were so fully invested.

For the Quakers the responsibilities of the British Mandate were entirely distinct to anything connected with imperialism. Kappes writes that Britain “must fulfil sincerely their duty as Mandatory Power!” but that “Imperialism and Mandate together is hypocrisy!”.²⁴⁷ In order to create a world of peace and justice a sharp distinction had to be maintained between the ruthless politics of imperialism, and the so-called Christian, benevolent, civilising mission of the Mandate as a moral force for good. By forging a split between imperialism and Mandatory responsibilities the Quakers also elevated their own moral roles and responsibilities out from among what they saw as the evil of politics. Heinz Kappes called on the Quaker community to “refuse the political struggle for the sake of its demonical character” and in doing so he urged the Quakers to distance themselves from British imperialism, Nationalism and other Christian missions:

²⁴⁴ Report by Heinz Kappes, ‘The establishment of a Quaker Centre in Jerusalem’, 1935, TEMP MSS 637, folder 4, LB Papers, FH

²⁴⁵ “Article 22, The Covenant of the League of Nations” *The Avalon Law Project*, Last accessed January 5, 2023, www.avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp

²⁴⁶ Gilbert Rist, *The History of Development from Western Origins to Global Faith*, New ed. (London : Zed Books, 2002) 62

²⁴⁷ ‘Letter from Heinz Kappes to the PWC, 25.6.1936

Different from several other missions we [Quakers] have to separate ourselves from every connection with Imperialism. Our spiritual position is beyond Imperialism and Nationalism. If that is not the case, the first cannot be overcome, the latter cannot be led outside its own boundaries into a world where all nations have equal rights. Disarmament, abolishment of war, justice and peace will only be possible in this non-political world.”²⁴⁸

The following story is told in several letters and illustrates the extent to which Quakers claimed to refuse any political identification with the nation or a wider community united around the commonalities of race.²⁴⁹ At the start of the Arab Revolt, Marshall Fox wrote about a young Iraqi student at the American University (in Beirut) “who has taken a splendid stand lately.” The Arab students were striking work in sympathy with the Palestinian Arabs suffering under the British, but this Iraqi student decided not to join the strike and so is commended for embodying “what the true Christian should stand for”.²⁵⁰ According to Marshall, her choice of loyalty to religion over a sense of solidarity with fellow Arabs resulted in “persecution from Arabs because of her stand” but in the letters she is commended for her stance which is described as striking a “higher note”. Marshall reports that “She told us that she had always gone with the crowd in the past but that she felt now she had had a higher loyalty, her loyalty to Christ and that she was living, as it were, in another Kingdom.”²⁵¹ When he recounted the same story in a different letter Marshall phrased it this way: “as a vital Christian she belonged to another kingdom and had a loyalty which was higher than loyalty to race”.²⁵² In effect then, the ‘true Christian’ is seen as a citizen of heaven rather than a member of a national or in this case pan-Arab group. To be a Christian is to follow a higher calling, to be citizens of a spiritual kingdom and live life in that realm, “free from racial and national prejudices”.²⁵³ Thus, for the Quakers, rejecting the political struggle and taking up the Christian ‘weapons’ of pacifism was part of their role as a citizen of ‘another’ kingdom.

2:2 From Quaker citizens of heaven to EAPPI citizens of the world

²⁴⁸ Report by Heinz Kappes, ‘The establishment of a Quaker Centre in Jerusalem’ 1935

²⁴⁹ I use this term as it was used at the time which was to denote a belonging to a people group

²⁵⁰ Letter to Lucy Backhouse, 18.5.1936, MSS 511, box 3, folder 7, LB Papers, FH

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Letter to John Robson, 9.6.1936, MSS 511, box 3, folder 7, LB Papers, FH

²⁵³ Letter to Lucy Backhouse, 18.5.1936

At first glance, the Quakers' view of themselves and their responsibilities might appear entirely distinct from that of contemporary EAPPI participants. The Quakers' particularly Christian sense of purpose seems very different to the language used even by those companions who espoused a Christian and/or a Quaker faith. It is true that the differences between the two groups and their situatedness in their respective eras and political contexts cannot be ignored. The PWC had a duty to Britain, a country they saw as inherently Christian, and their support for and identification with pacifism, the League of Nations' Mandate and Christianity was intertwined. Unlike EAPPI companions born years after the end of the British Mandate, as missionaries in Palestine, the Quakers were part of the imperial project, and complicit in it, even if they sought to distance themselves from it.²⁵⁴ However, despite these clear differences between British Mandate era Quakers and 2020's EAPPI companions, I would argue that the two groups' sense of responsibility is similar though not identical, and to a certain extent the differences are a question of language rather than of desire.²⁵⁵

Firstly, broadly speaking, both groups saw their responsibilities in a moral rather than political register. Both groups are/were not hesitant to intervene in the world of politics through advocacy work and petitioning of members of parliament for example, but as we saw above, the Quakers did not see themselves as primarily political but spiritual actors with allegiances to 'another kingdom'. This is a specifically Quaker, or Christian self-conception, but it is also one which has been part of the liberal humanitarian project over the years. Even if the language of religion is not used today, in humanitarianism, an anti-political stance is often taken (as is seen in the epigraph to this chapter), a stance which is supported by the liberal fiction of an "abstract and atomistic, general and universal" self that does not see itself as much part of "the particularities of social and political relations and identities"²⁵⁶ as are the

²⁵⁴ I would argue that this makes the 1930's Quakers complicit in British imperialism in Palestine and EAPPI companions born long after such events, as implicated in it. As Rothberg explains about the difference in meaning between the two terms "complicity works best as a term linked to unfolding processes and completed actions...but it works less well for describing the relationship of the past to the present. We are implicated in the past...but we cannot be complicit in crimes that took place before our birth." *The Implicated Subject*. 14

²⁵⁵ To this point, Michael Barnett notes that "When humanitarians dream of changing the world, they do so in their own language. In the nineteenth century, humanitarians favored the language of civilization, believing that commerce, Christianity, and colonialism would save lives and societies. Today many humanitarians (and others) aspire to create the conditions for positive liberty, to enable individuals to live a life of dignity and realize their aspirations, but they often assume that the holy trinity of democracy, markets, and the rule of law will enable individuals to do so." *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca, UNITED STATES: Cornell University Press, 2011) 231, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3138200>.

²⁵⁶ Goldberg, *Racist Culture*. 4

two sides that need to be reconciled. This abstraction of the self from a particular social and political location impacts on companions' imaginings of responsibility. When companions were asked specifically whether their British nationality and knowledge of British history in Palestine had anything to do with their desire to help, many companions expressed a sense of responsibility to do something, but not specifically as a British citizen. For example, Pete said: "my nationality is irrelevant when I spend time in Palestine, I am there to support the Palestinians, regardless of whether my country was or wasn't involved." Ultimately participants wanted to volunteer as companions on their own terms, because they wanted to be helpful, not that they had a heteronomous moral responsibility to act as a British citizen. When I asked Emma whether she felt her presence in the oPt as an companion had anything to do with British imperial history in the region she said:

I don't feel a sense of obligation as a British citizen, but as a human yeah, I would like to think we all have a responsibility to work towards peace and justice...but... not at the sense of personal responsibility for Britain's actions for the Balfour Declaration.²⁵⁷

Although Emma was aware of the privilege that being British carried and what it enabled in terms of being able to travel to and around the oPt, she said she did not see herself so much British as "an individual but in the sense of being a member of...just like a human on the earth, and we are all humans on the earth." Others articulated this more specifically as feeling like a citizen of the world. Owen talked about feeling a sense of responsibility to act for justice as something he owed his fellow world citizens:

I guess I wouldn't think so much about a personal [responsibility] you don't pick where you are born kind of thing. Particularly if you are born 70 years after something happened – but I see it more as a kind of – to use a cliché, I see it more as a world citizen – I think one's responsibility should be to kind of shine light on things that aren't great.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ Interview, UK, March 2020

²⁵⁸ Interview, Jerusalem, November 2019

In the 1930's the Quakers saw themselves in support of internationalist ideals, and as citizens of another kingdom. Whilst neither Emma nor Owen used this language, they talk in related terms when they speak of having a “planetary consciousness”.²⁵⁹ They want to be seen as a subject-beyond-borders, to see ‘humanity’ instead of Britain as their political constituency, to borrow a phrase from Ticktin and Feldman.²⁶⁰ Whether consciously or unconsciously, a dissociation from a British identity and an attachment to a wider, more global consciousness is a way of staking a certain moral claim. As Richard Rorty recognises, the desire to identify as a cosmopolitan is an expression of both one’s sense of choice in how one identifies, and a question of morality: “one’s moral identity is determined by the group or groups with which one identifies—the group or groups to which one cannot be disloyal and still like oneself”.²⁶¹ Moreover, recourse to the language of “we are all humans on the earth”,²⁶² ‘just human’ or world citizen is a lexicon which de-territorialises the companioner, just as the description of the Quaker-self as citizens of “another kingdom” did the religious Mandate era Christian. Pete, Owen and Emma understand their sense of responsibility as deriving not from their British nationality, but as ‘just human’, cosmopolitan humanitarians with a moral duty to help those who suffer.

This liberal language of a shared, universal humanity is deeply embedded within the logics of colonial rule and the ‘civilising’ mission. This discourse acted to gloss over the ways the allegedly unified human community was hierarchically divided into so-called ‘civilised’ ‘superior’ subjects and those racialised, so called ‘backward races’ said to be in need of civilizing. Since the very start of European imperial expansionism liberal, ‘humanitarian’, colour blind discourse has been invested in simultaneously producing, and ignoring, the racially organised divisions between humans which underpin notions of the civilised and those supposedly in need of development. Furthermore, the language of universal humanity is a discourse which enables a denial of responsibility for past British imperial injustices,

²⁵⁹ M. L Pratt refers to a sense of identity as a global rather than local subject, talking about “planetary consciousness” which gave rise to a planetary subject. She charts how this planetary subject emerged alongside 16th Century projects like the circumnavigation of the globe, map making and natural science writing. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*.

²⁶⁰ “Introduction, Government and Humanity” in Ilana Feldman et al., *In the Name of Humanity: The Government of Threat and Care* (Durham, UNITED STATES: Duke University Press, 2010) 1 <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1172277>.

²⁶¹ See Rorty, R. (1998) “Justice as a Larger Loyalty” in Cheah, P., Robbins, B. eds. *Cosmopolitics: thinking and feeling beyond the nation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 48.

²⁶² Interview with Emma, UK, March 2020

whether past or present. It is a discourse that enables the “universalistic shedding of difficult pasts”²⁶³ offering an “apparent levelling” of the very structural differences which produces differences between the categories of victims, perpetrators and implicated subjects.²⁶⁴ In the logics of the liberal project this means the humanitarian is able to see themselves standing innocently side by side with the victims.²⁶⁵

Therefore, in some ways, regardless of whether the language of Christianity and pacifism, or humanitarianism and human rights is/was front and centre; and, regardless of whether we are speaking of the Quakers who saw themselves primarily as missionaries promoting Christianity and pacifism, or of accompaniers promoting international law and human rights, the ideological basis on which the Quakers and EAPPI claimed to take responsibility to intervene in Palestine is very similar. Both the Quakers and the EAPPI accompaniers want to see themselves as responsible, good, helpful citizens whether they see themselves belonging first and foremost to an other-worldly ‘heaven’ or to an abstract notion of collective humanity or planet earth itself. Both groups rely on an abstract, universal understanding of humanity which erases important distinctions between the accompaniers and accompanied, the colonised and the coloniser.

3: Thinking collectively, thinking politically, thinking structurally

So, how would understandings of third party responsibility need to alter in order for organisations to operate in a way which acknowledged those differences between accompanier and accompanied and which took responsibility for historic injustice? What is a conceptualisation of responsibility that would allow accompaniment relationships to be built on an acceptance of, rather than in denial of the legacies of British imperialism? To begin to theorise an answer to these questions it is necessary first to think about the connection between the collective and the individual when it comes to historically accountable modes of

²⁶³ Rothberg *The Implicated subject*. 72

²⁶⁴ Ibid. 70

²⁶⁵ see Sophia Stamatopoulou-Robbins, ‘The Joys and Dangers of Solidarity in Palestine’. From the perspective of North American ISM activists, Stamatopoulou-Robbins discusses the fact that activists might articulate guilt in relation to the neo-colonial activities of the United States and Canada, but that the notion of historical responsibility is easily forgotten when activists travel to the oPt and form an identification with the victims rather than the perpetrators of human rights violations. She instead advocates for a politics of accompaniment-solidarity which keeps activists in the uncomfortable position of association with the perpetrator, and extricating oneself from the comfort of feeling ‘good’ through an over identification with the victim which elides important differences between accompanier and accompanied.

responsibility. Hannah Arendt argued that there is a direct link between our status as social beings, our responsibility to that which we have not done, and our ability to act.

This vicarious responsibility for things we have not done, this taking upon ourselves the consequences for things we are entirely innocent of, is the price we pay for the fact that we live our lives not by ourselves but among our fellow men, and that the faculty of action, which after all, is the political faculty par excellence, can be actualized only in one of the many and manifold forms of human community.²⁶⁶

Arendt's conception of action is inherently political and deeply social. However, her theorisation of responsibility sustains a distinction between the political and the moral, the social and the personal.²⁶⁷ "In the center of moral considerations of human conduct stands the self; in the center of political considerations of conduct stands the world" she writes.²⁶⁸ These dividing lines could be detected in accompaniers' responses to my questions when they emphasised the individual moral and humanitarian obligation to act and eschewed any sense that their British nationality had anything to do with their responsibility to intervene. Because they knew they were not personally involved in what had happened before they were born, responsibility for past injustice was deemed to belong first and foremost to the British government, or an abstract notion of 'Britain'. Michael said "yeah, Britain has a moral obligation to act, but I don't know if individuals have a responsibility towards that".²⁶⁹ Drawing a clear distinction between the collective 'Britain', and everyone else as individuals, offers a way to shore up individual citizens' innocence and negates the need to take responsibility for the past. Another accompanier, George put it most simply when he began talking about guilt in reference to the British Mandate and the Balfour Declaration "No, I mean I don't *personally* feel guilty, I mean how can I, I wasn't alive!" George then goes on to try and imagine himself in the role of someone who could have been blamed for the way they acted in the Mandate era: "I don't know, If I had been in that position of power would I have made that same decision people at that time made? I don't know".²⁷⁰ This automatic assumption that a sense of responsibility to do something belongs first and foremost to

²⁶⁶ "Collective Responsibility" in Bernauer, ed., *Amor Mundi: Explorations in the Faith and Thought of Hannah Arendt*, Boston College Studies in Philosophy 7 (M. Nijhoff, 1987) 50

²⁶⁷ Rothberg, *Implicated subject*, 44-50

²⁶⁸ Arendt "Collective Responsibility". 47

²⁶⁹ Interview, UK, December 2019

²⁷⁰ Interview, UK, September 2019

individuals prevents a collective imagining of responsibility. Only one participant, Simon, expressed his feelings of responsibility in relation to his sense of belonging to a bigger collective: “I don’t feel personally bad because I didn’t have anything to do with it [British action in Palestine since 1917], but I do think that as a citizen of a nation I have got my small part to take responsibility for recognising it [the historic injustice] and doing something about it.”²⁷¹

A different way to conceptualise one’s responsibility to intervene, one that is less reliant on notions of the moral self and more rooted in a collective, political sense of the self is Iris Marion Young’s social connection model. To better understand this the social connection model of responsibility it is best to examine an alternative model first. Young says the liability model is a much more common understanding of responsibility. In this model actors hold a direct “relationship to the cause of harm”,²⁷² and this relies on an understanding of the self who intervenes as morally autonomous, which is to say that “ethical responsibility is confined to the intention and effects of an individual’s actions.”²⁷³ When this is the model of responsibility one is reliant on, the search for a culpable party begins, and guilt is then frequently placed on the British government or another long dead individual (for example, Balfour or the individuals involved in government during the Mandate period). This is not an understanding of responsibility that leads one to feel responsible for past injustice in Palestine because there is no causal relationship between one’s own actions and the historic injustices of the British imperial past.

The social connection modal of responsibility, on the other hand, is different. Here the structural nature of both historic and ongoing injustice is emphasised, and its reproduction does not rely on the autonomous actions of a morally good or bad subject: “structural injustice is produced and reproduced by thousands or millions of persons usually acting within institutional rules and according to practices that most people regard as morally acceptable.”²⁷⁴ The liability model of responsibility does not apply to structural injustices

²⁷¹ Interview, UK, January 2020

²⁷² Iris Marion Young and Martha Nussbaum, *Responsibility for Justice* (Cary, UNITED STATES: Oxford University Press USA - OSO, 2010), 173 <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1153295>

²⁷³ Sheldon, Ruth. *Tragic Encounters and Ordinary Ethics: Palestine-Israel in British Universities*. Manchester University Press, 2016. 60

²⁷⁴ Young and Nussbaum, *Responsibility for Justice*. 95

because “it is in the nature of such structural processes that their potentially harmful effects cannot be traced directly to any particular contributors to the process.”²⁷⁵ The social connection model of responsibility is not about attributing guilt or blame to particular individuals, and whilst it does not preclude taking individual actors into account when understanding the nature of injustice, it focuses instead on structures of injustice.

Adopting a more structural understanding of one’s responsibility for injustice would also demand organisations like EAPPI understand the injustice and violence of the current situation in occupied Palestine in a more structural way. Nayrouz Abu Hatoum notes that “Palestinians are living in a continuous Nakba, understood as a structure and an everyday occurrence and not a singular event.”²⁷⁶ This means British imperial histories must first be understood not only as actions carried out and now safely contained within the boundaries of the past but rather that these histories form part of colonialism as an ongoing structural violence, the effects of which, as Khalidi said, began over a hundred years ago, but are still being felt by Palestinians today through the structures of the Israeli settler-colonial project.²⁷⁷ Understanding the violence of the situation into which EAPPI intervenes, and the histories of colonial violence which enabled them, as structural in nature is thus part of rethinking a conceptualisation of responsibility which is accountable for historic as well as ongoing injustices.

To envisage an alternative to EAPPI’s current framing of the situation, a comparison with another organisation might help. The Good Shepherd Collective, a Palestinian advocacy and solidarity building group, clearly articulates their struggle as one against systems of violence. According to its website the Good Shepherd Collective understands

violence to be rooted in the structures and laws that guide civil formation and order. As such we reject the binary discourse of Israelis v Palestinians and focus our energy on addressing settler-colonialism and other forms of violence by targeting the structures which facilitate these regimes.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁵ Ibid. 100

²⁷⁶ Nayrouz Abu Hatoum, ‘Decolonizing [in the] Future: Scenes of Palestinian Temporality’, *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 103, no. 4 (2 October 2021): 397–412)

²⁷⁷ Rashid I. Khalidi, *The Hundred Years’ War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonial Conquest and Resistance*, Main edition (Profile Books, 2020).

²⁷⁸ “The Good Shepherd Collective”, *The Collective*, Accessed Jun 21, 2023 <https://goodshepherdcollective.org/>

In adopting this more structural understanding of injustice and violence the question of how individuals think about their own place within these structures of violence and oppression is also much more accessible. With a liability model of responsibility it is much easier to absolve yourself of responsibility by saying you are not part of the Israeli or British government, by saying that you were not born at the time of Balfour, by saying you didn't even vote for the people currently ruling in government; and companions made all these lines of defence to me in our conversations. But, when one starts talking about systems of violence, structures of settler-colonialism, racism and patriarchy it may be easier to begin a conversation about one's responsibility for these historic and current systems. Tessa Morris-Suzuki's articulation of implication in historic injustice fits with this way of thinking. She writes that we are "implicated in the events of the past because we live within the structures, institutions and webs of ideas that the past has created".²⁷⁹

The second thing to note about the social connection model in relation to accompaniment is that it relies on a social understanding of the companioner-subject whose actions, whether consciously or unconsciously, reproduce systems of violence, and so responsibility to act to help undo those systems accrues from one's social and interdependent rather than autonomous nature. At the centre of this model is a social subject who holds political responsibilities and "bear[s] responsibility for structural injustice because they contribute by their actions to the processes that produce unjust outcomes."²⁸⁰ This conceptualisation of the responsible social subject helps broaden this chapter's discussion outwards from this a focus on a specifically British responsibility, to a sense of responsibility that less constricted. What I mean is the following. On the one hand I have argued that British subjects bear responsibility because of their Britishness. Albert Memmi's definition of the coloniser's collective responsibility for colonial violence supports this: "Even if he [the coloniser] is in no way guilty as an individual, then he shares a collective responsibility by the fact of membership in a national oppressor group."²⁸¹ Yet, drawing on Morris-Suzuki's quote above and Young's social connection model we see that mere membership in the nation-state is insufficient as the basis for collective responsibility for past injustices. Young states that

²⁷⁹ Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *The Past within Us: Media, Memory, History* (London : Verso, 2004) 235

²⁸⁰ Young *Responsibility for Justice* 105

²⁸¹ Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, [3rd ed.] (London: Earthscan, 2003) 83

“Responsibility in relation to injustice [thus] derives not from living under a common constitution, but rather from participating in the diverse institutional processes that produce structural injustice.”²⁸² This social connection understanding of responsibility casts a wide net, implicating more than only the British citizen. Living within structures, institutions and webs of ideas created by the injustices of the British imperial past is far from being something restricted only to British citizens. A social connection model of responsibility allows for an understanding of responsibility which does not imagine, nor is dependent on an essentialised, homogenous, individual British citizen at its centre—rather it imagines a social subject who lives entangled in and dependent on the structures, institutional processes, and webs of ideas that produce injustice. A decision to act, and take on the responsibility to work towards undoing these systems of oppression arises then not out of an individual sense of guilt, nor simply the type of passport one possesses, nor a leveraging of one’s moral goodness as a way of wielding power over those who are suffering,²⁸³ but rather out of an understanding of that which connects social subjects from different places and times, across the lines formed by webs of histories and structures of imperial injustice.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored EAPPI’s conceptualisation of responsibility as a way of uncovering what colonial logics and ideologies underpin EAPPI’s collective reasons for making an accompaniment intervention into the oPt. I showed that there were similarities between EAPPI’s humanitarian sense of responsibility and the Quaker Mandate era one, and that this moral, paternalistic conception of responsibility was also evident in the sense of so-called ‘sacred’ ‘moral’ ‘civilising mission’ responsibility which undergirded the League of Nations Mandates version of imperialism. It was also shown that the EAPPI desire to ‘make a difference’ and the Quaker desire to act as moral watchmen constituted a depoliticised way of thinking about one’s reasons for intervening which relied on the universalising language of an abstract, shared humanity. Finally, it was argued that EAPPI’s current reasoning for intervening is informed by a liberal, socially and politically abstract view of self, which allowed an obfuscation of the power differentials between those identified as in need of help, and those who seek to do the helping—thus reproducing paternalistic hierarchies and dependencies between the ‘moral’ accompanier and the ‘needy’ accompanied.

²⁸² Young *Responsibility for Justice* 105

²⁸³ Jessica Benjamin, *Beyond Doer and Done to: Recognition Theory, Intersubjectivity and the Third*, 1 edition (London ; New York: Routledge, 2018) 226

This led to the conclusion that a different conceptualisation of responsibility is needed in order to rethink the basis from which EAPPI works. Here I proposed the beginnings of such a theorisation with reference to Young's social connection model. This would necessitate a more collective and political sense of accountability to past injustices and a structural understanding of current and historic violence and injustice in Israel and Palestine. This theorisation would allow British organisations like EAPPI to ground their praxis and accompaniment relationships in an acknowledgement of the troubled, complicated connections formed through histories of colonialism, rather than purely on the problematic notion of a shared humanity which seeks to erase the histories of colonial injustice.

In summary, I argue that an ideological framing founded on an abstract rather than historical account of humanity is a feature of what this chapter has referred to as a moral, humanitarian understanding of one's responsibility to intervene. And assuming a position of responsibility to alleviate the suffering of distant others on the basis of the oneness of humanity is, however well-meaning the sentiment, a reproduction of colonial logics which in contemporary times, —to return to Danewid's way of expressing it—disconnects connected histories. A humanitarian conception of responsibility which does not acknowledge a responsibility for historic injustices creates a certain kind of accompaniment relationship: it maintains paternalistic hierarchies and dependencies between the 'responsible' colonial humanitarian and the 'needy' colonised subject and leverages the humanitarian's sense of moral goodness in a problematic way. In the following chapter I will turn to think more deeply about companions' attachment to moral goodness, the reasons why British companions fail to reckon with their implication in historic injustice and the implications that this failure has for EAPPI's praxis.

Chapter 4 From Balfour to Blair: remembering is resisting

History in an active voice is only partly about the past....It requires assessing the resilient forms in which the material and psychic structures of colonial relations remain both vividly tactile to some in the present and, to others, events too easily relegated to the definitive past

—Laura Ann Stoler²⁸⁴

One Friday evening during a research trip to Israel and Palestine I was at the Jerusalem hotel to meet Clare who was coming to the end of her three months in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt). The hotel is a popular destination for international NGO workers looking for an after work beer in the pleasant atmosphere of this Ottoman era building. The hotel, with its sandy-coloured stonework, had, I learnt, an interesting history: originally built as an Ottoman police station, it later became a registration centre for Palestinian draftees to the Ottoman army, fighting against British forces during the First World War.²⁸⁵ Situated not far from the road which marks the seam between Palestinian East Jerusalem and Israeli governed West Jerusalem, the hotel has also born witness to many successive waves of occupation and decades of upheaval— from the city’s capture by British forces in 1917, to the 1948 Jordanian occupation of East Jerusalem and the Old City, to the Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967. Yet life under occupation is by no means part of Jerusalem’s definitive past, instead it is an ongoing reality for Palestinians living in East Jerusalem. The hotel is a ten-minute walk away from the site of ongoing protests against the threatened forced evictions of dozens of Palestinians from their homes in Sheik Jarrah— one of the factors in events which ultimately led to the eruption of Israeli violence against Palestinians which is raging, and worsening across Gaza, the West Bank and within Israel itself at the time of writing in May 2021. As I write, in my mind I switch back and forth between news updates and my research trip, particularly back to the occasion mentioned above, when I was sitting in the Jerusalem Hotel with Clare, discussing her experience of the oPt as an EAPPI accompanier. Towards the end of our conversation, I had asked Clare whether she thought British volunteers had a particular responsibility to engage in activism in the oPt because of

²⁸⁴ Stoler, *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times*. 169

²⁸⁵ ‘Welcome to the Jerusalem Hotel’, The Jerusalem Hotel, Last accessed September 27, 2022.

<http://www.jrshotel.com/>.

Britain's history of imperial involvement in the region. In response she took a lengthy, somewhat uncharacteristic pause before saying:

I think people [Palestinians] are more conscious of the history here than we are... I mean maybe there are people [non-Palestinians] thinking the Nakba was 1948—get over it—but that is not how it is seen here. You know they [Palestinians] think in historical terms and so must we. It is almost as if, you know, Balfour, I had barely heard of him until I got a bit involved—but most people [in the UK] will never have heard of him, but here, they know their stuff.²⁸⁶

In the epigraph to this chapter, Ann Stoler also reflects on the different ways two groups—the colonised and the coloniser—relate to history. In this chapter I focus on a particular type of encounter between these groups – the ‘others’ of Stoler’s statement who relegate British imperial history to a definitive past, and the ‘some’, those who continue to live with the resilient structures of the imperial past and the on-going settler-colonial present. I focus on what the ‘some’—the Palestinians, have to say to the ‘others’—British accompaniers. In many, although not all, of these encounters Balfour’s name was mentioned, and often British volunteers were asked to apologise for the 1917 Balfour Declaration. I refer to these encounters as ‘Balfour conversations’ since Balfour’s name appeared to act as a signifier, encapsulating all that might be considered the afterlife of the British Mandate in the oPt. This message constitutes a demand to go much deeper than Clare’s suggestion that British people start to ‘think in historical terms’; instead, British subjects are being asked to consider their implication in historic colonialism in Palestine, and by extension, the current settler-colonial reality in Palestine. What is at stake in my examination of these moments of encounter is something much more than the question of whether or not an individual accepts their implication. I argue that these Balfour Conversations also that they have something to tell us about the accompanier- accompaniment relationship and the limitations of EAPPI’s praxis. Primarily, I argue that this request for accompaniers to reckon with implication highlights the need for organisations like EAPPI to listen more attentively to Palestinians about their experiences of life in the oPt. Additionally, I argue that it is not only that liberal discourses of disembodiment, objectivity and ahistoricism limit accompaniers’ ability to reckon with their implication, but also the way that EAPPI frames the situation into which it intervenes. These

²⁸⁶ Interview with Clare, Jerusalem, October 2019

moments of encounter also reveal the ways that, even if accompaniers do listen to Palestinians carefully, EAPPI's refusal to use a settler-colonial framing in its analysis of the situation can prevent accompaniers from fully understanding what it is Palestinians are saying to them.

In these exchanges, Palestinians sometimes demanded apologies from accompaniers, and sometimes anger was expressed, but not always. In the reports of these conversations examined in this chapter we see accompaniers respond in defensiveness, anger and shock. In highlighting accompaniers' affective responses, I am much less interested in making comparisons between, or passing judgement on individuals than I am in thinking about the way that beneath accompaniers' affective reactions lie collective dispositions, some of which are formed by imperial and liberal discourses which "circumscribe what one can know" and which work to prevent individuals from accepting the fact that they are implicated.²⁸⁷ Imperial dispositions are, as Stoler described, "acts of ignoring rather than ignorance" but are also ways in which one lives, acts and sees oneself.²⁸⁸ This means the individual bears responsibility for their acts but, as ways of being, dispositions are also rooted in structures of thought which exceed the individual and can be seen as a legacy of centuries of liberal and imperial philosophy, culture, economics and politics in Britain. Furthermore, reckoning with implication— "self-consciously grasping one's position as an implicated subject",²⁸⁹ is, as Rothberg demonstrates and as I must underline, far more than a theoretical question. Rather, it is a politically and ethically urgent task to investigate the narratives in which one lives and the kind of subjects formed through these processes of becoming.²⁹⁰ Narratives are themselves "processes of subjectification, they are ways in which women and men become subjects and live their lives as a story within a history".²⁹¹ And, as Tabar argues, this kind of self-reflection is essential for those wanting to engage in more ethical and effective transnational solidarity relationships with the colonised. For her solidarity

necessarily entails grappling with the differential ways individuals are implicated and

²⁸⁷ Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*. 255

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject*. 200

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ruba Salih, 'Bodies That Walk, Bodies That Talk, Bodies That Love: Palestinian Women Refugees, Affectivity, and the Politics of the Ordinary: Bodies That Walk, Bodies That Talk, Bodies That Love', *Antipode* 49, no. 3 (June 2017): 747

invested in overlapping systems of domination, while connecting different struggles under global capitalism and imperialism. Starting from a position of critical self-reflection enables solidarity to be negotiated and built around shared political commitments, while recognising the need to avoid lapsing into re-colonising relations.²⁹²

Finally, in this chapter I pay close attention to the Balfour conversations as a way of understanding what Massad called the “synchronicity of the colonial and the post-colonial” in Palestine.²⁹³ In being invited to reckon with implication in historical injustice I suggest that British accompaniers are being invited into a different way of relating to the contemporary Palestinian struggle—the call here is to join Palestinians in *remembering* and thus in joining them as they engage in ongoing acts of refusal of settler-colonialism. Therefore I begin the chapter by examining a Palestinian perspective on the relationship between the past and the present. I then examine accounts written by EAPPI participants which describe these Balfour Conversations. I suggest that such encounters can be compared to the Althusserian ‘hail’, which interpellates accompaniers into a self-conscious understanding of their implicated positioning. I examine two main types of responses in this chapter. Firstly, I show how accompaniers respond in defensiveness as they dismiss Palestinian accounts of history as oversimplistic and unsophisticated. Secondly, I examine a response to an incident when a Palestinian village refused to welcome British accompaniers on account of the Balfour legacy. This second example allows me to explore the reaction of shock as a response elicited by the discovery of the dissonance between the way they and Palestinians understood the meaning of their presence in the oPt. I conclude by drawing these examples together to reflect on how the process of reckoning with interpellation might help transnational organisations build more attentive, less paternalistic, less colonial relationships with those they accompany.

1:1 The past as an ever-living present²⁹⁴

When I asked Clare about the legacy of British history in Palestine, she said she thought that the history of the Balfour Declaration was “living history” for Palestinians who must contend

²⁹² Tabar, ‘From Third World Internationalism to “the Internationals”’. 427

²⁹³ Massad, *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question*. 14

²⁹⁴ Khoury, ‘Finding a New Idiom’. 56

with acts of oppression of a military occupation on a daily basis. While one could remark on the fact that buildings like the Jerusalem Hotel remain standing years after successive occupiers have come and gone, the endurance of the Palestinian people in the face of such histories of oppression is much more remarkable.²⁹⁵ When accompaniers visit Palestinian communities to report on incidences of human rights violations and gather testimonies about what enduring life under occupation is like they often find that accounts of quotidian experiences of settler-colonial violence are rooted in longer histories of people and place. Sami, a Palestinian EAPPI employee in the oPt, talked about what often happens:

...if you are coming for a visit to know about what happened yesterday, I won't just give you the short information, I will let you know all the history... for like ten to fifteen minutes - and then answer your questions for what happened yesterday...they will give you the history of the place - the village, the community and talk about their ownership properties and their great-grandfathers who were living in this community and now are still living here - and then they will tell them [the participants] the story.²⁹⁶

Viewing contemporary injustice as inseparable from a long history of oppression is a standpoint echoed in Fatma Kassem's interviews with Palestinian citizens of Israel who had lived through the Nakba of 1948. Rather than using terminology like 'The British Mandate' or the era of 'the Ottoman Empire', Kassem described how women often used colloquial expressions such as 'the time of the Turks', 'the days of the English' to talk about their memories of those times.²⁹⁷ It was the way they experienced power in their everyday lives where 'days' followed 'days', and one occupying power replaced another: "'After the Turks, the English came, after the English, Israel came' laughed one woman named Aysheh from Isdud."²⁹⁸ For these women, life as Palestinians in an Israeli settler-colonial state was a continuation of a sequence of oppressive powers controlling their lives and under whose watch they continued to suffer despite the change in names of the occupiers.

