

## Black–Palestinian Solidarity in the Ferguson–Gaza Era

*Kristian Davis Bailey*

Leading into summer 2014, no one could have predicted the actions that pushed Black–Palestinian solidarity into mainstream focus. The police killing of Michael Brown and subsequent uprising in Ferguson, Missouri, sparked mass action across the country just as US outcry against Israel’s fifty-day war on the Gaza Strip reached its fever pitch. Protesters from Oakland to New York chanted “from Ferguson to Palestine, occupation is a crime” and began to highlight connections between the two struggles.

Yet, as Rabab Abdulhadi remarked at the 2014 American Studies Association annual meeting, Black radicals and Palestinian resistance have been in solidarity and drawing connections long before Ferguson: “These expressions are not new and they’re not because of the excitement of the moment. They do have their historical precedents in the connections that organically brought together anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-capitalist—very clear revolutionary politics, not reformist politics.”<sup>1</sup>

While many Black radicals supported the Zionist movement in Palestine and founding of Israel in 1948, a notable shift emerged after the 1967 war, when radical Black groups and individuals began to locate solidarity with Palestine in an anti-imperialist, antiracist lens.<sup>2</sup> The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was penalized for its 1967 statement against Zionism a dozen years before Andrew Young was fired from his ambassadorship to the United Nations for meeting with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). The PLO and Black Panther Party drew comparisons between racial capitalism in the United States and Israel, in addition to strategizing together while in Algiers—all under a project of revolutionary internationalism and anti-imperialism.<sup>3</sup>

There are many lesser-known accounts as well. On the first day of a woman of color delegation to Palestine, Angela Davis recounted that one thing that sustained her time in prison was a letter that Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails had managed to pass from their families in the West Bank to her colleagues in the United States.<sup>4</sup> In 1984 Adrien Wing was one of two US representa-

tives invited to attend the Palestine National Council in Amman, Jordan.<sup>5</sup> Speaking on behalf of the National Conference of Black Lawyers, Wing said, “The Black American people and the Palestinian people are bound together in a common struggle” that is “symbolized by the U.N. General Assembly 1975 resolution which identified Zionism as a form of racism” and chanted “Revolution! Revolution until victory!” as she concluded her speech.<sup>6</sup> In the United States, Black and Palestinian Americans have supported each other from the San Francisco State University general strikes in 1968 to divestment from apartheid South Africa, to Jesse Jackson’s Rainbow Coalition and calls for an independent Palestinian state in his presidential platform.<sup>7</sup>

Within liberal and mainstream Black and Palestinian American circles, the question of solidarity has been more fraught. From the mainstream civil rights organizations and leaders of the 1960s through today’s Congressional Black Caucus, the liberal Black political class has largely supported or remained ambivalent about Zionist policies and has hesitantly expressed solidarity with Palestinians (if at all). Arab and Palestinian anti-Blackness, particularly from the Arab merchant class in Black urban communities, has been an impediment to mainstream antiracist and anti-imperialist solidarity.

In the context of these histories and tensions, the most recent chapter in Black–Palestinian solidarity—the Ferguson–Gaza moment—marked an increase in mainstream US political awareness and momentum shift for both Black and Palestinian liberation struggles. For Black and Palestinian people in the United States, and Palestinians in Palestine itself,<sup>8</sup> this moment created a new opportunity for multidirectional solidarity both on the ground and online.<sup>9</sup> The moment also presented an opportunity for the resurgence of Black internationalism in the contemporary era. It is as a participant and witness in this current chapter that I offer the following essay.<sup>10</sup>

As the scenes in Ferguson unfolded after Michael Brown’s death, images circulating on social media revealed the face of the militarized police state to an even wider portion of the US population. These images of people facing guns and tear gas while protecting their communities were not lost on Palestinians thousands of miles away. Activists from the West Bank and Gaza began tweeting not only messages of support for the uprising in Ferguson but also practical advice on how to deal with tear gas inhalation. On the ground in Ferguson, Black protesters were surprised to receive support from a people undergoing a fifty-day Israeli assault in Gaza, as well as a crackdown by Israeli forces across the rest of historic Palestine. Immediately, protesters in Ferguson began sending images and messages back, and waving Palestinian flags at demonstrations.

