



THE PEOPLE'S SCHOOL FOR JUSTICE



U.S. Imperialism in West Asia: A Community Teach-In for Asian Americans

WITH SHENGXIAO "SOLE" YU

Saturday, November 4, 2023 ▪ 2:30 - 4:30 PM PST
In-person in Los Angeles and on Zoom



Shengxiao “Sole” Yu (she/her)

- Speaker, writer, facilitator, and social justice educator
- Inherited culture and wisdom from my Chinese ancestors, learned about systemic oppression living in the diaspora in the United States, and developed my political consciousness in Latin America
- Live and work on occupied Tongva and Kizh land, colonially known as Los Angeles
- Founder of Nectar: to ignite our desire and grow our capacity to live in liberated ways



Why I am here today

- Grace Lee Boggs “these are the times to grow our souls.”
- My approach to political education is centered on systems and frameworks
- Center the voices of the most oppressed and ease the burden of educating from folks who are actively experiencing violence
- A note about complexity

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MISSION

The Asian American Justice + Innovation Lab is a community racial justice incubator. At its core, AAJIL (pronounced “agile”) offers general racial justice education for all that employs a decolonial framework and intentionally integrates Asian American histories and experiences. Radiating from that core work is the practice of mutual care through community-building, opportunities for collaboration and innovation, and the long-range potential for participants to impact their spheres of influence with values of justice, liberation, and collective agility.

Community Agreements

- This is a space for collective learning. Please submit questions in the Q&A box or private message to AAJIL team member. We will get to as many as possible.
- This workshop is for people who already believe that safety and the protection of life includes all of us. Any harmful or violent comments posted, including but not limited to anti-semitic and anti-muslim comments, will result in the person's removal from the space by AAJIL team. If you want to examine or unlearn anti-semitism or islamophobia, there are spaces for that work; this is NOT one of those spaces.
- Please do NOT record any part of this workshop

A quick explanation of terms:

**West Asia / SWANA instead
of Middle East / MENA**

**We begin by tending to our
collective grief.**


Plan for today's teach-in

- Context
 - Brief history of Zionism
 - Conditions in Occupied Palestine
- What this is about – Frameworks
 - Settler Colonialism and Imperialism
 - White Supremacy
- What this is not about – what is weaponized
 - Religion
 - Safety
- Hope and Solidarity

Plan for today's teach-in

- **Context**
 - **Brief history of Zionism**
 - **Conditions in Occupied Palestine**
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Brief History of Zionism

A hand is pointing to a map of the Jewish State. The map shows a grey area labeled 'Jewish State' with a red dot inside. The map is placed on a brown surface, and a green area is visible below it.