²⁹⁵ Barakat "'Ramadan Does Not Come for Free'"

²⁹⁶ Interview with Sami, Jerusalem, November 2019

²⁹⁷ Fatma Kassem, *Palestinian Women: Narrative Histories and Gendered Memory* (London ; New York: Zed Books, 2011) 116

²⁹⁸ Cited in *ibid.* 118

Many have written about, and theorised Palestinian experiences of time when returning to, arriving in, and travelling through Israel and the occupied territories.²⁹⁹ Writing of a visit to Palestine, Adania Shibli describes the way she is often subjected to hours of interrogations and searches at Israeli border control. What she notes about one such experience was that her watch stopped working during this time. It went “into a coma, unable to count time ... maybe it simply refuses to count the time that is seized from my life, time whose only purpose is to humiliate me and drive me to despair”.³⁰⁰ As well as making a point about the way her watch became her ally in these instances, “trying to comfort me by making me believe that all that searching and delay had lasted zero minutes”, her prose also suggests there is a sense in which in refusing to count the theft of hours and minutes, days and years that the colonising powers take from the colonised, the watch is also performing an act of refusal.³⁰¹ For there is little sense in attempting to count time in a linear fashion when days merge into days, when existence under occupation is experienced as power which passes from the Turks, to the English to the Israelis.³⁰²

This experience of time as if it is suspended in stasis is, as Sherene Seikaly argues, not a recent Palestinian experience under a Zionist regime, but rather is in and of itself a legacy of the British Mandate. Seikaly roots this experience of temporality and the subjectivities it produces in the logics of the League of Nations’ Mandate system. Palestinian independence had already been pledged informally in a carrot and stick like fashion by the British High Commissioner McMahon in his correspondence with Sharif Husayn in 1915-1916, but more than this, a “temporality of deferral” was baked into the League of Nations Mandates system devised in the early 1920’s. In its logic the colonised inhabitants of the Mandate were seen as not yet ready for independence so in need of Britain’s tuition, but,

²⁹⁹ For example, Mureed al-Barghouti writes of his return to his family’s village post 1967 and notes the frustration and despair experienced by Palestinians living there, the sense that the past is “still in place, unchanged, like a dark donkey tethered to a tree and forgotten” in ‘Songs for a Country No Longer Known’, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 27, no. 2 (1 January 1998) 63 <https://doi.org/10.2307/2538284>; See also Helga Tawil-Souri, ‘Checkpoint Time’, *Qui Parle* 26, no. 2 (1 December 2017): 383–422, <https://doi.org/10.1215/10418385-4208442>; Peteet, Julie. ‘Closure’s Temporality: The Cultural Politics of Time and Waiting’. *South Atlantic Quarterly* 117, no. 1 (1 January 2018): 43–64. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-4282037>.

³⁰⁰ Adania Shibli “Of Place, Time and Language”, in *Seeking Palestine: New Palestinian Writing on Exile and Home*, eds. Penny Johnson, Raja Shehadeh (New Delhi: Women Unlimited 2012) 67

³⁰¹ Ibid. 68

³⁰² A Palestinian sense of temporality is much more cyclical than linear as Nayrouz Abu Hatoum argues, ‘Decolonizing [in the] Future: Scenes of Palestinian Temporality’, *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 103, no. 4 (2 October 2021): 397–412, <https://doi.org/10.1080/04353684.2021.1963806>.

How long the tutelage might last or when it might end was nowhere to be found in the plans for realizing the ‘sacred trust of civilization.’ The mandates system introduced into international law a temporality of deferral: everyone under mandate rule was confined to the ‘waiting room of history.’³⁰³

This sense of what is often referred to as suspended waithood is not merely waiting of course, the experience of time is also the experience of protracted violence and oppression. This is expressed by Barakat as “the past remains present in an ongoing Nakba”.³⁰⁴ Elias Khoury writes about this sense of ‘ongoing’ as he reflects on the violent events of May 2021, referenced in the introduction to this chapter: “Sheikh Jarrah isn’t and wasn’t a reminder but a marker or an indicator. The Nakba is not a past that we remember but a present in which we live. The Nakba has been an uninterrupted trajectory since 1948.”³⁰⁵

This is the Palestinian conception —and embodied experience— of time and occupation out which Palestinian villagers speak to companions when they come to visit. Sami describes here how Palestinians ‘see’ the past, and then, with reference to Balfour, ask British subjects to join them in this way of seeing:

Well, in a few communities it is still [pause] in some interviews when the host or the local person asks the EAs where they are from and there is a person from the UK, before starting the conversation he asks them: ‘you have to say sorry for what Balfour did’. So, this is something for us as locals we won’t ever forget. It’s not Balfour alone, so I am not blaming Balfour alone – no – or I am not blaming the people from the UK for what Balfour did, but yes, in some communities they still remember. And especially old men. And especially if there is a Nakba witness, if we are talking to a Nakba witness he will mention Balfour.³⁰⁶

³⁰³ Seikaly, Sherene. ‘The Matter of Time’. *The American Historical Review* 124, no. 5 (1 December 2019): 1681–88. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/rhz1138>. The phrase ‘waiting room of history’ is a quote from Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, N.J., 2000), 8.

³⁰⁴ Barakat “‘Ramadan Does Not Come for Free” 92

³⁰⁵ Elias Khoury, ‘Finding a New Idiom: Language, Moral Decay, and the Ongoing Nakba’, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 51, no. 1 (2 January 2022): 54

³⁰⁶ Interview with Sami, Jerusalem, November 2019

When accompaniers are asked to apologise for all that Balfour and his infamous Declaration represents, the apology is not the real point of this request. Accompaniers are also being asked by the Nakba witness to listen carefully and to ‘see differently’, to remember the part the British played, but also to better understand the Palestinian experience. The Palestinian, speaking from the “viewpoint of the subjugated”³⁰⁷ addresses the British subject, challenging them to see themselves and their presence in the oPt as being connected to both to past injustices and the Palestinian present. In essence accompaniers are being challenged see themselves as implicated subjects.

1:2 A moment of interpellation

One EAPPI participant, Sarah, who had been an accompanier some years ago at the time when Tony Blair was British prime minister, wrote to me recalling the following incident. Sarah and her colleagues were monitoring an Israeli checkpoint which regulated Palestinian farmers’ access to land they owned, but which was trapped on the ‘wrong’ side of the Israeli apartheid wall. The encounter was meaningful to Sarah, so much so that she specifically thanked me for asking about it, however many years later.

There was one very specific encounter. The three of us [accompaniers] were monitoring the military checkpoint which separated the farmers from their land. Early in the morning they [Palestinians] came down the dusty track from the village and were put through the humiliation of checks of IDs, permits, searches - and sometimes being turned back. On this morning a venerable couple came down on a mule cart. As he drew level with us, the old man and ourselves exchanged morning greetings. But after the courtesies, he paused and in a sweeping gesture took in the checkpoint, the barbed wire fence, the Israeli soldiers and their jeeps, he looked at us, and said simply: 'Bush! Blair! Balfour!' Then he cracked the whip and drove on. That was hardly a conversation, but it said everything.

At the time I felt shocked, because of the barely contained anger in those three words. Balfour was in the past. Bush and Blair were politicians in the present. And although we had just enough Arabic to exchange polite greetings - *we were part of their world.*³⁰⁸

³⁰⁷ Haraway, ‘Situated Knowledges’.

³⁰⁸ Email from Sarah, April 2020 (my emphasis)

While both Sarah and the Palestinian man did not share much common language, these three words were enough to convey a message. We do not know how far the Palestinian man intended to blame Sarah, but in his anger, Sarah indicates her awareness that she was present in Palestine and had become part of the Palestinians' world as an activist, but also specifically as a British accompanier.

This encounter, painted here so vividly, bears a likeness to a well-known but imaginary one conjured up by Louis Althusser which he uses to explain the way ideology transforms individuals into subjects.³⁰⁹ In Althusser's scene a policeman calls out to an individual shouting "hey you!"; in Sarah's story there is a Palestinian in a mule cart calling out "Bush, Blair, Balfour!". In Althusser's scene the individual being hailed stops at the sound of the call, recognises that the call was addressing them specifically, responds to that call in a turning around, and in doing so self-identifies as that which the interpellator named them. Whilst Palestinians cannot be likened to authority figures issuing the call of hegemony, there are helpful similarities found in the patterning of the call, turn, response and "become".³¹⁰ In Sarah's account, the Palestinian's three words, along with his pause, his look and his gestures also constitute a hailing: a call to turn around and realise that as British visitors to Palestine, they are part of the lineage of Bush, Blair and Balfour, and both because of this, and because of their presence in the oPt, they are also part of the Palestinians' world. This lineage marks the Palestinian experience of the continuity between past and present violence; it is the *present* Palestinian experience of continuity between Balfour (as a representative of British colonial powers) and Bush and Blair (representatives of contemporary imperial powers) that renders the call especially urgent.

Unfortunately, Sarah's version of events offer only a snapshot of this encounter. If I had been able to, I would have asked this man on the mule cart more about what he feels about British humanitarian presence in the West Bank, and whether his decision to call out to Sarah that morning was born of anger or frustration or rage, or what exactly he felt. However, despite it

³⁰⁹ Louis Althusser, *Essays on Ideology* (London: Verso, 1984).

³¹⁰ Althusser admits that his narrative is limited in its accuracy of how ideology works since in reality these events do not have a sequential nature: "The existence of ideology and the hailing or interpellation of individuals as subjects are one and the same thing...I must now suppress the temporal form in which I have presented the functioning of ideology, and say: ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subject, which necessarily leads us to one last proposition: *individuals are always-already subjects*" *ibid.* 49

only being a snapshot, what can nonetheless be ascertained from Sarah's reporting is that Britain's complicity with violence against Palestinians cannot be relegated to a sealed off past. It is the very sense of temporal continuity in the naming of Bush, Blair, Balfour that collapses the passing of time between Balfour and Blair, demonstrates the reality of the Palestinian lived experience, and testifies to the fact that the British remain entangled in an historic and ongoing regime of domination and colonialism.

2: Palestinian anger, British defensiveness

Althusser argued in his work that "ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subject".³¹¹ Drawing on this, I suggest that there is both the fact of implication, and, at the same time, a process of being interpellated into a different way of being as a result of a growing, conscious understanding of one's implication. I described some of this process of reckoning with implication as I experienced it, in the previous chapter. As I read various iterations of the Balfour Conversations in the form of emails sent to me by former British EAPPI participants I saw that they were all describing significant encounters and that sometimes, what Avtah Brah called the "electric moment[s]" of interpellation featured in their narratives.³¹² The various accounts of Balfour Conversations ranged in intensity, some were reported as very casual sounding exchanges, some reported Palestinians making a joke of their request for an apology, some were occasions when the request for an apology was being made very earnestly, and at other times companions reported accounts of Palestinian anger, and feeling "blamed for what happened in the past".³¹³

Three of the accounts I received contained particular similarities in relation to the responses companions made. Firstly, Tom wrote about a conversation he had had while out shopping in the town where his team were staying. He suggests that the Palestinian he had met with expressed some anger. He said the man

told me that the UK has the principal responsibility, through the Balfour declaration, for the suffering and current situation of Palestinians, and suggested that my presence in the EAPPI programme was hypocritical and prompted by a desire to clear my

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Avtar Brah, 'The Scent of Memory: Strangers, Our Own and Others', *Feminist Review* 100 (2012): 9

³¹³ Interview with Owen, Jerusalem, November 2019,

conscience. My first reaction was defensive, but it quickly brought me to a realisation that his anger was understandable and that I was not in a position to challenge his accusation.³¹⁴

Eric wrote about meeting a Palestinian community leader who was a point of contact for his team:

When the contact asked where we were from, he responded to me specifically about how the situation in Palestine was the fault of the British. I followed up by speaking about the Balfour Declaration but that it...also was intended to protect the rights of people living in Palestine. He didn't respond but then pointedly praised Norway for its support of the Palestinian people upon hearing that one of the group was Norwegian. I felt frustrated and ignored by the dismissal of what I said, which was in response to a comment framed in a passively hostile (and what I found to be rude) manner.³¹⁵

Gavin wrote more generally about numerous exchanges with Palestinians concerning British history:

There were comments on Balfour, on the brutality of British rule in Palestine and on the continuing unhappy engagement of the UK in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and its role as a supporter of the US. These conversations were mainly with villagers – mostly shepherds – in isolated rural communities, who were nevertheless keen to talk about politics. One or two of them had specific stories of their grandparents engaging with specific British officers during the 1930's and 40's who were behaving in an arrogant or racist manner.³¹⁶

In these emails both Tom and Eric wrote about Palestinian anger whilst Gavin's account sounds lighter and less personal. However, all three express remarkably similar lines of defence against interpellation in their descriptions of the encounters. Tom wrote that the exchange “upset me because despite the oversimplification of his accusation I felt its fundamental justice. It also struck a nerve with regard to my own motivation.” Eric wrote

³¹⁴ Email from Tom, April 2020

³¹⁵ Email from Eric, April 2020

³¹⁶ Email from Gavin, April 2020

about how he dealt with his relationship with the Palestinian contact on a longer term basis: “As the placement continued, we had a great deal to do with the contact I refer to. We assisted him...on a frequent basis. So, it didn't matter, and I 'placed' his comments alongside our other key contacts whose analysis was more sophisticated and nuanced.” Lastly Gavin wrote:

For many, the whole complex history of the last 140 years in Palestine *had been reduced to the argument* that the British had let ‘the Jews’ in and the whole subsequent mess was their fault. I felt a number of different things: - understanding why they felt as they did; acceptance that British power in its imperial and post-imperial phases had/has often been used arrogantly and wrongly; a little irritation that a somewhat *simplistic version of the actual history was being conveyed*, which couldn’t easily be corrected without offence.³¹⁷

While the above accounts make mention of companions feeling a mixture of reactions—irritation, acceptance, frustration, offence— all three also employ a certain defence mechanism. They hint at a disregard for a Palestinian understanding of history as the Palestinian analysis of events is described as “simplistic” and lacking “nuance” and “sophistication”. Blaming the British for the present situation was felt to be a “reduction” of the complexity of the history and they were aware that the Palestinian could not be corrected “without offence.” A shared assumption underscores all three male companions’ words, that knowledge of the current situation and its historical causes is less well understood by some Palestinians than by themselves. And these criticisms construct a subtle, yet powerful line of defence against accepting implication.

I suggest this is not *simply* a matter of companions expressing Orientalist views of Western knowledge as superior and more sophisticated, although it certainly also is this. Rather, it is also reflective of a disposition which speaks to the way companions see themselves in relation to the past. In liberal ideology, as Mahrouse explains, the subject of liberal universalism is thought to be “without history”, “in so far as it can step out of historical events such as colonialism and slavery”.³¹⁸ Likewise, Goldberg described the dislocated

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Mahrouse, *Conflicted Commitments*. 143

liberal subject as “divorced from the contingencies of historicity”.³¹⁹ In an imagined freedom from the confines of historical legacies there is an assumption that companions are more able to fully ‘know’ history because they are detached from it, positioned as outside the Palestinian experience. It is this patriarchal, universalising logic which enables Gavin, Eric and Tom to dismiss knowledge produced by Palestinians as simplistic and partial versions of history; and implicit in this is the false assumption that Palestinians are somehow more embodied, more entangled in the particularities of their situation. When companions dismiss Palestinian accounts of history on the assumption that their understandings are based more on experience than ‘knowledge’, the British citizen’s own particular positioning in colonial history is obscured, and this constructs a false, hierarchical division between different types of subjects who have different ways of knowing. British ways of knowing become falsely associated with superiority, detachment and objectivity, and Palestinian knowledge is Othered, feminised in its association with lived experience and a lack of objectivity. However, a Palestinian call like the one issued by the farmer in the above example shatters this illusion in its insistence on the continuity between Bush, Blair and Balfour. Even if colonial histories are as Stoler wrote “too easily relegated to the definitive past” by the coloniser, no one can step outside of historical events and the legacies they leave behind.³²⁰ The colonised do not live a more particular, embodied life than the coloniser despite the uneven distribution of pain and injustice which “adheres to some bodies compelled to remember”.³²¹

Yet, not all ways of knowing *are* equal. Some forms of subjectivity allow for a better understanding of the links between past and present than others. When Haraway insists that it is the standpoint of the oppressed which is privileged (the view of the past as expressed by the farmer on the mule cart) it is because this position offers a better understanding of the continuities between past and present, *not* because the oppressed live a more embodied life. It is a privileged viewpoint because the oppressed “are least likely to allow denial of critical and interpretive core of all knowledge. They are knowledgeable of modes of denial through repression, forgetting, disappearing acts – ways of being nowhere while claiming to see comprehensively.”³²²

³¹⁹ Goldberg, *Racist Culture* 4

³²⁰ Stoler, *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times*. 169

³²¹ *Ibid.* 67

³²² Haraway, ‘Situated Knowledges’. 584

Not being willing to reckon with implication is a stance which is rooted in an unwillingness to unlearn one's presumption of objectivity and detachment from past colonial histories. As Charles Mills highlights in his work on white ignorance, the idea of a "group-based cognitive handicap" is "a straightforward corollary of standpoint theory: if one group is privileged, after all, it must be by comparison with another group that is handicapped."³²³ And yet, as Haraway advocates, there is a way of moving towards and connecting with the viewpoint of the oppressed and the views of time as expressed by the Palestinian voices included in section 1. The three examples of accompaniers expressing defensiveness here stand in contrast to Sarah's response when she wrote that she realised she had become "part of their [the Palestinians'] world". In order for British accompaniers to understand their place in the legacies of British imperialism better and so to begin the process of reckoning with implication, the fact that the detached, objective, view from nowhere is merely an illusion must be acknowledged. Such an acknowledgement is only possible via a move towards the other in an attitude of listening and open acceptance of the others' knowledge: "The knowing self is partial in all its guises, never finished, whole, simply there and original; it is always constructed and stitched together imperfectly, and *therefore* able to join with another, to see together without claiming to be another."³²⁴

3:1 "Cold receptions", Palestinian refusals and British shock

One particular account of a Balfour 'conversation' stood out as being quite different to the others, and as the person who wrote about it said, it wasn't so much a conversation as an encounter that *didn't* happen. The story involves an incident where a British accompanier was told he was refused a welcome in a certain West Bank village because he was British. This was not an experience peculiar only to Philip who wrote to me about it—I had heard similar accounts about this village from other British accompaniers and EAPPI staff members. But, given that it was Philip who told me about it in detail I focus on his reaction:

Something happened that, unfortunately, caused me some considerable concern. It wasn't a conversation that happened; rather one that didn't. My team arranged visits to quite a significant number of villages ...to meet with the leadership, explain our work,

³²³ Charles W. Mills, *Black Rights/White Wrongs: The Critique of Racial Liberalism*, Transgressing Boundaries (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017). 51

³²⁴ Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges'. 586 (Haraway's italics)

offer what support we could to them, etc. We were sharing those visits equally between us but, to my huge disappointment, one of those villages barred me from visiting them. The others were allowed to go but, because I was British, I was not allowed to join them. The explanation given was that the Balfour Declaration was a major factor in bringing about the creation of the state of Israel, the British people were therefore significantly responsible for the situation that exists today, they wanted no British EAs in their village.

Obviously it was right to abide by this and so I stepped back from the visit. I was really shocked though. I thought they would welcome a Brit like me who recognised the reality of the situation, how the occupation affects their lives, wanting to show my support by working as an EA. I have to admit that their refusal to meet me actually left me feeling quite angry. I thought, here I am facing up to Israeli soldiers and settlers on an almost daily basis, feeling quite threatened sometimes and yet the usually high level of Palestinian hospitality was not being extended to me. It didn't make sense to me, but I had to accept it of course.³²⁵

We read here that Philip is upset because the Palestinian community did not welcome him as he had expected they would. Philip's expressions of concern, disappointment and anger are, I would suggest, slightly different ways of articulating the shock of uncovering a dissonance between the way he viewed himself and the way that the Palestinian community saw him and other British companions.

EAPPI's companions are not the first humanitarians to realise that their British presence in Palestine was not universally welcome of course. Closer to the time of the issue of the Balfour Declaration, Mandate era travel accounts sometimes record the impact the Declaration had on the way British missionaries and travellers were received by Palestinians. For example, in 1922, a British traveller Bessie Pullen Burry wrote:

...Nor is it a pleasant experience to find oneself in a country where the Englishman's prestige has vanished. Actually, in villages not so far away from Jerusalem, missionaries belonging to the Church Missionary society (CMS) are receiving very

³²⁵ Email from Phillip, April 2020

scant courtesy where formerly their visits were welcomed and they were on the friendliest terms with the Arabs. A lady told me that when she and her friend paid their usual visit to some of these outlying places, the one taking medical stores, the other holding some sort of religious meeting, they were met with these words: “We don’t want your message, and we don’t want your medicines”. Pressing for the reason for this cold reception, where hitherto they had met with friendliness, the answer was: “Because your country has sold us to the Jews”.... I tell you things have come to a pretty pass when to admit your nationality is to court hostility, insult or contempt!³²⁶

Pullen Burry seems to be mainly concerned for what the Balfour Declaration means for Britain’s reputation abroad: she is sorry for the ‘Englishman’s’ loss of prestige. One hundred years later, Philip’s reaction is slightly different. He does not expect to be welcomed on account of his Britishness, but he does expect a welcome because of his activism, and like the CMS missionaries mentioned in Burry’s account, he is curious about the reason why his good deeds do not override any feelings of anger Palestinians might have about Britain’s actions in Palestine. Philip’s story recalls something that Said stated when describing the relationship individual scholars have with ‘the Orient’ that “he comes up against the Orient as a European or American first, as an individual second.”³²⁷ Philip might have wanted to be seen as a particularly good type of British person: a “Brit like me” who recognises “the reality of the situation” and wants to show Palestinians support through his accompaniment work. Being *this* kind of person, Philip expected a positive response from the Palestinian village community and shock arises from being faced with Palestinian anger which shakes his belief in himself as present in the oPt ‘doing good’.

Jeanne Morefield argues that at the time of empire when liberals told the story of ‘who we are’, rather than simply erasing or omitting details which pertain to the “imperial state’s forays into illiberality in the past and present”, they relied instead “upon prolonged and creative forms of deflection that consistently ask the reader to avert her eyes away from colonial violence and economic exploitation, and back toward the liberal nature of the imperial society.”³²⁸ Stoler captures a related idea in her concept of the imperial disposition

³²⁶ Bessie Pullen BURRY, *Letters from Palestine, February-April, 1922*. (London: Judaic Publishing Co, 1922, 1922) 13

³²⁷ Said, *Orientalism* 11

³²⁸ Morefield, *Empires Without Imperialism* 3

of disregard. She describes this as “what it is both to know and not know the imperial strictures to which one is tethered, and the demands to which one is bound”.³²⁹ Accompaniers, as those who seek to make a difference and ‘do something good’, are attached to similar moral “narrativization[s] of the self”.³³⁰ At the end of his three months in the oPt, another accompanier, Owen told me about a time when he felt wrongly blamed by a Palestinian contact for being responsible for the current situation. He emphasised that “I personally think I work fairly hard to try and be a good EA anyway, regardless of the historical significance of the country I happen to be born in.”³³¹ Kotef makes a pertinent point in relation to Morefield’s politics of deflection: “The alleged stability of identity presumably means that the violent actions cannot contaminate it. Accordingly, by pointing to the liberal identity of the empire, its imperial (illiberal) doings can simultaneously be acknowledged and their meanings and implications for one’s identity denied”.³³² Connecting Philip’s story to the theme of the previous chapter, a belief in one’s the moral humanitarian identity as stable is an insistence that also resists contamination, allowing accompaniers to both be aware of Britain’s histories of imperial violence and injustice, and to avoid a contemplation of one’s implication in those histories because there is no desire to disrupt one’s sense of identity. Thus, at the roots of what Heron called the “helping imperative”³³³ is a strong desire to maintain a position of moral goodness. When this display of moral goodness is questioned rather than accepted, as it was here for Philip, shock ensues as part of his disbelief that his ‘good deeds’ are not universally appreciated.

However, I would also suggest that Philip’s shock is not only a result of having his view of himself as a ‘good’ individual shaken. Although he claims to understand the ‘reality of the situation’, there is one particular way in which Philip fails to do that. That he struggles to see the connections between his 21st Century presence in the oPt and a history dating back to 1917 is due, I think, in part to the way EAPPI frames itself as an anti-occupation rather than an anti-colonial intervention. As Omar Jabary Salamanca et al. write, making a point which can apply equally well to either academics or activist organisations, one of the problems of

³²⁹ Stoler, *Duress* 9

³³⁰ Stuart Hall “Introduction: Who needs identity?” in Hall and Gay, *Questions of Cultural Identity*: SAGE Publications (London, UNITED KINGDOM: SAGE Publications, Limited, 1996) 4
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1474805>

³³¹ Interview, Jerusalem, November 2019

³³² Kotef, *The Colonizing self* 40

³³³ Heron, *Desire for Development*

focusing on the 1967 illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories as distinct from the larger project of settler-colonialism, is that "it emphasises settlement by Israelis in the West Bank and absolves previous generations of Zionists and Israel itself of settler colonialism".³³⁴ In regards to conceptions of time, framing oneself as an anti-occupation organisation is a way of seeing that severs any sense of continuity between 1917 and 2017. As an organisation which refuses to speak about the occupation in terms of settler-colonialism, EAPPI's rhetoric does not enable companions to see this continuity nor to recognise themselves as the implicated imperial subject positioned in a continuity of British intervention in Palestine stretching from the time of Balfour to Blair, and onwards to the present moment. And, in remaining within this anti-occupation rather than anti-colonial framing, Philip remains rooted in an attachment to his view of self as an activist, who like the companions in the previous chapter focused on their ability to help in the present instead of considering their implication in injustices of the past. Companions see themselves as engaged in the task of ending an occupation that dates back only to 1967 not back to 1948 or 1917. When Philip encounters a Palestinian who experiences the continuous Nakba— the suspension of time as explicated above— he is shocked that he is seen to be implicated in this unresolved continuity of oppression and violence.

Because this Palestinian perspective comes as a shock to Philip, he responds in anger. In Butler's words, rather than recognising that it is he who is being named in the moment of interpellation, he answers instead to another name.³³⁵ For Butler notes the following about interpellation:

As Althusser himself insists, this performative effort of naming can only attempt to bring its addressee into being: there is always the risk of a certain misrecognition. If one misrecognizes that effort to produce the subject, the production itself falters. The one who is hailed may fail to hear, misread the call, turn the other way, answer to another name, insist on not being addressed in that way.³³⁶

³³⁴ Omar Jabary Salamanca et al., 'Past Is Present: Settler Colonialism in Palestine', *Settler Colonial Studies* 2, no. 1 (January 2012) 3 <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2012.10648823>.

³³⁵ Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford, Calif. : Stanford University Press, 1997) 95

³³⁶ Ibid.

In Philip's case, he does not want to be addressed as an implicated subject. His story appears to exemplify the times when there is no guilt, no internal compulsion to turn around at the sound of a call, and the attempt to bring the addressee into being fails. Even many months on from the event, when he writes this account, he insists on being someone other than that which the Palestinian refusal hails him as. This is partly because he has *already* turned around upon hearing a call, as I have suggested above, in the performance of his work as an accompanier, working for an end to the occupation he sees himself as distinct from the other Brits who are not taking action in the way he is. In addition, because accompaniers do not often see any link between Balfour and Blair, human rights based accompaniment is seen as a task for the present moment in the present time of an illegal occupation. His view of time, and his positioning within it, is entirely different to that of the Palestinians and thus he insists on not being addressed that way.

3:2 The ambivalence of shock

Philip is not the only one to mention feeling shocked when reporting these Balfour Conversations. Another participant, Karen, mentioned shock twice. Talking of meeting Palestinians in the 1970's in a refugee camp in Lebanon she said, "My statehood was scorned as a result of Balfour and the British Mandate, it was initially a shock and at the time something I hadn't really thought about too much." She wrote that she "felt shocked but also defensive, not of the British action but the suggestion that I should account for the actions of the British Government".³³⁷ Sarah also mentioned feelings of shock in reaction to the Bush, Blair, Balfour greeting saying shock was a result of realising there was "barely contained" anger in the Palestinian's words.³³⁸ Whilst many Palestinians expressed gratitude for accompaniers' presence at checkpoints, shepherding in the fields, walking their children on the way to school, in some accounts of Balfour conversations Palestinians surprise accompaniers by refusing them entry to their homes, by demanding an apology or by accusing them of having selfish motives for coming to Palestine. This encounter with anger or refusals of a welcome was not expected. However, feelings of shock are, I would argue, the result of the volunteers meeting with both the expected and the unexpected in the message. There is something in the anger, the refusals, the demand for an apology met with in these encounters which was not entirely unexpected. Thus, I would argue that in some

³³⁷ Email from Karen, April 2020

³³⁸ Email from Sarah, April 2020

instances the various mentions of shock appear to mark an openness, and at other times to mark a lack of readiness to turn and recognise the hail.

In Tom's account analysed in section 2, we read that the Palestinian accused him of becoming an accompanier with EAPPI in order to clear his conscience. This was an accusation which Tom said "struck a nerve". Tom's metaphorical use of language positions the impact of the interpellation as a bodily sensation. It conveys the idea that the hailing lands in the body in a way akin to a strike to the nervous system, it shakes, disorientates, surprises Tom who is not used to being the object of Palestinian anger and is not accustomed to the idea of being interpellated as an imperial subject. Yet this embodied experience of interpellation seems to mark something of a readiness to turn and grapple with the message being conveyed to him. He suggests the accusation was felt like a blow to a sensitive area, an area perhaps already weakened by a previous encounter. Here, the hailing has the capacity to touch a place which the accompanier already has some familiarity with. When Butler rethinks the process of interpellation, she renders more explicit the relationship between the exterior call and the inner workings of a response to that call in the realm of the psyche. She explains that the decision to turn and self-identify with the hail must be the result of an interior readiness which pre-exists the moment of interpellation. She writes, "Although there would be no turning around without first having been hailed, neither would there be a turning around without some readiness to turn".³³⁹ The interpellation "strikes" this place of readiness, so that Tom both defends himself against the accusation (as we saw in section 2), and that at the same time he also reports feeling the "fundamental justice" of the Palestinian's anger.

The shock which results from these moments of interpellation therefore acts ambivalently: it both closes the subject down, as I could conjecture it seemed to do for Philip, allowing individuals to re-trench themselves as unimplicated; or/and it has the potential to open the subject up, as again, I could conjecture it did for Tom. Tom wrote that his Balfour conversation enabled him to reflect deeply on his positionality as a British subject and his work with various projects in several different countries in the Global South. He says, on reflection: "I now see the privilege I unwittingly enjoyed and doubt the value of what I spent half my working life doing".³⁴⁰ Just as several of the accompaniers wrote about feelings of

³³⁹ Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*. 107

³⁴⁰ Email and phone interview with Tom on the same topic, April 2020

shock, there are indications in several of these accounts of this kind of opening up, of tentative beginnings to a process of reckoning with implication. Karen wrote of her experience in the 1970's that, "the memory [of the conversation] has stayed with me and prompted me to question and read more about Balfour."³⁴¹ Eric, also cited in section 2, wrote that he had been "pulled up to think about the effect of Balfour...To use the current phrase, it made me 'check my privilege'."³⁴² Sarah talked about how when she gave advocacy presentations in the UK she always included the story of her encounter with the Palestinian farmer at the checkpoint. She said that she had not forgotten the experience, and that in part it had led her to help community groups and political parties in Scotland to organise a Citizen's Apology for the Balfour Declaration in 2017.³⁴³

Conclusion: building better accompaniment relationships across difference

Examining a call to implication through the lens of interpellation has offered the opportunity to examine some of the affective responses made by accompaniers to this Palestinian call. Despite the ease with which the idea of implication in histories of imperialism in Palestine is denied or misunderstood or looked away from, I argue that reckoning with implication is a politically necessary task. As Rothberg argued, it is an important precursor to building a more ethical movement of transnational solidarity across difference, where hierarchies and histories of power are acknowledged rather than repressed.³⁴⁴ Therefore, implication needs to be understood and engaged with outside the bounds of academia, and to be allowed to impact on transnational accompaniment praxis and solidarity relationships more generally. "Seeing our complicities is the first step in taking responsibility for them" as Koopman says.³⁴⁵ Or, as Tabar argues, "It is from a recognition of these locations and our entanglements within systems of oppression that ties and alliances can be built that are based on mutuality, accountability and shared political principles."³⁴⁶

However, Palestinian requests for British accompaniers to reckon with implication are only invitations, however strongly worded they might, or might not be. It is clear that

³⁴¹ Email from Karen, April 2020

³⁴² Email from Eric, April 2020

³⁴³ Telephone interview, Sarah, April 2020

³⁴⁴ Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject*. 200

³⁴⁵ Koopman, Sara. 'Imperialism Within: Can the Master's Tools Bring Down Empire?' *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 7, no. 2 (2008): 298

³⁴⁶ Tabar, 'From Third World Internationalism to "the Internationals"'. 419

interpellation often fails, volunteers do not always seem to recognise themselves in this call, and thus fail to open up to an awareness of their implication. And this begs a question that Butler has already articulated, “Why should I turn around? Why should I accept the terms by which I am hailed?”³⁴⁷ Why should British subjects be attentive to this Palestinian call? In Butler’s response to her own question she discusses the need for a readiness to turn to face the law which is represented by the police officer in Althusser’s scene. She says it “means that, prior to any possibility of a critical understanding of the law, there is an openness or vulnerability to the law, exemplified in the turn toward the law.”³⁴⁸ To be clear, there is evidently a marked difference between the notion of the law as that to which one feels required to turn and respond to, and the idea of the accompanier choosing to turn to listen to Palestinians. When the accompanier chooses to respond to the call there is a redressing of the pre-existing unequal relations of power between the caller and the called which does not occur in Althusser’s account of interpellation. To this extent, navigating implication is a responsibility which lies with individuals, a task that requires maintaining an open posture towards oneself and others since it involves an encounter with the Other *and* an encounter with the unknown parts of one’s self. As Rothberg argues, whilst *dwelling in* implication is about closing oneself off to one’s responsibilities, *reckoning with* implication involves opening oneself to “one’s unacknowledged capacity to wound”.³⁴⁹ I would argue that it is one’s—albeit unacknowledged—capacity to wound that is being reflected back to the accompaniers in the Palestinian anger and acts of refusal examined in this chapter. As Ahmed notes, in embodied postcolonial encounters there is much that lies in the space between those representing the colonized and the colonizer—“other encounters, other speech acts, scars and traumas, that remain unspoken, unvoiced, or not fully spoken or voiced”.³⁵⁰

In conclusion therefore, I would firstly argue that implicit within this invitation to reckon with implication is first and foremost a call to listen better and more attentively to the “standpoint of the oppressed”³⁵¹—and that means all the perspectives and experiences of Palestinians that accompaniers are present in the oPt to accompany. And, for British accompaniers to listen attentively to what is being said, a willingness to face one’s capacity

³⁴⁷ Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*. 108

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject*. 201

³⁵⁰ Ahmed, *Strange Encounters* 156

³⁵¹ Haraway, ‘Situated Knowledges’.

to wound is required, a capacity which it is not possible to simply overwrite or undo through acts of accompaniment, or solidarity or support or activism. Building more ethical accompaniment relationships through cultivating a disposition towards attentive listening, is, I suggest, a necessary, not to be overlooked, first step on the path to a less colonial, more Palestinian led form of accompaniment intervention.