Palestinians and members of the diaspora circulated a statement of solidarity, while the Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) also issued statements of support.<sup>11</sup> An organic solidarity emerged from the ground up between communities bearing the brunt of state repression.

People began to make connections online and outside Ferguson, too, noting that the former chief of the St. Louis County Police Department was one of many US police officials to travel to Israel for joint “security” training.<sup>12</sup> Photos shared on social media revealed that Bahrain, Egypt, Israel, and the United States used the same two companies’ tear-gas canisters against civilian protesters.<sup>13</sup> But one crucial notion emerged amid the conversations of connections and similarities, which the writer and commentator Mychal Denzel Smith expressed on Twitter: “The people of Ferguson aren’t being treated like a foreign army. They’re being treated like Black people in America.”<sup>14</sup>

Israeli training is not what makes police in the United States oppress Black people; the anti-Black violence endemic to the United States—through its foundational enslavement of Africans and their descendants as well as the afterlife of slavery (Jim Crow and carceral violence)—ensures that police enact anti-Black violence on their own without Israeli influence. Black Americans would experience anti-Black state violence if Israel never existed and will experience such violence even when all three criteria of the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement are satisfied.<sup>15</sup> This condition motivates an urgency for Palestinians and their supporters to fight anti-Black racism concurrently to the struggle for Palestinian self-determination. Accordingly, principled Palestinians (in the United States and Palestine) and solidarity activists have maintained a focus on the specificity of anti-Black racism in the United States, both as a mode of oppression in which Palestinians in the United States like other immigrant communities, even those from the third world, participate, and as an experience historically distinct from that of Palestinians living under Israeli colonialism and occupation.

This distinction was clear in the mobilization of the 2014 Palestine Contingent to “Ferguson October,” the National Weekend of Resistance. Black organizers and groups such as the Organization for Black Struggle (OBS) welcomed such a contingent because of the ongoing work of the St. Louis Palestine Solidarity Committee (STL-PSC) with St. Louis’s Black activist community. Joint work between the two groups predated Michael Brown’s death.<sup>16</sup> Throughout Ferguson October, the Palestine Contingent modeled what it looks like to show respect for the specificities of anti-Black racism and the history of anti-Blackness in the United States while forging alliances and

solidarities between overlapping struggles against state-sanctioned violence, dehumanization, and discrimination. Signage for the contingent used the hashtag #Palestine2Ferguson, as organizers sought to be explicit that Palestinians and the solidarity movement were focusing on the issues and calls emerging from Ferguson.<sup>17</sup> At the major march of the weekend, the Palestine Contingent took up the rear of the procession, giving formal Black delegations and unaffiliated Black protesters space to lead the demonstration. And during an interfaith event with Cornel West, two Palestinian women were among a dozen people slated to speak who removed themselves from the stage, allowing young Ferguson protesters to express their rage at establishment civil rights organizations for avoiding Ferguson during the heat of the repression.

These actions represent a careful consideration and rebuttal of pitfalls of multiethnic solidarity and organizing observed in Palestine solidarity circles and in “progressive,” movements more broadly: namely, the co-optation and tokenization of Black activism (most notably of the civil rights movement), marginalization of contemporary Black voices and willful ignorance of present-day anti-Black oppression, and flattening of the ways that non-Black ethnic groups in the United States participate in anti-Black racism while suffering differently under white supremacy.<sup>18</sup> STL-PSC member Suhad Khatib’s remarks during a rally in downtown St. Louis on behalf of the Palestine Contingent embodied these considerations: “We recognize that none of us is free until all of us are free,” she said. “We know Black liberation in this country will lead to liberation for all.”<sup>19</sup>

After Ferguson October, Black and Palestinian activists had numerous opportunities to engage in each other’s living and organizing spaces. The first such opportunity was at the 2014 Students for Justice in Palestine National Conference (NSJP) at Tufts University. Organized under the theme “Beyond Solidarity: Resisting Racism and Colonialism from the US to Palestine,”<sup>20</sup> the conference brought in organizers from St. Louis, Detroit, and Hawai‘i, in addition to activists representing Anakbayan, Black Youth Project (BYP100), the BDS National Committee (BNC), Dream Defenders, the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, MEChA, and US Palestinian Community Network, among other groups.