Jewish State

How Israel was Created

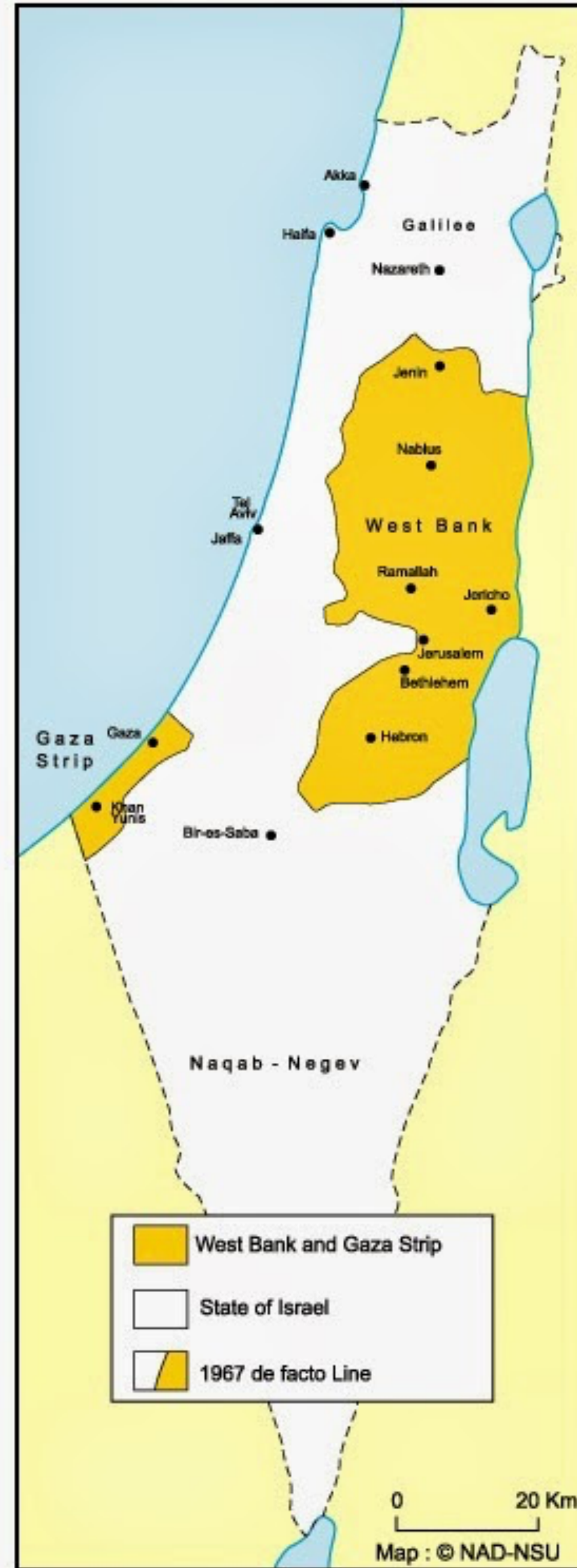
Pre-1948
100% of Historic Palestine



1947 UN Partition Plan
48% of Historic Palestine



1967 De Facto Line
22% of Historic Palestine



Settlements, Wall, and Jordan Valley
12% of Historic Palestine



These maps are for illustrative purposes only. Boundary representations are not authoritative.