Butler makes an important point when she explains that in the process of interpellation there needs to be a pre-disposition to turn towards the voice that hails, and as I suggested above, a significant part of this lack of readiness is due to EAPPI's decision to frame its mission as anti-occupation rather than anti-colonial. Thus, secondly, I propose that EAPPI's choice of framing itself only as an anti-occupation organisation needs to be rethought. Confronting implication requires a disposition of readiness to address the uneven hierarchies of power in accompaniment relationships which continue to be structured by colonialism; but if settler-colonialism is a word that EAPPI refuses to use to describe the situation in the oPt, then it will come as no surprise that reckoning with implication is avoided. These Balfour Conversations are far from being examples of a petty inability on behalf of Palestinians to forget what lies finished in the past; not everyone has the luxury of being able to choose between remembering or forgetting the past. "Like all human beings, we too want to forget", writes Khoury, "A person can forget the past, but try as she might, she cannot forget the present. At the hands of the Israelis, our past has become an ever-living present that does not pass, so how are we to forget?".³⁵² And, regardless of whether, as Hawari argues, "remembering Palestine beyond lived experiences and generational boundaries" is a conscious performance of political resistance or not, this is still an act of resistance.³⁵³ Therefore, when Palestinians invite British subjects to see the past, the present and the future in the same way that they do, to see the continuities between Balfour and Blair as the man in the mule cart asked Sarah to do, accompaniers are being invited to participate in the ongoing Palestinian refusal of the situation of quotidian settler-colonial violence. And as I have been arguing in this chapter, it is through the Palestinian invitation —sometimes expressed as anger, sometimes as a refusal, sometimes as a joke—that the fiction of the ahistorical view from nowhere, a supposedly superior, detached, objective way of knowing, and a self which remains untethered to the specificities and legacies of British imperial history is shaken. This

³⁵² Khoury, 'Finding a New Idiom'. 56

³⁵³ Hawari, 'Palestine Sine Tempore?' 172

moment of interpellation thus presents a challenge to the liberal project's imaginary of the disembodied, objective, ahistorical self, but it also presents a challenge to the ideology EAPPI uses to frame the situation into which it intervenes. It prompts a rethinking of EAPPI's refusal to name the situation as a "complex imperial/colonial formation",³⁵⁴ a naming which encompasses the entire geography of both Israel and the oPt, as well as those Palestinians refugees continuing to live in a situation of suspended waitness in countries like Lebanon, unable to return to Palestine.

³⁵⁴ Rema Hammami. 'Follow the Numbers: Global Governmentality and the Violence against Women Agenda in Occupied Palestine'. In Janet Halley et al., eds., *Governance Feminism: Notes from the Field* (University of Minnesota Press, 2019) 479–504 <https://doi.org/10.5749/j.ctvdjrpfs>.

Chapter 5 All in the name of balance? – The colonial logics of a discourse of moderation

I think it is important now that I am thinking about information [advocacy] work, I find it important to be able to say we are impartial but we are on the side of human rights, because you will get those questions that ‘oh well, you are just pro-Palestine’ or ‘you are anti-Semitic’, ‘Why did you only spend time in the West Bank?’

—Julia, Norwegian companioner³⁵⁵

One of EAPPI’s key principles is that they claim to be non-partisan: they say they are pro-human rights and international humanitarian law, and that they are “not pro-Israeli” and “not pro-Palestinian”.³⁵⁶ Presenting themselves in this way, as not pro one group of people, nor pro another, is what I refer to in this chapter as taking a balanced approach. This, along with their accompanying claim to be a pro-human rights organisation can be understood as a strategic choice for EAPPI since a certain level of credibility and clout is needed in a globalised world often hostile to supporters of Palestinian rights. Being balanced and non-partisan is partly a way that the organisation tries to secure a respectable reputation for itself, and as Julia says in the epigraph above, this is a helpful way to deflect false accusations of anti-Semitism. In the UK, as in many other places, anti-terrorism legislation is frequently used to suppress the activism of those acting in support of Palestinian rights, and via the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition, criticism of the State of Israel is often wrongly redefined as anti-Semitism. However, this chapter demonstrates that through EAPPI’s determination to present themselves in this balanced way, Palestinian rights organisations become associated with a very problematic discourse, and in proclaiming to be pro-human rights instead of pro-Palestinian, I argue that EAPPI fails to present any challenge to the settler-colonial logics which seek to delegitimise and eradicate Palestinian civil society organising.

In focusing on the way that EAPPI forms itself as a non-partisan organisation, this chapter offers a contribution to an ongoing scholarly conversation about the interplay between role and identity formation in humanitarianism and volunteer work more generally. Rebecca Allahyari writes in the context of contemporary religious volunteer work in the US using the term ‘moral-selving’ to describe the way volunteers “seemed motivated by a need to create a

³⁵⁵ Video call interview, April 2020

³⁵⁶ “Key Principles of Accompaniment”, EAPPI accessed January 4, 2023 <https://eappi.org/en/our-model>

self in keeping with particular moral ideals” and used their work as a way of a “shaping, striving, creating, building, and sculpting” that self.³⁵⁷ In the context of Quaker humanitarian work post-1948 in Gaza, Ilana Feldman writes about the Quakers’ overriding concern to act in an ethical way— a way which best reflected Quaker values. Their struggles are seen as an engagement in an “ethical practice that joined concern for others with “care of the self””.³⁵⁸ While, Feldman says, on a practical level the relief workers felt they had done fairly well in making decisions which best helped the Palestinian refugees, “they were much less sure about whether they had been able to be Quakerly as they did so”.³⁵⁹ I reflect on similar feelings of moral anxiety about the nature of the accompanier-self who intervenes in this chapter. I explore the ways in which EAPPI is anxious to create a certain reputation for itself as non-partisan and thus ‘performs balance’ both in response to interior desires to be ethical and because of external demands and fears of appearing too radical, or too pro-Palestinian— demands placed on the organisation by the political context. Rather than using the terms ‘moral-selving’ or ‘care of the self’, I work with Stephan Greenblatt’s term ‘self-fashioning’.³⁶⁰ Diane Nelson also uses this language in her analysis of the way human rights accompaniers invest in both “a practice and theory of identity-in-formation” in an attempt to fix their own ideas of who they are through their solidarity work.³⁶¹ This desire to fix oneself into a certain shape leads me to a consideration of the productive aspect of EAPPI presenting itself as non-partisan. For the adoption of balance as a strategy to avoid being wrongly accused of anti-Semitism cannot remain merely a performance, instead it becomes part of a process which shapes and sculpts accompaniers and accompaniment into a certain form— into a certain way of being and doing.

In this chapter I highlight what I am quite loosely referring to as EAPPI’s ‘balanced approach’, while the following chapter will deal more precisely with EAPPI’s praxis of what they call ‘principled impartiality’.³⁶² Within the constellation of concepts being referenced in

³⁵⁷ Rebecca Anne Allahyari, *Visions of Charity: Volunteer Workers and Moral Community* (Berkeley, UNITED STATES: University of California Press, 2000) 111, 6.

³⁵⁸ Ilana Feldman, ‘The Quaker Way’ 690; See also Michal Givoni for an analysis of Foucault’s care of the self in relation to MSF’s role as ‘witness’ in the oPt. ‘The Ethics of Witnessing and the Politics of the Governed’, *THEORY CULTURE & SOCIETY* 31, no. 1 (January 2014): 123–42, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276413488633>.

³⁵⁹ Feldman, ‘The Quaker Way’ 693–4

³⁶⁰ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2005)

³⁶¹ Nelson, *A Finger in the Wound*. 37

³⁶² See chapter 6 for a full definition of what I refer to at the start of this introduction p120. Also, “Key Principles of Accompaniment”, *EAPPI* accessed January 4, 2023 <https://eappi.org/en/our-model>

this chapter are a variety of both practices and markers of identity which include a human rights and IHL framework, non-partisanship, a peace and reconciliation discourse, a principle of non-violence and Christianity. While the analysis will deal with different ones of these at different times, and while they are all distinct ideas, in section 3 I will demonstrate, via the archives, how these concepts can be connected and brought together in and under the overarching concept of moderation. Being what Kotef calls a liberal ‘good’, moderation is, I suggest the ethical good by which EAPPI aspires to be known,³⁶³ and I demonstrate that EAPPI’s emphasis on moderation and balance is part of a continuity stretching back to the Orientalist colonial ideologies of the ‘Christian’ ‘civilising’ mission. Through its praxis EAPPI fixes its identity as an organisation which does not take sides, yet in doing so it fails to account for the impact of this on those who this discourse constructs as existing beyond the boundaries of moderation: those associated with religions other than Christianity, those deemed not yet ready for non-violence and dialogue, those seen as too political or too passionate or too partisan, but also quite simply, those who are defined as ‘Palestinian.’

The chapter is organised in the following way: firstly, I explore the reasons why EAPPI and individual accompaniers rely on the idea of balance as both a strategy and a moral good. I also trace this approach back to the Mandate era archives and show the way the Quakers acted to safeguard their own reputation as impartial actors. This also allows me to explain how self-fashioning is not only about the control of one’s own identity, but also involves using the Other to define oneself. In section 2 I complicate the notion of self-fashioning further by showing how it is impossible to draw a distinction between balance as a strategy and as a self-fashioning practice. Section 3 moves on to consider some of the key implications of EAPPI’s balanced approach. Again, via an examination of the PWC documents, I uncover the way Oriental, Christian and colonial logics are reproduced when EAPPI singles out specific types of Palestinians and Israelis for allyship. I conclude by demonstrating the consequences of EAPPI’s balanced approach, and show how accompaniment praxis in the oPt therefore fails to support Palestinian resistance to settler-colonial logics.

³⁶³ For more on the ways balance is considered a liberal good, and the links between moderation and balance See Hagar Kotef, “Balance” Reworking Political Concepts: A Lexicon in Formation, (Paper presented at Columbia University and The New School for Social Research, December 2010)

1:1 Balance as a strategic necessity

At the time of writing this chapter, six Palestinian civil society organisations have recently been declared “terrorist organisations” and “unlawful” by the Israeli government in what might only be the latest, but also one of the most worrying of Israel’s bids to defame the reputation of such groups and to cut them off from networks of support and funding. In a statement made by an one of the six, Addameer — an organisation supporting Palestinian detainees— they spelled out the fact that the intimidation and persecution of Palestinian human rights defenders has become a key part of the Israeli apartheid system.³⁶⁴ Whilst Palestinian civil society organisations are much more heavily targeted than international human rights groups working in the oPt, the latter are also impacted by campaigns to delegitimise Palestine solidarity activism.³⁶⁵ Such efforts are carried out on many fronts including through policy interventions. In 2017 for example, a bill was passed which barred entry into Israel of anyone found to be in support of the Boycott Divest and Sanctions (BDS) movement. As a Palestinian-led movement, BDS is often criticised for supporting the delegitimization of Israel and many human rights activists are now prevented from entering Israel and the oPt on these grounds.³⁶⁶ That EAPPI refrains from fully supporting BDS could be interpreted as one way in which they attempt to minimise the likelihood of such difficulties. However, both WCC staff and EAPPI participants still find themselves at risk of being denied entry, and their continued ability to provide protective presence for Palestinians

³⁶⁴ “Spyware surveillance of Palestinian human rights defenders” *Addameer*, November, 8 2021 <https://www.addameer.org/news/4564> The six which have been wrongly deemed ‘unlawful’ are: Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, Al-Haq Law in the Service of Man (Al-Haq), Bisan Center for Research and Development, Defence for Children International-Palestine, the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, and the Union of Palestinian Women’s Committees

³⁶⁵ See Ben White, ‘Delegitimizing Solidarity: Israel Smears Palestine Advocacy as Anti-Semitic’, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 49, no. 2 (1 February 2020): 65–79. Also see Gordon and Perugini who note the existence of an agenda in Israel, carried out by both governmental and non-governmental bodies, to muzzle the work of liberal NGOs by framing them as threats to national security. For example, the organisation the ‘NGO monitor’ states its aims to be that of ending “the practice used by certain self-declared ‘humanitarian NGO’s’ of exploiting the label ‘human rights values’ to promote politically and ideologically motivated agendas.” cited in *The Human Right to Dominate*, Oxford Studies in Culture and Politics (New York : Oxford University Press, 2015) 52

³⁶⁶ For more on the BDS movement see Sunaina Maira, *Boycott!: The Academy and Justice for Palestine* (American Studies Now: Critical Histories of the Present): 4 (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2018); EAPPI have always had to deal with this risk but since this new bill was passed the risks have become greater. For example in 2016 the Malawian born WCC executive, Isabel Phiri, was banned from entering Israel and interrogated about the EAPPI programme supporting BDS, and deported See Ilan Lior, ‘Theologian Barred From Entering Israel: Guards Didn’t Ask Me About BDS’, *Israel News - Haaretz.com*, 8 December 2016, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-theologian-barred-from-israel-guards-didnt-mention-bds-1.5470872>; For more on the WCC’s stance on BDS see Claudia Baumgart-Ochse, ‘Claiming Justice for Israel/Palestine: The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Campaign and Christian Organizations’, *Globalizations* 14, no. 7 (10 November 2017): 1172–87, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2017.1310463>.

and keeping accompaniers on the ground remains a major concern.³⁶⁷ Memories of the international controversies that followed the deaths of both Rachel Corrie and Tom Hurndell, American and British members of ISM respectively, who were killed by Israeli forces in 2003, are never far away from conversations around transnational protective accompaniment work in the oPt. In the court hearing which followed Corrie's death it was decided that her attempts to protect Samir Nasrallah's home in Gaza was an act of combat, thus criminalising her actions and acquitting the Israeli soldier who crushed her to death and demolished Nasrallah's home. ISM was accused of carrying out illegal activities by "serving as human shields for wanted people or for the homes of Palestinians".³⁶⁸ In the aftermath, ISM became a target for Israeli attack on its activists, who were subsequently frequently deported or not allowed into Israeli, and their offices were raided by the military on at least one occasion. This has resulted in ISM having to downscale its operations in the West Bank and the Gaza strip considerably since 2005.³⁶⁹ Like ISM, EAPPI is not immune from the difficulties of operating in a context where human rights groups of any nationality have become vilified as a threat to Israel's security.³⁷⁰ In the years that EAPPI has been operating, like many other solidarity activists, EAPPI participants have been physically and verbally harassed and attacked by settlers unhappy with the accompaniers' presence in the West Bank, and one way of trying to minimise the likelihood of this happening is for accompaniers to maintain a 'non-interventionist' stance.³⁷¹

In response to the hostility of the climate in which they operate, it is true to say that EAPPI spends considerable effort seeking to protect the programme and its accompaniers both in Israel and Palestine and in the countries from which accompaniers are sent. I argue that to do this they curate an image of themselves and their work that it is hoped will be presentable to the world at large as they engage in advocacy work. In EAPPI's home countries, protecting the programme is about protecting EAPPI's reputation, and securing a listening audience both among members of the general public and among politicians and other leaders in

³⁶⁷ It has often been spoken of and sometimes reported that the frequency of individuals on a tourist visa being barred entry to Israel is higher for people of colour and individuals with a Muslim sounding name see Jakril Hoque, 'Israel Denied Me Entry on the Basis of My Skin Color and Religion', *The Electronic Intifada*, 27 July 2012, <https://electronicintifada.net/content/israel-denied-me-entry-basis-my-skin-color-and-religion/11536>

³⁶⁸ Neve Gordon and Nicola Perugini, *Human Shields: A History of People in the Line of Fire*, (University of California Press, 2020) 1.

³⁶⁹ See Wales, Zachary. 'Peace under Fire: Israel/Palestine and the International Solidarity Movement'. *Journal of Palestine Studies* 35, no. 3 (20 March 2006): 118–19.

³⁷⁰ Gordon and Perugini, *The Human Right to Dominate* 54

³⁷¹ See chapter 6 for more on what EAPPI's non-interventionist approach looks like in the oPt

positions of influence. When accompaniers return from the oPt, the eye-witness accounts of human rights violations which they then formulate are dispersed through their networks of contacts with the ultimate aim of moving “decision makers higher up the vertical ladder of influence.”³⁷² Maintaining access to those in positions of power is vital for EAPPI’s advocacy efforts and a respectable, you could say moderate reputation, enables EAPPI to better communicate their anti-occupation message.

1:2 Balance as a moral good

Among EAPPI’s accompaniers however a balanced approach was not only considered to be a strategic good. It is also thought to be the ‘right’, most ethical approach by some. Whilst not all participants chose to apply to EAPPI specifically because of its nonpartisan stance, some volunteers certainly did and this appeared to be true especially among those who counted among their close relationships those who identified as Jewish, or Jewish-Israeli.³⁷³ One volunteer in this category was Nikki, who had taken part in EAPPI a few years previous to our interview and talked about her decision to apply to EAPPI:

I think something which was really important to me, and I wouldn’t have gone otherwise, was EAPPI’s commitment to supporting human rights and supporting equality and supporting a just peace for everyone. So it is not anti, or it should never be anti-Jewish or anti-Israeli, but it is speaking out against the actions of the current Israeli government administration ...I felt like I could play a positive role because of my commitment to hearing lots of different voices and perspectives...and I feel I have a role in breaking down the idea of those two irreconcilable sides and actually bringing forward the voices of people who are trying to bring together Israelis and Palestinians.³⁷⁴

In this example Nikki identifies as someone committed to a ‘just peace’ to ‘reconciliation’ and equality for ‘everyone’ whether Palestinian or Israeli, and so fully supported EAPPI’s approach. She is also positive about EAPPI’s work because she says it reflects something of

³⁷² Darweish and Rigby, *Popular Protest in Palestine*.162

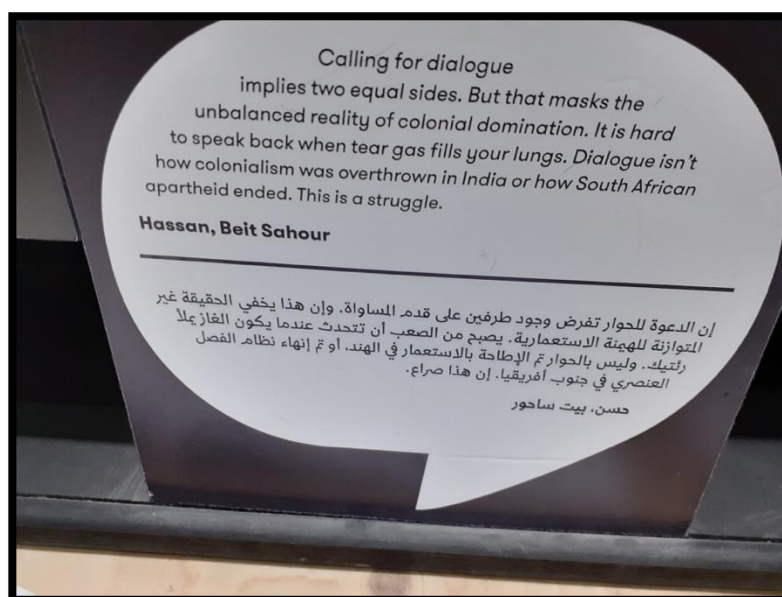
³⁷³ However, to be clear this point does not equate to any kind of general statement about the politics of Jews or Israelis. For example, there were several accompaniers in my project who were Jewish and held views on EAPPI’s balanced approach that were different to Nikki’s.

³⁷⁴ Video call interview, May 2020

her own concerns and abilities, that is to say she feels she has a role in bringing Israelis and Palestinians together. When talking about EAPPI’s approach Nikki links human rights and a discourse of equality, justice and peace for all, emphasising reconciliation, peace and dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. When I asked Nikki to tell me about any memory of her time as an accompanier that came to mind, the example she chose to tell me about were her memories of meeting a Palestinian ex-prisoner in the gardens of an old abbey located in the West Bank. She said he had changed since leaving prison— he had become committed to non-violence after his release, and he was “actually now living quite a peaceful life cultivating his land”. She added that this meeting marked a contrast with the depressing evidence of the impact of the occupation that spent the rest of their time in the West Bank witnessing. Meeting him “was just kind of this real ray of hope that someone in their life could— it was kind of like he had let go a lot of the bitterness and anger that he had”.³⁷⁵ Placing this emphasis on an individual story of change in the life of a man who transitioned (so her words implied) from a life of violence to a life of peace, in the context of the on-going violence of settler-colonialism in the oPt, shows something of Nikki’s enthusiasm for EAPPI’s approach which she says is about creating a just peace “for everyone”.

1:3 Non-violence and peace and reconciliation work as self-fashioning

Figure 2: A Palestinian view on the call for dialogue and reconciliation work. Exhibition board in the museum in the Walled Off hotel, Bethlehem, 2019.



³⁷⁵ Video call interview, May 2020

This embedding of the notion of balance into a discourse of peace and reconciliation is an approach to the Palestinian question which is criticised by many Palestinians (see figure 2 for example). It is a discourse of normalisation that recalls the way Christians in the era of the British Mandate focused so intently on reconciliation between the ‘two sides’.³⁷⁶ While the initial focus of the Quaker missions in Palestine in the 1800’s had been setting up schooling for girls and later boys, as the years of the British Mandate progressed, hosting dialogue between the Jews and the Arabs became an increasingly more important part of their work. And concern for reconciliation between Jews and Arabs was a focus of many different Christian groups working in the region. In 1936, the year the anti-imperial Arab revolt began in Palestine, the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem wrote a letter to Lucy Backhouse commenting on how the “Arabs and the Jews are boycotting one another.” And that “This does not bridge the chasm” between the two sides. Rather than justice, reconciliation and peace is seen as the primary objective and it is expected that this will follow on from a change of hearts and minds. The Bishop finishes the letter saying “I trust that efforts all are making towards understanding and friendship within this country are having the desired effect”.³⁷⁷ Another Quaker missionary Rosina Harvey, wrote to Lucy Backhouse saying Palestine needed love rather than hatred and that the recent struggles had been about “bitterness and hate and wrong”, whereas “reconciliation and a common aim alone make for progress”.³⁷⁸

This relentless pursuit of peaceful relations between Jews and Arabs sometimes at the expense of a search for justice, provoked some ire among some in the Quaker community, however. The Quaker wife of a professor at the American University in Beirut was interviewed as part of a Quaker investigation into the possibilities of a new peace and

³⁷⁶ There is much activist and academic critique of organisations, referred to as intergroup contact interventions, whose primary focus it is to bring Israelis and Palestinians together. For example, Thiessen and Darweish note that such groups have been “promoted as fundamental components to bottom-up conflict resolution initiatives because of their perceived capabilities to counteract the failure of official peace negotiations and agreements, reconstruct individual and group identities, reduce prejudice and hostility, and increase the odds of sustainable peaceful coexistence in the future” Chuck Thiessen and Marwan Darweish, ‘Conflict Resolution and Asymmetric Conflict: The Contradictions of Planned Contact Interventions in Israel and Palestine’, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 66 (September 2018): 73 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2018.06.006>; However, the authors also note that there has grown to be widespread objection to such initiatives by both Palestinians and Israelis on the grounds that they normalise the occupation. As a result, many interventions have had to cease operation.

³⁷⁷ Letter to Lucy Backhouse from the Bishop at St Georges, Jerusalem, 23.12.1936, TEMP MSS 637, Folder 8, LB Papers, FH

³⁷⁸ Letter to Lucy Backhouse, 31.10.1939, TEMP MSS 637, Folder 8, LB papers, FH.

reconciliation project, ironically a matter of weeks before Israel's establishment in 1948. She noted: "There is nothing that is not understood. It is not a lack of understanding that prevents a settlement but a lack of what the Arabs regard as justice. Friendship remains behind a barrier not of misunderstanding but of injustice."³⁷⁹

Returning to think about this discourse of peace and reconciliation in relation to EAPPI and Nikki's emphasis on wanting to be and to be seen as someone who had "a role in breaking down the idea of those two irreconcilable sides", we can see that there are many ways in which both Christian missions and peace-making and accompaniment activism can be sites in which individuals and organisations engage in a process of identity formation. Self-fashioning, the "representation of one's nature or intention in speech or actions" is a term with origins traceable back to the 16th century according to Greenblatt.³⁸⁰ In Nikki's responses, and many other accompaniers like her, I suggest that this practice is evident: through her work with EAPPI she wanted to be seen and to see herself as someone committed to not taking sides, and seeking reconciliation, equality and a just peace for all. Since notions of equality, justice and peace are normatively morally 'good', self-fashioning oneself as balanced, and pro-peace for 'both sides' is a way of defining and presenting oneself as a moral subject. However, such a positioning is far from stable, it is fragile even. Investigating activism as a self-fashioning practice, Nelson proposes that the term 'fluidarity' is more useful than 'solidarity'. In her theorisation, fluidarity acknowledges that, despite the attempts made to 'fix' one's identity in place through activism, despite trying to erect fixed boundaries around a certain type of morally good self, self-identification through activism is instead a process of continual 'becoming' rather than 'being'. Fluidarity is a theory and practice which does not presuppose clear-cut hero nor villain subject positions. It acknowledges that there is no solid, fixed identity as a morally good, non-partisan activist that can be leaned upon; no identity positioning nor activist practice is ever that constant nor stable.³⁸¹

When it is assumed that a position of moral goodness can be fixed or fashioned firmly in place through one's work as a peace-maker or a human rights accompanier, there is also an

³⁷⁹ Nancy Gallagher, *Quakers in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict : The Dilemmas of NGO Humanitarian Activism* / (Cairo ; New York : American University in Cairo Press, 2007) 31

³⁸⁰ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. 3

³⁸¹ Nelson, *A Finger in the Wound*. 68-73

anxiety surrounding the potential loss of that identity. When I asked another accompanier, Andrea, about the idea of principled impartiality and whether it had seemed very relevant when she was in the West Bank, she said the following:

It felt difficult...we talked about it as a team. We are impartial but we are opposed to human rights abuses. I had to constantly tell myself 'I am not anti-Israeli, I am opposed to what the Israeli government is doing, I do not think what they are doing is lawful or correct but I do not have hatred for Israelis, or I am not anti-Semitic. So that was a constant underpinning of what I did, just being aware of that. ³⁸²

It is notable that Andrea uses both 'I am' and the collective, 'we are' numerous times in this answer as if both a collective EAPPI, and an individual accompanier identity is at stake here. The fact that she "constantly" had to reassure herself that she was not 'anti-Israeli' or anti-Semitic suggests anxiety over both her own self-identification as good, and the way others might judge her actions. In a political environment where anti-Semitism is often wrongly defined as any act or statement of opposition to a regime of Zionist settler-colonialism there are plenty of opportunities for anxiety over possible loss of a sense of the moral self. In order to ease her anxiety Andrea tries to reassure herself that she is *not* anti-Israeli and that she can act to oppose the actions of the Israeli government without becoming someone she does not want to be.

1:4 Self-fashioning and anxiety in a self-other relationship

Self-fashioning is a performance of power, but it is also true to say that it does not occur in isolation from a self-other relationship—"the power to impose a shape upon oneself is an aspect of the more general power to control identity – that of others at least as often as one's own".³⁸³ Diana Fuss uses a particularly good phrase when she talks about this kind of identity work as the "detour through the other that defines the self".³⁸⁴ Relatedly, Pratt describes how the imperial centre needs to know its periphery, to present it and then represent it in order to know itself: "It becomes dependent on its others to know itself."³⁸⁵ Thus, here, through the following examination of some more of the letters in the Lucy Backhouse collection, I

³⁸² Video call interview, February, 2020

³⁸³ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. 1

³⁸⁴ Nelson, *A Finger in the Wound*. 42

³⁸⁵ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*. 4

continue to show about EAPPI's balanced approach has roots in Mandate-era, Christian missions work, and in doing so I show how self-fashioning is a practice which often involves whoever is perceived to be the Other.

Alongside the British missionaries in the small Quaker community in Palestine in the 1930's was a Palestinian Quaker, Khalil Totah. There is record of a small number of Palestinians becoming Quakers in the late 19th and early 20th century, but as the headmaster of the Quaker boys' school in Ramallah, Khalil appears to be the only Palestinian in a position of authority in the community in the time of the British Mandate. According to the letters in the Backhouse collection and his own diaries, both Khalil's attitude and his politics were deemed problematic by many in the Quaker missionary community.³⁸⁶ In one 1938 letter, a British PWC member, Paul Maughan, writes to Lucy Backhouse expressing concern over a rift in the relationship between Khalil, and David Oliver. Referring to letters recently received from Oliver, Paul writes:

What I am particularly thankful for is that he [David] has, with his increased immersion in the Palestine problem—come to such a perfect understanding of it. It is important that if possible, he and other friends like Khalil Totah should be in friendly and if possible affectionate accord.³⁸⁷

These comments about David's supposed "perfect" understanding of the Palestine problem replicates an Orientalist dynamic similar to the one highlighted in chapter 3 where the British companions implied their knowledge of Palestinian history was more sophisticated than that of the Palestinians they met. Additionally, Paul has only good things to say about David who is praised for his "devotion to the cause of Palestine", yet Khalil is described as "defensive" and "aggressive"—attributes which, invoking the too well-worn Orientalist trope, are deemed to be particularly Arab traits. The problem between the two Quakers thus apparently lies with

³⁸⁶ There are other indications that Khalil Totah is not fully accepted into the Quaker community in Palestine. For example there are conflicting reports on the reasons for Khalil's departure from the post of headmaster of the schools in Ramallah and the family's subsequent departure for the U.S in 1944. Before leaving Khalil wrote a memorandum to the Ramallah monthly meeting in 1943 offering his advice on the state of the Friends' mission. In it he notes that Palestinian Quakers had been "treated like children who needed someone wiser and more experienced to care for them. Palestinian Quakers were never invited to attend Monthly Meeting, which was the controlling body of the Mission, even though American-hired staff who were not members of the Mission were invited to attend." cited in Joy Totah Hilden, *A Passion for Learning: The Life Journey of Khalil Totah, a Palestinian Quaker Educator and Activist*, e-Book (Xlibris US, 2016) 175

³⁸⁷ Letter to Lucy Backhouse, 30.1.38, TEMP MSS 511 box 2 folder 4, LB papers, FH

Khalil and the issue at hand is not only the rupturing effect of this disagreement on the unity of the missionary community, but also Khalil's lack of 'cordiality'.³⁸⁸

A few years previously Marshall Fox wrote to Lucy on a visit to the UK. He said he was sorry that he had missed the PWC meeting and goes on to say how much he regrets that the Ramallah school could not be "thought of as an influence for peace. With such an ardent nationalist at its Head, I have not thought of it as that".³⁸⁹ Earlier in that same year in a letter to another member of the PWC Fox had used the same phrase to describe Khalil Totah:

I have seen a good deal of Dr Totah in the last 18 months. I was at the Y.M [Quaker yearly meeting] in Ramallah last year and we were guests together at Mrs Little's in Broumana for the Y.M in April. At both Y.M's the relation of the races in Palestine has come up and Dr Totah spoke to the subject at both Y.M's. I wish he were able to see any other point of view than that of the Arabs and I gather that the missionary community in Palestine regard him as an ardent Nationalist.

However, the full force of Marshall's disappointment with Khalil is established in the following paragraph where Marshall moves on to make a comparison, not with David Oliver but this time between Khalil and Heinz Kappes. Heinz is praised for his excellent reconciliation work in Jerusalem in many of the letters in the Backhouse collection. He is commended for "his wise and helpful influence" and is said to be "making the most typically Quaker contribution in the Jerusalem area of anyone". In fact his work inviting both Arabs and Jews to his home for dialogue was so highly valued by the Quaker community that several letters contain expressions of disappointment that it would be ended if the Kappes family had to leave Jerusalem during the Second World War. In this letter, marking the completion of Fox's swift transition from criticising Khalil as an ardent nationalist, to praise for Kappes' reconciliation work, he ends on news from another friend in Jerusalem, Miss Jan Macdonald of the YMCA. Referencing the upcoming 1939 Peel Commission he quotes a recent letter of hers where she says: "I shall do everything I can to suggest that some Quakers come out as members of the Royal Commission on Palestine—it requires people who do not take sides".³⁹⁰

³⁸⁸ Letter to Lucy Backhouse, 30.1.38

³⁸⁹ Letter to Lucy Backhouse, 5.10.1936, TEMP MSS 637, Folder 8, LB papers, FH

³⁹⁰ Letter to John Robson, 9.6.1936, TEMP MSS511 box 3, folder 7, LB Papers, FH

Khalil's Palestinian nationalist viewpoint seems to trouble the Quaker's deeply held, impartial self-image but it is not only his politics that bothers the non-Palestinian Quakers. As much as Khalil belongs to the Quaker community and has a leadership role within it, he also embodies a challenge to the Quaker sense of self just by being a Palestinian. I posit that some of the anxiety and disapproval apparent in both Paul Maughan and Marshall Fox's letters derive from this troubling of the Quaker sense of self-self.³⁹¹ As both a Palestinian and a Quaker, Khalil assumes a liminal position—he could be considered both insider and outsider to Quaker the community, both self and Other. Khalil's leadership position within their community means that the Quaker collective's ability to act in ways which represent their values is threatened by Khalil's 'ardent nationalism'. In order to maintain and secure the Quaker self-image as impartial peacemaker, the internal Other must be disciplined and its behaviour moderated. For the Quakers the focus of attention was on the behaviour of the Palestinian, but, in the process of criticizing the non-Western Other for being too nationalistic, too ardent, too aggressive and not impartial enough, the Western, colonial Quaker sense of self is strengthened—and this sense of self *appears* to materialise as moderate, knowledgeable, and impartial. In the section that follows I will make the case for the impact of this *appearance* of substance, showing that there is something not only performative but also productive about using one's role to fashion a certain identity for oneself.

2: The performativity of a balanced approach

In the above sections I have suggested that a balanced approach is something EAPPI and its companions take up as both a strategic response to a difficult political situation and as a moral choice. I am not therefore reducing EAPPI's balanced approach to a strategy and nor am I dismissing the idea that it could be a strategic choice. Ultimately, no matter whether a non-partisan approach is favoured as primarily a strategic choice or as a moral good, it is clear that being balanced, being pro-peace for all and being pro-human rights is how EAPPI and its companions want to be seen. Another way of thinking about this is that self-

³⁹¹ This anxiety is reminiscent of a discussion of Quaker anxiety during their relief work in Gaza in 1948 onwards in Feldman, 'The Quaker Way: Ethical Labor and Humanitarian Relief'

fashioning as balanced involves responding both to exterior regimes and authorities (balance as a strategy) and to “inward necessities” (balance as a ‘good’ is desired).³⁹²

For some volunteers the adoption of a balanced approach appears to be more of a response to exterior demands than a reflection of who they want to support and how they themselves feel about the situation. In conversations with participants who had recently taken part in EAPPI’s training course, but prior to their travel to the oPt, the impact of the training was evident in our conversations. When I asked accompaniers whether they had strong feelings about the situation in Palestine, it was interesting that four out of six accompaniers responded by speaking about the need for balance, as if having strong feelings was a political stance in and of itself, and therefore problematic. When I asked Laura, she paused and then said:

...it depends what you mean by strong feelings. I know you are trying not to lead me anywhere - yes - I mean obviously I have got to practice my impartiality, but I mean there does seem to be a lot of wealth on one side and none on the other, there is a lot of people speaking for one side and not many for the other – so you know that is another pressing need to go.