In a workshop titled “Water Rights from Hawaii to Detroit to Palestine,” organizers from Detroit and Hawai‘i taught about their respective grassroots movements, while a member of SJP spoke about the fight for water in Palestine. The Detroit delegation cited Veolia, which is part of the effort to privatize the city’s water resources, as a common reference point with the Palestinian struggle.<sup>21</sup> Tawana Petty, representing Detroiters Resisting Emergency Manage-

ment and the People’s Water Board of Detroit, wrote after the conference that she was pleased to hear of successful BDS efforts against Veolia:

Listening to the BDS stories solidified my view that the people have the final say. I returned home with a strengthened resolve to bridge the gaps between organizers across borders while building towards self-determination and creating alternatives for my community and communities who are on the ground building towards a just society in Palestine, Hawaii, South Africa, Ferguson, India, and beyond.<sup>22</sup>

The second opportunity for mutual engagement came two weeks later, when a group of ten Palestinian students from the Right to Education Campaign (R2E) at Birzeit University in the West Bank began a speaking tour across forty-two US campuses, sponsored by the ad hoc steering committee of NSJP.<sup>23</sup> The two-week tour started with an orientation in St. Louis and Ferguson to connect with grassroots organizers fighting racism, police brutality, and militarized repression. The students met with members of the Don’t Shoot Coalition, Tribe X, Freedom Fighters STL, in addition to the parents of VonDerrit Myers Jr. at the one-month vigil and demonstration against his killing by St. Louis police. Mahmoud Daghlas, a senior in electrical engineering, said that he saw “one regime” repressing both Black Americans and Palestinians: “In Palestine we have the Israeli occupation that is fully supported by the American government that is oppressing social movements in the US.” Jonathan Pulphus, one of the Black activists whom the students connected with, spoke of recognizing the experiences of each group in the other: “Thinking about their resilience, reflecting on their history, and thinking about the road ahead, I agreed and said they are ‘Black’ and I am ‘Palestinian.’ Tribe X agreed to this: their struggle is our own.”<sup>24</sup>

Following the two-day orientation in St. Louis, Palestinian students split into five different tour groups and had the opportunity to engage with different grassroots movements and student activists across the country, including a weekend visit with Tawana Petty and other organizers in Detroit, and a talk sponsored by the newly formed HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) for Palestine at Spelman College. Being in St. Louis was the highlight of the tour for the majority of the students, who took what they learned of the Black struggle in the United States back to Palestine. The R2E campaign held three events in solidarity with Black Americans on Birzeit’s campus in December 2014: an installation of educational posters about Black revolutionary figures, including Malcolm X, Angela Davis, Huey Newton, and Toni Morrison; a report back on the tour and an academic lecture on the ideology,

institutionalization, and linguistics of racism; and a silent demonstration that featured quotes in English from Angela Davis and Mike Brown's parents, as well as the Assata Shakur chant in Arabic and English.<sup>25</sup> Deema Al-Saafin, a senior in English literature and a member of the R2E US tour, said to *Ma'an News* that the lecture was part of an effort to "create and sustain solidarity with other struggles." She added, "We aimed to emphasize that change begins with liberating the mind first, and to build solidarity we need to actively resist derogatory terminology and stereotypes between each other and the way we address other people of color."<sup>26</sup>

Connecting with Black protesters and organizers across the country allowed the students to invert the typical direction of education and solidarity characteristic of most exchanges between the United States and Palestine. Instead of Americans traveling to learn about Palestine, Palestinians came to the United States with the intention of learning from and connecting with local movements. And instead of simply presenting the narrative of "Palestinian as victim" and returning home, the students expressed a sense of empowerment in connecting with another people who were also struggling under colonialism and racism.