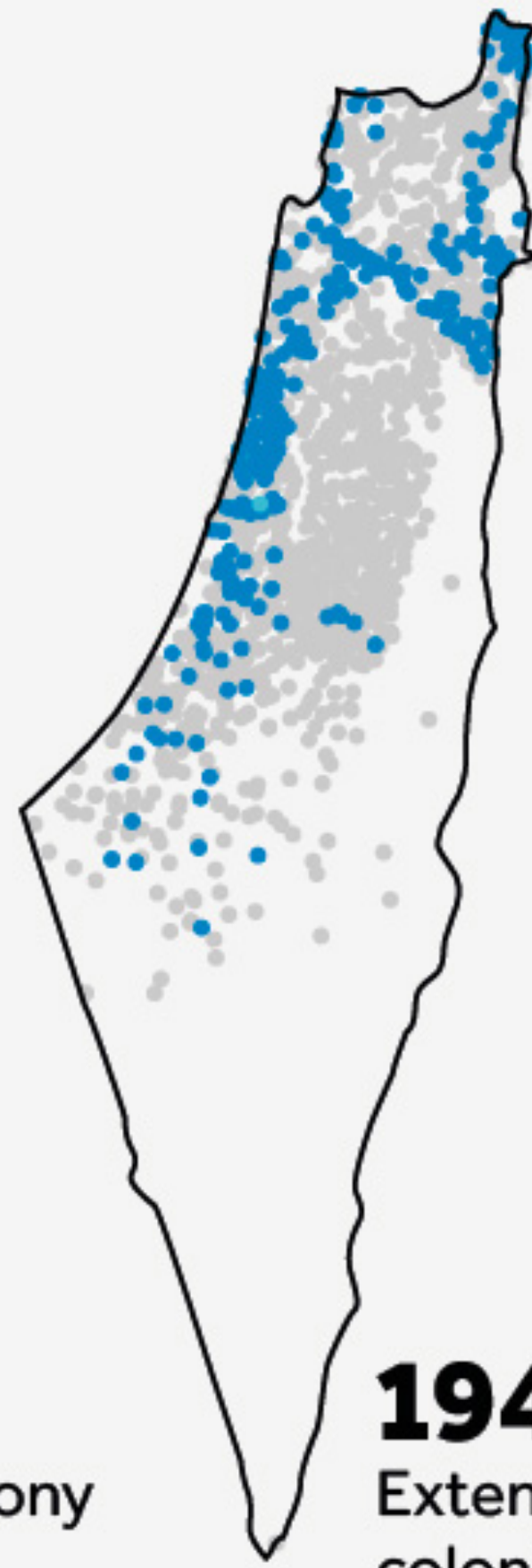
THE ZIONIST COLONIZATION OF PALESTINE

● Zionist/Israeli locality ● Pre-existing/Palestinian locality



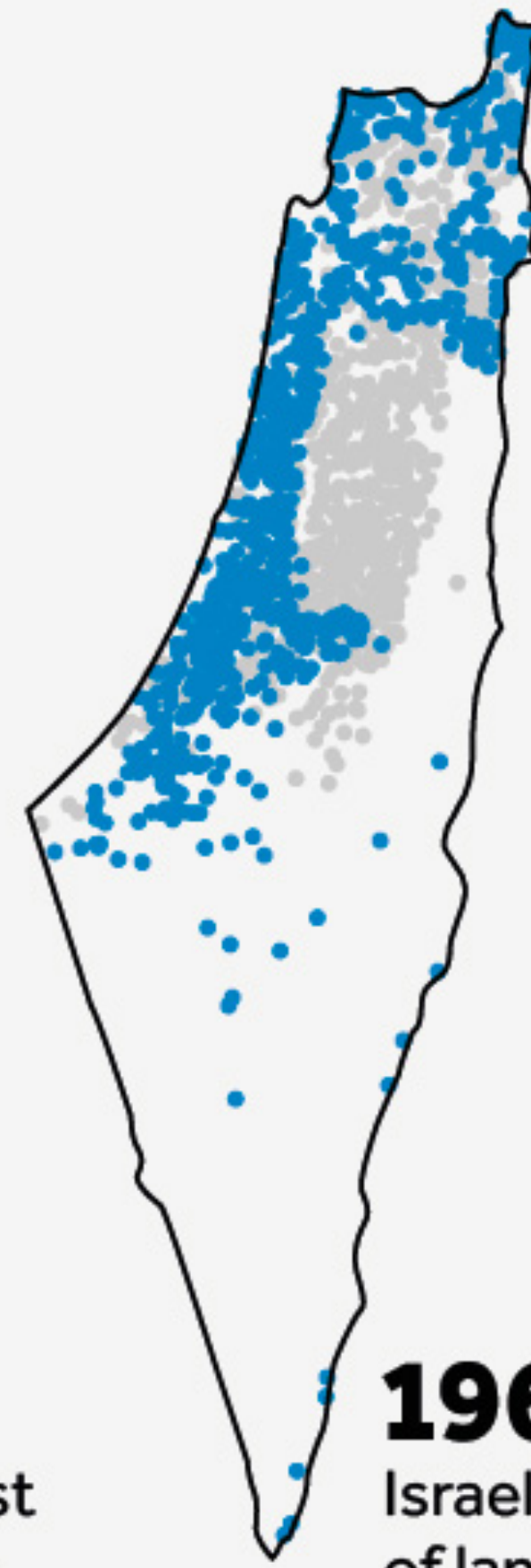
1882

First Zionist colony
Rishon LeZion
established under
Ottoman rule



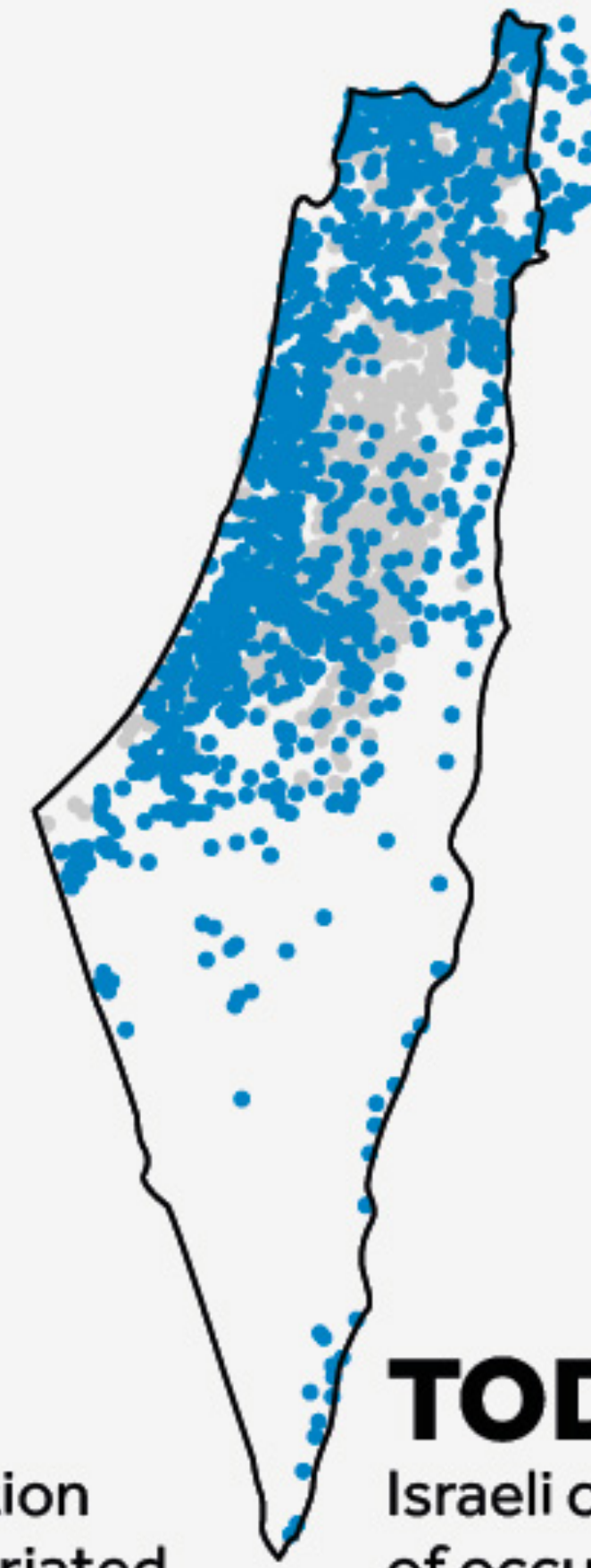
1947

Extent of Zionist
colonization by
end of British
Mandate period