Then when I asked her to be more precise about exactly how she felt she said:

At the moment I am *trying* to make sure it doesn’t make me feel too angry because that is not the best way to go out there, I don’t think. But I doubt very much I will be able to come back and perhaps feel that way, but at this moment in time because I am *trying* to tell everybody what the programme is all about.... And obviously because it is an illegal occupation, so that is without a doubt wrong,...I am *just trying* to keep any sentiment out of it, so that hopefully I can come back and give something balanced and make people feel they have to listen to it more because it is not just someone going off on some emotional sentiment.³⁹³

Laura admits to feelings of anger but is making an effort to keep those feelings at bay both in order to be in the best frame of mind when she goes to the oPt and when she returns as a way

³⁹² Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. 9.

³⁹³ Interview with Laura, UK, December 2019 (my emphasis)

of making her advocacy work more effective. That Laura uses the word ‘try’ three times in the above excerpt, and twice in the following one, indicates that she was taking her training very seriously and was wanting to be as effective an advocate as possible. Later I asked whether Laura thought the EAPPI programme offered solidarity to Palestinians or not. She told me what she had told some friends earlier that day:

L: I have said, just today, we are showing solidarity with any group of people who want to put a just end to the occupation. So, I guess a large point of that would be Palestinians, but I do keep *trying to say* any other Israeli NGOs who are doing this too.

BE: So drawing alongside them and showing them solidarity?

L: Yep, yep. As you can see, I have been *trying* very hard (Laughs)

BE: (laughs) And your training was quite recently, was it?

L: (laughs) It was, the end of October, the beginning of November.³⁹⁴

There is something in this moment of laughter between Laura and myself that indicates that Laura is self-conscious about her performance of this role in which she must show support for both Palestinians and Israelis who are working against the occupation. It is clear she is conforming to something she has been told *to do and to be*, and that her actions and her speech might be more reflective of EAPPI’s desires than their own feelings. Self-fashioning can be “a manipulable, artful process” and as “calculated self presentation...grounded upon hidden reserves of private judgement”.³⁹⁵ In the above example when Laura presents herself in a certain way to her friends, she may be hiding private judgements about the concept of principled impartiality, but agrees to follow EAPPI’s guidelines almost as “a theatrical role, a mask” in order to conform to what is expected.³⁹⁶ And, in Laura’s laughter, there is a sense of the recognition of this fact between the two of us, as fellow ‘insiders’ to EAPPI’s praxis. However, when it is necessary to control one’s feelings in order to play a certain role, a balanced approach does not remain an external act. Theoretically, the control of one’s feelings could still be an act of self-presentation which covers over other deeper, more authentic feelings about how ‘pro’ Palestine and ‘pro’ Palestinian activists feel outside of, or before EAPPI, but it is not possible to maintain, nor rely upon such a distinction.

³⁹⁴ Interview, UK, December 2019

³⁹⁵ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. 2, 157

³⁹⁶ Ibid. 158

Thinking about self-fashioning alongside a Butlerian theorisation of subject formation means considering the fact that role playing is never only an external practice, comparable to the donning of a mask. Butler argues that the production of a gendered subjectivity results from a series of repeated acts which ‘congeal’ over time, as the gendered self is fixed in place as A and not B. For Butler there is a productive aspect to a performance, which would mean in this context that, even if a balanced approach began as a strategy, it cannot remain *only that*. Moderating one’s feelings does not remain ‘mere talk’, instead it forms a certain way of being in the world, just as, for Butler, repeated acts “congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being.”³⁹⁷ Thinking with the productive nature of performativity, a balanced approach produces a certain type of subject—in this instance an accompanier whose feelings of anger, or pre-existing preferences for supporting ‘one side’ have been moderated and who acts differently as a result.

This next example shows this even more clearly. Even when a balanced approach is openly talked about as strategic, it is still productive of certain forms of subjectivity. When I asked Jackie about her feelings she said she used to have strong feelings before she started with EAPPI:

J: ...and then I think I probably learnt to have a bit more of a balance and a little bit less bias, through the EAPPI programme.

BE: So, what would have changed, in terms of feelings?

J: I would have had a balance towards Palestinians, you know, and Palestine, but it has got to be... it has to be within international law and you have to follow what international law is saying, even though it may not appear very effective, but that’s what you’ve got to follow....

BE: So, would you say that is quite a detached position to be in?

J: I think it is, very much so, but I think that is the thing which is going to avoid criticism.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁷ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Tenth Anniversary Edition* (London, UNITED KINGDOM: Routledge, 2002) 43-44 <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/detail.action?docID=180211>

³⁹⁸ Interview, UK, September 2019

Having come to EAPPI with what she (slightly confusingly) calls a balance towards Palestinians, Jackie finished the training acknowledging the need to be pragmatic, to moderate her feelings: “if they [EAPPI] lost their place there [in Palestine] for causing troubles, that is not going to do anyone any good” she said. A reliance on human rights and IHL appears here as a protective mechanism even if, as she also suggests, it might not be the most effective approach. Jackie implies that being balanced is the only way to avoid criticism and to allow EAPPI to continue its work in the oPt. In order to fully embody this approach, like Laura, her inner disciplinary system has been engaged, her feelings have changed, she has learnt to have a bit less bias, in short, she has adopted a balanced approach and so has *become* more balanced.

3:1 The implications

What is at stake here, in exploring the way EAPPI and its accompaniers adopt a balanced, non-partisan way of acting and being, is its impact on the Palestinian struggle against settler-colonialism. I suggest that one of the implications of EAPPI’s approach is that it can take support and attention away from the Palestinian struggle. This is made apparent in two areas. In chapter 1 I described an episode in 2012 when the Board of Deputies of British Jews accused EAPPI of being an inflammatory and partisan programme. This incident provoked EAPPI to defend the notion that its participants did not know enough about the Israeli perspective on the situation. Partly in response to this, EAPPI UK and Ireland instigated an initiative which involves accompaniers taking a short break from their work in the oPt to travel to Haifa in Israel. There they spend a weekend with Israeli members of a synagogue, including teenagers about to begin their military service. This initiative is, EAPPI says, a chance to meet Israelis “on a human level and hear about each other’s lives and experiences.”³⁹⁹ Accompaniers’ hold mixed views on participating in this part of the programme, but of relevance here is one of the most obvious consequences of this initiative—the fact that accompaniers then spend fewer days in the oPt offering accompaniment to Palestinians.

In addition, EAPPI’s balanced stance impacts on the type of eyewitness testimony offered to audiences back home. It is intended that EAPPI blogs are written by accompaniers in the oPt as a way of amplifying the voices of Palestinians and highlighting the human rights violations

³⁹⁹ ‘EAPPI around the World: UK and Ireland’, *EAPPI*, 28 March 2014, <https://blog.eappi.org/tag/haifa/>

that Palestinians experience. In order to do this companions are instructed to maintain impartiality by writing in a “distanced and neutral” tone,⁴⁰⁰ to avoid emotive language and to include the technocratic language of international law; writers are also asked to centre Palestinian experiences of occupation and not their own feelings or experiences. However, in addition to blogs written like this, and there are also number of blogs which tend to be written from more of a subjective perspective focusing on companions’ experiences of their time in Israel or of meeting Israeli peace activists.⁴⁰¹ The presence of these blogs on the blogsite is so that EAPPI can communicate the impact of the occupation on Israelis as well as Palestinians, but in doing so it temporarily removes the readers’ attention from the Palestinian struggle. Thus, both the Haifa initiative and the inclusion of these other types of blogs are tangible examples of ways in which EAPPI seeks to present itself to the world as a balanced, nonpartisan, moderate programme, and yet in doing so it removes the focus from the Palestinian struggle and those who are most in need of support.

These efforts made in the name of balance sometimes have unintended consequences. On the British and Irish EAPPI blogsite companions’ frequently reference NGOs and activist groups which companions visit or work with when in both Israel and the oPt. But, whilst the Israeli NGO’s are always named specifically as Israeli, when it comes to Palestinian groups, the descriptor ‘Palestinian’ is often omitted. This is not something which companions are asked to do but is the result of EAPPI’s desire to over-emphasize the fact that, as well as accompanying Palestinians, they also support Israelis who work for peace, a fact which allows them to demonstrate that EAPPI itself is anti-occupation and not anti-Israeli. As a reader it is easy to be left with the impression that only Israelis and other internationals run NGO’s and organise non-violently, not Palestinians. This was also noted during some of the companions’ advocacy presentations.⁴⁰² This determined effort to stress the existence of ‘good’, pro-peace Israelis leads to an over-exaggeration of the size of the Israeli peace movement, as well as, more importantly, an obfuscation of the existence of Palestinian peace and human rights groups. Majd Kayaal has pointed to the disparity in visibility between Israeli and Palestinian human rights groups in a discussion of the

⁴⁰⁰ Telephone interview with Gavin, June 2020

⁴⁰¹ For example see ‘Hearing and Understanding the Israeli Perspective’ *EAPPI UK & Ireland EyeWitness Blogs*, 23 June 2015, <https://archive.eyewitnessblogs.com/2015/06/23/hearing-and-understanding-the-israeli-perspective/>

⁴⁰² FW notes. This observation is based on an analysis of UK and Ireland blogs on <https://www.eyewitnessblogs.com/> and from participant observation of EAPPI advocacy meetings in the UK

international attention given to the Israeli NGO B'Tselem when it changed its policy to adopt an 'apartheid' framework. Kayaal asks "how come B'Tselem receives worldwide attention while Palestinian organisations, with that same position, remain ignored?"⁴⁰³

A third and final implication under discussion in this chapter relates to EAPPI's practice of self-fashioning through making very specific statements about those it is willing to form allegiances with. In the early 2000's at the time of the Al-Aqsa uprising, a WCC delegation visited Palestine as part of their preliminary investigations which led to the establishment of the EAPPI programme. One of the recommendations issuing from this visit stated that

The WCC needs to identify, listen to and lift up the alternative and moderate voices on both sides of the civil society who are struggling to find a common vision and future and seek ways to bring them together with church leaders and church-related organisations.⁴⁰⁴

Wanting to support moderate civil society organisations and bring their voices together with those of church groups was a way of reflecting something of what the WCC already valued, and of defining what EAPPI would become; but again, it was also a strategic move in that it helped EAPPI distance themselves from associations with Palestinian acts of violent resistance in evidence during this Intifada. Moving forward from this era, in contemporary EAPPI discourse the word moderate is no longer used to talk about those whom EAPPI seeks to listen to or support. Instead of referring to 'alternative' or 'moderate' voices, support and solidarity is offered to a particular assemblage of civil society and Christian groups: "Our EAs support acts of nonviolent resistance alongside *local Palestinian and Israeli peace activists* and stand in solidarity with *local churches*".⁴⁰⁵ There is no mention of support for Palestinians as an entire collective. In this move from the language of support for moderate voices at the time of the Intifada, to statements of support for peace activists and churches, a relationship is drawn between moderation, peace activism, impartiality and Christianity that I suggest demands further exploration. In order to make this argument I will revisit the idea

⁴⁰³ Majd Kayyal, 'On B'Tselem's Apartheid' 1, *السفير العربي* February 2021, <https://assafirarabi.com/en/35722/2021/02/01/on-btselems-apartheid/>.

⁴⁰⁴ "Report of Delegation to Israel/ Palestine", *World Council of Churches*, August 6, 2001 <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/report-of-delegation-to-israel/palestine>

⁴⁰⁵ "Our model: Engage" *EAPPI*, Last accessed January 5, 2023, <https://eappi.org/en/our-model/engage> (my emphasis)

that self-fashioning is a relational process and return again to the archives to trace this usage of the concept of moderation back in time. I argue that EAPPI's practice of singling out those with whom they want to be associated from among the wider Palestinian community is a continuation of the Christian, Orientalist, colonial trajectory, and which has consequences for how Palestinians are then represented through EAPPI's work.

3:2 Creating divisions between Palestinians: the moderates and the extremists

In archival research I found that the moderate voices of the Israeli and Palestinian civil society organisations to whom EAPPI sought to listen during the Intifada in 2001, had predecessors in the Mandate era. The 'moderate' Jew and the 'moderate' Arab were figures that I encountered when reading British documents from the time of the Arab Revolt against the British from 1936 to 1939. The following is an excerpt from parliamentary debate in London in 1939. A Mr Williams MP says:

I am not one of those who would separate the Arabs of Palestine, because we know that there have been rebellious Arabs, extreme Arabs, and moderate Arabs; and we know that the Government of this country have always co-operated with the extreme terrorist Arab element.... There is a moderate element of Arabs in Palestine which has been largely ignored by His Majesty's Government, and it is because of that that cooperation has not proceeded as it might have done— with disastrous results to the Jews, the Arabs, and Palestine as a whole. The Government's policy has broken down. ...It is not too late, even now, to go back to the Mandate, and to encourage the moderate Arabs and Jews to co-operate as they did hitherto.⁴⁰⁶

In the rest of this particular debate the term moderate was used in conjunction with a number of related descriptors: it was used to describe the character of British politicians;⁴⁰⁷ it was used to describe a particular group of Arabs who were thus distinguished from “the extreme terrorist Arab element”; it was used to describe both those Jews and Arabs who were *co-*

⁴⁰⁶ Hansard, HC, Deb.vol.350, July, 20, 1939, Online, Last accessed January 7, 2023, <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1939-07-20/debates/5a38cbe5-3878-4e77-8052-755cc9e36975/ClassIf?highlight=palestine%20promises#contribution-dd18021b-d3b4-453e-b913-12f2c1bbff3b>

⁴⁰⁷ Mr Duff Cooper MP says (my emphasis): “The hon. Member for the Don Valley (Mr. T. Williams) said that His Majesty's Government had co-operated with the extremists. That so *moderate* an hon. Member as the hon. Member for the Don Valley should make a statement like that, with which I do not agree shows how far misconception can go, and if he, living in this country, feels like that, what must the Jews in Palestine be feeling and how much more strongly must they share that misconception.” Ibid.

operative with the ‘other side’; and it was also used in the negative form to describe the majority of the inhabitants of Mandate Palestine as “people who are *not* moderate but *bitter partisans*”.⁴⁰⁸ In the Quaker PWC documents the adjective moderate was used to describe Jewish inhabitants of Palestine who were “*very reasonable*”.⁴⁰⁹ It was also a term given to both Arabs and Jews who were seen to be *suitable participants for dialogue* at a roundtable event planned by the British Quakers. I suggest that all of these descriptors in italics relate to, and thus can be included in, what was meant by use of the label ‘moderate’ in the 1930’s: a moderate was a figure who was co-operative, impartial, reasonable, and ready for dialogue with the Other.

In 1937, after the Peel Commission concluded that the League of Nations’ Mandate was no longer tenable and proposed partition, the PWC members noted “very strong feeling against partition of Palestine by both Jews and Arabs”.⁴¹⁰ In light of this, they proposed to organise a very small, unofficial round table conference in London. In the end this idea never actually materialised,⁴¹¹ but the plan was for three Quakers, three Arabs and three Jews to meet together to see “if there were any way to bring the two sides together to agree on some proposal or scheme”. It was recommended that Friends who attend should have “open but not vacant minds”. This open-ness indicates Quakers should come with a willingness to listen to all viewpoints, but not with an empty or ignorant mind: “The Friends should have a clear statement in their minds of the Arab and Jewish positions and let a bridge rise up naturally between the two sides which psychologically satisfies each”. The Arabs and the Jews who were to attend this roundtable were to be carefully selected. They had to be “moderate” and “suitable”.⁴¹² A letter from the Palestine Information Centre in London tells us that they had been approached for recommendations of suitable Arabs who could be invited and they suggested Musa Husseini, a cousin of the mufti Hajj Amin Al-Husseini, who they describe as “a very quiet young man with extremely moderate views”.⁴¹³

⁴⁰⁸ Mr Duff Cooper MP. Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹ Letter to Lucy Backhouse from Mary Pumphrey in Ramallah, 12.12.1936 TEMP MSS 511, box 2, folder 3, LB Papers, FH

⁴¹⁰ Lucy Backhouse, Meeting for Suffering notes, handwritten, 5.11.1937, TEMP MSS 511, box 2, folder 3, LB Papers, FH

⁴¹¹ In a 1941 a PWC report makes a vague reference to this proposal, stating that over the years “endeavours were made to get ‘moderate Arabs and Jews to meet together’ in both London and Jerusalem, with only partial success”. Meeting Report of Palestine Watching Committee to the Yearly Meeting 1941, Handwritten notes, Lucy Backhouse

⁴¹² Lucy Backhouse, Meeting for Suffering notes, handwritten, 5.11.1937

⁴¹³ Letter, 19.11.1937, TEMP MSS 511 box 2, folder 3

Proposals for a roundtable are also mentioned several times by Marshall Fox a year later and each time it is advised the matter be approached in “a detached spirit” and “as far removed as possible from...political influences”.⁴¹⁴ One letter quotes from an article written by a church leader: “Why cannot the churches of Great Britain invite representatives from both sides to a conference” and “in an atmosphere of goodwill, plead with them to cast aside hatred and prejudice, to realise that they have to live together, and that the only sane and wise thing to do is to live and let live.....it would need not have any political significance whatever”.⁴¹⁵ Here, the suitable representative is a depoliticised, co-operative subject, one who is led not by strong emotions like hatred and prejudice, but rather is guided by a reasonable and wise mind. This insistence on ideals such as detachment, wisdom and sanity in the place of politics, prejudice and hatred links us back to the companions who were intent on moderating their feelings in accordance with EAPPI’s guidance on balance, and to the Quakers and their belief that Khalil Totah should be less ardent in his politics and more impartial and cordial in his manners.

At this point it could be noted that for the Quakers, and other British Christians to emphasise the selection of moderate Jews and Arabs for peace and reconciliation work is an entirely common-sensical proposition. Enabling better understanding and reconciliation between two warring parties was an important part of the Quaker mission and they wanted people at their roundtable who would be co-operative and prepared to sit and attempt dialogue. Yet, what appears common-sensical always also deserves to be questioned.⁴¹⁶

In the PWC letters, the label ‘moderate’ was used to describe both Arabs and Jews who, at that point in time, lived under the control of an imperial power. As representatives of that power, the Quakers’ naming and selection of moderate subjects is the articulation— the speech act— of representatives of an imperial, Orientalist power. From this presumed position of judge of who is moderate and who is not, the imperial actors reproduce Orientalist, paternalistic, civilising mission ideologies; labelling Palestinians as moderates – a move which also produces a group of non-moderates – becomes a way of cementing in place

⁴¹⁴ ‘Light and Shade in the East’, 6.6.1938

⁴¹⁵ Reverend Bonarjee, cited in letter to E. Harvey 20.6.1938, TEMP MSS 511 box 2, folder 4, LB Papers, FH

⁴¹⁶ As Foucault advises: Michel Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture : Interviews and Other Writings, 1977-1984* (New York ; London : Routledge, 1988). 154-155

a distinction between subjects who are more, or less civilised. As Diane Otto writes, in Orientalist and colonial ideologies “it is still only modern—fully civilised, fully ‘rational’—peoples who are thought to be capable of living together in peace”.⁴¹⁷ For the Quakers, like many liberal internationalists of the early 20th century, international law was increasingly being considered the mechanism by which worldwide peace could be achieved, and peace was “represented as the ultimate sign of civilisation”.⁴¹⁸

Moderates fell into the category of those deemed most useful to the imperial powers in the terminology of the civilising mission and were also seen to be closer to attaining maturity as civilised, modern subjects, who would perhaps one day be ready for self-government. While most oriental subjects were seen as irrational, deprived, childlike and different,⁴¹⁹ moderates were drawn out of the norm and attributed with some capacity for reason, some control over their emotions, and to be capable of working towards peace. In short, both selecting and labelling are performative speech acts which cast judgement over the Orient and create a divide between members of the colonised population. In making such selections, the Quakers presumed to know Arabs and Jews well enough to categorise them, thus reinforcing the idea that, in Edward Said’s words, and reminiscent again of the argument about the ‘view from nowhere’ in chapter 4, as imperial subjects they “stand apart from it [the Orient] objectively”.⁴²⁰ In selecting and labelling, in seizing their own “power to narrate”,⁴²¹ the Quakers reinforce their own position as distinct and superior to the general mass of ‘uncivilised’ ‘oriental’ subjects.

In a more contemporary context, Mahmood Mamdani examined the productive power of labelling and selecting in his work on the post 9/11 ‘good’ Muslim discourse. This Islamophobic discourse extricates some ‘good’ Muslims from the general mass of Muslims who, having not yet proved themselves good, must necessarily be ‘bad’.⁴²² The discursive

⁴¹⁷ Dianne Otto, ‘Rethinking “Peace” in International Law and Politics From a Queer Feminist Perspective’, *Feminist Review* 126, no. 1 (1 November 2020): 19–38 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0141778920948081>.

⁴¹⁸ Otto, ‘Rethinking “Peace” in International Law and Politics From a Queer Feminist Perspective’ 23. See also Daniel Litwin, ‘Stained Glass Windows, the Great Hall of Justice of the Peace Palace’, in *International Law’s Objects*, by Daniel Litwin (Oxford University Press, 2018), 463–77

⁴¹⁹ Said, *Orientalism*. 40

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.* 104

⁴²¹ Said, *Culture and Imperialism*

⁴²² Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York : Pantheon Books, 2004) 15; Studies in psychology also show that the subdivision of Muslims into ‘radical terrorists’ and ‘peaceful moderates’, rather than protecting a positive image of the group actually left original negative stereotypes associated with Muslims unaltered. See Nader H. Hakim, Xian Zhao, and Natasha Bharj,

power which constructs both the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ Muslim subject reflects the colonial dynamic where, as Frantz Fanon wrote, it was “...the colonist who *fabricated*, and continues to *fabricate* the colonized subject”.⁴²³

3:3 Support for non-violent activists and Christian Palestinians

I suggest that something of a similar dynamic occurs in the process whereby EAPPI selects those with whom they want to be associated and those they are prepared to support. In stressing their specific support for local Palestinian Christians and Palestinian and Israeli peace activists, EAPPI expresses something about the way in which they hope to be seen. In a sense this is a declaration which attempts to fix themselves as everything they are not. It is significant that the idea of there being such a thing as a ‘self’, and that it could be fashioned, arose during the 16th century.⁴²⁴ The renaissance period saw the early days of European imperialism and the beginnings of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and it was through these activities that Europe collectively began to define itself in relation to the ‘uncivilised’, racialised, feminised Other of its colonies. Greenblatt explains that self-fashioning practices in those times worked in relation to an Other such as the figure of the savage, the heretic, the traitor, the witch, or the adulteress who “must be discovered or invented in order to be attacked or destroyed”.⁴²⁵ Anne McClintock also speaks to this intersubjective identification process when she examines the gendered nature of the formation of Bourgeois identity during the years of the British Empire.⁴²⁶ The Other in these processes of identification is thus a gendered and racialised Other, one which lay on the other side of the line dividing social respectability from its opposite, which at the time might have been articulated in terms of those who were seen to be civilised and thus fully human, and those who were not. While in EAPPI’s discourse the term moderate has been dropped, in its place statements of support are made for Palestinian (and Israeli) activism which uses a non-violent approach, leaving in place negative stereotypes about the rest of the Palestinian (and Israeli) populations. Secondly, in pointing out their solidarity for Palestinian churches (when EAPPI specifically refrains from using the word solidarity in any other of their statements) a divide is created

‘The Paradox of the Moderate Muslim Discourse: Subtyping Promotes Support for Anti-Muslim Policies’, *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (2020): 3476

⁴²³ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York : Grove Press, 2004) 2 (emphasis in the original)

⁴²⁴ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. 2

⁴²⁵ Ibid. 9

⁴²⁶ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, 1st edition (New York: Routledge, 1995)

between Christian Palestinians and non-Christian Palestinians. Both of these two facts together result in a problematic reproduction of gendered, Islamophobic, Orientalist tropes.⁴²⁷ Because of Palestine's majority Muslim population the figure of the so-called dangerous, Muslim Arab, the 'bad' Muslim of Mamdani's analysis, does not need to be named for his existence to be conjured up through the silence. For EAPPI, making clear statements about who they ally themselves with is beneficial because it acts to put distance between their work and this violent, often male Palestinian figure whose shadow lurks around the edges of the moderate subject discourse. This figure has been an ever present threat that it has been thought judicious to seek distance from, from the times of the Arab Uprising against British imperialism in the 1930's, to the Al-Aqsa Intifada of the 2000's, to the continuing acts of refusal of settler-colonialism in the 2020's. In this selecting of those who are worthy of support in EAPPI's eyes—the non-violent activist and the Christian Palestinian—the moderate subject becomes Christian, and as moderation's counterpart, the extremist subject, is gendered as male, racialised as non-white and cast as Muslim.

What all of this means is that those engaged in the Palestinian struggle against settler-colonialism, but who are not singled out for support by EAPPI, are seen in the same way as the colonised subject was in the days when Christianity and Empire were especially close travelling companions—through a frame of “moral-political admonishment”.⁴²⁸ Today, just as then, the notion that an imperial power is able to dictate the most appropriate ways for the colonised to resist their colonisation, remains highly problematic. As Linah Alsaafin writes: “Oppressed people do not and should not have to explain their oppression to their oppressor, nor tailor their resistance to the comfort of the oppressors and their supporters.”⁴²⁹

4: Conclusion

In her discussion of the concept of balance, Kotef explains that she is interested in balance as “liberalism's conception of the good”.⁴³⁰ She writes,

⁴²⁷ I realise I do not make space in this chapter to consider the impact of this process on the remainder of the Israeli population, but nevertheless I want to mark the fact that there will also be one.

⁴²⁸ Said, *Orientalism*. 207

⁴²⁹ Linah Alsaafin, 'How Obsession with “Nonviolence” Harms the Palestinian Cause', *The Electronic Intifada*, 10 July 2012, <https://electronicintifada.net/content/how-obsession-nonviolence-harms-palestinian-cause/11482>.

⁴³⁰ Kotef, “Balance”

“Moderation” can only be determined vis-à-vis an assumed excess, which is at times produced in order to configure some constellations (which we deemed to be normative, just, or good) as moderate. In this way moderation, which is but a fear of excesses, operates... by producing excesses as external.⁴³¹

In all the different ways EAPPI expends energy on trying to protect itself and secure its reputation as nonpartisan and balanced (and the energy spent is considerable), ‘excess’ exists as moderations’ counterpart. And this then is my main point — that when EAPPI fashions itself as a balanced, moderate organisation excess is *externalised* just as Khalil Totah’s ardent nationalism was seen as external to the Quaker sense of self. In this framing, excess becomes an excessive amount of support for one of the two sides, an excess of time spent with one of the two sides, or even an excess of feeling concerning the situation; and these— being constructed as external to the EAPPI sense of self— appear as fearful, posing a threat to the fiction of the stable moderate self, and thus demand moderation.

This chapter has given examples of times when anxiety is expressed by those who did not want to lose their footing and tumble from their balanced poise, as if even a momentary loss of balance would result in a permanent loss of moral goodness. Fears of losing balance, or embodying excess, was demonstrated when participants talked about not wanting to show too much feeling or too much politics, when fears of being seen as anti-Semitic were expressed, and in the anxiety expressed by the 1930’s Quaker community when Khalil Totah behaved in ways that were deemed too aggressive, too nationalistic, too political, too partial, ultimately too ‘Arab’. Furthermore, as we saw through the story of the roundtable proposals, moderation interpreted as readiness for dialogue with the other side is seen as an essential attribute in the rational, civilised, co-operative, peace-loving subject; and making associations with Christians and moderates is a move which it is hoped will protect one from criticism—for too close an association with those who might take a morally contentious approach to the struggle for self-determination is also to be feared.

In summary, when a balanced approach becomes associated with moderation it follows that *to be pro-Palestinian easily becomes falsely equated with excess, as moderation’s opposite*. When balance and moderation are viewed as normative and valued as ‘good’ in the liberal

⁴³¹ Kotef, *Movement and the Ordering of Freedom* 133

schema, any other way of acting or being is externalised and feared. This means that an avoidance of appearing pro-Palestinian, even if this approach appears common-sensical and strategic in some ways has a negative impact on the reputation of those groups and actors who actually *are* Palestinian, no matter what tactics they use in the struggle for their rights and freedoms. The current global environment is one of extreme hostility towards those advocating for Palestinian rights, a fact which is evidenced here by occurrences like that in which the six Palestinian civil society groups were selected, labelled, and then criminalised under Israeli anti-terrorism legislation. And, I argue that when organisations like EAPPI self-fashion themselves, with such resolve, as moderate and balanced, however unintentionally, this equates to a failure to actively support Palestinians and challenge the settler-colonial logics which work to shut down the Palestinian struggle in all its forms.

Epilogue: Voices from the archives: a ‘moderate’ Palestinian and an ‘ardently nationalist’ Palestinian Quaker

Several times already in this thesis I have noted the presence of a gap between the way that companions see themselves, and the way that companions are seen. The following snippets from the archives provide an interesting counterbalance to the PWC Quakers’ self-assured vision of themselves as impartial, and their own criticisms of Khalil Totah for being too partial. This statement written by Khalil is found in his personal diaries:

In 1934 The Friends Yearly Meeting of Syria and Palestine delegated Daniel Oliver and me to attend the London Yearly Meeting of Friends and place before them the question of Palestine. Although we talked to the colonial Minister at Whitehall, saw many members of Parliament and other influential people, we accomplished nothing. England, including the English Quakers, were so sympathetic with the Zionists’ viewpoint that our visit made no impression.⁴³²

Another perspective comes from a Palestinian named Izzat Tannous who offers commentary on the partiality of Christian humanitarian work in Palestine in the pre-1967 years. Born in Nablus, Tannous ran the Palestinian Information Centre in London and his name was also

⁴³² *Turbulent Times In Palestine: The Diaries of Khalil Totah, 1886-1955* (Institute for Palestine Studies and PASSIA, 2009) 82. Khalil was outspoken about the British partiality towards Zionism in other places too. In 1933 he wrote a memorandum on Palestine which states his position without ambiguity: “The Arabs’ grievance in Palestine is the British support of Zionism.” Cited in Hilden, *A Passion for Learning*. 324.

proposed when the PWC were looking for ‘moderate Arabs’ to participate in their roundtable event. Years later, in 1957, according to the scholar Daniel Cohen, Tannous gave a statement on Palestine Arab Refugees before the UN Special Political Committee. Although I did not have access to this document myself, a very brief part of this statement is cited in Cohen’s discussion of the humanitarian, Christian response to Palestinian refugees in the years following 1948:

In the eyes of Palestinian nationalists, however, this [the Christian, humanitarian] ethos was complicit with Zionist tactics. For the Nablus-born Izzat Tannous, who served in the late 1950s as an unofficial Palestinian representative in the United States, such a stance *colluded* with the Israeli preference “to speak of the refugee problem from the humanitarian aspect and so develop an Israeli-Arab States conflict as a substitute.”⁴³³

It seems apt to finish with these fragments of the voices of ‘moderate’ Palestinians and this opinion on the so-called apolitical, Christian, humanitarian stance, which was examined in detail in the previous chapter. Tannous suggests that limiting the Palestine question to a humanitarian problem to be solved, is, regardless of intentions, nothing to do with impartiality and everything to do with complicity. In fact, when both Dr Totah and Izzat Tannous’s voices are allowed to be heard from the otherwise silencing power of the archives, there seems to be a bursting out of the boundaries prescribed by those who otherwise seek to categorise them, and speak for them. Both Totah’s and Tannous’s statements offer a stinging verdict on an approach which the Quakers, the WCC, and now EAPPI hoped would prevent criticism. One wonders what kind of critique either Totah or Tannous might today offer EAPPI and its balanced, moderate stance.

433 Cohen, ‘Elusive Neutrality’ 202 (my emphasis)

Chapter 6 The impartial accompanier, or, taking a stand in the oPt?

Solidarity is usually defined as the sense of unity between two political actors on the basis of shared interests, understandings, or aspirations, and sometimes on the basis of a common enemy.

—Leila Khalili⁴³⁴

Justice involves feelings which move us across the surfaces of the world, creating ripples in the intimate contours of our lives. Where we go, with these feelings, remains an open question.

—Sarah Ahmed⁴³⁵

It was a rainy London lunchtime at the offices of an international humanitarian aid agency where staff members and friends had gathered to hear a talk by Carolina who had just returned from her three months with EAPPI in the oPt. This presentation formed part of accompaniers' commitment to help advocate for an end to the Israeli occupation through sharing their eye-witness testimonies when they return to their home countries. At the end of the talk, one member of the audience asked Carolina about EAPPI's 'principled impartiality' approach. EAPPI explains this important principle by stating that "We are not pro-Israeli or pro-Palestinian and we do not take sides in the conflict. We are pro-human rights and international humanitarian law."⁴³⁶ On this occasion the questioner was wondering about how this principle worked in practice, and whether the experience of witnessing Palestinians' suffering hadn't impacted on Carolina so much that she found it impossible to remain impartial. Carolina answered the audience member by stressing the value she placed on relying on humanitarian law and how she felt it offered the "strongest position" from which to convince others about the wrongs of what she had seen. Each day in the West Bank she said had repeated a mantra to herself: "This is what I saw today, and now, how can I use international law to the best effect as I write this report?"⁴³⁷ Carolina's reply shows how

⁴³⁴ Laleh Khalili, "'Standing with My Brother': Hizbullah, Palestinians, and the Limits of Solidarity', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49, no. 2 (April 2007): 278

⁴³⁵ Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh, UNITED KINGDOM: Edinburgh University Press, 2014) 202

⁴³⁶ "Key Principles of Accompaniment", EAPPI accessed January 4, 2023 <https://eappi.org/en/our-model>

⁴³⁷ FW notes, February 2020, London

international humanitarian law works to support and justify EAPPI's impartial stance in the oPt.

Building on the previous chapter which showed how EAPPI fashions itself as balanced and moderate, here I focus in on the impact of EAPPI's principled impartiality statement and the way it becomes incarnated as a form of embodied accompaniment intervention in the oPt. In both academic and activist spaces there are ongoing discussions over the politics, ethics and effectiveness of using a human rights and IHL framing in relation to the Palestine question.⁴³⁸ This chapter makes a contribution to that conversation by considering the tensions inherent in the politics and practice of EAPPI's principled impartiality stance.⁴³⁹ Through a focus on the ways principled impartiality is both articulated and practiced by EAPPI this chapter argues that it is an ideology and a practice which places limits on the potential for a less colonial, more relational, more participatory, more politically engaged type of accompaniment praxis.