Two months later, in January 2015, fourteen Black, Arab, and Latina activists traveled to Palestine as part of a delegation organized by the Dream Defenders, which had unanimously voted to endorse the BDS movement at its annual conference the month before. Participants in the trip included five Dream Defenders, Black Lives Matter cofounder Patrisse Cullors, Black Youth Project national director Charlene Carruthers, Ferguson protesters Tef Poe and Tara Thompson, the journalist and commentator Marc Lamont Hill, the poet and artist Aja Monet, and the organizers Cherrell Brown and Carmen Perez. For Brown, many of the conversations she heard in Palestine resonated with similar issues in the United States, such as "dealing with the obsession over 'non-violence,' the fear of being co-opted by those who would call themselves allies who don't experience oppression quite the same as us." She said the nonviolence piece struck her the most: "A [Palestinian] sister said in a meeting that until recently, [Palestinians] didn't have a distinction between violence and nonviolence—it was all resistance. I think that is so powerful as Black Americans find themselves caught up in this faux binary of good versus bad protester, and that assignment, to one or the other, is often handed down by those in power."<sup>27</sup>

Alex Lubin writes that Palestine has always been "a generative site for articulating anti-racist and anti-colonial politics" for Black radicals. Brown's articulation of gaining clarity from Palestinian discourses on resistance con-

tinues this trend.<sup>28</sup> The distinctions of non/violent resistance and “good” or “bad” protesters remain a site of contestation between liberal and radical US supporters both of Palestine and of the Black liberation movement.

This current episode of Black solidarity with Palestine builds on narratives and legacies of past chapters: disconnect between Black radical activists and the Black political establishment over allegiances, the use of Christian Zionism to support Israel in its denial of Palestinian self-determination, and a tension between liberal Zionists and Black activists who worked together on civil rights campaigns in the United States.<sup>29</sup> Possibly the most solid constant in this narrative is the unequivocal support of the Black radical tradition for the liberation of Palestine.

Present-day developments in Palestinian solidarity with the Black struggle represent an explicit focus on anti-Black state violence and anti-Blackness within Palestinian American and Arab American communities. Palestinians under occupation and in the diaspora are making calls for “de-exceptionalizing” Palestine and resituating it in the context of antiracist, anticolonial, and anti-imperialist movements worldwide, including the Black struggle.<sup>30</sup>

Organizers and scholars alike continue to demonstrate a deep commitment to these projects. Students at Wesleyan and Columbia University have insisted on linking divestment from private prisons to the issue of Palestine, with Columbia divesting its holdings in the Corrections Corporation of America and G4S in June 2015.<sup>31</sup> In the same month, a *Jadaliyya* roundtable provided much-needed space to address the terrain and nuances of “Anti-Blackness and Black-Palestinian solidarity.”<sup>32</sup>

As we mark the one-year anniversary of Mike Brown’s death and Israel’s massacre in Gaza, and as the repressive nature of capitalism, neoliberalism, and the state continue to evolve, those of us in each movement must continue to model the “indivisibility of justice.”<sup>33</sup> We must develop a praxis of space sharing and revolutionary joint struggle against oppression of all kinds. To overcome US and Israeli violence, this requires a politics that is simultaneously antimilitarist, anti-imperialist, and antiracist (specifically opposing anti-Blackness)—both from organizers in the United States and in historic Palestine.

## Notes

There is a long and wide history of Black solidarity and engagement with Palestinian liberation that precedes my participation in this current chapter. I wish to honor the individuals and organizations who have done this work for decades, including Malcolm X, Phil Hutchings and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Kwame Turé (fka Stokely Carmichael) and the Black Panther Party, the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement (including Kali Akuno, Linda Tigani, and Sanyika Bryant), Angela Davis, Barbara Ransby, Rabab Abdulhadi and their 2011 delegation of indigenous and woman of color scholars, among countless others. Thank you Jimmy Johnson for helping me refine my ideas. And a special thank you to my mentors in scholarship, movement work, and writing—the late Dr. Vincent Harding, Dr. Clayborne Carson, Reverend Osagyefo Sekou, and dream hampton.