1966

Israeli colonization
of lands expropriated
from Palestinians in
the Nakba



TODAY

Israeli colonization
of occupied West
Bank, Gaza and
Golan Heights

ONE POPULATION IS REPLACING ANOTHER

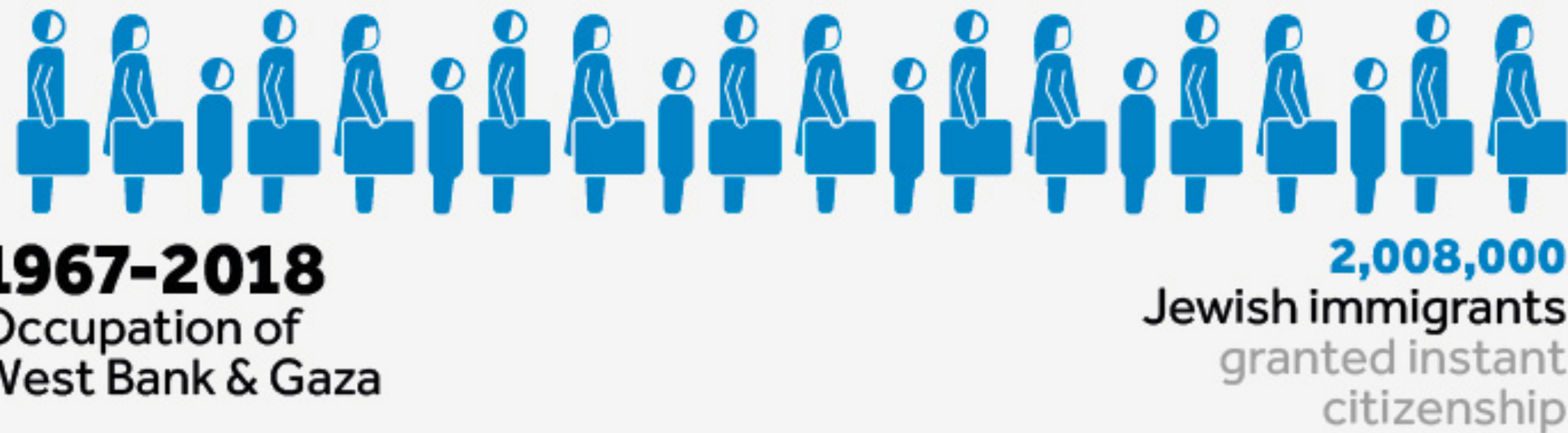
1922-1947
British Mandate
of Palestine



1948-1966
Nakba & Formation
of Israeli State



1967-2018
Occupation of
West Bank & Gaza