In the above account of Carolina's advocacy presentation question and answer time, I suggest that there were two suggestions that hovered underneath the question posed: one that impartiality might, in this context, be an ethically questionable stance, and two, that in practice, in the face of witnessing the suffering of one particular group of people, it is a difficult position to maintain. Firstly, as part of an assessment of the ethics of principled impartiality I explore the relationship between accompaniment and solidarity. Leila Khalili offers a very clear definition of exactly what solidarity means, and this definition is included as an epigraph, as an expression of the kind of solidarity this chapter ultimately argues for. Here, solidarity is a "sense of unity", and those who are involved in a solidarity relationship are "political actors" who share interests and aspirations. Drawing on this definition, and on Tabar who defines solidarity as being "taking a stance, and opposing oppression", where external actors "become allies by sharing the risks and burden of the struggle against

⁴³⁸ For example, see Shalhoub-Kevorkian and Khsheiboun, 'Palestinian Women's Voices Challenging Human Rights Activism'; Lori Allen, *The Rise and Fall of Human Rights: Cynicism and Politics in Occupied Palestine*, Stanford Studies in Human Rights. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2013); Lynn Welchman, Elena Zambelli, and Ruba Salih, 'Rethinking Justice beyond Human Rights. Anti-Colonialism and Intersectionality in the Politics of the Palestinian Youth Movement', *Mediterranean Politics* 26, no. 3 (27 May 2021): 349–69; Tabar, 'Disrupting Development, Reclaiming Solidarity: The Anti-Politics of Humanitarianism'; Perugini and Gordon, *The Human Right to Dominate*; Anna Bernard, 'You Start Where You Are: Literary Spaces of Palestine Solidarity', *Human Geography* 14, no. 3 (November 2021): 322–32

⁴³⁹ Bronwyn Leebaw, 'The Politics of Impartial Activism: Humanitarianism and Human Rights', *Perspectives on Politics* 5, no. 2 (2007): 223–39.

oppression”,⁴⁴⁰ I argue that it is only from this basis that there is potential for accompaniment to become a less colonial form of intervention. In relation to the second suggestion noted during this question and answer time I explore tensions in the *difficulty* of having to remain in an impartial stance whilst in the oPt. Sara Ahmed writes in the other epigraph to this chapter that although there is more to fighting injustice than feeling angry about it, affective attachments, formed in the process of the struggle remain key. Her notion that these feelings show up in the “intimate contours of our lives” indicates to me that these are feelings which impact the way our bodies move through the world. This chapter highlights the fact that witnessing human rights violations and accompanying Palestinians is both an affective and embodied experience for accompaniers—in the way in which it ‘moves’ and motivates, equipping volunteers to engage effectively in advocacy work, and in the way that accompaniment involves accompaniers share time and space with Palestinians and in this there is potential for connections to be formed. It is these embodied experiences, I suggest, which instigates an affective pull towards both connections with Palestinians and with the Palestinian cause, even as EAPPI’s impartial stance, which is also an embodied stance, creates a detachment and produces a withdrawal away from those being accompanied.

The chapter is organised in this way: first, I focus on the ways in which EAPPI’s volunteers understand their role in the oPt in relation to the concept of solidarity, and in doing so I highlight the tensions between EAPPI’s rhetoric and practice. With reference to critical scholarship on human rights, I explicate two ways that human rights discourse shapes praxis. First, I show how it works to conceal the above mentioned tensions. Secondly, I show how it produces a disembodied, detached conception of support rather than solidarity with Palestinians. In section two I focus on what impartiality looks like as an embodied mode of action in the oPt, considering the depoliticizing impact of impartiality and its ability to accommodate a version of solidarity which is unwilling to take risk. Through analysis of one participant’s account of accompaniment I show that it is through spending time walking alongside Palestinians that accompaniers are invited into taking a different kind of political action and affective relationship with those they accompany. Finally, the question of whether issues of gender, race, histories of imperialism, and ultimately the liberal politics of

⁴⁴⁰ Tabar, ‘Disrupting Development, Reclaiming Solidarity’. 28

impartiality form insurmountable barriers to the realisation of such accompaniment relationships, or not, are considerations with which this chapter concludes.

1:1 Asking about solidarity, talking about impartiality

In the scholarship on transnational solidarity activism Keck and Sikkink make clear the distinction between solidarity organisations and human rights advocacy groups.⁴⁴¹ Anna Bernard builds on this relating it to the Palestinian context and describing Keck and Sikkink's division as concurrent with a split between groups with liberationist visions of solidarity and those with humanitarian aims.⁴⁴² As argued in chapter 1 EAPPI fits more comfortably in the second of both these distinctions. However, despite EAPPI's insistence on principled impartiality, the discourse of solidarity is not entirely absent neither at the level of the organisation nor among individual accompaniers. Shining a spotlight on accompaniers' understandings of their role in relation to the concept of solidarity helps to reveal some of the inconsistencies within EAPPI's praxis of impartiality.

When participants were asked whether they were going to the oPt to offer solidarity to Palestinians or not, their answers ranged between thinking EAPPI's work definitely was solidarity, to those who thought it was not. Yet, one thing which was common to many of their answers was the way principled impartiality formed part of their response to a question about solidarity. One volunteer, Michael, (whose story we hear in 2:2) told me he chose to work with EAPPI especially because of its pro-human rights and IHL framing. He took a very long pause before answering my question but concluded that offering solidarity to Palestinians was consequential to EAPPI's first objective which was supporting "human rights and humanitarian law, and trying to uphold some sort of objective, rather than 'I am going to support Palestinians'." He said that *if* Palestinian solidarity had been his aim, "what comes to mind if I think of that, is the International Solidarity Movement, or, like, going to demos and rallies and things like that, rather than what we are doing."⁴⁴³

I draw attention to the long pause taken as a prelude to Michael's answer as, for me, it symbolises something of the discomfort nearly every research participant expressed when

⁴⁴¹Margret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1998).

⁴⁴² 'You Start Where You Are'. 323

⁴⁴³ Interview, UK, December 2019

talking about EAPPI and solidarity. It struck me as strange that so many volunteers seemed conflicted about how to answer this question, given how many volunteers had spoken about their desire to help those who were suffering when I asked them about their motivations for joining EAPPI.⁴⁴⁴ Michael's pause seemed pregnant with uncertainty and ambivalence, as well as a desire to find the best, most honest and perhaps most correct answer. Even despite the pressures of being interviewed which for some carried with it the desire to represent EAPPI 'correctly', the difficulties participants had in answering this question was surprising given my readings of scholarly studies of accompaniment which spoke of it as a practice of transnational solidarity. I suggest one of the reasons for this hesitancy lies in a contradiction inherent in EAPPI's statements about their work and their actual practice: in answering, participants had to grapple with the difficulty of reconciling an espousal of principled impartiality alongside the fact that EAPPI spends most of their time in the oPt and not Israel, accompanying Palestinians in Palestinian communities and monitoring human rights violations against Palestinians. A Swiss volunteer put it this way: volunteers have a "much stronger view on the Palestinian side because obviously you are spending the majority of your time with Palestinian communities", and although the programme aims to be pro-human rights and "even though you go out there *without* the concrete plan to be...showing solidarity, it will certainly go into this direction". She added that the programme was originally set up in response to a call for help from the Palestinian churches and so yes, she thought that the idea was "to come and assist the people who were asking for this."⁴⁴⁵

EAPPI's overarching commitment is to work towards an end to the illegal military occupation of the Palestinian territories, and to support those who suffer from the effects of the occupation. In contradistinction to terminology used by EAPPI in its 'principled impartiality' statement, this does make EAPPI 'partial', according to a definition noted by the accompaniment theorists, Eguren and Mahony. They say, "To be partial but nonpartisan, then, is to say, 'We will be at your side in the face of injustice and suffering, but we will not take sides against those you define as enemies.'"⁴⁴⁶ As per Khalili's definition of solidarity, EAPPI does not join Palestinians against a common enemy and yet they do chose to be at the side of Palestinians who are suffering under settler-colonialism. However, in my view, this distinction between partisanship and impartiality highlights rather than resolves some of the

⁴⁴⁴ See chapter 3

⁴⁴⁵ Interview with Ella, Jerusalem, November 2019

⁴⁴⁶ See Eguren, and Mahony, *Unarmed Bodyguards* 236

contradictions I explore in what follows. In EAPPI's rhetoric, all of these complications and nuances are bound up in their phrase 'principled impartiality' which explains that they do not take sides in what they continue to frame as a 'conflict' between Israelis and Palestinians, and yet strongly condemn every action which equates to a contravention of international humanitarian law or human rights violations. This being said, almost regardless of these rhetorical manoeuvrings, it is evident that EAPPI's claim to principled impartiality does not stand up to close scrutiny when one considers their actions as well as their discourse. The truth is, their mission is not to document occurrences of human rights violations against Israelis. The inconsistency between not wanting to be pro-Palestinian, and yet spending the majority of their time in the oPt, accompanying Palestinians is one way in which EAPPI's claims could be contested as partial to Palestinians. Later on in this chapter I will explore a different scenario in which EAPPI's actions instead appear partial to Israel, but before I get there, I wish to reflect on what can be learnt from paying attention to these contradictions and problematics. For example, how does a human rights discourse function to support EAPPI's claim to impartiality?

1:2 What does a human rights discourse do?

A human rights discourse may well offer EAPPI a certain amount of credibility in its advocacy work, but as a discourse I suggest it also acts to conceal a particular paradox. When EAPPI claims to be non-partisan, claiming detachment from a particular side and attaching themselves to human rights, in its recourse to the language of universalism, the question of exactly whose human rights EAPPI is talking about is left open and ambiguous, with no clear response in sight. EAPPI claims to "stand faithfully with the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized"⁴⁴⁷ and that its "presence protects vulnerable communities" and "deter[s] attacks on civilians".⁴⁴⁸ In its official discourse it rarely, if ever, states overtly that these are Palestinian civilians or communities or that they work to help oppressed Palestinians. This construction of the abstract subject of EAPPI's humanitarianism which creates the victim as simply poor, oppressed and marginalised allows EAPPI to distance themselves, in language, from the political cause of Palestinian rights. I suggest it is precisely this lack of clarity which

⁴⁴⁷ See "Principled Impartiality" *EAPPI* last accessed 6, January 2023, <https://eappi.org/en/our-model>

⁴⁴⁸ See "Our model-engage" *EAPPI*, last accessed 6, January 202, <https://eappi.org/en/our-model/engage>

renders impartiality through the language of human rights a particularly “useful operational tool”.⁴⁴⁹

The exact meaning of the ‘human’ in rights language is something which has fuelled debate since the issue of the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen.⁴⁵⁰ Karl Marx famously pointed out the abstract nature of the citizen addressed by this declaration. He noted that the ‘material constituents’ of personhood were disavowed therein, with rights instead being accorded to the abstract subject— that is: the citizen, the subject of the state and the law.⁴⁵¹ Other thinkers such as Hannah Arendt have located that same abstractness in the ‘Man’ of the ‘Rights of Man’ discourse. What Arendt calls the “perplexities” of the discourse of rights is that they were attributed to an abstract man “who seemed to exist nowhere”.⁴⁵² And yet, instead of the language of universal humanity working to accord *all* humans their rights no matter where they lived, in fact, when individuals became stateless, “the Rights of Man, supposedly inalienable, proved to be unenforceable”.⁴⁵³ For the most part, Arendt argued, the Rights of Man had remained a theoretical statement of intent and instead only civil rights really provided for one’s tangible needs. Centring the rights of an abstract ‘man’ in effect concealed and dismissed the particular needs of those who had been forced to exist without the protection of a nation-state and who thus had no recourse to claiming their civil

⁴⁴⁹ Fiona Terry, ‘The principle of neutrality: is it relevant to MSF?’ *Médecins Sans Frontières*, 2000, 6.

⁴⁵⁰ For a summary of critiques of the subject of the Rights of Man see Jeremy Waldron, *Nonsense upon Stilts (Routledge Revivals): Bentham, Burke and Marx on the Rights of Man*, 1st edition (London: Routledge, 2014). For critiques of the subject of human rights discourse see for example: Jacques Rancière, ‘Who Is the Subject of the Rights of Man?’ *South Atlantic Quarterly* 103: 2/3(2004) 297-310; Moya Lloyd ‘Rethinking the human in human rights discourse’ in Birgit Schippers, ed., *Critical Perspectives on Human Rights* (London ; New York: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2019) 47-63; Birgit Schippers ‘Towards a posthuman conception of human rights’ in *ibid.* 63-84; For a summary of some of the key critiques of human rights discourse see Birgit Schippers ‘Introduction’ in *ibid.* ix-xxi; Ayten Gündoğdu, *Rightlessness in an Age of Rights: Hannah Arendt and the Contemporary Struggles of Migrants* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2015)12; And, for a historiography of human rights which comments on the discontinuities between the rights of man and human rights see Samuel Moyn, J. Andrew, and A.M. Elizabeth, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (London, UNITED KINGDOM: Harvard University Press) 2010 <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3300882>; Justine Lacroix and Jean-Yves Pranchère argue against a strict dichotomy between the rights of man and human rights. See ‘Introduction From the Rights of Man to Human Rights’ in *Human Rights on Trial: A Genealogy of the Critique of Human Rights*, Human Rights in History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018)1-24 <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/human-rights-on-trial/B060533D35B0CE6B87091518F5CE20B>

⁴⁵¹ Karl Marx ‘On the Jewish Question’ in *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Robert C. Tucker, Karl Marx, and Friedrich Engels, eds., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2d ed (New York: Norton, 1978).

⁴⁵² Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, New [5th] ed., A Harvest Book ; (New York : Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973) 291

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.* 293

rights.⁴⁵⁴ Wendy Brown's critique of contemporary human rights picks up on some of the contradictions between the generic and the particular, the abstract and the tangible inherent in human rights discourse. She points out that the practical application of human rights requires "a high degree of historical and social specificity", while the language of rights "necessarily participate[s] in a discourse of enduring universality rather than provisionality or partiality".⁴⁵⁵

One accompanier I interviewed was evidently battling with these opposing notions of the particular and the universal when I asked her about solidarity. She told me that EAPPI intended to help alleviate the suffering of Palestinians, but then qualified that statement by adding, "equally... it is for everyone... that it is achieving peace, and that is for the benefit of everyone in that region".⁴⁵⁶ For EAPPI, this inherent discursive ambiguity, the way the 'particular' Palestinian subject is concealed within the abstraction of the universal subject, this acts as a convenient abstraction of the particularities of their mission. Thus, when EAPPI sends its volunteers to walk with Palestinian children on their way to school they are doing so to help Palestinians access the right to education, hoping that the accompaniers' presence will deter Israeli settlers or soldiers from harassing Palestinian children on their daily commute. And when accompaniers walk with Palestinian shepherds the hope is that they will protect Palestinians from being attacked, allowing them to exercise their right to freedom of movement and the right to work. Yet, according to the UN charter, the right to education belongs to all humans everywhere and so EAPPI does not need to say it is protecting *Palestinian* rights by offering them protective presence in the face of Israeli threat, they can claim they are protecting *human* rights. Up unto a certain point (and the limits of this point will soon become clear as my argument unfolds), impartiality through human rights language can be seen as a rhetorical device which acts to obscure the specifics of what EAPPI aims to do in practice, which is to advocate for Palestinian rights, and to seek to protect Palestinian subjects from Israeli violence. While this project of abstraction is understandably useful

⁴⁵⁴See also Talal Asad's commentary on Arendt's argument and the practical application of rights in 'Redeeming the "Human" Through Human Rights', in *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford University Press, 2003), 127–58;

⁴⁵⁵ Wendy Brown, *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton, NJ Princeton Univ. Press, 1995). 97

⁴⁵⁶ Telephone interview with Anna, February 2020

given the difficulties of the political context as explained in the previous chapter, this discourse also helps to bolster the fiction that EAPPI is an impartial protagonist.⁴⁵⁷

A second answer to the question of what a human rights discourse does it that, with its concurrent abstract, universalising language it impacts on the way solidarity is conceived of within EAPPI. As mentioned, there was a range of opinions among accompaniers as to whether EAPPI was a solidarity organisation or not. But, in addition to this, there were also different understandings of exactly who it is that accompaniers support through their work. A sliding scale from the particular to the abstract is evident as expressions of support ranged from being tied to very specific groups of people, to a notion of support which was entirely abstract and disembodied.

On the one hand, EAPPI says it offers support to Palestinian churches, and Palestinian and Israeli non-violent activist groups. While not many accompaniers spoke about supporting churches many talked about wanting to raise the profile of Israeli peace groups. For example, Anna said, “it is not solidarity in, like, favouring one side or the other, because we also show solidarity with the Israeli peacemakers”.⁴⁵⁸ I do not wish to critique this show of support for Israeli peace activists, but I do suggest that this way of thinking is illustrative of a tendency to reduce solidarity to support for rather than to understand it as forming alliances with the collective who is struggling against dispossession, oppression, and ultimately, erasure as a people. At other times the notion of support was conceived of in slightly more abstract ways. In supporting ‘human’ rights rather than ‘Palestinian’ rights, EAPPI offers its support to ‘both sides’ which it names on its logo, saying that the programme operates both in Israel and Palestine, despite the fact that they only offer accompaniment in the Palestinian territories.



Figure 3: The EAPPI logo

⁴⁵⁷ I am not saying this is necessarily something EAPPI does with conscious intent, rather I point it out as an effect of their decision to employ the language of human rights

⁴⁵⁸ Telephone interview, February 2020. This support for Israeli activists is not merely a verbal expression of support. While in Israel and the oPt, EAPPI accompaniers regularly help Israeli accompaniment groups in the West Bank and also attend a weekly Women in Black vigil in West Jerusalem.

A declaration of this is made all the while accompaniers are on duty both in the oPt and during advocacy work at home since the jackets they wear bear the name of the organisation in large letters on their backs (see figure 3). Thus, whether intended or not, accompaniers make a very generalised offer of support for non-specific inhabitants of both Israel and Palestine wherever they go. This slightly more abstract, depoliticized notion of support is also evident when EAPPI claims to support universal categories of people like the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized.⁴⁵⁹ Here EAPPI ‘stands with’ those who are categorised via their need for help rather via their specific political or collective identity.

Finally, at the most abstract end of the scale, the idea of solidarity is stripped down to a show of support not for a particular people but, instead, for abstract values. Jackie put it this way when she told me she thought EAPPI acted “in solidarity with international humanitarian law and international humanitarian processes”. Later she added “I think if it [EAPPI] *is* showing solidarity, it is showing solidarity to moral principles, a just peace. So, whether you stand with Palestinians in their struggles, or whether you are helping Israelis protest against the occupation, it is still standing in solidarity in a way.”⁴⁶⁰ In this conceptualisation, EAPPI’s volunteers are allies to an abstract concept of morality and justice rather than *standing with* a specific people. And, to return to Michael’s response as cited above, this means EAPPI is trying to uphold some sort of moral standard instead of supporting or standing with Palestinians. This is a disembodied form of solidarity where the accompanier is primarily acting in a moral capacity for an abstract idea of justice rather than physically and ideologically standing with an oppressed people. In refusing to call themselves pro-Palestinian, they focus instead on being pro-human rights and anti-occupation, as if injustice could be disconnected from the tangible acts of violence performed by particular political players. In this way of thinking solidarity as an embodied building of alliances becomes an impossibly partial, political and overly relational idea.

Paul Dean calls EAPPI’s attempt to be both detached from, and supportive of Palestinians “tragi-comic”.⁴⁶¹ He notes:

⁴⁵⁹ See “Principled Impartiality” *EAPPI* last accessed 6, January 2023, <https://eappi.org/en/our-model>

⁴⁶⁰ Interview, UK, September 2019

⁴⁶¹ Paul Dean, ‘Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI): A Study in Ecumenical Theology and Praxis’ (Ph.D., King’s College London, 2018), 82

The idea of not taking sides with the parties to conflict, accompanying those who suffer injustice without taking their side, and only taking sides against injustice - not against a primary actor in the conflict - is subtle and difficult to maintain. It has its own self-interest: to uphold the illusion of "intervening" and yet keeping one's hands clean. It is not just difficult, it may be wrong.⁴⁶²

Dean's assessment of EAPPI's approach is incisive, yet the argument I am making here is not primarily about ethics; first and foremost, my point is to consider the ways in which an impartial stance places limits on the effectiveness of EAPPI's work to end the occupation. In the following second half of the chapter, I turn to focus on EAPPI's practice of accompaniment in the oPt. As part of their duties, volunteers spend time with Palestinians, *standing* or *walking*, often *waiting* together in various locations in a militarily occupied territory (see figure 4). There the accompanier must make decisions about where to place their body in relation to the infrastructure of the occupation (for example, checkpoints or gates), in relation to bodies which are seen to present risk (settlers' and soldiers'), and other bodies (Palestinians') which are seen as more vulnerable than their own and in need of protection from violence.



Figure 4: Accompaniers walk with a shepherd on land which is surrounded by Israeli settlements. Southern West Bank. (Photo EAPPI: B. ELCE)

⁴⁶² Ibid. 490

If, as I have argued thus far, a rights discourse centring the generic and abstract human which produces a disembodied notion of support and enables EAPPI to appear more impartial than they are, it will now become evident that when accompaniers put principled impartiality into practice in a very tangible, embodied way this discursive stance is challenged by a whole range of dilemmas which accompaniers face in the oPt. In the following sections, I look more closely at the daily reality of accompaniment in order to illustrate what happens when the rhetoric of impartiality, based as it is on ideas of an abstract, disembodied concept of solidarity, becomes an embodied mode of action.

2:1 The disembodied witness-accompanier

One way in which principled impartiality is translated into action is to stress accompaniers' roles as witnesses who do not intervene in situations of confrontation between Palestinians and Israelis. EAPPI's notion of protective presence, which is further explored in the next chapter, relies more on the *fact* of the accompaniers' presence, than their physical ability to intervene or stop any human rights violations from occurring. As a way of understanding this better, some contrast with EAPPI might help. Although in practice many different accompaniment organisations make a concerted effort to avoid using terms like "human shields"⁴⁶³ other accompaniment organisations like CPT place much more emphasis on the corporeal role of the accompanier. They used to have "Getting in the Way" as their slogan, and this was a way of expressing both their ideological and embodied strategy.⁴⁶⁴ As Coy writes, "putting their bodies on the line...CPTers endeavour to figuratively and literally 'get in the way' of oppression, injustices and violations of human rights".⁴⁶⁵ Likewise, the phrase 'unarmed bodyguards', coined by Mahony and Eguren, emphasises the centrality of the physical body which gets in between the perpetrator and the intended victims.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶³ In legal discourse voluntary human shields are often conflated with direct participants in combat making it a term groups like EAPPI, whose strategy relies on being seen as representatives of international humanitarian law, are keen to avoid. See Gordon and Perugini *Human Shields*.

⁴⁶⁴ CPT, the Community Peacemaker Teams was previously known as the Christian Peacemaker Teams. They now describe their work by saying their teams "support and amplify the voices of local peacemakers who risk injury and death waging nonviolent direct action". "CPT About Us" *CPT*, Last accessed January 6, 2023 <https://cpt.org/about>

⁴⁶⁵ Coy, 'Nonpartisanship, Interventionism and Legality in Accompaniment'. 9

⁴⁶⁶ Eguren, and Mahony, *Unarmed Bodyguards*; see also Gordon and Perugini *Human Shields*; Todorova, 'Vulnerability as a Politics of Decolonial Solidarity'; and chapter 6 for more on accompaniment strategies which mobilise the vulnerability of the accompanier

In EAPPI, discourses of accompaniment manifest as a refusal of embodiment and focus instead wholly on the moral leverage of their presence. Rather than thinking that their bodies act as an unarmed human shield for vulnerable Palestinians, for EAPPI, the accompaniers' presence is thought to predominantly mobilise shame in the perpetrators which would then deter the Israeli military and armed settlers from violence.⁴⁶⁷ For example, Gavin described what he thought was the impact of his presence when his team witnessed the demolition of a Palestinian home:

I mean obviously your presence isn't going to stop a demolition. I think a number of [Palestinian] people the next day thanked us for coming, thanked us for our interest was one thing, but also actually looking at the soldiers, it wouldn't have been in that context appropriate to talk much to them, but just going and staring at them and saying with body language, 'here I am, I am watching this'. Actually, several of them were looking quite embarrassed, and wouldn't meet my eyes.⁴⁶⁸

This interview took place just before Gavin flew back to the UK, at the end of his three months as an accompanier. In the same interview I also spoke with Carolina (who we met in London at the start of the chapter). In the following excerpt from our conversation, we gain a further insight into accompaniers' experiences of this non-interventionist 'witnessing' stance. At the start of the interview Carolina talked about how tired she felt and how she was anticipating returning home. She then described an experience from early on in her time in the oPt when her team had been called to attend an incident. Her narrative is disjointed and interrupted by her tears, but by quoting it at length I think we can get a better view of the picture she is painting. Settlers had approached some Palestinian shepherds and accused them of stealing their sheep. Carolina recalls:

The military came over and pointed at one Palestinian, beckoned him over, brought him over to the jeep, blindfolded him, tied his hands behind his back, sat him down next to the jeeps' tyres, and then all of a sudden, another one [Palestinian] was over there and also blindfolded and hands tied behind the back... For a minute or two [they] repositioned one of the jeeps to block the view... We couldn't see what was

⁴⁶⁷ For a discussion on the mobilisation of shame in human rights work see Randall Williams, *Divided World: Human Rights and Its Violence* (Minneapolis, UNITED STATES: University of Minnesota Press, 2010)

⁴⁶⁸ Interview with Gavin and Carolina, Jerusalem, November 2019

happening, and...at that point I knew intellectually that being there wasn't going to stop anything [she pauses, too emotional to continue]. So to experience [pause] blatant [pause] inequality and injustice— and they [the military] didn't even take his [the Palestinian's] statement they just took him over there. We didn't know what was happening—couldn't do anything about it, [pause, still teary] and eventually even more soldiers came.

And the Palestinian let the settler come and look at the sheep and when they didn't find any [sheep belonging to the settlers] then they [the settlers] changed their story and accused them of hitting settlers with their sticks. Two sticks that were lying on the ground got confiscated by the military, and I think that was the ultimate charge that was the accusation, I don't know, we weren't able to follow up to find out... They were released after two weeks...I can't remember what the fine was... I think the reality of witnessing as opposed to other kinds of intervention— and who knows—this is the problem with protective presence – you don't know what might have happened if we weren't there. A few Palestinians said they will treat the Palestinians better because we are here. But...they [the military] took them away from their families, away from their earning an income, who knows how they were treated there, and what kind of trial or you know faux-trial they will face now.

So, my first experience [of an incident like this]—that feeling like the adrenaline coursing through me, feeling like I am going to throw up at any second but that I don't actually have to throw up. It is just the injustice of it all and knowing I can't do anything. There is no—I can't stop this, and you know intellectually—I know that is not what the programme is about. This is about—*this isn't about intervening and stopping, but...*⁴⁶⁹

As Carolina says, and indeed we witness her struggle with the truth of the idea here, accompaniers are trained to understand that their effectiveness does not reside in their ability to get in the way or intervene directly, individually or as a team. Instead, accompaniment is often understood as witnessing. It is evident from this excerpt that witnessing such scenes had an affective impact on Carolina and her description of having such an embodied reaction to

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

events illustrates the truth of the fact that, regardless how accompaniment is understood theorised, it is never a disembodied experience. Her tears and fatigue during the interview, her description of how her body reacted during the incident, the adrenaline, her desire to vomit were all perhaps partly the result of her perceived powerlessness in the face of the injustice she and her team witnessed and indeed she felt in her body. Later, when back in London— as we learnt earlier on in the chapter— Carolina was questioned precisely about this kind of incident and whether she had found it difficult to remain in this impartial position despite the suffering she had witnessed. She chose to respond by speaking about impartiality and IHL. Here, speaking to me while still in Jerusalem, Carolina comforts her feelings of powerlessness by using a phrase which is repeated time and time again by EAPPI participants: ‘you don’t know what might have happened if we weren’t there’. Accompaniers (myself included) were often heard using this phrase to bolster their belief that being present to stand and witness and not intervene does have an impact even when it does not seem like it does and cannot be proven to have done. Thus, by adopting a stance which is sensed rather than proven to be effective, through its mobilisation of morality and shame, and its emphasis on witnessing rather than direct action, an embodied practice of accompaniment is perceived to be more of a disembodied one. Or, put another way, when principled impartiality becomes a mode of action in accompaniment, it sometimes becomes equated with non-interventionist, witnessing practices which are valued for the moral rather than physical impact.

However, the impact of accompaniers’ presence is not merely moral. The impact of their embodied presence on Israeli settlers, the Israeli military, and Palestinians is both material and political. In the following section I narrate a story told to me by Michael when I asked him whether he felt accompaniment was an effective mode of action or not.⁴⁷⁰ Being somewhat familiar with the types of stories accompaniers tell when they return from the oPt, I was expecting a story about a time in which he and his team had successfully negotiated with the Israeli soldiers for some practical help for Palestinians, allowing them through a checkpoint gate a few minutes after it had officially closed, for example. But Michael’s thinking about the impact the accompaniers had on a situation was more complex than this. He said he felt like the accompaniers’ presence had “affected the mood”. This is something mentioned in gendered analyses of accompaniment work. For example, in contrast with other accompaniers it was often young males who were found to “have an escalating effect on the

⁴⁷⁰ Video call interview, April 2020

situation”⁴⁷¹ and sometimes women who were deemed able to be most persuasive on behalf of the Palestinians.⁴⁷² In this situation Michael told me he felt like the argument he had witnessed between Palestinians and settlers “became more heated for our benefit almost, so because there is like a third party there, rather than the third party like being this neutral bystander it was actually allowing something to happen in the moment.” His concern for whether accompaniment, and the impartial nature of that role was effective and of value was something that underpinned much of our conversation. That international accompaniers cannot control the impact of their physical presence, no matter the way they intend for their presence to have impact, is evident. It also underlines the point that however much accompaniers intend to be impartial, whether or not they are read as such by the various other actors present in the oPt is beyond their control. In what follows I build on this theme to reveal something of the nature of EAPPI’s so-called impartial stance. While impartiality might be presented as an integral facet of liberal subjectivity, as Goldberg states, it is only ever “purported”.⁴⁷³

A note before I begin Michael’s story: whilst endeavouring to remain faithful to his version of events I stress that this account is not, and never could be, entirely and only Michael’s interpretation of what happened. Following feminist research methodologies, I wish to remain transparent about the role of the researcher in co-constructing knowledge with the research participant and hence there is no need to conceal my own role as narrator, editor and interpreter of someone else’s story. Thus, I tell the story in two slightly different ways. In the first telling I omit some details which I want, in the second telling, to emphasise and develop more fully into my argument.

2:2 Principled impartiality in action in the field—or, quite literally, in Abu Amir’s field

Version 1: “We backed off”

The events took place in the West Bank on a day when Michael and his team were accompanying Abu Amir, a Palestinian farmer. Michael says:

⁴⁷¹ Matthew P. Eddy, ““We Have to Bring Something Different to This Place”: Principled and Pragmatic Nonviolence Among Accompaniment Workers’, *Social Movement Studies* 13, no. 4 (2 October 2014) 459

⁴⁷² For a discussion of this in relation to Palestinian women see Hammami, “Precarious Politics: The Activism of “Bodies That Count (aligning with those that don’t) in Palestine’s Colonial Frontier”; For a gendered analysis of Israeli accompaniment activism see Kotef and Amir, “(En)Gendering Checkpoints: Checkpoint Watch and the Repercussions of Intervention”

⁴⁷³ Goldberg, *Racist Culture*.⁴ for the full quotation see Introduction chapter

We went to this farmer's land outside of [a certain village] and we were very, very close to a settlement, and his sons and his nephews were attending to the land, over a big area of land with a weed killer. And two settlers came down from the settlement and started shouting at the family and it turned into this massive brawl.⁴⁷⁴

The Israeli settlers were angry apparently, because they thought Abu Amir and his family were spraying their crops with chemicals in order to poison the settlers' animals. Michael said that this "feud between the three settlers and this family had been happening for ages". Michael notes the complexity of their disagreement, saying it wasn't just a matter of settlers complaining about Palestinians' presence on the land; Michael describes it as a really loud 'brawl', an 'argument', a 'feud' between neighbours. Next, we hear that the Israeli soldiers arrived, "settlers have this direct link to the army because they were there so quickly it was unbelievable" Michael said. Having arrived, "the soldiers were like 'what are you doing here? You have to go, like, everybody has to go.'" In response, Abu Amir and his family sat down on the ground in protest at the soldiers' orders and asked the companions to join them on the ground. Michael told me he and his team-mate did not feel that they could join Abu Amir's family sitting down.

I said to him, I can't do that, like, I cannot sit down. I felt like partly out of personal safety, and partly I felt that wasn't 'the role' to protest with Palestinians. For me at that time, that is what felt right and we kind of backed off.

I asked Michael for clarification on this part of the story: "so you were there watching? In a sense observing his [Abu Amir's] protest?" He replied "Yes, yes". Michael told me, "We kind of left, but stayed within a distance where we could see, and I was like, [either talking to his team-mate or to thinking to himself] 'well, if they [the soldiers] say to us go again, then we will leave.'" "

In his explanation for why they did not participate, Michael alludes to the fact that EAPPI does not encourage volunteers to take part in demonstrations in the oPt, which means the

⁴⁷⁴ Video call interview with Michael, April 2020 (note that hereafter in this section all of Michael's subsequent quotes derive from this interview)

team's actions were consistent with EAPPI's training. In a 2018 media statement EAPPI stated that "Ecumenical Accompaniers do not engage in political activism, and are advised to avoid and withdraw from any confrontation, whether with IDF [Israeli Defence Forces] personnel, border patrol officers or anyone else."⁴⁷⁵ Accompaniers regard their role first and foremost as the opportunity to offer protective presence and monitor human rights abuses, rather than a political one which involves joining in demonstrations or engaging in confrontation with the military. Impartiality demands that if a confrontation between the two 'sides' takes place accompaniers remain as observers, detached and physically positioned adjacent to the area where a protest is taking place. Here it is evident that impartiality is an embodied strategy which relates to how Michael and his team "backed off". In contradiction to Gavin and Carolina's accounts of being present when Palestinians are being arrested unfairly, or having their houses demolished, when accompaniers are present and witness Palestinian protest, accompaniers move to position themselves physically as well as ideologically at a distance. Michael said they were "parallel" to where Abu Amir was sitting on the ground, "just up the hill slightly" to the side of the 'action'. This withdrawal marks the limit of the accompaniers' willingness to engage in an embodied form of solidarity with Palestinians. At the point at which Palestinians cease 'only' to be victims and 'protest' is deemed to occur, the accompaniers move from *walking with* the Palestinians to position themselves away on the side lines as a detached observer, hoping their 'proximate' presence still holds some protective capabilities, still hoping to be close enough to shame the perpetrators out of making a violent response.