1. Rabab Abdulhadi, “Black Radicalism, Insurgency in Israel/Palestine, and the Idea of Solidarity” (paper presented at American Studies Association 2014 annual meeting, Los Angeles, November 7, 2014). Much of the following history is drawn from this lecture.
2. Alex Lubin, “Locating Palestine in Pre-1948 Black Internationalism,” *Souls* 9.2 (2007): 95–108.
3. Alex Lubin, “The Black Panthers and the PLO: The Politics of Intercommunalism,” in *Geographies of Liberation: The Making of an Afro-Arab Political Imaginary* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).
4. Abdulhadi, “Black Radicalism.”
5. The second US invitee, James Sulton, was also Black.
6. Samira Kavar, “Black U.S. Lawyer Lauds Palestinian Cause,” UPI, November 25, 1984, [www.upi.com/Archives/1984/11/25/Black-US-lawyer-lauds-Palestinian-cause/3138470206800/](http://www.upi.com/Archives/1984/11/25/Black-US-lawyer-lauds-Palestinian-cause/3138470206800/). The 1975 UN resolution was rescinded in 1991 by UNGA resolution 46/86.
7. Rabab Abdulhadi, “Palestinianness and the Politics of Solidarity,” *Local Actions: Cultural Activism, Power, and Public Life in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 231–53.
8. This necessarily includes Afro-Palestinians whose existence simultaneously disrupts popular Western understandings of the “Palestinian” as ethnically Arab and falls outside a US understanding of “Blackness.” While awareness or discussion of African Palestinians appears to be low in the United States, African Palestinians have been part of the Palestinian resistance since 1948, participating in crucial battles for Jerusalem during the Nakba, resistance efforts in Jerusalem again post-1967, and suffering the first casualty of the Second Intifada in 2000. Palestinian resistance historically has not had a rigid understanding of the Palestinian identity, situating it more in the political struggle against Zionist colonialism than in an ethnic basis. Connecting with Afro-Palestinians has been a focal point of recent Black delegations to Palestine, most recently including the January 2015 Dream Defenders delegation. See Budour Youssef Hassan, “African-Palestinian Community’s Deep Roots in Liberation Struggle,” *Electronic Intifada*, July 10, 2015, [electronicintifada.net/content/african-palestinian-communitys-deep-roots-liberation-struggle/14682](http://electronicintifada.net/content/african-palestinian-communitys-deep-roots-liberation-struggle/14682).
9. That is to say, solidarity in both directions between the United States and Palestine.
10. I have been actively organizing around and writing about Black–Palestinian solidarity over the past year, participating in most of the events listed in this essay. Some of the content comes from my previously reported articles on the Ferguson–Palestine connection and Dream Defenders delegation to Palestine. Other content comes from my experiences as a member of the steering committee of National Students for Justice in Palestine, coordinating workshops on Black liberation and environmental justice at the Students for Justice in Palestine national conference, organizing the 2014 Right to Education Tour of students from Birzeit University across the United States, and participating in the Dream Defenders Congress to support the BDS resolution that was unanimously passed. Finally, some content comes from my experience attending Ferguson October as a member of the Palestine Contingent and building relationships with members of the St. Louis Palestine Solidarity Committee. Similar to the subjectivity of my advocacy-based journalism, I hope that my position as someone in this movement offers a useful perspective on this topic.
11. “Palestinians Express ‘Solidarity with the People of Ferguson’ in Mike Brown Statement,” *Electronic Intifada*, August 15, 2014, [electronicintifada.net/blogs/rana-baker/palestinians-express-solidarity-people-ferguson-mike-brown-statement](http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/rana-baker/palestinians-express-solidarity-people-ferguson-mike-brown-statement/); “Solidarity with Ferguson: Justice for Michael Brown, End Police Oppression,” Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network, August 12, 2014, [samidoun.net/2014/08/solidarity-with-ferguson-justice-for-michael-brown-end-police-oppression/](http://samidoun.net/2014/08/solidarity-with-ferguson-justice-for-michael-brown-end-police-oppression/); “PFLP Salutes the Black Struggle in the US: The Empire Will Fall from Within,” Popular Front for the