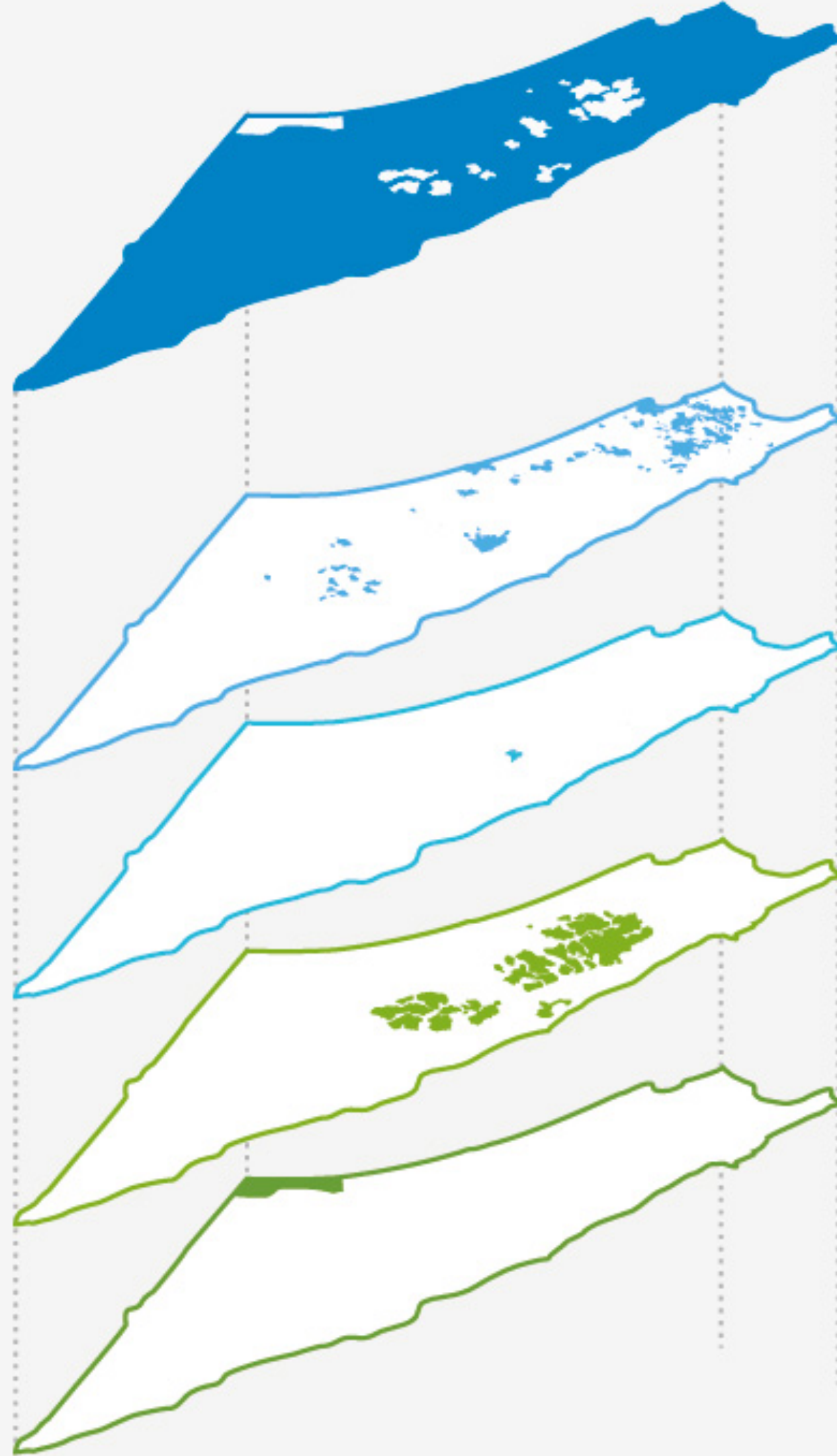


3,749,000
TOTAL JEWISH IMMIGRANTS

1,725,000+
TOTAL PALESTINIANS DISPLACED

Conditions in Occupied Palestine

SOME PEOPLE ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS



6.6m JEWISH ISRAELIS



JEWISH CITIZENS OF ISRAEL

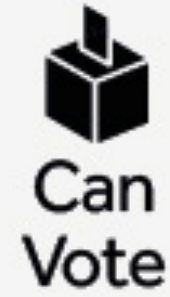
Free to live throughout Israel and most of West Bank