Despite the intent behind EAPPI's policy, this refusal to participate is not impartial and is not apolitical; to the contrary, it is deeply political and has a partial impact. One cannot stand as an apolitical humanitarian at the side of the "poor, oppressed and marginalised" as EAPPI's principled impartiality statement reads, and then refuse to sit in a certain political position vis à vis their 'enemies'. It is impossible to intervene in a humanitarian capacity in an occupation without taking a political stance in relation to the oppressor. As Barnett and Weiss state "It is impossible for humanitarian agencies to be apolitical. Their actions have political consequences, and they are viewed by those on the ground as political."⁴⁷⁶ Michael and his

⁴⁷⁵ "Response from the World Council of Churches", *EAPPI*, 8 June, 2018
<https://eappi.org/en/about/MediaResponseEAPPI20180615.pdf>

⁴⁷⁶ Barnett and Weiss, *Humanitarianism in Question*. 4

team's move to the side enacted impartiality as a mode of action, and this withdrawal is what Redfield describes as the "political art of abstaining"—both a political strategy, and an act with political, and partial, effects.⁴⁷⁷ Yet, not only is it a withdrawal of support for Palestinians—because of the power imbalance between Israelis and Palestinians, refusing to be 'pro-Palestinian' or 'pro-Israeli' cannot equate to impartiality, instead it works to reinforce the already more powerful of the two sides in an asymmetric situation. Regardless of their desire to carry out EAPPI's instructions and act impartially, the companions had, in effect, already chosen sides. By refusing to support the dominated, their actions supported the unequal power dynamics of the settler-colonial status quo.

In Michael's account of events, on this occasion the confrontation between settlers, soldiers and Palestinians ended here. Michael said: "Well, once we moved back, we weren't told to move again and to me that proved that the soldiers didn't care too much about us being there, they just didn't want us in the immediate vicinity. They [the soldiers] surrounded the family, they then just left, settlers left and they [the soldiers] just left the land." Abu Amir and his family had stayed sitting on the ground, the occupying powers had temporarily walked away, and the companions stood by, watching events unfold.

Version 2: 'Did we do the right thing?'

Having noted how this episode demonstrates the embodied, partial and politicised nature of EAPPI's mode of action, in this second telling, I focus on the companions' feelings about their safety and the nature of the relationship between the companions and the Palestinians in this incident.

When Michael and his team were out walking with Abu Amir on his land, it didn't take long for Israeli settlers and then Israeli military to arrive on the scene. When Michael told me they moved out of the way at the moment of confrontation, and did not sit with Abu Amir on the ground, it seemed he was struggling over how best to articulate the fact that his team had moved to the side. He often used hesitant and imprecise language. He said about the soldiers, "I *felt like* we were asked" to leave, and then "we *kind of* left", "I was like, *well, if*" the soldiers ask us to again, then he said they would leave completely. This lack of precision

⁴⁷⁷ Peter Redfield, 'The impossible problem of neutrality' in Bornstein and Redfield Eds. *Forces of Compassion: Humanitarianism Between Ethics and Politics*, Illustrated edition (Santa Fe: SAR Press, 2011) 55-56

indicates a distancing, an insecurity over what he was recounting. His words convey an effort to justify his decisions, perhaps both to himself and to me as the interviewer. I asked him whether both he and his team-mate felt the same about how to respond to Abu Amir's request:

I think we were both agreed on not joining in on Abu Amir and his family, we were not in agreement about how close we should be, like my team-mate was quite keen to leave as soon as the soldiers were there and wanted to go quite far away from the situation... it was like scary – are we going to get arrested?... but... just to leave as soon as the soldiers asked us to, I was like...[trails off into another thought]

It seems his team was torn between feeling obliged to do what an arms-bearing authority figure was ordering, a fear for their own safety, an obligation to witness and stay present which was their remit as accompaniers, but also to do right by Abu Amir. In the end they agree to move to the side and not go as far away as his team-mate suggested.

Feeling fearful for one's personal safety is a very real factor in this situation and cannot be disconnected from an examination of impartiality as a mode of action for accompaniers. Michael told me it was the first time the team had been invited to accompany a Palestinian family to offer them protective presence, and that being surrounded by ten armed soldiers was scary, inducing fears the team would be arrested. The risks involved in accompaniment work was an issue much discussed in 2002, when the EAPPI programme was in its design stages. At a planning meeting "intense debate" took place over whether EAPPI should be called the 'Ecumenical Monitoring Programme', or the 'Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme'.⁴⁷⁸ While they eventually opted for the latter, there remained no clear decision on how far the programme's focus should be on direct action and how far on monitoring. A British Quaker present at the meeting noted:

At the end of the discussion, the group did not wish to separate internationals into participating in one or the other categories. Instead, it was felt that each person

⁴⁷⁸ Dean, 'Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)'. 69

participating in this programme, would be given the option to participate in activities at the level of risk he/she would feel comfortable in doing so.⁴⁷⁹

It is interesting to note that flexibility was written into the role not in accordance primarily with the needs of the Palestinian community, but according to the needs and preferences of individual international volunteers. And, as would be expected there is a range of attitudes towards risk amongst accompaniers who participate in the programme. According to one Palestinian former EAPPI employee, among the accompaniers she had met over the years, at one end of the spectrum were those she described as “really activist”, then at the other end were those who didn’t want to take any risk at all, and then there were some who apparently had not been well informed of the risks they were going to encounter when they arrived, and so took exception at the situations they found themselves placed in. She said most accompaniers were somewhere in the middle of the spectrum, but also remembered one or two who had left the programme because “it wasn’t activist enough.”⁴⁸⁰

Returning to the idea of contestation over the meaning of solidarity, Tabar makes the point that it is important to distinguish the difference between solidarity and support. Solidarity, she says, involves a greater willingness to make sacrifices for the struggle. Support on the other hand “can be given and just as easily taken away. It is still rooted in ideas of imperial benevolence”.⁴⁸¹ In a conversation in Jerusalem, one accompanier, James was hesitant to fully claim the word solidarity because of his hesitancy to embrace the implications of such a term:

J: when you are present in the vest [the uniform] it helps everyone to act in accordance with their humanity and so...my presence can, just by *being*, mediate a different outcome — for a potentially conflicting situation between two opposing parties in this conflict.⁴⁸² I guess that is a form of solidarity. But, yeah, I haven’t used

⁴⁷⁹ Kathy Bergen, ‘A Report of the Consultation organized by the World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland, February 1 & 2, 2002,’ cited in *ibid*.

⁴⁸⁰ Interview notes, November 2019

⁴⁸¹ ‘From Third World Internationalism to “the Internationals” 427

⁴⁸² Interview, Jerusalem, November 2019. Note James’ use of the word ‘everyone’ here as if the onus is equally on the Palestinian, without recourse to armed forces, as much as it is on the Israelis, with jeeps, tanks and guns at their disposal, to act more humanely.

that term a lot in my experience in the past... I like the idea, I don't know if I really know what it means.

BE: what do we really mean by this?... it is quite a strong commitment if you are offering solidarity.

J: Agree! Am I offering myself to be arrested? Well not as much as they [Palestinians] are. *(Pause)*. I just don't want to overstate it.⁴⁸³

In Michael's story, it is clear that a fear of the repercussions of joining Palestinians in protest plays a part in his team drawing to stand to the side. But, to do this they had to ignore Abu Amir's request for help; and when Abu Amir made this request, he also made a statement to the Israeli soldiers which tells us something important about the kind of solidarity Abu Amir might have hoped for from EAPPI. Michael told me,

when we left, we had to be separated [moved to the side], and Abu Amir was like "no, no these are my friends they should stay here", and Abu Amir and his family sat down on the ground in protest. And Abu Amir said: "sit with us, sit with us", "these are my friends," speaking to the soldiers.

In contrast to the conceptions of solidarity discussed in section 1, Abu Amir's call is a request for an embodied, relational form of solidarity, asking companions to stay and take action with him, as friends. In this action of sitting on the ground, the Palestinians were enacting what is known as '*Sumud*', the Arabic term used to connote persistence in the face of settler-colonial attempts to dispossess and erase Palestinians from the land. And they offer an invitation for the non-Palestinians to join them, as friends, in their struggle. Thinking more about this relational aspect of Abu Amir's appeal to Michael can help us to think more generally about the kind of solidarity EAPPI is being called to.

Michael's hesitations and the concern about how to narrate these events mirrors something of the difficulties he expressed in articulating his understanding of EAPPI's praxis in section 1, and the accompanying tensions inherent in the rhetoric of principled impartiality and the task of accompanying Palestinians. Michael finds himself in a bind with his desires split in two directions: he wants to be true to EAPPI's principled impartiality stance but also wants to

⁴⁸³ Interview, Jerusalem, October 2019

maintain friendship or at least a good connection with the Palestinians who had invited them to provide protective presence. On this occasion, the desire to follow EAPPI's guidelines and to not take part in demonstrations is prioritised. Michael expresses concern for whether their actions had jeopardized their relationship with Abu Amir or not, but also quickly dismisses it.

I was a bit concerned that Abu Amir thought that we had abandoned him, and that we had almost betrayed him a bit by not demonstrating with his family, but he was fine, I found out that he felt completely fine about the situation, because he let me ride his donkey and I rode it all the way back to the road which was bloody great [he laughs].

While it is impossible for anyone other than Abu Amir to know what he really thought of the EAPPI team's actions, I wonder if Michael's readiness to absolve himself of worry might be too swift to be entirely believed. In Michael's account he twice stated that Abu Amir had called the volunteers his friends in front of the soldiers, and his confident dismissal of the idea of Abu Amir being offended (an issue that Michael himself raised) seems to strike a very different tone to Michael's more concerned, reflective tone at other times. It is clear to see Michael wanted to believe he had maintained a connection to Abu Amir's family, he describes having ridden the donkey back and then finishing the day in their home:

It was nice to reflect on what had happened with the family. Nice to talk about it and we felt like—they [Palestinians] always tell you stories about things—you know this happened the other day with—but then when it happens, and you are there—you feel quite *connected* with their family, I think actually.

Rather than remaining with his insecurities about whether Abu Amir was offended, Michael pushes the thought away, turning instead to laughter about the fun he had riding the donkey and finishing the day with his family. Fully confronting the inconsistency of seeking a friendship with Palestinians whilst also remaining impartial and detached from the political side of the Palestinian struggle is thus avoided. And, rather than being resolved in any way, the contradiction between a desire to feel connected with Palestinians and their struggle, and EAPPI's concept of principled impartiality is left to linger as a tension in Michael's account. On the one hand there is a desire for friendship with Palestinians and an affective sense of connection to Palestinians. Yet, the tension created by the pull towards attachment, countered by the ideal of principled impartiality which forces detachment, does not resolve itself easily,

leaving certain forms of solidarity impossible. The impossibility of fully reconciling this contradiction resounds loudly in the unanswered sounds of Abu Amir's request for the accompaniers to join him on the ground.

Conclusion: an invitation to a different type of accompaniment praxis

As I move towards the conclusion of my argument, I want to stay with that Palestinian voice ringing out over the field, the one which calls the volunteer subject away from impartiality, and towards a different type of support for the Palestinian cause. In attending to this call, I am also reminded that Yousef, a Palestinian former EAPPI employee who we will meet in the following chapter, made a similar request for EAPPI to make a change in relation to the idea of impartiality. He believed the programme's desire for balance was irredeemably problematic, saying very directly, "you need either to be with the people [Palestinians] or no need for [international volunteers] others to come."⁴⁸⁴

And so, I finish by reflecting on what might it mean to 'be with the people', to not take the political stance of moving to the side, but to take a different type of action, to remain sitting with Palestinians in their resistance to settler-colonialism. I would argue that 'being with' demands a specific kind of commitment, a more participatory version of accompaniment where accompaniers would be ready to remain seated on the ground, and thus to face whatever risks that staying put might entail. This chapter has demonstrated that human rights accompaniment work might try to be nonpartisan but it will never be perceived to be that by all the various sides involved. Principled impartiality is itself an embodied mode of action which involves not only witnessing and hoping in that one's presence makes a difference, it also involves withdrawing support from Palestinians. There can be no real solidarity action without the willingness to expose oneself to risk and this might be something of what Yousef imagined when he, like Abu Amir called for EAPPI to "be with the people".⁴⁸⁵ Yet this is certainly not all that Abu Amir was calling for. For me, Michael's story illustrates the ways in which a Palestinian call to action invites accompaniers into a different way of being. Abu Amir called the accompaniers 'friends', and I think this form of address connects with Tabar's call for a renewed, less individualistic, more relational understanding of transnational solidarity and accompaniment.⁴⁸⁶ Michael's story as it has been narrated here has allowed us

⁴⁸⁴ Interview, November 2019

⁴⁸⁵ Interview, November 2019

⁴⁸⁶ See chapter 1

to eavesdrop on an encounter between the accompaniers, the accompanier and the occupying powers. Abu Amir's words invite accompaniers to discard the impartial role which fit with liberalism's story about who they are and what they can do. In this case Abu Amir's invitation was not taken up by the accompaniers, but this does not undermine the importance of a call which undoes, or at least unsettles, the notion that international support for Palestinians can remain detached, disembodied, impartial and apolitical. And yet, the suggestion that friendship could lie at the heart of a concept and practice of transnational accompaniment is an uneasy one, especially in light of the legacies of Britain's imperial intervention in the region. As Chowdhury and Philipose's warn about transnational relationships "To get to friendship...we would have to unravel our assumptions and clear the colonial and racial debris from our perceptual apparatus to see intimately and to become personal".⁴⁸⁷ For EAPPI, accepting to reposition oneself as an organisation which responds, in friendship, to a Palestinian lead, would entail work which addresses the barriers to friendship that have already been explored in this thesis so far: unequal power relations, imperial histories and on-going structures of settler-colonialism which construct the relationship between the 'helper' and the 'helped', the accompanier and the accompanied.

In Hammami's study of Israeli and Italian accompaniment work in the oPt she concludes on a hopeful note when she detects signs of "transformative relationalities" emerging between accompaniers and Palestinians. Hammami saw something positive at work as accompaniers lived with Palestinians in communities in the West Bank, shared the realities of daily life, and in the "everyday coming together of grievable and ungrievable bodies" as accompaniers showed commitment to the work.⁴⁸⁸ Importantly, she argued that the breakdown of hierarchies started to seem possible as day to day relationships of trust formed. While I would like to carry the optimism of Hammami's conclusion into my own, despite the evidence which shows that EAPPI's accompaniers desire connection, and despite Abu Amir's call to friendship and action, in addition to the obstacles already explored in previous chapters, EAPPI's strategy of impartiality and their refusal to fully support Palestinian acts of resistance to settler colonial power stands firmly in the way of trusting and transformative

⁴⁸⁷ Elora Halim Chowdhury and Liz Philipose "Introduction" in Chowdhury and Philipose eds., *Dissident Friendships: Feminism, Imperialism, and Transnational Solidarity* (Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2016) 12 <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/reader.action?docID=4792704&ppg=11>

⁴⁸⁸ Hammami, "Precarious Politics: The Activism of "Bodies That Count (aligning with those that don't) in Palestine's Colonial Frontier" 184

accompaniment relationships. Despite my argument that EAPPI's stance is only 'purportedly' impartial, it is as Michael's story demonstrates also a mode of action which has real effects in the real world. Michael and his team mate had to withdraw, and stand to the side, "separated from the group". In this way we see that the practice of impartiality in the oPt draws a division between potential friends, separating the accompaniers physically and ideologically from those they accompany. The kind of transformative alliance building mentioned by Hammami would only be possible I think if EAPPI saw themselves *primarily* as friends, and fully on the Palestinian 'side'.

Perhaps, although I cannot be certain, it might still be possible to hear Abu Amir's call ringing out across a West Bank field. If this is so, this invitation for transnational organisations like EAPPI to embrace both friendship and action carries with it the potential to re-envision accompaniment work as a participatory, embodied and relational practice of solidarity. And while no practice of solidarity could ever be entirely free from hierarchies of power, this kind of intervention would at least pay them careful attention, and work to mitigate them. Rather than cultivating friendships based purely on benevolent acts of support for 'abstract' victims of rights abuses—a stance still embroiled in colonial, racialised and gendered hierarchies of power—in this version of transnational solidarity, friendship, action and a willingness to make sacrifices for a Palestinian led struggle for liberation would be at its heart. The following chapter will continue on to work through some of these issues as I return to what Yousef said about the nature of EAPPI's support for Palestinians, and the way EAPPI deals with accompaniers' vulnerability to violence and harassment whilst providing 'protective presence' in the oPt.

Chapter 7: Paternalism, protection and precarity: the gendered discourse of protective presence

Fieldwork snapshot 1 - The Handover Ceremony

Whilst I was in Jerusalem on fieldwork, EAPPI held a handover ceremony to mark the end of one set of accompaniers' time in the oPt and to welcome the incoming team. The event was full of ritual, as one might expect from a programme run by the WCC. As part of the proceedings the outgoing accompaniers carried lit candles to represent their three months of service in the oPt, and then symbolically handed their responsibilities, along with the flames of light, to the incoming accompaniers who carried their own candles. Present at this meeting were various people connected with the programme in Israel and the oPt. Among the charm of the candles and songs, having thanked the new team for the sacrifices made to come and help in the oPt, a Palestinian community leader spoke up. She said that Palestinians appreciated EAPPI because— and this was the part I remember taking note of— she said very frankly and with a sense of urgency, “we need your protection”.⁴⁸⁹ The directness with which she asked the international community for help, and the appearance of the very ordinary group of volunteers who stood, candles in hand, aged from the mid-twenties to very late sixties raised questions in my mind. How far do accompaniers feel the term ‘protection’ describes what they are doing? Do accompaniers as non-armed civilians really feel they protect Palestinians in the face of armed soldiers and settlers? And if, with a critical, feminist lens, I view this type of transnational accompaniment work as a paternalistic call to the protection of ‘vulnerable’ Palestinians, what do I do with the fact that some Palestinians are very frank about their need and desire for protection?

Fieldwork snapshot 2 - A pleasant interview with Isabel

The Austrian hospice is a hop, skip and more of a shuffle than a jump away from the Damascus Gate in the Old City, Jerusalem. The thoroughfare of tradespeople, tourists, religious tour groups, Palestinian shoppers and school children, Israeli police and soldiers, and worshippers of many faiths form a constant stream of movement down from the city walls and along the stone-flagged pathway worn slippery and smooth with time. The throng of crowds is always especially tight where this downward path meets a junction, and a high wall marks the corner of the Via Dolorosa. Here Christian pilgrims follow in the reported

⁴⁸⁹ FW notes October 2019

footsteps of Christ on his journey to be crucified, and armed Israeli soldiers are also often posted here, quite often watching over a Palestinian being held in detention under a makeshift looking shelter.⁴⁹⁰ For a non-Palestinian it is easy not to notice the Israeli police and soldiers in the Old City as they meld into the background of the rest of the busy street life; and even for me, as someone trained to document Palestinian life under occupation, it took me dozens of trips around this corner to notice that this is a spot where Palestinians are frequently stopped and detained, often on arbitrary pretences. Fairly frequently on this research trip to the city, when I reached this junction, I would leave the chaos of the street and push my way through a heavy door in the high wall, seeking sanctuary in the terraces of the Austrian Hospice gardens that look down on this busy street. There is a lovely café in the gardens which became a pleasant space to work in during the weeks of my fieldwork; but perhaps more significantly for the topic under examination in this chapter, in my mind now, something about the Hospice's calm, colonial era space of beauty and privilege in the midst of a busy and troubled city also serves to remind me of how easy it can be to hide oneself away from discussions of certain difficult topics and find false comfort in silence instead.

The garden offered an ideal place to meet for an interview with an accompanier I am calling Isabel, who was at the end of her time in the oPt. We sat in the shade drinking milky coffees at tourist prices while I asked her about her time as an accompanier. We discussed what had motivated her to join EAPPI, the specific tasks her team had been involved with, how effective she felt 'protective presence' was,⁴⁹¹ and how she felt about returning home and giving presentations talking about what she had witnessed. The interview progressed helpfully but throughout our time together there was something I concertedly avoided asking her about and which she also avoided.⁴⁹² I had been in Jerusalem for some weeks by this point and had heard that there had been an incident which had resulted in Isabel and her teammates having to leave their placement in the West Bank and return to Jerusalem early. I don't remember exactly the words were used to describe what had happened but I understood

⁴⁹⁰ FW notes October 2019

⁴⁹¹ 'Protective presence' is the phrase used by EAPPI to describe their protective accompaniment work. The idea is that the presence of white bodies in spaces of illegal occupation reminds the occupiers that their actions, and indeed their very presence, is illegal according to international law. Protective presence is supposed to deter the military and the settlers from violence against Palestinians. See EAPPI's description: "Our presence makes the costs of human rights abuses more apparent to the perpetrators, persuades them to act differently, and deters attacks on civilians." Last accessed 6 January 2023, <https://eappi.org/en/our-model>

⁴⁹² Interview with Isabel, Jerusalem, October 2019

that one of Isabel's team-mates had been subjected to sexual harassment.⁴⁹³ No one talked about who the perpetrator was but from what was said it was clear it been a local Palestinian rather anyone from inside the EAPPI organisation. No one talked about who the perpetrator was but In the Austrian Hospice gardens Isabel did not mention any of this although it had clearly resulted in several repercussions: her placement had ended early, and I knew from other conversations with the team that they were worried about having left the Palestinian communities they had been accompanying without any protective presence. Yet, I did not ask directly about this. I was trying hard to be an ethical researcher, not wanting to pry into what I presumed was confidential information and wanting to be respectful of the way EAPPI was handling the case. As such, I thought it best that my interview with Isabel passed without commenting on the matter.⁴⁹⁴

Introduction

In this chapter my contribution to the literature on protective-accompaniment is to highlight the gendered and sexualised dynamics of the relationships between accompanier and accompanied. And, by examining EAPPI's approach to the issue of cross-racial sexual violence in accompaniment work, I home in on the main function of the gendered and racialised power international activists embody—the supposed ability to offer Palestinians protection. By foregrounding the way racialised power is always also gendered and constituted by vulnerability,⁴⁹⁵ I deepen our understanding of the ways patriarchy weaves its way through the gendered discourse of protection. I conclude that a renegotiation of the power dynamics between the 'protector' and the 'protected' is needed in accompaniment praxis, and call for a review of EAPPI's protective presence strategy, as well as proposing that the role of international accompaniment within the Palestinian struggle also needs to be reassessed.

⁴⁹³ FW notes October 2019

⁴⁹⁴ Information about the incident involving Isabel's team-mate was later confirmed officially by email to a closed group of EAPPI supporters which also detailed what action EAPPI was taking in response. I do not include any further details of this case to protect the confidentiality of those involved. To protect the anonymity of Isabel and her team mates as far as possible I have used a different pseudonym to refer to Isabel elsewhere in this thesis

⁴⁹⁵ Judith Butler "Rethinking vulnerability and resistance" in Butler, Gambetti and Sabsay eds. *Vulnerability in Resistance*: 21

The issue of sexual harassment of international activists by those with whom they acting in solidarity has not been addressed within much of the scholarship on accompaniment activism. One exception is Mahrouse, who noted that a reluctance to address these issues within organisations are often due to the fears that speaking up could harm ‘the struggle’.⁴⁹⁶ I saw this same reluctance within both EAPPI and myself as a result of the above mentioned incident: my fieldnotes evidence how unsure I was about how to respond to what I had heard whilst on fieldwork in Jerusalem:

The issue of harassment, it is so important, and so much strikes at the core of what this is all about, how can I ignore it? I can't really, but I feel like there is this 'keep it quiet' culture, ignore it because the struggle is more important mentality... And yet I can't just pretend it isn't happening can I? I don't want to assess how well it was managed, but without asking I can see that it has caused waves and yet is being talked about but also not being talked about. Also it struck me that this is linked to protective presence....⁴⁹⁷

There is a sense in which this chapter is an exploration of the sentence I left trailing off into the distance in these notes. Knowledge of the incident left me feeling uncomfortable precisely because of the ethical, political, and potentially legal difficulties that talking about such issues could provoke. However, when I finally decided to write about the topic it was because I felt that despite the difficulties, there was good reason to. Provoked both by what was described in snapshot 1 above and an interview with a Palestinian ex-EAPPI employee, I realised that the issue of harassment raised an important point about the gendered relationship between protection and vulnerability which sits at the heart of EAPPI's ‘protective presence’ praxis. Speaking openly and transparently about the fact that, as happens anywhere in the world, international accompaniers experience sexual harassment and assault in the oPt is akin to pulling on a thread which, once pulled, has the potential to challenge and even unravel some of the logic upon which EAPPI's protective presence praxis is based.

⁴⁹⁶ 2014, *Conflicted Commitments*; Whilst Nelson does not address this issue explicitly her analysis of the vulnerability of accompaniers is also relevant here. In *A Finger in the Wound* she gives a vivid account of how the power invested in whiteness intersects with gender in the bodies of accompaniers.

⁴⁹⁷ FW diary, November 2019

To examine the relationship between the protector-accompanier and the vulnerable-accompanied in this chapter I think with Butler's theorisation of ethical politics which relies on the concept of mutual vulnerability and interdependency. Here, "each is dependent or, formed and sustained in relations of depending upon and being depended upon".⁴⁹⁸ This allows me to argue for a link between the suppression of a feminised/feminising vulnerability in certain areas of EAPPI's praxis and the promotion of a paternalistic mode of protection rather than a type of accompaniment work which fosters interdependency. However, I begin from the premise that Palestinians' need for protection arises from the conditions of their lives in a "zone of hyperprecarity and elimination" under the necropolitics of Israeli settler-colonialism.⁴⁹⁹ "For situated communities of hyperprecarity, this awareness that one's survival depends on so many others is an everyday doxa" Hammami writes.⁵⁰⁰ In a racialised regime where Palestinian bodies do not count and their suffering remains invisible to the rest of the world, Palestinians build strategic connections with accompaniers whose lives are deemed to be of more value.⁵⁰¹ This chapter builds on Hammami's work which thinks through how the notion of interdependence becomes politicised when Palestinians are faced with the logics of settler-colonial elimination.

Throughout this intervention into a conversation on the gendered and sexualised vulnerabilities of accompaniers in a regime of settler-colonialism I wish to emphasize the fact that while vulnerability is a universal ontological condition, it is always distributed both inconstantly and unevenly.⁵⁰² And, for the sake of additional clarity, I want to be careful to demarcate the boundaries of this intervention. It is not an examination of the phenomenon of sexual violence in transnational accompaniment organisations per se. It is not the product of a systematic investigation into the ways in which EAPPI deals with the issue of sexual violence, regardless of the nationality of the perpetrator. And neither do I intend it as a critique of EAPPI's ability to deal with the issue of sexual violence, although this is also

⁴⁹⁸ Judith Butler, *The Force of Nonviolence: An Ethico-Political Bind* (Brooklyn: Verso Books, 2020). 16

⁴⁹⁹ Hammami, "Precarious Politics: The Activism of "Bodies That Count (aligning with those that don't) in Palestine's Colonial Frontier". 167

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.172.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.173

⁵⁰²Susan Dodds "Dependence, Care and Vulnerability" in Catriona Mackenzie, Wendy Rogers, and Susan Dodds, eds., *Vulnerability: New Essays In Ethics And Feminist Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, Usa, 2013):188; For examples of others who define vulnerability this way see Kelly Oliver, 'Witnessing, Recognition, and Response Ethics', *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 48, no. 4 (2015): 473-493 <https://doi.org/10.5325/philrhet.48.4.0473>.

important work that every organisation anywhere should always be looking to improve upon. Secondly, I refer mainly to female companions in this chapter, but I do not mean to imply that companions who identify as male, or companions with non-normative sexual and gender identities are not also vulnerable to sexual violence. In a conversation which is not as full and frank as it could be, I have only been informed of reports of sexual harassment and assault of female companions.⁵⁰³ Lastly, I am very aware that in referring to an incident involving Palestinian perpetrators rather than those of any other nationality, this intervention does nothing to disrupt ignorance about instances of sexual harassment and assault at the hands of the Israeli police, soldiers or fellow international activists; and nor does it shed any light on incidences in which Palestinians are victims of sexual violence. I have not found any reports of any such incidents taking place within EAPPI I so cannot comment on this, suffice it to say there would certainly be scope for further research into the issues surrounding sexual violence in accompaniment organisations more generally.⁵⁰⁴

This chapter is structured in the following way. Section 1 begins by setting out a framing for the ensuing analysis before then discussing two ways in which EAPPI works to mitigate risks of sexual violence, firstly through cultural awareness training and secondly the decision not to place young females in a particular location in the West Bank. Section 2 turns to connect the discussion of companions' gendered vulnerabilities more specifically with EAPPI's praxis of protective presence. Here the vulnerability of Palestinians in the face of settler-colonial violence, the vulnerability of companions in the oPt, and the vulnerability of the EAPPI programme itself are shown to be entangled in problematic ways. The chapter concludes that these three are in need of untangling in order to properly assess EAPPI's effectiveness in protecting Palestinians and offers two possible proposals for change.

1:1 A framing—hyperprecarity and the logics of sexual violence in the oPt

⁵⁰³ EAPPI is careful to provide companions with an assessment of the risks of accompaniment work before they leave for the oPt and set out clear guidelines for minimising risk and for dealing with incidents should they occur. Included in this is a risk assessment for the potential for sexual harassment, sexual assault or rape, based on reports of a number of cases of international activists (not only from EAPPI) who have experienced both sexual harassment and assault in the oPt over the years since the programme has been running. This information was shared with new companions at the training in the UK. I am unaware of the training offered on this subject in other EAPPI sending countries.

⁵⁰⁴ I found only this news report which includes testimony of an Israeli peace activist who reports having been sexually assaulted by a fellow Israeli activist Avi Issacharoff, 'Israeli Leftist Activists: We Are Being Sexually Harassed in the West Bank', *Haaretz.com*, March, 17 2012, <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5205985>

When speaking of sexual violence in a situation of settler-colonialism, it is important to consider who it is that bears the “burden of violence”.⁵⁰⁵ Hammami, points out that the scholarship often gets it wrong: “The everyday and spectacular violence that the colonial sovereign metes out is displaced from the frame, and the pathological violence rooted in Palestinian society (or more exactly culture) is brought to the fore”.⁵⁰⁶ Thus, in order to understand the interrelated dynamics of vulnerability and gendered discourses of protection the ensuing analysis must be situated in the context that the incidents themselves took place within—which is to say, on land that continues to be settler-colonised by the Israeli state. Precarity is a particular political condition which is linked to vulnerability and is also distributed unevenly across the West Bank.⁵⁰⁷ Hammami describes the Palestinians who live in area C of the West Bank as living in an extreme situation of precarity, or ‘hyperprecarity’, because of Palestinians’ daily exposure to state-sanctioned military violence, and, more broadly than that, the logics and mechanisms of settler-colonial elimination.⁵⁰⁸ Zone C, where EAPPI does most of its protective presence work, forms 64% of West Bank land, is under the direct control of the Israeli military, and contains most of Palestinian farmland along with Israeli settlements, and IDF military installations.⁵⁰⁹

As Massad and others have argued, the oPt is a settler-colonial space where sexual violence is not merely a side effect of colonialism, but one where colonialism itself is structured by the logics of sexual violence.⁵¹⁰ In the practice and ideology of settler-colonialism the erasure of indigenous peoples is justified since they are seen as an impure presence which ‘contaminates’ the settler-colonial state. As Andrea Smith argues in the context of the colonization of native peoples in the Americas, because of the links between native bodies and lands in settler-colonial ideology, if native bodies are seen as impure and thus violable it follows that native lands are also “inherently violable”.⁵¹¹ And as Shalhoub-Kevorkian,

⁵⁰⁵ Hammami. ‘Follow the Numbers: Global Governmentality and the Violence against Women Agenda in Occupied Palestine’. 497

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ Hammami draws on Butler’s work on precarity in *Frames of War*

⁵⁰⁸ Hammami, “Precarious Politics: The Activism of “Bodies That Count (aligning with those that don’t) in Palestine’s Colonial Frontier”. 171

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid. 168

⁵¹⁰ Joseph Andoni Massad, *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question: Essays on Zionism and the Palestinians* (London: Routledge, 2006) 32-34; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Ihmoud, and Dahir-Nashif, “Sexual violence, women’s bodies, and Israeli Settler Colonialism”

⁵¹¹ Andrea Smith, ‘Not an Indian Tradition: The Sexual Colonization of Native Peoples’, *Hyapatia* 18, no. 2 (2003): 82

Ihmoud, and Dahir-Nashif explain, in Israeli settler-colonialism, Palestinian land, and Palestinian women's bodies are targeted for invasion and violation. The Palestinian body and Palestinian land are inextricably linked, not only metaphorically but also through practices of rape, killing and theft of land.⁵¹² These structuring logics of sexual violence do not just account for a one-off historical occurrence of violence such as occurred in 1948 when the rape and killing of Palestinian women formed a central part of the Zionist strategy to eliminate Palestinians and Palestine. More than this, the 'ongoing Nakba' continues to be structured by this logic of sexual violence.⁵¹³ As long as hunger for the possession of more land persists within regimes of settler-colonialism, "Native bodies will continue to be depicted as expendable and inherently violable as long as they continue to stand in the way of the theft of Native lands."⁵¹⁴ International accompaniers are present in the oPt in the zones of Palestinian hyperprecarity with the aim of protecting Palestinians from acts of settler-colonial violence, and so any consideration of sexual violence against accompaniers cannot be disentangled from the logics of sexual violence which structure Israeli settler-colonialism, regardless of who the perpetrators are.