- Liberation of Palestine, August 19, 2014, [pflp.ps/english/2014/08/19/pflp-salutes-the-black-struggle-in-the-us-the-empire-will-fall-from-within/](http://pflp.ps/english/2014/08/19/pflp-salutes-the-black-struggle-in-the-us-the-empire-will-fall-from-within/).
12. Patrick M. O’Connell, “St. Louis County Chief Will Travel to Israel,” *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, March 24, 2011, [www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/st-louis-county-chief-will-travel-to-israel/article\\_9b614430-5679-11e0-999b-0017a4a78c22.html](http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/st-louis-county-chief-will-travel-to-israel/article_9b614430-5679-11e0-999b-0017a4a78c22.html).
  13. Alex Kane, “Weapons Fired in Ferguson Come from Companies Supplying Israel, Bahrain, and Egypt,” *Mondoweiss*, August 19, 2014, [mondoweiss.net/2014/08/ferguson-companies-supplying](http://mondoweiss.net/2014/08/ferguson-companies-supplying).
  14. We can assume that Smith is talking about the United States of America.
  15. The three criteria are ending the occupation of all Arab lands colonized since 1967, full legal equality for Palestinian citizens of Israel, and the right of return for refugees.
  16. According to STL-PSC member Sandra Tamari, St. Louis–based rapper Tef Poe and OBS chair Montague Simmons were “instrumental” in STL-PSC’s first BDS victory, the disinvitation of a *hasbara*-sponsored artist at a 2011 event. (*Hasbara* is the official public relations efforts of Israel to create a positive global image of itself through propaganda.) Poe and Simmons made calls to local hip-hop artists, urging them to pull out from the event unless the artist’s invitation was rescinded. OBS was also part of a 2012–13 citywide coalition to prevent the St. Louis Water Division from contracting services to Veolia Water, whose parent company is a target of the BDS movement for its operations in Palestine. Veolia withdrew its contract after St. Louis Dump Veolia’s grassroots campaign. STL-PSC members have supported local Black initiatives through fund-raisers and the ongoing Fight for 15 minimum wage campaign. Tamari was asked to speak on the ties between Black oppression and US wars abroad at a downtown rally following the acquittal of Trayvon Martin’s murderer.
  17. The three main signs read: “Resistance is not a crime,” “End racism now,” and “Justice for all.”
  18. These tendencies occur both in primarily white movement spaces as well as primarily non-Black people of color spaces that do not have an explicit sensitivity to anti-Blackness.
  19. See [electronicintifada.net/content/liberation-all-why-palestine-key-issue-streets-ferguson/14124](http://electronicintifada.net/content/liberation-all-why-palestine-key-issue-streets-ferguson/14124). This notion has a root in afropessimist theory. Afropessimist scholars such as Jared Sexton and Frank Wilderson articulate a distinction between the experiences of indigenous people under colonialism and the “ontological holocaust” Africans experienced during the Middle Passage (i.e., their category of being fundamentally changed in being transformed from “people” to “things”). This ontological condition is irreconcilable in the way that restoring sovereignty to a colonized population is (since reconciling anti-Blackness requires a fundamental disruption of modernity and our understanding of humanity). A specific focus on anti-Blackness and Black liberation is necessary because it is through the disruption Black liberation would cause that all other people are liberated. See Jared Sexton, “People-of-Color-Blindness Notes on the Afterlife of Slavery,” *Social Text*, no. 103 (2010): 31–56; and Frank Wilderson, *Red, White, and Black: Cinema and the Structure of US Antagonisms* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).
  20. The 2014 conference was the fourth national convening for Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) chapters. Its theme and goals represented a progression from establishing a national network for SJP activists and building out BDS and other solidarity efforts to focusing on jointly fighting racism and settler colonialism in Palestine and the United States. The 2014 theme emerged from the closing panel of the 2013 national conference at Stanford University, where members of the Palestinian Youth Movement, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, and International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network discussed joint struggle. According to the SJP National website, “The term ‘joint struggle’ represents the work of acting together to resist the systems that oppress our respective communities—sometimes in ways that overlap and other times in ways that are very specific.” Organizers listed anti-Black racism, the ongoing colonization of indigenous lands and peoples, and violence against Black, indigenous, and migrant peoples as focuses of the 2014 conference, as well as “militarism as a transnational problem” ([web.archive.org/web/20141011151337/http://sjpnational.org/2014/09/10/announcing-2014-national-sjp-conference/](http://web.archive.org/web/20141011151337/http://sjpnational.org/2014/09/10/announcing-2014-national-sjp-conference/)).
  21. In August 2014 Detroit’s state-appointed emergency manager Kevyn Orr hired Veolia Water to conduct a review of the city’s water system. The company also expressed interest in a request for information Orr put out to identify potential bidders for the privatization of the city’s water resources. Detroit activists, including Tawana Petty, have been opposed to privatized water for years. At the time of the SJP conference, Veolia operated a wastewater treatment center in an Israeli settlement in the West Bank, as well as a landfill in the Jordan Valley for settler refuse. Veolia sold off all its Israel-based operations