12.7m PALESTINIANS



PALESTINIAN CITIZENS OF ISRAEL

Barred by committees from living in 68% of towns in Israel

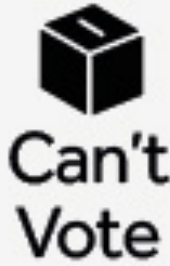


Can Vote



EAST JERUSALEM PALESTINIANS

Israel may revoke residency if living outside of Jerusalem



Can't Vote



WEST BANK PALESTINIANS

Barred by Israel from all but 38% of West Bank



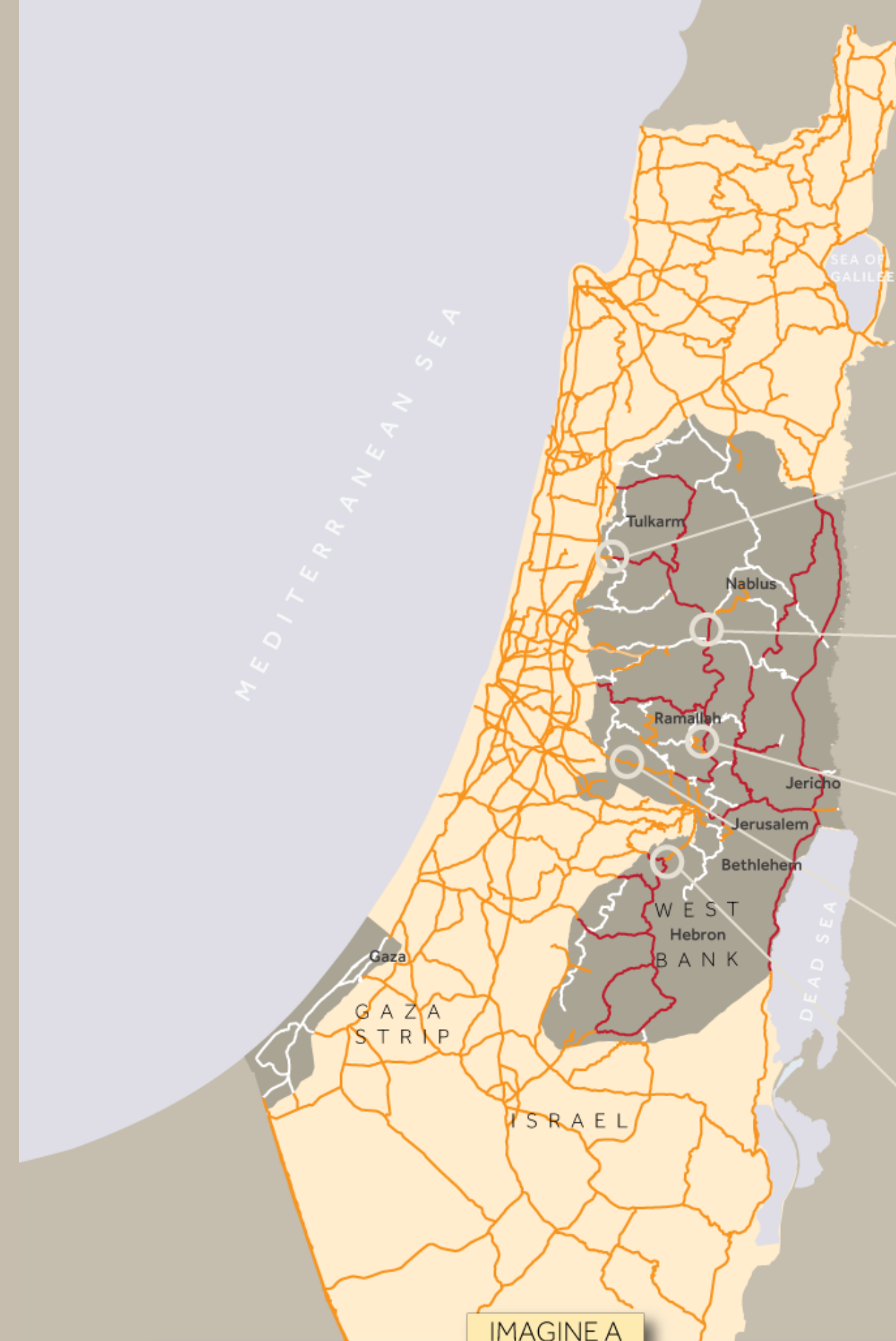
GAZA STRIP PALESTINIANS

Barred by Israel from living outside of Gaza since 2007



EXILED PALESTINIANS

Barred by Israel from returning to their homeland since 1948



TYPOLOGIES OF SEGREGATION

- 1 **ALL RDS** Land expropriated by Israel on either side of major roads.
- 2 **ROAD 557** Underpass roads between Palestinian enclaves, with access often restricted by gates.
- 3 **ALL RDS** Checkpoints along and adjacent to all restricted roads.
- 4 **ROAD 45** Fully segregated roads running in parallel to one another.
- 5 **ROAD 443** Road blocks/trenches prevent access to main roads and travel between Palestinian enclaves.
- 6 **ROAD 60** Israeli-only bridges and tunnels connecting Israeli settlements east of the separation wall.

IMAGINE A

SEGREGATED ROAD SYSTEM

29,521-65
Israeli license plate

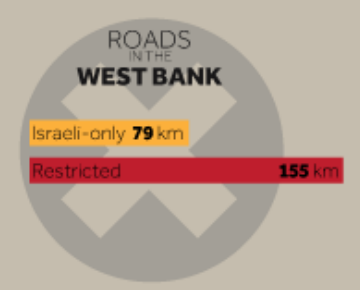
- ✓ Accessible only to Israelis
- ✓ Accessible to Israelis
- ✓ Accessible to Israelis Except in Gaza

COLOR

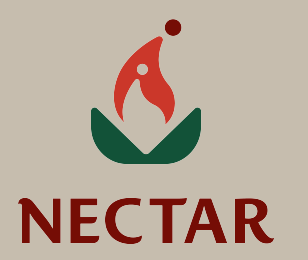
OF YOUR LICENSE PLATE
DICTATES
WHICH ROADS YOU
CAN DRIVE ON.