1:2 Feeling responsible

It should then be clear that it is precisely because the logic of sexual violence continues to construct the relations between the settler-colonial state and native peoples, that it is impossible to separate out an anti-occupation struggle from an anti-sexual violence struggle. However, in practice, even when struggles are understood in an intersectional manner, it can still be hard to speak out about the one without opening up the potential for harm to the other.⁵¹⁵ This is a particularly pertinent issue for feminists speaking about cross-racial sexual violence more generally. Sometimes situations present themselves in which feminism,

⁵¹² As Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Ihmoud, and Dahir-Nashif write "the Zionist movement's imaginary of conquering and settling the Palestinian body is inseparable from the project of conquering and settling Palestinian land, and erasing indigenous presence" in "Sexual violence, women's bodies, and Israeli Settler Colonialism"

⁵¹³ For example, Rabab Abdulhadi writes of the emergence of orientalist, sexualised, Islamophobic Israeli discourse in during the 2014 attacks on Gaza. For more on this see Sharoni et al., 'Transnational Feminist Solidarity in Times of Crisis'. 659; See also Hammami, 'Follow the Numbers: Global Governmentality and the Violence against Women Agenda in Occupied Palestine'; Kim Jezabel Zinngrebe, 'Reflections on the Silence on Sexual Violence among Palestinian Feminists in Israel', *Feminist Review*, no. 112 (2016): 85–91. See also Julie Peteet 'Male gender and rituals of resistance in the Palestinian Intifada: a cultural politics of violence' Mayy Ghaṣṣūb and Emma Sinclair-Webb, eds., *Imagined Masculinities: Male Identity and Culture in the Modern Middle East* (London: Saqi, 2000)103-126

⁵¹⁴ Smith, 'Not an Indian Tradition: The Sexual Colonization of Native Peoples' 82

⁵¹⁵ See Davis and Barat, *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle* on Palestine and the intersectionality of struggles. 7. Also see Rabab Abdulhadi in Simona Sharoni et al., 'Transnational Feminist Solidarity in Times of Crisis'

imperialism, racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia and sexism appear so irremediably interlinked that it appears impossible to begin to speak of them all at once.⁵¹⁶ Deciding to stay quiet or to minimise issues of sexual violence can be an ethical-political decision, an attempt “to counter the history of racist allegations against men of colour”.⁵¹⁷ And, striking the right balance between speaking transparently and not exaggerating the size of the issue is not easy. In 2010 the right-wing Israeli media got hold of information about a workshop that was being held for Israeli peace activists to discuss issues of sexual violence in the anti-occupation movement. Taking this as evidence that sexual harassment was a common occurrence in joint Israeli-Palestinian protests, the media blamed the left for silencing the issue of sexual harassments which further maligned the anti-occupation struggle in Israel.⁵¹⁸

In an interview with Isabel after her return home, I asked about EAPPI’s training on staying safe in the oPt. She said advice in relation to sexual and gendered violence centred on issues of respect for a different culture around gender norms.⁵¹⁹ Advice was given on what to wear, and what is and isn’t acceptable in Palestinian culture when interacting with someone differently gendered.⁵²⁰ Being respectful of Palestinian requests for visitors to make sensitive

⁵¹⁶ In different contexts many anti-racist, feminist scholars have explored the dilemmas faced when speaking out about cross-racial sexual violence. For example, Julia Garraio offers a transnational feminist response to events in Cologne 2015 when many of the migrants charged with the sexual assault of women at the New Year celebrations were from North African countries. She highlights the issue of pitting feminism against anti-racism in the context of immigration and multiculturalism in Europe; Garraio, ‘Cologne and the (Un)Making of Transnational Approaches to Sexual Violence’, *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 28, no. 2 (1 May 2021) 129-144 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506820938094> ; See also Stefanie C Boulila and Christiane Carri, ‘On Cologne: Gender, Migration and Unacknowledged Racisms in Germany’, *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 24, no. 3 (1 August 2017): 286–93 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506817712447>; Amira Elwakil, ‘Reflections on Intersections: Searching for an Anti-Racist, Pro-Migrant Feminist Response to Sexual Assault Committed by Migrants’, *Kohl: a Journal for Body and gender Research* Vol 3 No1 (2017) 41-45 Last accessed on 24 May 2022 Available at: <https://kohljournal.press/reflections-on-intersections>

⁵¹⁷ *Conflicted Commitments* 131

⁵¹⁸ Deutsch, ‘Feminist Criticism, Occupation and Sexual Harassment’, *AWID*, 10 November 2010, <https://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/feminist-criticism-occupation-and-sexual-harassment> See *Conflicted Commitments* for more commentary on this. In brief, a column had been written in a right wing publication which criticised the workshop, claiming that the peace activists had been betrayed by the left and that humanitarian groups were a cover for “pro-Islamic organisations”; See also Noam Sheizaf “The joint struggle and sexual crimes: a cover up or a smear campaign”, *+972 Magazine* September 25, 2010 <https://www.972mag.com/the-joint-struggle-and-sexual-crimes-a-cover-up-or-a-smear-campaign/>; Hannah Boast, ‘Israeli Peace Activists Told: Ignore Harassment “for Sake of Struggle”’ *Women’s Views on News*, March 19, 2012, <http://www.womensviewsonnews.org/2012/03/israeli-peace-activists-told-ignore-harassment-for-sake-of-struggle/>

⁵¹⁹ Isabel’s memories of the training are supported by my own memories of an EAPPI security training session in the oPt in 2019 and my own earlier participation in the EAPPI programme.

⁵²⁰ There might have been some frustration related to this training on ‘Palestinian culture’ from some Palestinians. Previous to this research project I spoke with a Muslim Palestinian activist who had worked alongside several international accompaniment groups, including EAPPI, for many years. He criticised EAPPI’s

clothing choices is an important part of building successful solidarity relationships and would also apply to accompaniment work.⁵²¹ However, one main piece of advice from EAPPI's cultural awareness and health and safety training had stuck clearly in Isabel's mind many months later. In an interview with Isabel after her return home, I asked about EAPPI's cultural awareness and health and safety training had stuck clearly in Isabel's mind many months later. She said all of the EAPPI staff in the oPt had used the exact same phrase: "the main message that I remember, the real emphasis on 'don't be too nice', that was said so many times in the course of the training, just don't be too nice". She continued:

I suppose volunteers do go over [to Palestine] with...they want to be friendly and make a difference and get to know the culture and get to know people, and they [EAPPI] said that is absolutely great, but this can be misinterpreted sometimes by some of the [Palestinian] people, particularly by the males, because they don't have that culture of, I suppose, males and females just being friends. And so there was a huge emphasis on just don't be too nice.⁵²²

Isabel said it was open to interpretation as to whether this was advice specifically intended to protect female accompaniers from the threat of sexual or gendered harassment in the places they would be living and working. She said: "I suppose it was for both - for males not to be 'too nice' to females as well" but did not dwell on this point.

The fact that EAPPI's Palestinian staff members who run the training are all Christian clearly has an impact on how gender norms in a predominantly Muslim population are represented. In emphasising the 'cultural differences' between accompaniers and 'Palestinians',⁵²³ a whole

training saying it painted much too conservative a picture of gender relations in Palestine and neglected the fact that many Palestinians were in fact quite liberal.

⁵²¹ For example this was something Israeli activists found in the shared space of Palestinian-Israeli protests in Sheik Jarrah, East Jerusalem. Again, in 2010 the issue drew divisions between Israeli feminists as disagreements broke out over how to respond to Palestinian requests that Israeli activists dress appropriately and in respect of the Palestinians who lived in the neighbourhood. Yvonne Deutsch, an Israeli, feminist anti-occupation organiser responded by stating that as guests in Palestinian communities, the responsibility is on non-Palestinian activists to adapt their behaviour and to respect local customs in those communities. Deutsch, 'Feminist Criticism'

⁵²² Telephone interview with Isabel, June 2021

⁵²³ I use inverted commas here to indicate the fact that Palestinians are not a monolithic group with the same culture or attitudes to gender relations. It seems that there might have been some frustration related to this training on 'Palestinian culture' from some Palestinians. Previous to this research project I spoke with a Muslim Palestinian activist who had worked alongside several international accompaniment groups, including EAPPI, for many years. He criticised EAPPI's training saying it painted much too conservative a picture of gender relations in Palestine and neglected the fact that many Palestinians were in fact quite liberal.

minefield of issues is raised in relation to the way the concept of the Other is produced, and the gendered, sexualised, Orientalist and anti-Islamic tropes which are reproduced in the process. There is no ‘one’ essentialised Palestinian view on gender relations which can be said to be entirely distinct from the varied cultures which accompaniers, from a range of cultures and backgrounds, are familiar with, and no ‘one’ Palestinian dress code for men and women. In its very ambiguity, the phrase “just don’t be too nice” is able to conceal all manner of Orientalist, Islamophobic and gendered tropes about the hypersexual Other without having to spell them out.

In Isabel’s opinion EAPPI’s advice to not be too nice encouraged relationships with Palestinians which “maintain some level of professionalism”, but this was something she inferred was not realistic on a programme in which accompaniers are constantly visiting Palestinian homes: “people are very friendly and very welcoming, and you don’t want to be rude do you?”⁵²⁴ In EAPPI, a larger number of accompaniers are female than male, and the number of male Palestinian contacts they meet with far outweighs the number of female Palestinians.⁵²⁵ The use of this ambiguous phrase thus encourages anxiety among a female majority over ‘correct’ behaviour as accompaniers interact with predominantly male Palestinians on a daily basis. Therefore, according to Isabel and some other interviewees, female accompaniers were disproportionately left to feel alone in bearing a responsibility to avoid harm, to manage their appearance and to manage their behaviour. The fact that accompaniers must constantly ‘manage’ their sexual vulnerability in order to avoid harm then means that protective-accompaniment relationships become fraught with anxiety and ambiguity.

However, this is not all that is at stake here. Dwelling further with this theme, I posit that the responsibility given to female accompaniers for protecting themselves from sexual harm becomes inextricably linked with EAPPI’s responsibilities to protect Palestinians from settler-colonial violence. Accompaniers do not only feel responsible for themselves but also for the wider EAPPI programme and its future work in the locality where their placement was based. In situations like the one Isabel’s team-mate experienced, a decision of whether to report or not means considering the impact that reporting would have on the community if the

⁵²⁴ Telephone interview, June 2021

⁵²⁵ Anecdotal evidence backed up by informal conversations with EAPPI management

programme had to withdraw from that area as a result of the incident. Isabel expressed feelings of guilt numerous times while she described the consequences of reporting the attack to EAPPI. While Isabel said she was sure her colleague had made the right decision, several times she described feeling “bad” that in reporting and having to leave the placement early protective presence was withdrawn. A matter of days after their team had left their placement and stopped their duties walking children to school a Palestinian boy had been arrested by Israeli soldiers on the school run; and speaking to team members at that time it was obvious this concerned them, normally they would have been there and they felt their presence might have prevented the arrest.⁵²⁶ An additional consequence was that the team’s Palestinian driver had lost income when the team withdrew, and it was unknown at what point, if ever, accompaniers would go back to work in that community. When I probed to further to understand Isabel’s expressions of feeling ‘bad’ and asked directly whether she felt guilty, Isabel replied: “absolutely, I think we all do, absolutely, hugely,... we were the last team and we closed it [the placement] — *it was us that did this*”. Isabel said both that “I don’t think it was wrong to make the complaint” and that “it probably would have been better to say nothing, but now it is said.”⁵²⁷ Isabel’s mixed feelings and obvious guilt, a year or so after the events themselves are evidence that her team felt it was their actions which had caused unwanted repercussions, despite also saying that the team had left the decision of whether to report or not to the accompanier who had been attacked. According to Isabel, responsibility for the continuation of the programme in that location was felt to be dependent on the all-female team’s decision to report the incident.⁵²⁸

To summarise, both male and female accompaniers are trained to be careful about how they conduct themselves in the oPt, and yet it is female accompaniers who are left feeling the heaviest burden of responsibility for their own safety in respect to risk of sexual violence. And as a result, they are burdened with an unfair share of responsibility for the continuation of the programme, and for EAPPI’s continued ability to protect those they are present to accompany. EAPPI has a duty to protect its volunteers, the programme and, of course, Palestinians. All these three groups are very differently vulnerable, and EAPPI’s responsibility of care towards all these is not the same; these are the responsibilities which

⁵²⁶ FW notes, Jerusalem, October 2019

⁵²⁷ Telephone interview with Isabel, June 2021

⁵²⁸ Isabel was also very clear about the way the team had left the decision whether to report or not with the victim herself, yet it seems, according to Isabel here, that they shared responsibility for her decision.

EAPPI must continually keep in balance, and yet, as my argument develops it will become clear that all three have become problematically conflated.

1:3 Keeping young female companions out

There is one area of the West Bank where EAPPI regularly sends a team but will not send young female companions as part of it, the implication being that these places are more dangerous for younger women but that older women and men would be less at risk there. Companions told me they assumed the reason for this was because of cases of sexual harassment in the area but did not think they had been told this explicitly.⁵²⁹ Additionally it was said that these areas were more rural, and deemed to be characterised by a more conservative form of Islam so locals were unaccustomed to seeing many Western tourists and NGO workers walking in public without head coverings. So, companions deemed more vulnerable than others are moved to other parts of the West Bank, leaving men, and older women —those deemed less sexually vulnerable, to carry out protective presence work in this area.

It could be argued that this is a necessary and pragmatic approach. Women, as a collective, have nearly always had to “deal[s] with its vulnerability to violence” and this is just one way of doing this.⁵³⁰ There are, however, at least two problematic outcomes of this strategy which are relevant to my argument. The first is that in removing younger women whilst deeming older women ‘safe’ enough to work in this area, the issue of companions’ safety has not been solved. EAPPI recently developed stricter rules for the participants placed there after two female companions had experienced gender-based harassment while walking together in the town. Companions are now not to go out of the EAPPI house alone and when they do so the team should be accompanied by their Palestinian EAPPI driver.⁵³¹ When I asked Paula (an companion in her sixties located here shortly before this new rule) she told me she had had an experience where she was verbally and physically harassed by a Palestinian boy whilst out in the town on her own. I asked whether her two male team-mates (also in their sixties) had experienced anything similar, she quickly said no they were very tall men. Her understanding of the incident was that it had occurred because she was a female walking

⁵²⁹ Author’s personal communication with ex-companions from three different countries, July 2021

⁵³⁰ Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (London, UNITED KINGDOM: Taylor & Francis Group, 2004) 231, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/soas-ebooks/detail.action?docID=183001>.

⁵³¹ Interview with Jackie, UK, February 2020; Video call interview with Andrea, February 2020

around without a head covering in an area where the majority of Palestinian women did so.⁵³² Asking teams to only leave the house when accompanied by their Palestinian driver is one approach to seeking to ensure companions' safety and yet, besides the impracticality of it, it reveals a problematic logic. The risk of gender-based violence at whatever point in a continuum of violence is presumed limited to contact with the orientalised, racialised Other, and neglects to consider that the EAPPI team itself might also be a place where companions of any gender or sexuality could be vulnerable to harassment or violence at any point on that continuum (whether verbal or physical). Sharing accommodation and staying close to your team every hour of the day might not feel an entirely safe option for every companion in every team.⁵³³ This shows that companions' gendered vulnerability is planned for and protected against when the potential for risk is located within the Palestinian Other, in particular in a rural area where a more conservative form of Islam is prevalent; but the risks of gender-based/sexual harassment and violence occurring within EAPPI teams are not given the same amount of consideration.⁵³⁴ Whether intentional or not, at play here are racist, Islamophobic, Orientalist tropes which construct so-called Western liberal culture as more progressive and more respectful of women than so-called patriarchal, Islamic, non-Western men.⁵³⁵ Nadjé Al-Ali describes the prevalence of "simplistic and flawed explanations that would peg 'Muslim culture' as the key determinant of Palestinian women's experiences of oppression".⁵³⁶ Such warnings apply equally well to this context also.

A second consequence of not sending young female companions to this part of the West Bank is that the vulnerability of older companions is not fully accounted for. Jackie (in her fifties) told me about an interesting conversation with a Palestinian. Her team had been asked to sleep over at a family's house in a village very close to both a settlement and an outpost. In this village the situation was so bad that the Israeli army agreed to escort Palestinian children to school to protect them from settler violence.

J: So we did stay there one night, had lovely food... and did shepherding in the morning... One of the guys [Palestinian hosts] actually mentioned to us, ...he said: 'no

⁵³² Telephone interview with Paula, June 2021

⁵³³ Ibid.

⁵³⁴ This was an issue Paula brought up in the interview

⁵³⁵ See Inderpal Grewal, 'Outsourcing Patriarchy: feminist encounters transnational mediations and the crime of 'honour killings', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 15, no. 1 (March 2013): 2

⁵³⁶ In Sharoni et al., 'Transnational Feminist Solidarity in Times of Crisis'. 663

offence but we don't really call EAPPI for this sort of thing because everyone is a little bit older and we don't think that they would be able to escape settlers if they came to attack'.

BE: So there was a feeling like team members were often older?

J: Yeah and he said it in a very nice way and he said, 'it is no offence to you, but Operation Dove [an Italian organisation] always send people in their 20's and early 30's and EAPPI well...it is something like 40 to 70' [she laughs].⁵³⁷

While EAPPI has a strict selection process and a physical fitness requirement in place, this Palestinian obviously felt less secure with the older EAPPI accompaniers. In this situation, we see that in replacing younger accompaniers with older accompaniers one vulnerability is replaced with another. Young females are deemed more sexually vulnerable, but older accompaniers are also vulnerable because of their age. Sexual vulnerability is planned for and so 'dealt with' but vulnerabilities related to age which impact on one's ability to offer protection are not considered problematic. Palestinians are very aware of this even though EAPPI seems not to recognise that age impacts on the activists' physical ability to protect. Jackie laughs as she remembers the Palestinian's comment. As well as the social awkwardness of having someone making a reference to one's age, something of the absurdity of EAPPI's accompaniment praxis is revealed in the Palestinian's words. Accompaniers in their fifties, sixties and occasionally even seventies are being sent to 'protect' Palestinians – who may well be very young, fit, strong male individuals, from settlers who, regardless of age, gender and strength, often carry guns. There is a tragic absurdity in the protective accompaniment logic which constructs white bodies, regardless of their age, as powerful enough to protect racialized others because of the different ways bodies are racialised in uneven hierarchies of power.

This failure to take age into account is more understandable when one considers EAPPI's understanding of protective presence. As argued in the previous chapter, EAPPI's discourse tends to disavow the corporeal aspect of protective presence, and thus disavows corporeal vulnerability as part of the protective strategy. Conversely, corporeal vulnerability is central to the concept of protection found in what Gordon and Perugini refer to as humanitarian human shielding:

⁵³⁷ Interview with Jackie, UK, February 2020

...vulnerability itself becomes the means of protection. In other words, the human shield defends a vulnerable body (an animated combatant), an object (an unanimated weapon or military structure), or an area (in some cases a civilian area) that has become part of the military hostilities, but it does so through its own vulnerability. In this sense, the politics of human shielding is fundamentally a politics of vulnerability.⁵³⁸

The phrase ‘protective presence’ strikes quite a different note to the invocation of the body as a shield standing between the victim and the perpetrator of violence. That EAPPI relies more on the ‘fact’ of the accompaniers’ presence than their physical ability to intervene has a significant bearing on the ways in which accompaniers’ corporeal vulnerabilities (whether sexualised, gendered or age related) are thought about in relation to the protective presence role. In the following section, I explore the ways in which EAPPI is driven even further to bypass rather than acknowledge accompaniers’ vulnerabilities in the protective presence role. In a manner that might at first appear to be entirely contradictory to EAPPI’s purposes, it is sometimes hoped that the presence of the accompanier-protector remains entirely ‘unseen’.

2:1 Protective presence - the unseen position

As described in fieldwork snapshot 1, the fact that the Palestinian community leader had made such a frank declaration of need for international protection had stuck with me. When I interviewed Yousef, an ex-EAPPI employee and Palestinian from the West Bank, I asked him about it. Yousef had a history of involvement in non-violent resistance stretching back to the time of the First Intifada of the 1980’s, and I was curious to hear his thoughts on the role of internationals in the struggle. The conversation was wide ranging, but during the interview Yousef brought up the incident which related to Isabel’s team-mate. He was very reluctant to say much whilst the audio recorder was running but nevertheless wanted to raise the issue,

⁵³⁸ Neve Gordon and Nicola Perugini, ‘The Politics of Human Shielding: On the Resignification of Space and the Constitution of Civilians as Shields in Liberal Wars’, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 34, no. 1 (February 2016): 166 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775815607478>; see also Gordon and Perugini, *Human Shields*. 57

linking sexual harassment with the wider question of whether the EAPPI programme was effective or not. He spoke of Isabel's team-mate saying:

...instead of this girl to go[ing] home and advocate about the cause, she will focus on her own thing, and she has the right! No one has the right to harass her, verbally, sexually or anything, this is a big thing that they [accompaniers] suffer and they [EAPPI] are not going to solve it, and I think it is time to evaluate it *honestly*, the programme.⁵³⁹

He also spoke of the Palestinian need for protection:

we are calling for international protection all the time, we need international protection for Palestinians from you [EAPPI] and other allied groups to come here and protect us from the aggression of the soldiers and the settlers, and we appreciate that, we appreciate the pro-justice camp in Israel...who are there also not only to protect, but to observe, to convey, to see, because whenever there is international presence there is mitigation of violence. Probably whatever the name who said that, really appreciates the presence of EAs, but we don't *want* to expect a lot from the EAs, I believe the EA also need our protection, the EA cannot protect us from the soldiers or the settlers anymore.⁵⁴⁰

There is much to unpack in these statements. Yousef speaks of Palestinians' need for protection from violence, Palestinian expectations of accompaniers and their need (and lack of desire) for accompaniers' help, accompaniers' ability to protect Palestinians, and accompaniers' need for protection from Palestinians. One way of looking at the issues he raises is to say that there are three sets of *very unevenly distributed* vulnerabilities here which necessitate different levels of protection: the vulnerability of Palestinians in the face of settler-colonial violence, the vulnerability of accompaniers in the oPt, and the vulnerability of the EAPPI programme itself.⁵⁴¹ Mechanisms for the protection of all three are activated in

⁵³⁹ Interview, November 2019

⁵⁴⁰ Interview, November 2019 (my emphasis)

⁵⁴¹ See previous chapter for more on the need to protect the programme.

different ways, and as alluded to earlier, I posit that it is the interconnection between all three that is one of the problematics that requires untangling.

I begin with the vulnerability of the accompaniers since this is the issue that initiates Yousef's suggestion of the need to reassess the EAPPI programme. Thus far I have focused on risks of sexual and gendered harm to accompaniers, and while this issue allowed an entry point into the issue of protection, it is also only one way accompaniers are vulnerable to violence whilst working in a militarily occupied territory in a settler-colonial state. Inevitably accompaniment work is high risk and safety cannot be guaranteed yet Yousef felt EAPPI's attitude to risk had changed over the years. In a continuation of the conversation as quoted above, I asked whether EAPPI's ability to protect Palestinians had been more effective in the past:

Y: Yes, [He says this emphatically] not anymore. The training now, for good reason, for bad reason, be away

BE: be?

Y: be away...if there is anything [any trouble with soldiers or settlers] – be away, if you want to take a picture, take it from a safe, unseen...

BE: [I interrupt him] you mean EAs' training...?

Y: unseen position...⁵⁴²

This 'unseen position' is an interesting phrase which does not appear to relate to any official change in EAPPI policy, but reflects back to unresolved discussions within EAPPI over the extent to which the accompanier should make themselves and their actions visible to the Israeli state and also to settlers.⁵⁴³ In EAPPI's description of its role it says that when accompaniers are unable to prevent human rights violations from taking place, they are present to monitor and record. However, it is not clear what the line is between observing and protecting, and how and when accompaniers are able to take action rather than merely stand 'being present'. Michael illustrated this dilemma when he talked about an incident which had taken place at a military checkpoint in the West Bank. Some of the British EAPPI co-ordinators were visiting his team one day as they stood monitoring Palestinian farmers pass

⁵⁴² Interview, November 2019

⁵⁴³ Coy, 'Nonpartisanship, Interventionism and Legality in Accompaniment' provides a discussion of these issues in relation to other accompaniment groups such as ISM, CPT and PBI

through a checkpoint to Palestinian land which has been enclosed on the wrong side of the apartheid wall. The British staff were with the team when something not unusual happened: Michael said: “this man [Palestinian] wasn’t allowed through the gate...and we didn’t do anything we just recorded the rejection...”. He added that the EAPPI staff had questioned the team afterwards and asked why they didn’t “go with the man to the soldiers and ask why his permit had been rejected in the hope that your presence would *do something else*”. Michael explained his team’s actions:

...the previous team didn’t talk to the soldiers at all – and that had been partly because they had had a really bad situation where a soldier had come out and threatened them with a gun...And then the security training...before, it was kind of like – “don’t talk to soldiers” essentially.⁵⁴⁴

Similar to Yousef’s notion of the ‘unseen’ position, Michael’s suggestion is that accompaniers had been trained to adopt a position where they were seen but perhaps not always heard while in the oPt. When set against the input of the British programme co-ordinators, it is clear not all EAPPI staff thought about it this way. Yet some did. I had attended some of the training sessions for the newly arrived team, and the Palestinian security officer had downplayed EAPPI’s emphasis on protective presence. He was adamant: “You are there to monitor and record, monitor and record” he repeated again and again. Picking out a particularly well-built looking young man from among the group he stressed the importance of them not trying to play the hero: “we don’t want you to be a target” and “you are not there to save lives”, “Your job is not worth your life”.⁵⁴⁵ As the one responsible for accompaniers’ safety the security officer had a vested interest in not encouraging accompaniers to take risks, yet training which encourages accompaniers to remain unseen or unheard is also an act of withdrawing help from Palestinians. And Yousef believed accompaniers today were less able to help protect Palestinians than they used to be because of this.

The second part of Yousef’s statement about the ‘unseen position’ relates to the idea that the reputation of the programme needs protecting in order for EAPPI to continue operating. The relationship between reporting an incident of sexual violence and EAPPI’s ability to continue

⁵⁴⁴ Video call interview with Michael, March 2020.

⁵⁴⁵ FW notes, Jerusalem, October 2019

providing protective presence in certain areas has already been mentioned. Here Yousef describes another way in which the EAPPI programme is constructed as being in need of protection and relates this to the ‘unseen position’. While Yousef had been working for EAPPI, an incident had occurred which, coincidentally, I had been present at as an accompanier prior to this research project. During the Spring of 2017, Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons staged a mass hunger strike which lasted for 41 days.⁵⁴⁶ Yousef took us to a community in the West Bank to show solidarity with the Palestinian prisoners’ hunger strikes which were ongoing across Israeli prisons. At this event some accompaniers were filmed, and some interviewed for Palestinian TV. This drew strong disapproval from various accompaniers and international EAPPI staff members since it was deemed too visible, too partial and too political an act, despite it being an act of solidarity with non-violent resistance (something EAPPI is present in the oPt to support). Disapproval of the event was partly reflective of a desire for the organisation to keep a low profile in order to maintain access to the West Bank. In essence, rather than be visible in showing solidarity with the families of prisoners, the ‘unseen position’ was thought necessary.

While accompaniers’ safety, and the need to keep EAPPI’s activities low profile are important considerations, there are also repercussions to a strategy which renders accompaniers invisible or inaudible. Sticking to a monitoring stance as advocated by the security officer, not talking to Israeli soldiers, not appearing to be ‘too political’ these are all attempts to protect the accompaniers and the programme, but at what point then does EAPPI cease to be of any help to the Palestinians? The third and certainly gravest set of vulnerabilities is the hyperprecarious state in which Palestinians live. In a way which echoes the way that Michael’s team’s refusal to join Abu Amir on the ground in chapter 6, here taking the unseen/unheard position also constitutes a withdrawal of support and protection from those who need it most. Yousef’s words challenge EAPPI’s efforts to remain unseen, if this means Palestinians are not being protected, then, to repeat words from the conversation quoted above, as Yousef says: “I think it is time to evaluate it *honestly*, the programme.”

2:2 Seeking a more interdependent relationship

⁵⁴⁶ Approximately 800 prisoners took part, mainly to demand better visitation rights. See Peter Beaumont, “Mass Palestinian hunger strike in Israeli jails ends after visitation deal” *The Guardian*, May 27, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/27/mass-palestinian-hunger-strike-israel-ends>

Paying attention to what Yousef is calling for, leads me down two different but connected avenues of thought. Firstly, I see his intervention is a critique of EAPPI's hierarchical rather than relational concept of protection, "*Who is protecting the other*, this is the question" he says.⁵⁴⁷ In a piece on ISM activists' relationship to their white privilege, Mica Pollock notes how the term 'direct action' was deemed preferable to 'protection', but this linguistic switch does not mean that the idea of paternalistic protection has been dismantled. According to Pollock, "one seasoned Boston activist argued at a meeting: "I don't want to just do protection. Many people go over there with no knowledge of the original purpose to foster and protect Palestinian activism. We're not chaining ourselves to trees. Palestinians aren't trees, they're people and they have activity."⁵⁴⁸ Here, rather than seeking to protect Palestinians, Palestinian activism becomes the object of ISM's protection, but the same paternalistic protectionist attitude is maintained. I would argue that a renegotiation of the power dynamics in relation to the issue of protection demands much more than just an avoidance of the idea of white bodies protecting vulnerable Palestinians and their activism.

When accompaniers are tasked with protecting Palestinians, a masculinist, colonialist logic of protection creates a paternalistic relationship between protectors and protected. This masculinist form of protection is rooted in 'benevolent' imperial ideas of superiority and inferiority inherent in the 'civilising mission' and is reproduced in various examples of Western state humanitarian interventions into Muslim, countries in the global south supposedly on behalf of women's rights.⁵⁴⁹ Butler relates the issues inherent in modes of paternalistic protection to the concept of vulnerability, explaining the problematics of one group of people being charged with the protection of another group labelled as vulnerable. In designating the role of protection to one group, those actors are simultaneously invested with "the power to preserve life" and "divested of vulnerability".⁵⁵⁰ The other group whose lives are in danger and in need of protection are constituted as vulnerable and feminised in their need for masculine protection. At present, as this chapter has explained, in EAPPI's praxis the accompaniers' vulnerability is constantly being managed by EAPPI: it is not totally ignored and yet it is not fully accepted or mobilised. It is as if as much as possible is done to

⁵⁴⁷ Interview, November 2019

⁵⁴⁸ Pollock, 'Using and Disputing Privilege'. 241

⁵⁴⁹ Iris Marion Young, 'The Logic of Masculinist Protection: Reflections on the Current Security State', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 29, no. 1 (2003)

⁵⁵⁰ Butler, *The Force of Nonviolence*. 70-71

keep vulnerability at bay without EAPPI's protection mechanisms (whether taking the unseen position or banning young females from certain areas) encroaching too far and too entirely on companions ability to protect Palestinians. What Yousef is pointing out in suggesting that EAPPI reconsider its protective presence strategy is that these imaginary limits have already been surpassed. In addition, this management of vulnerability maintains a masculinised, independent type of protection relationship in place and in doing so Palestinians become constituted only by their need. As Iris Marion Young argues "In this patriarchal logic, the role of the masculine protector puts those protected, paradigmatically women and children, in a subordinate position of dependence and obedience".⁵⁵¹ Despite Palestinian needs for protection, that accompaniment creates a childlike dependency in Palestinians is deeply problematic and certainly is one among many factors which negatively impacts on Palestinian constructions of masculinity.⁵⁵² According to Butler, this hierarchical divide between the masculine protector and the feminised vulnerable subject "fortifies a paternalistic form of power at the very moment in which reciprocal social obligations are most urgently required".⁵⁵³

An alternative, feminist account of protection "exposes the disavowed dependency at the heart of the masculinist idea of the body."⁵⁵⁴ This chapter has highlighted occasions in which the companioner became the victim of sexual or gendered harassment. In these moments the 'protector' found themselves vulnerable and in need of protection. I suggest that, as unwanted as such moments are, by shining a spotlight on them, the fiction of independent masculinised protector subject is revealed. This revelation of the need for interdependency and reciprocity between companioner and accompanied correlates closely to a point that Yousef made:

I believe it is mutuality there, and are we [Palestinians] doing a good job in protecting the EAs? From harassment, from misuse by some people? As well as are the EAs, and I believe they are, most— all of them — are they respecting the culture? Not coming to judge, and not to bad mouth the local community?⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵¹ Iris Marion Young, 'The Logic of Masculinist Protection' 2

⁵⁵² For more on this issue in the context of the First Intifada see Julie Peteet 'Male gender and rituals of resistance in the Palestinian Intifada: a cultural politics of violence'

⁵⁵³ Butler, *The Force of Nonviolence*. 71

⁵⁵⁴ "Rethinking vulnerability and resistance" in Butler et al. eds *Vulnerability in Resistance*: 21

⁵⁵⁵ Interview, November 2019

I am not sure I know exactly what a more reciprocal, interdependent relationship between Palestinians and accompaniers would look like in this context. One example of accompaniers relying on a closer sense of dependency on the protection of Palestinians was given by Jackie who said she had experienced gendered/sexualised physical harassment in town one day. Her response had been to ask for help from her team's Palestinian driver who went and found and talked to the boy himself.⁵⁵⁶ However, this is not advice that EAPPI would offer its accompaniers. Depending more closely on the Palestinian community for protection from sexual harassment could also be problematic. Would this be an invitation to further entrench a paternalistic protection of women? Or would a deeper integration of accompanier teams into the life of Palestinian communities, and a greater sense of interdependency enable a more relationally based form of protection? One related issue which requires further investigation is accompaniers' accounts of dependency on Palestinian contacts to ensure their safety in new communities where EAPPI has just begun work and where relationships of trust are yet to be established.⁵⁵⁷ Yet, while accompaniers' dependency on Palestinians, and in particular on their drivers, is certainly appreciated by nearly all the accompaniers I spoke with, it is a fact that goes largely unacknowledged in public presentations and writings where EAPPI's paternalistic protective role is emphasised.⁵⁵⁸

The second aspect of Yousef's intervention that I conclude this chapter with provokes a deeper questioning of EAPPI's role in the oPt. Given that so much effort goes into protecting accompaniers and the programme, is EAPPI still able to provide Palestinians with protection? And how far should accompaniers be ready to risk their own safety in order to provide protective presence? After speaking about his frustration with accompaniers hiding in the unseen position, Yousef continued by emphasising the fact that he also did not want accompaniers to take unnecessary risks. Yousef was clear about what he felt Palestinians wanted and did not want from internationals; and he was not simply saying that EAPPI should turn to tactics more similar to humanitarian human shielding:

⁵⁵⁶ Telephone interview with Jackie, June 2020

⁵⁵⁷ Telephone interview with Anna, February 2020

⁵⁵⁸ Based on an analysis of EAPPI blogs and visits to EAPPI advocacy presentations. In interviews accompaniers were very appreciative of the role their Palestinian taxi drivers play as fixers, translators, security advisors, friends and more.

I don't want any EA to be a cannon fodder, I don't want them to risk their lives for me, I appreciate their presence, I appreciate their empowerment, I appreciate their support, but I also don't want to ask them to do the job that I should do.⁵⁵⁹

Whilst on the one hand he is clear that Palestinians need international protection, he also said “we don't want to expect a lot from the EAs”. Here a clear demarcation between the role of international solidarity and the Palestinian owned struggle is being drawn up. Just like the EAPPI security officer said when he advised accompaniers not to risk their lives or play the hero, Yousef suggests there are limits to what is to be expected of internationals. First and foremost, the Palestinian struggle for liberation lies primarily with Palestinians and there are tasks which are not for internationals to do. The limits Yousef is placing on accompaniers' ability to help presents a challenge to the whole concept of accompaniment as risk taking acts of solidarity that was discussed in the previous chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted some ways that EAPPI disavows accompaniers' vulnerabilities in its protective strategy, and given what has been noted about Palestinians' ongoing need for protection, it might seem obvious to finish simply by advocating for a more radical vulnerability-based form of solidarity.⁵⁶⁰ But this kind of risk-taking solidarity work is not what Yousef was calling for, he suggests that EAPPI's support and empowerment is appreciated, but he didn't want to expect a lot from internationals. He wanted to see a re-evaluation of the programme so that EAPPI would not need to be constantly weighing up their actions against the risk of being “kicked out [of the oPt], without being afraid that Israel will accuse you of being anti-Semitic or pro-BDS.”⁵⁶¹

Having explored the way gendered discourses of corporeal vulnerability and protection operate within EAPPI there are some things I can be more certain about than others as I come to conclude. At present EAPPI's praxis remains wedded to a masculine form of protection.