- in April 2015, with the exception of its light rail project connecting settlements in Occupied East Jerusalem beyond the Green Line to West Jerusalem. According to the BDS movement, the company has lost billions of dollars in contracts because of boycott work against it.
22. See [conversationsthatyouwillneverfinish.wordpress.com/2014/11/08/moving-beyond-solidarity-by-tawana-petty/](http://conversationsthatyouwillneverfinish.wordpress.com/2014/11/08/moving-beyond-solidarity-by-tawana-petty/).
  23. See [right2edu.tumblr.com/](http://right2edu.tumblr.com/).
  24. See [www.ebony.com/news-views/building-unity-wrecking-walls-palestinians-come-to-ferguson-032](http://www.ebony.com/news-views/building-unity-wrecking-walls-palestinians-come-to-ferguson-032).
  25. The chant has been a popular one during the Ferguson and Black Lives Matter protests. With slight variations, it is adapted from a longer poem by Shakur: "It is our duty to fight for our freedom / It is our duty to win / We must love each other and support each other / We have nothing to lose but our chains."
  26. Alex Shams, "Birzeit Students Hold Solidarity Event with Black Struggle in US," *Maan News Agency*, December 7, 2014, [www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=748239](http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=748239).
  27. Cherrell Brown, e-mail to author, January 7, 2015.
  28. Alex Lubin, "Locating Palestine in Pre-1948 Black Internationalism," *Souls* 9.2 (2007): 95–108.
  29. Much of this tension has played out in St. Louis, where local Zionist rabbis have participated in protests against police brutality in the region while expressing discomfort or rejecting comparisons between Ferguson and Palestine. *Haaretz* reported that Rabbi Ari Kaiman said, "As a person who supports Israel I was glad to see that there were no signs and conversation about Gaza at all," after a clergy-led protest at the Ferguson police department in October. According to the Palestinian American activist and Ferguson livestreamer Bassem Masri, Rabbi Susan Talve, who spoke alongside Cornel West and shared the stage with Palestinians at an interfaith event during Ferguson October, asked, "What can Ferguson learn from the Palestinian movement? How to strap on bombs and blow up buses." In March the Missouri History Museum canceled an event featuring the Organization for Black Struggle, St. Louis Palestine Solidarity Committee, and Latinos en Axion titled "From Ferguson to Ayotzinapa to Palestine." According to e-mails released by Jewish Voice for Peace, the museum canceled the event the night before it was scheduled after pressure from the local Jewish Community Relations Council.
  30. At the opening panel for the 2014 US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation national conference, Rabab Abdulhadi warned against "exceptionalizing" Palestine and "exceptionalizing" Israel and the United States as anything but settler colonial projects. Abdulhadi focused on the "colluding interests of war industries," "the increased impunity of colonial and aggressive forces," and "naked racism and overt culture of hate and discrimination" present in both the United States and Israel/Palestine. These ideas inspired remarks I gave later during the US Campaign conference and at the conclusion of the 2014 NSJP conference during a panel titled "Transnational BDS." After returning from the R2E tour in the United States, Deema Al-Saafin told *Ma'an News* that "the Palestinian struggle is not a unique one and is part of the broader imperialist-colonialist struggle that many people worldwide are victims of. Thus Palestinians cannot resist alone, and local resistance should be paired with international resistance" (Alex Shams, "Palestinian Students Tour US, Building Solidarity with Local Movements," *Maan News Agency*, November 27, 2014, [www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=743227](http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=743227)).
  31. The largest private prison company in the United States and the largest private "security" company in the world, respectively. The latter has been targeted by activists around the world for securing prisons in Israel where Palestinians are transferred illegally from the West Bank, operating youth detention facilities and deportation buses in the United States, operating private prisons and asylum detention centers in the UK, South Africa, and Papua New Guinea—all three of which have come under scrutiny for the death or mistreatment of inmates.
  32. See [jadaliyya.com/pages/index/21764/roundtable-on-anti-blackness-and-black-palestinian](http://jadaliyya.com/pages/index/21764/roundtable-on-anti-blackness-and-black-palestinian).
  33. Abdulhadi, "Black Radicalism."