4,0039-43
Palestinian license plate

- ✗ Not accessible to Palestinians
- ✗ Restricted access to Palestinians
- ✓ Accessible to Palestinians



SOURCES
The Humanitarian Impact of Israeli Settlements and other Infrastructure in the West Bank; UN OCHA (Jerusalem, 2007)
Forbidden Roads: Israel's Discriminatory Road Regime in the West Bank; B'Tselem (Jerusalem, 2004)
'Apartheid Roads' Promoting Settlements, Punishing Palestinians; Ma'an Development Center (Ramallah/Gaza, 2008)
openstreetmap.org



Grounding back to our energetic resource



Plan for today's teach-in

- Context
 - Brief history of Zionism
 - Conditions in Occupied Palestine
- **What this is about – Frameworks**
 - **Settler Colonialism and Imperialism**
 - **White Supremacy**
- What this is not about – what is weaponized
 - Religion
 - Safety
- Hope and Solidarity

What this is about

**aka the frameworks we need to understand what
is going on**

Settler Colonialism and Imperialism

Colonialism

- Began in the ancient times, i.e. Romans and Greeks
- Modern sense began with the “Age of Discovery,” 15–17th century
- Denotes “ownership:” the colony is owned by the metropole and exists to provide resources for the metropole
 - i.e. West Indies: the British owned the islands, but British people did not work the fields, they had local people work the fields and kept the profits
 - Extractive industries: rubber, copper, diamonds

Settler Colonialism

- People from the metropole actually settle and live in the colony
 - United States
 - Israel
- Need to navigate relationships of co-existence (often resulted in displacement and genocide)

Imperialism

- More modern form of colonialism
- Denotes “control:” the metropole holds power and sway over the territory but may not be through direct ownership
- Can be a debt relationship or a military dependency
 - The World Bank/IMF “bail-outs”
 - The U.S. in Occupied Palestine (\$270 billion military aid to Israel)