⁵⁵⁹ Interview, November 2019

⁵⁶⁰ See Teodora Todorova, ‘Vulnerability as a Politics of Decolonial Solidarity: The Case of the Anarchists Against the Wall’, *Identities* 27, no. 3 (3 May 2020): 321–38, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2019.1647663>. for more discussion of the strategic mobilisation of vulnerability in the Israeli group AATW. Todorova notes that the uneven distribution of vulnerability in this kind of resistance means the strategy remains problematic since not everyone taking part in this resistance work experiences vulnerability in the same way.

⁵⁶¹ Interview with Yousef, November 2019

As Ulrika Dhal says, “vulnerability is predominantly understood as feminising and subsequently as negative, scary, shameful and, above all, something to be avoided and protected against.”⁵⁶² This chapter has shown that just as the feminised and feminising vulnerability of accompaniers is suppressed in certain parts of EAPPI’s praxis, so too is a certain type of accompaniment support which relies on a greater sense of mutual dependency between accompanier and accompanied. Therefore, I agree with Yousef that a renegotiation of the paternalistic, protectionist power dynamics between accompanier and accompanied is needed. On the other hand, there is much I remain uncertain of. As Yousef in his comments about the unseen position, and the Palestinian man who spoke to Jackie about the need for younger accompaniers made clear, the measures EAPPI has to put in place in order to try and suppress the vulnerability of both accompaniers and the EAPPI programme has often rendered their ability to protect Palestinians less than effective. And, as discussed in chapter 5, it is becoming increasingly difficult for international NGOs to enter and remain working in the oPt. But, conflating the protection of Palestinians with the protection of the EAPPI programme diverts attention away from an honest reassessment of whether accompaniment and protective presence is effective or not. And EAPPI’s effectiveness was not Yousef’s only concern. I have spent the preceding chapters arguing that transnational accompaniment organisations should move away from humanitarian notions of support and should transition to a form of intervention that is more relational, less impartial, takes more responsibility for histories of imperialism, interrogates its reproduction of colonial logics and is more willing to embrace Palestinian led action. What then do I do with the limits Yousef seems to be placing on the extent to which accompaniers should take risks, and involve themselves in a struggle that is not theirs? His words certainly raise questions concerning the Palestinian desire for international accompaniers to fully participate with Palestinians in the ‘shared struggle’. I will return to consider this question in the following concluding chapter.

⁵⁶² Dahl, Ulrika. ‘Femmebodiment: Notes on Queer Feminine Shapes of Vulnerability’. *Feminist Theory* 18, no. 1 (1 April 2017) 41

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

Michael told a story, which I retold in chapter 6, about a day when he and his team had been accompanying Abu Amir when he was working on his farmland, and a situation had arisen when settlers approached, and Israeli soldiers arrived and told them all to leave. The context in which Michael chose to tell me this story was a time of reflecting together on how effective he thought protective accompaniment actually was:

We— I think, I— was super critical the whole time of what our role was there in different scenarios. And I kept analysing things and breaking it down and kind of critiquing it. I think that went more towards being cynical, and I was just thinking this is ridiculous because I do think there were times when our role of protective presence was working as such. Our presence wasn't just there as an innocent bystander...I think particularly at gates in the morning.⁵⁶³ Like, I did feel like if we weren't there things might have been different....I don't think we would have stopped some [Palestinian] guy, you know, if someone didn't have a permit— I don't think our presence was going to allow him to get in to the seam zone or something, but maybe our presence affected the mood of the soldiers.⁵⁶⁴

I begin this final chapter with this conversation with Michael in order to highlight the importance of critique and ongoing reflection on accompaniment as a conversation between the scholarship and the practice: that is to say between academia and those involved in accompaniment: both accompaniers but also importantly, the accompanied. As explained at the outset, one of the limitations of this project is that I was unable to uncover a wide range of Palestinian perspectives on accompaniment. However, I was given access to hear detailed accounts of how a range of accompaniers from a variety of countries experienced the EAPPI programme, and what it was that made them decide to become an accompanier. Like Michael, many of those I interviewed conveyed a blend of critique, hopeful optimism, cynicism and thoughtful reflection when talking about the impact of their work. In fact, many

⁵⁶³ He is referencing the agricultural gate checkpoints here which Palestinians must have a permit to pass through in order to reach the seam zone. This is an area of mostly agricultural land is Palestinian, which is to say it is on the Palestinian side of the green line, but when the illegal Israeli separation wall was built Palestinian access to this land was blocked.

⁵⁶⁴ Interview, November 2019

of the project participants wanted to be interviewed to discuss their work as an accompanier because of the questions the experience raised for them, and because the impact of the accompaniment role *is* hard to judge. The difficulty of knowing what impact accompaniment actually does is why I think accompaniers so often return to the phrase “if we weren’t there, things *might* have been different”, with all the blind faith and lack of ability to know that is contained within that word ‘might’.

In light of these difficulties of judging the impact of accompaniment this project has not tackled the question of efficacy directly. Instead, with an acknowledgement of the importance of critique, the main premise on which this project has been built is the idea that accompaniment work must both acknowledge, and work at dismantling hierarchies of power rooted in the structures of imperialism and settler-colonialism, if it really us to help what EAPPI describes as a struggle to end the occupation—and what others name as an anti-colonial struggle. Methodologically, this thesis interweaves political and critical theory with ethnographic and archival work, and this enables me to bring a theoretically informed, but grounded and historicised perspective to bear on accompaniment as an important empirical issue. In working with the aforesaid premise, and in using this methodological approach, this thesis has made a number of significant contributions to the body of literature on accompaniment praxis. Firstly, I offer a thick, grounded description of the way one particular accompaniment organisation operates in one particular context, thus bring a greater depth of critique to studies of accompaniment which have often previously been conducted in relation to a range of organisations, and often also in multiple different contexts. Secondly, in situating accompaniment in the oPt in relation to the legacies of British imperial history this study brings a new perspective on accompaniment’s implication in contemporary imperialism and historic colonialism in Palestine.⁵⁶⁵ In gathering materials from several differently located and differently temporalized field sites, that is, through combining archival work with the ground level study of EAPPI, I was able to draw connections between British Mandate era Christian missions and peace and reconciliation work and contemporary human rights accompaniment praxis in Palestine. This enabled me to highlight the imperial dispositions and colonial logics which continue to animate accompaniment praxis in the oPt. Finally, a postcolonial feminist theoretical framework enabled me to account for the ways race, class,

⁵⁶⁵ See for example Stamatopoulou-Robbins, ‘The Joys and Dangers of Solidarity in Palestine’; Pollock, ‘Using and Disputing Privilege’.

gender, age and histories of imperialism interlock in and through the accompanier-subject, thus enabling me to critique accompaniment through a critique of both liberal and colonial framings and conceptions of selfhood. Thus, this project has built on and significantly extended studies carried out by Koopman and Mahrouse, whose work began to explore the relationship between liberal ideological framings and accompaniment praxis.⁵⁶⁶

In this chapter I summarise the critique of accompaniment that this thesis has presented by explaining the various limits that liberal and colonial discourses and ideologies of selfhood have been shown to place on accompaniment praxis. Secondly, I reflect on the theoretical framing used in this project and indicate a couple of opportunities which remain open for further research. Thirdly, I reflect on the relationship between accompaniment and praxis and the specific context of the oPt in which this study has been based. This enables me to bring everything together to explain the overall argument this thesis is presenting. And, finally, this chapter considers some of the practical outcomes of this research project. I reflect on the question of what alternative forms of accompaniment intervention would be possible given the particular difficulties of the Palestine context, and, drawing on the findings from this thesis, present two particular areas of EAPPI's praxis that I believe accompaniment organisations in the oPt should pay particular attention to.

1: The limitations of EAPPI's accompaniment praxis

In order to conduct my critique of accompaniment in the oPt the approach I took was to shed light on what a less colonial, less paternalistic version of accompaniment might look like through learning about accompaniments' current limits. Throughout the thesis I highlighted different ways in which discourses reliant on the notion of a universal, white, liberal Subject shaped accompaniment praxis; and illustrated a range of ways in which colonial, Orientalist, racist and gendered logics are reproduced in certain forms of accompaniment work. Here, I summarise some of these ways and detail the links I drew between the liberal and colonial discourses and ideologies of selfhood, and the forms of intervention, or ways of being, which were then restricted or suppressed.

⁵⁶⁶ Koopman, 'Imperialism Within: Can the Master's Tools Bring Down Empire?'; Mahrouse, *Conflicted Commitments*.

Chapter 3 showed how EAPPI, as a collection of individual accompaniers understands its responsibility to intervene in the situation in the oPt and the colonial logics upon which this sense of responsibility rested. The chapter showed that colonial roots of this morally autonomous, humanitarian conception of responsibility could be found in the Quaker Mandate era discourse of the moral watchman, and which echoed the paternalistic, so-called ‘sacred’ ‘moral’ sense of responsibility which undergirded the League of Nations Mandates version of imperialism. The chapter demonstrated that the language of the Universal human and a conception of self as abstract, apolitical and individualised led to this depoliticised understanding of a responsibility, and that this obscured the imperially-inflected power differentials between accompaniers and accompanied. This was argued to be an ethically unsound basis on which to build a transnational accompaniment practice. In chapter 4 I shed light on liberal discourses of the disembodied, objective and ahistorical self and, showed how, along with EAPPI’s framing of itself as an anti-occupation rather than anti-colonial organisation, these discourses and paradigms limit British accompaniers’ willingness and ability to see themselves as implicated subjects. This failure to reckon with implication in historic and consequently ongoing injustice in Palestine spoke, I suggested, of a failure to properly listen to Palestinian experiences of life under successive occupying powers. If accompaniment organisations are not predisposed towards listening carefully and openly to Palestinians on this issue, then it follows that the potential for a more Palestinian led form of intervention is also limited; an idea which I returned to discuss in chapter 6. Chapter 5 explored the impact of EAPPI self-fashioning itself as ‘balanced’ towards what is seen as ‘both sides’ of the conflict and linked this to the (post)colonial discourse of the moderate subject found in the archives. I argued that these self-fashioning practices led to a form of intervention which inadvertently had a negative impact on the reputation of Palestinians more generally, and specifically on Palestinian NGOs under attack from the Israeli regime, and so equated to a failure to challenge settler-colonial logics. Chapter 6 examined the impact of purportedly impartial nature of the liberal self as well as the impact of discourses of disembodiment on accompaniment practices in the oPt. I argued that what is perceived of by accompaniers as an apolitical, pro-human rights but impartial form of intervention actually equated to withdrawal of support for Palestinian-led non-violent action and a more relational form of solidarity. Lastly, chapter 7 showed how gendered discourses of protection which relied on an autonomous rather than independent notion of selfhood, suppressed understandings of accompaniers’ vulnerability and also limited the potential for a less

paternalistic praxis of protective presence reliant on mutual sense of dependency between accompanier and accompanied.

In highlighting the above areas of limitations, some of the ways in which accompaniment equates to a withdrawal of support for Palestinians have also been made evident, in spite of what might be EAPPI's intentions. And, so, in drawing up this summary I return to the argument made in chapter 1 which located EAPPI and accompaniment praxis within what Linda Tabar described as an ideological shift in the transnational solidarity movement since the early 2000's. This saw a move away from solidarity as an anti-colonial expression of political commitment to a united struggle for liberation, and towards a more depoliticised, liberal, form of intervention which emphasised individualised acts of witnessing and the monitoring of human rights abuses.⁵⁶⁷ When seeing EAPPI as one organisation among many forming part of this shift in the practices of solidarity, I argue that my critique of accompaniment is relevant not only to EAPPI itself, but can also be applied more generally to other transnational accompaniment organisations working in Palestine, and which embody this change in the expression of solidarity activism.

2: Opportunities for further research

Before moving on to draw everything together to highlight the overall argument this thesis making, I want to briefly reflect on the choice I made to make liberal conceptions of self one of the main frames through which I analysed my findings. In choosing this theoretical framing I realise that I have not then paid as much attention to other related but different discourses and ideologies. And so, there are a couple of areas which present themselves as opportunities for further research and which might in the future add to the contributions made by this study. I have already shown some of the ways EAPPI's ideological stance is rooted in discourses which belong to a much longer, broader history of colonial era Christian missions and pacifist interventions into the Palestine question. And, in doing so, I suggested that some entrenched ideas about 'who we are' as human rights activists are imperial dispositions which linger from the time of British imperial intervention in Palestine and are rooted in the colonial logics of the Christian 'civilising mission'. However, the precise relationship— and perhaps

⁵⁶⁷ See Tabar, 'From Third World Internationalism to "the Internationals"'; Tabar, 'Disrupting Development, Reclaiming Solidarity'.

difference between— Christian and liberal ontologies of selfhood, and particularly Christian framings of a ‘mission’ to intervene is an area which could be expanded upon. On the one hand there is scope for more detailed investigations into how EAPPI as an organisation, despite its welcome of accompaniers from a range of secular/religious backgrounds, is shaped by some specifically Christian ontologies of selfhood. On the other hand, in addition to further investigations into the history of WCC’s humanitarian work in Palestine, future research projects might be oriented around the study of a wider range of archival materials which relate to a wider range of Mandate or pre-Mandate era humanitarian Christian mission organisations.

In addition to further investigation into Christian ideological framings, it would also be fruitful to explore more precisely the impact of neoliberalism. As briefly touched on in chapter 3, many of the younger accompaniers arrive at EAPPI hoping to develop a career in humanitarianism or overseas conflict related work. This is a very different context to that of those participating in the Palestine transnational solidarity movements of the 1960’s, for one thing EAPPI participants were born in the age of an already booming transnational human rights and humanitarian aid industry. One example where discourses attesting to the NGOisation of EAPPI’s work was discernible was discussed in chapter 7 when the Palestinian security officer advised accompaniers not to take too many risks since “the job was not worth their life”. Referring to EAPPI as a job is an interesting framing—among accompaniers from a range of countries there is a wide difference in the variety of ways that the programme is funded and volunteers recruited. Some receive payment to do EAPPI while others must fundraise thousands of pounds for the privilege; a deeper engagement with this theme might add another important dimension to the study.

3: Accompaniment and the importance of context

Returning now to consider the arguments made in section 1 it is important to remember the methodological fact that they were formed as a result of an in-depth study of one particular accompaniment organisation which operated in a very particular context. As has been shown at various points in this thesis, it is more than evident that the Israeli settler-colonial regime (along with its supporters) are able to dictate the terms on which the outside world engages

with the Palestinian cause.⁵⁶⁸ At the time of writing this conclusion there have been reports that the Israeli military has raided the offices of seven Palestinian human rights and humanitarian NGOs in the oPt. Six of these were the groups previously criminalised as ‘terrorist’ organisations by Israel in October 2021, as was explained in chapter 5. Included in the seven is one of the foremost Palestinian human rights organisations, Al-Haq, and the Union of Palestinian Women’s Committees. In the raids property was destroyed, equipment confiscated and some of the doors of offices were welded shut, thus literally closing down the space in which the struggle for Palestinian rights can be conducted. It is clear that the settler-colonisation of the very small space in which Palestinian human rights and civil society groups attempt to exist continues unabated and worsens.⁵⁶⁹ Whilst I do not wish to equate the targeting of international civil society organisations with attempts to eliminate the Palestinian struggle in all its forms, it is true to say that those who offer support to that struggle also place themselves in the path of the same logics of elimination. This theme has been present in this study both in terms of the content of what was written about and the way fieldwork in the oPt was not permitted as a result of my own involvement with EAPPI. Thus, it is impossible to ignore the fact that the context in which EAPPI seeks to work is, in addition to the impact of liberal discourse and framings, a major factor which forecloses and shapes certain forms of intervention and certain ways of being as accompaniers.

In the UK and elsewhere accompaniers talked about wishing to avoid appearing ‘too political’ when trying to build networks and arrange to give presentations about their experiences in the oPt. They emphasised their role as being humanitarian rather than political in nature in order to be invited to speak at events, and because of fears of a loss of reputation if EAPPI was seen to be ‘too political’ or appeared ‘too pro-Palestinian’. Whilst in the oPt accompaniers were said to frequently adopt an ‘unseen’ position to remain low profile in the hope this would enable EAPPI to continue being able to access the oPt, hoping that even from this unseen position their presence would still offer protection to Palestinians and enable them to advocate for Palestinian human rights back home. I would suggest it is becoming

⁵⁶⁸ In May 2022 a new set of rules were introduced complicating the rules of entry and residence in the West Bank for foreign nationals. The new rules will make it even more difficult for those travelling to the West Bank and wanting to reunite with Palestinian family members, do volunteer work, or teach or study at Palestinian universities in the West Bank. See “New Israeli rules on foreigners visiting West Bank stir outrage” *Al Jazeera News*, April 27 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/27/new-israeli-rules-on-foreigners-visiting-west-bank-stir-outrage>

⁵⁶⁹ “Not going anywhere, the Palestinian NGOs shut down by Israel” *Al-Jazeera News* August 19, 2022 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/8/19/what-are-the-palestinian-ngos-that-israel-shut-down>

more and more evident that accompaniment, as the Palestinian teacher said of EAPPI's presence in a quote in chapter 1, now constitutes only a very "slight hope" for Palestinians.

This, then, brings me to the overall point I wish to make. As a contribution to postcolonial feminist scholarship which has such a strong tradition of critiquing the liberal, colonial subject, this thesis has shown the ways in which liberal and colonial ideologies and discourses shape and limit much of EAPPI's praxis. It has demonstrated the ways in which these discourses lead to paternalistic forms of accompaniment which continue to reproduce colonial logics and hierarchies of power, and which often result in a withdrawal of support from Palestinians. In offering this critique of accompaniment's current limits, this thesis then calls for accompaniment as a more interdependent, more politically engaged, relational, fully embodied, Palestinian-led form of intervention, which brings accompaniers to the oPt with a collective sense of responsibility for past and present injustices. And yet, this being said, ascribing accompaniment's limits solely to the impact of liberal and colonial discourse is not the full story of why accompaniment organisations operate in the way they do in the oPt. It is evident that transnational attempts to fight for Palestinian human rights are significantly constrained by the same political project against which organisations themselves struggle. When examining accompaniment in the oPt context, it is impossible to ignore the fact that it is the settler-colonial regime in which and against which EAPPI seeks to work that also shapes and limits accompaniment's potential: because it seeks to shut down the space for Palestinian resistance it also seeks to deter anyone else acting in support of Palestinians, and that is regardless of whether an organisation calls itself pro-human rights or pro-Palestinian. This thesis has shown that the accompanier-subject constituted by EAPPI's praxis emerged both through colonial ideologies, and in response to the practices of the contemporary Israeli settler-colonialism state. Thus, when seeking to understand the limits of accompaniment, and beyond that, when working towards less colonial, less paternalistic forms of accompaniment, I propose that it is necessary to understand the complexities of both liberal ideological framings *and* the politics of settler colonial context, the way these two factors intersect, and then in combination impact on accompaniment praxis.

4: A new form of accompaniment? A new way of being and doing?

This study has offered a critique of EAPPI's current accompaniment praxis but whilst making this critique it has also presented a vision for alternative ways of doing accompaniment. In considering what alternative forms of intervention might be possible I have been led by my

empirical findings and the literature, and where possible I have attended to the Palestinian voices in both those sets of material. Therefore, this final section summarises the alternatives I have argued for and offers some practical suggestions as points for future consideration by accompaniment organisations like EAPPI.

Interpellation has been a concept which has arisen in several areas in the thesis, for example at the outset in chapter 2 I discussed moments in my own journey reckoning with implication in the current settler-colonial regime: my encounter with Palestinians in the oPt in 2017, reading my great-grandfather's diary and finding Margret Emmott's map. I suggested that these were all moments where I was being interpellated as an implicated subject. Later in Chapter 4 I introduced Althusser's concept of interpellation through the Balfour Conversations, and in other places, although not strictly examples of Althusserian interpellation, I homed in other types of invitations and requests being made to EAPPI by Palestinians. I suggest these were calls to a different way of being and doing in accompaniment. Firstly, the Balfour Conversations were a call for accompaniers to reckon with their implication in historic British colonialism in Palestine, and by extension, the current settler-colonial reality. This led to my proposal that EAPPI should listen more attentively to the Palestinian perspective, something which would impact on many areas of accompaniment praxis. I also proposed that EAPPI should respond to the Palestinian call to friendship and a more participatory form of accompaniment. This would mean adopting a less impartial, more relational practice which would also entail a greater readiness to take risk as part of joining in with a Palestinian led struggle. The image of the accompanier sitting down in the field with the Palestinian farmer and family was an image which captured the sense of accompaniment as an embodied act of solidarity—accompaniment as 'being with' even when a political stance was demanded, rather than moving away to stand at a distance, both literally and ideologically. Lastly, attending to Yousef's comments, I argued that EAPPI should pay attention to the request for a more reciprocal, interdependent type of accompaniment relationship. Instead of operating out of a masculine conceptualisation of paternalistic protection it was recommended that EAPPI does more to acknowledge their dependency on the Palestinian community for protection as well as better allowing for the gendered and age-related vulnerabilities of the accompaniers.

These invitations can be seen as expressions of Palestinians' desire to shape and direct their own struggle of resistance to settler-colonialism and the ongoing legacies of historic British

imperialism. When Palestinians addressed EAPPI from this place of resistance, and invited companions to join them in the struggle, it issued a challenge to EAPPI's very sense of self as well as inviting it to make changes to the accompaniment role. It interpellated an implicated, politically responsible, partial subject. It invited companions into a relational, interdependent position alongside Palestinians in an active struggle. It proposed a rethinking of the roles that internationals play in the 'shared' struggle. It demanded work to be done towards the dismantling of the hierarchical, racialised and gendered power relations that currently structure the protector-protected, companioner-accompanied relationship: calls to a different way of being as well as a different way of doing which shook much that was previously imagined to be settled in the benevolent, liberal, human rights activist imaginary.

But, having seen in chapter 4 that interpellation often fails as well as it succeeds, what then, do these calls do? Are these new ways of being and doing possible? Or, as suggested above, does the settler-colonial regime itself place impossible limits on the possibility for a more radical kind of solidarity/accompaniment work? Can accompaniment organisations continue to find new ways to circumvent the limits imposed by the settler-colonial context or is it possible that transnational civil society is just not equipped to withstand the Zionist regime's assaults and attempts to eradicate the Palestinian struggle?⁵⁷⁰ These are all questions which raise areas for further research, and yet while this project might not have provided the evidence needed to answer these questions, it does allow me to offer a couple of practical suggestions.

The first point I want to make concerns the framings that accompaniment organisations use. In an environment which is becoming more, not less, hostile to those speaking up for Palestinian rights, I suggest that if EAPPI was to simply break free from the liberal fishbowl (borrowing Ratna Kapur's image)⁵⁷¹ and chose to discard a human rights framing altogether, it would need to find other ways to strengthen its voice for its message to be heard. However, it might not be a case of having to choose to either work with a human rights framing, or not. As described by Welchman, Zambelli and Salih, the Palestinian Youth Movement (which is active in both Palestine and worldwide) critique the human rights paradigm but also realise

⁵⁷⁰ Teodora Todorova suggests this in *Decolonial Solidarity in Palestine-Israel: Settler Colonialism and Resistance from within* London: Zed Books., 2021. 12

⁵⁷¹ Ratna Kapur, *Gender, Alterity and Human Rights: Freedom in a Fishbowl*, Elgar Studies in Legal Theory. (Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2018)

the pragmatics of adopting it as one framing amongst a plurality of others.⁵⁷² Perhaps this is something human rights accompaniment organisations could learn from, and which might lead them to consider using other framings too. At several points in this thesis I have noted EAPPI's refusal to use the terminology of settler-colonialism when describing the situation in Palestine. In chapter 1 I showed how the WCC framed their work in Palestine since 1948 as a humanitarian, spiritual intervention which was concerted not intended to be political. In chapter 3 I explored the Mandate era religious sense of responsibility to intervene which rested on a depoliticised, moral understanding of one's duties to do good and how this was similar to EAPPI's depoliticised, humanitarian desire to make a difference, invoking the notion of a shared humanity. I suggested that contemporary accompaniment in the oPt needed to be based on something very different: a conceptualisation of responsibility to intervene because injustice is something we are accountable for on the basis of participation in the structures and histories that reproduce it (and not simply because we are citizens of a particular country). This then also required an understanding of the present situation in Palestine and Israel as one of structural violence, structural injustice, and structural settler-colonialism. In chapter 4 I linked EAPPI's refusal to use a settler-colonial framing in place of an anti-occupation one to accompaniers' difficulty in navigating the idea of implication in historic colonial injustice. As pointed out, naming oneself as an anti-occupation *rather than* anti-colonial organisation means it is harder for accompaniers and the organisation itself to recognise the colonial roots of the current settler-colonial regime.

If EAPPI were to adopt a settler-colonial framework several things would become possible. It would enable a movement away from a narrative of two equal sides and of a focus on conflict resolution and dialogue between the sides rather than seeking first and foremost to dismantle the structures of oppression and violence.⁵⁷³ This was something which my turn to the Quaker archives allowed me to trace the roots of, and which helped shed light on the problematics of EAPPI's 'balanced approach'. Furthermore, rather than reproducing a narrative of a never-ending two-sided conflict, use of the settler-colonial analytic enables a future oriented vision. This vision is one that works towards more radical ends, demanding not only that which

⁵⁷² Lynn Welchman, Elena Zambelli, and Ruba Salih, 'Rethinking Justice beyond Human Rights. Anti-Colonialism and Intersectionality in the Politics of the Palestinian Youth Movement', *Mediterranean Politics* 26, no. 3 (27 May 2021): 349–69

⁵⁷³ Brenna Bhandar and Rafeef Ziadah "Acts and Omissions: Framing Settler-Colonialism in Palestine Studies" *Jadaliyya*; January 14, 2016; <https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/32857/Acts-and-Omissions-Framing-Settler-Colonialism-in-Palestine-Studies>

EAPPI currently campaigns for—the end of the Israeli occupation— but also a Palestinian future which entails liberation, and the dismantling of the structures which seek to erase Palestinian lives and foreclose the possibility of the right of return.⁵⁷⁴ Thus, in order to for accompaniment organisations in the oPt to begin to become more anti-colonial, an acceptance of this alternative, more holistic way of viewing the situation into which they intervene, and the ends towards which they work is of utmost importance. Any talk of ‘decolonising’ accompaniment—or working towards a less colonial form of accompaniment work—must begin from this premise.⁵⁷⁵ And this is far from being as simple as saying organisations like EAPPI should start use different terminology. This thesis has argued that to better understand the need for a different framing of the situation one of the keys is to better understand implication, and as argued at the end of chapter 3, this is not something which only pertains to British accompaniers. As recommended in chapter 4, accompaniers and EAPPI should attend carefully to conversations around the legacy of the Balfour Declaration, and rather than being drawn inwards to dwell in feelings of guilt about this history, instead the task is to begin coming to terms with implication by understanding it, and then by seeing what changes need to be made after that.

The second practical point I want to make concerns the protective presence element of the accompaniment role. It is clear that protection is a crucial part of this multi-faceted accompaniment role and protection is often presented as the *raison d’être* for accompaniers being in the oPt, enabling them to also collect testimonies and then do their advocacy work back home. In considering this point we cannot forget both the Palestinian’s urgent and ongoing request for protection as described in chapter 7, and the fact that it is clearly not possible to work against a regime of settler-colonialism and remain entirely protected from risk. There is then this unresolved tension at the heart of accompaniment praxis where concern for accompaniers’ safety and the programme’s reputation is pitted against their ability to protect Palestinians.

⁵⁷⁴ Salamanca et al., ‘Past Is Present’. 3

⁵⁷⁵ I have not used this term in this thesis because I have not located my study within the vast body of literature on decolonisation theory and practice. However, I note this term here because of the use EAPPI has already made of the term. For example, since finishing my fieldwork on this project I learnt that EAPPI Britain and Ireland has been seeking to do work towards decolonising certain areas of their praxis.

It could be argued that the more participatory, Palestinian-led form of intervention which has been argued for in this thesis exposes accompaniers to more risk than a more distanced, impartial, accompaniment-witnessing-monitoring approach. Accompaniers continued to reassure themselves with the fact that they were still being useful even in that more passive, witnessing position— ‘who knows what would have happened if we weren’t there’ as Carolina said, along with tens of other accompaniers. However, if Yousef is correct that the accompaniment strategy has changed over the years, and if accompaniers’ effectiveness in providing protection really is waning because of all the difficulties imposed by the Israeli regime and fears of smear campaigns, perhaps the protective presence element of the accompaniment role does require rethinking. As it stands it appears as if too many compromises are having to be made, and as noted at the end of chapter 7 —perhaps this means the whole role of international protective accompaniment in the oPt needs rethinking.

While some like Lina Alsaafin contest the idea that the Palestinian struggle ever can be really shared⁵⁷⁶, in some organisations the move from the language of protection to that of a shared struggle has already been undertaken. For instance some Israeli anti-occupation groups used to place more emphasis on their protective capacities but now speak more of providing “on-the-ground support to a struggle that is led first and foremost by those who it affects”.⁵⁷⁷ At the same time, it has also been noted that Palestinian activists are now more frequently turning to build alliances with the struggles of other indigenous peoples rather than relying on accompaniment and its accompanying mobilisation of racist hierarchies invested in the dichotomy between ‘bodies that count’ and those that do not.⁵⁷⁸ All of this leads me to pose the question of whether EAPPI should stop offering protective presence and focus instead on the advocacy work in accompaniers’ home countries where it is easier to take a more visible position? If organisations like EAPPI were to do this, the very concept of transnational accompaniment would then involve a different set of practices and perhaps also ideological stances.⁵⁷⁹ Would it then be possible for advocacy-accompaniment to be much more openly political and much more partisan?

⁵⁷⁶ ‘How Obsession with “Nonviolence” Harms the Palestinian Cause’

⁵⁷⁷ Todorova, ‘Vulnerability as a Politics of Decolonial Solidarity.’ 326-7

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁹ For example during the COVID-19 pandemic while accompaniers were not permitted to travel to the oPt there was talk of providing ‘protective advocacy’ work.

It is clear that the struggle for Palestinian liberation is one that requires international support in a whole variety of modes and capacities. And yet, as this thesis has shown, the exact demarcations of this transnational solidarity role — and the place within that for accompaniment praxis— are not easily defined. In Yousef’s frustration with EAPPI taking the unseen position, and despite his statement that Palestinians continue to need protection, he also suggested that Palestinians did not want international accompaniers to take reckless risks, to become “cannon fodder” or fully participate with Palestinians in the ‘shared struggle’. He did not suggest that EAPPI ceases to travel to the oPt, but he did perhaps suggest that there was a role for Palestinians in their own struggle that was not for sharing. How transnational organisations respond to such thoughts, along with the other points made throughout this thesis is, I suggested at the start of this chapter, a matter requiring ongoing, critical, activist and scholarly engagement.

Appendix: Information about research participants

Notes

All companions indicated to be part of EAPPI Britain and Ireland are British except for where it is indicated in brackets that participants have Irish nationality.

There were several ways in which these research participants were recruited. Names of individuals due to participate in EAPPI in the year 2019-2020 were provided by EAPPI and emails were sent to invite them to participate in this project.

When in the oPt I was introduced to one entire multinational cohort of companions during their initial training and invited the whole group to participate in short interviews about their motivations and expectations. Of those participants who participated, some were then also keen to take part in follow up interviews once they had returned home.

Lastly, emails were sent out via an online forum for former British companions inviting the participation of those who had already participated in EAPPI and were within 5 years of returning to the UK. Separately to this a very small number of companions who had participated in EAPPI more than 5 years ago also responded to a request for accounts of Balfour conversations.

Table 1: Personal details

Pseudonym used in thesis	Gender	Age at time of interview	Sending country	Ethnicity – self declared
George	m	68	Britain/Ireland	white
Jackie	f	51	Britain/Ireland	mixed
Becky	f		Britain/Ireland	White
Michael	m	29	Britain/Ireland	white
Laura	f	57	Britain/Ireland	white
Christina	f	61	Britain/Ireland	white
Emma	f	31	Britain/Ireland	mixed
Clare	f	67	Britain/Ireland	white
Owen	m	26	Britain/Ireland	white
Carolina	f	37	Britain/Ireland	white
Gavin	m	67	Britain/Ireland	white
Olivia	f	42	Britain/Ireland (Irish)	white
Karin	f	40	Sweden	white
Anna	f	28	Britain/Ireland (Irish)	white
Ella	f	29	Switzerland	white
Adrian	m	37	Australia	white

Pseudonym used in thesis	Gender	Age at time of interview	Sending country	Ethnicity – self declared
Alex	m	34	Canada	white
Nils	m	29	Sweden	white
Jan	m	66	Netherlands	white
Martin	m	63	Norway	white
Julia	f	32	Norway	white
Andrea	f	70	Norway	white
Finn	m	30	Switzerland	white
Tom	m	70	Britain/Ireland	white
Richard	m	62	Britain/Ireland	white
Nikki	f	28	Britain/Ireland	White
Simon	m	67	Britain/Ireland	white
Pete	m	68	Britain/Ireland	white
Ruth	f	69	Britain/Ireland	white
Karen	f		Britain/Ireland	white
Joan	f	68	Britain/Ireland	white
Paula	f	67	British/Ireland (Irish)	white
Philip	m		Britain/Ireland	white
Sarah	f		Britain/Ireland	white
Eric	m		Britain/Ireland	white

Table 2: Forms of participation in the project

Pseudonym used in thesis	Interviewed Pre-oPt	Interviewed in oPt	Interviewed Post oPt	Attended advocacy presentation
George	x		x	
Jackie	x		x	
Becky	x		x	
Michael	x		x	
Laura	x		x	x (video call)
Christina	x			

Emma	x			
Pseudonym used in thesis	Interviewed Pre-oPt	Interviewed in oPt	Interviewed Post oPt	Attended advocacy presentation
Clare		x	x	x (video call)
Owen		x	x	x (video call)
Carolina		x		x
Gavin		x	x	x (video call)
Olivia		x	x	
Karin		x		
Anna		x	x (phone call)	
Ella		x		
Adrian		x		
Alex		x		
Nils		x		
Jan		x		
Martin		x		
Julia		x	x (video call)	
Andrea		x	x (video call)	
Finn		x	x (video call)	
Tom			Email and phone interview	
Richard			Email and phone interview	x
Nikki			x (video call)	
Simon			x	
Pete			x	
Ruth			x (video call)	
Karen			Email	
Joan			x	
Paula			Phone interview	
Philip			Email	
Sarah			Email and phone interview	
Eric			Email	

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