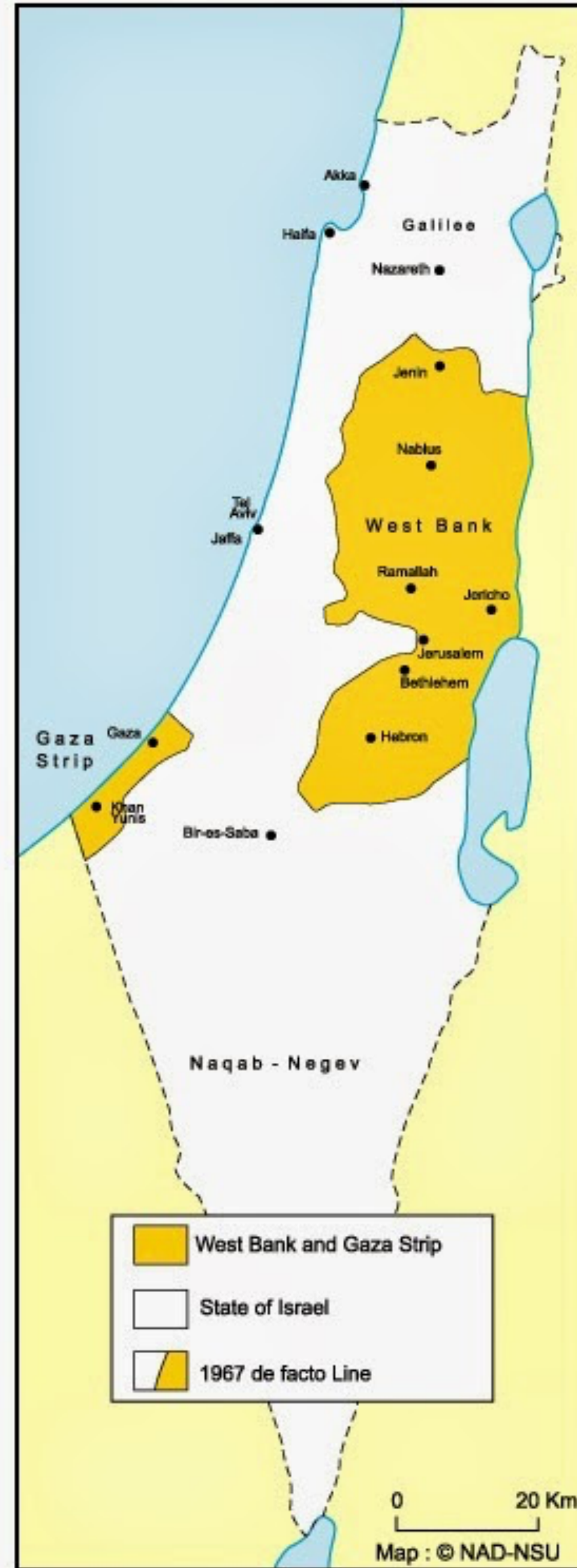
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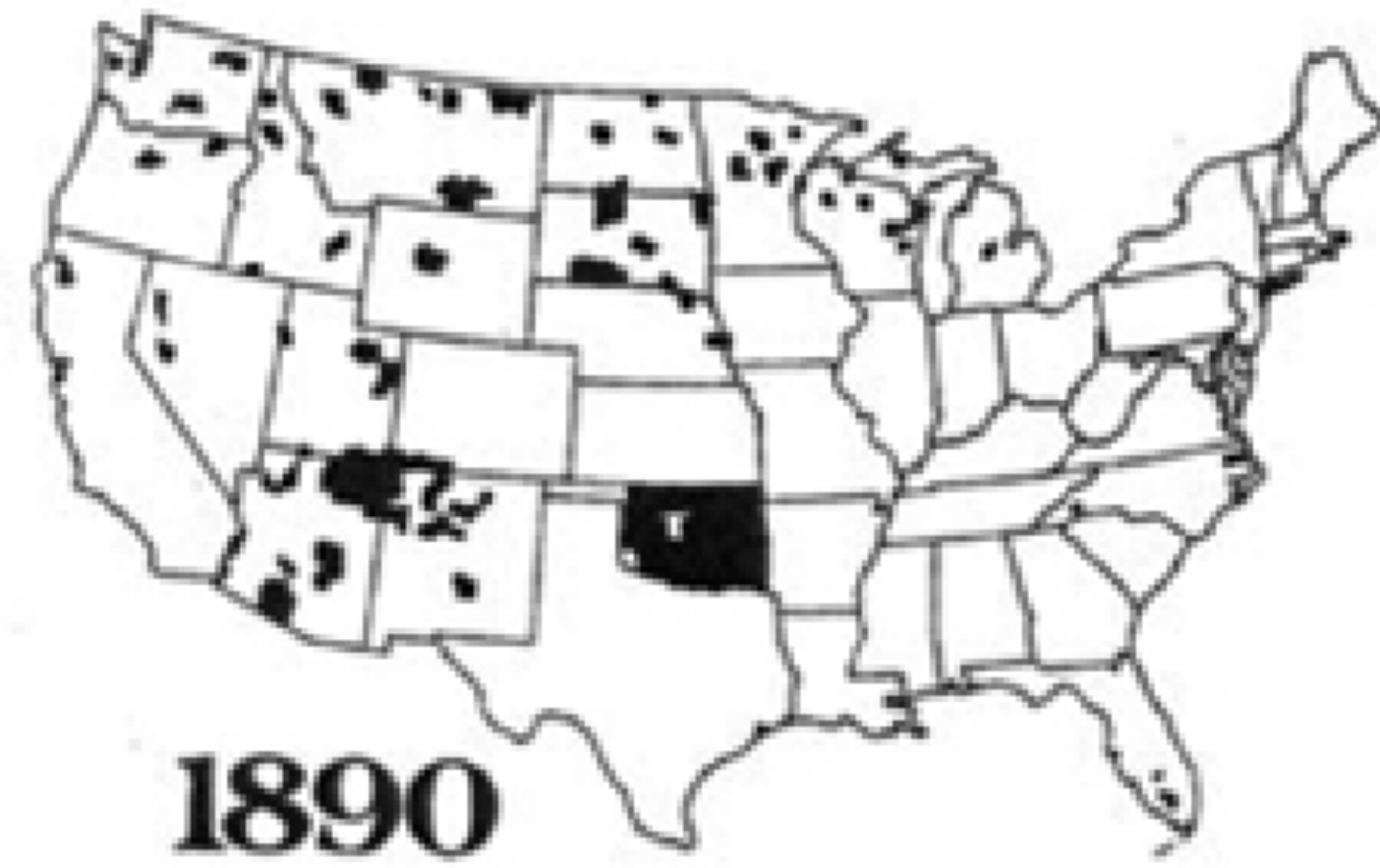
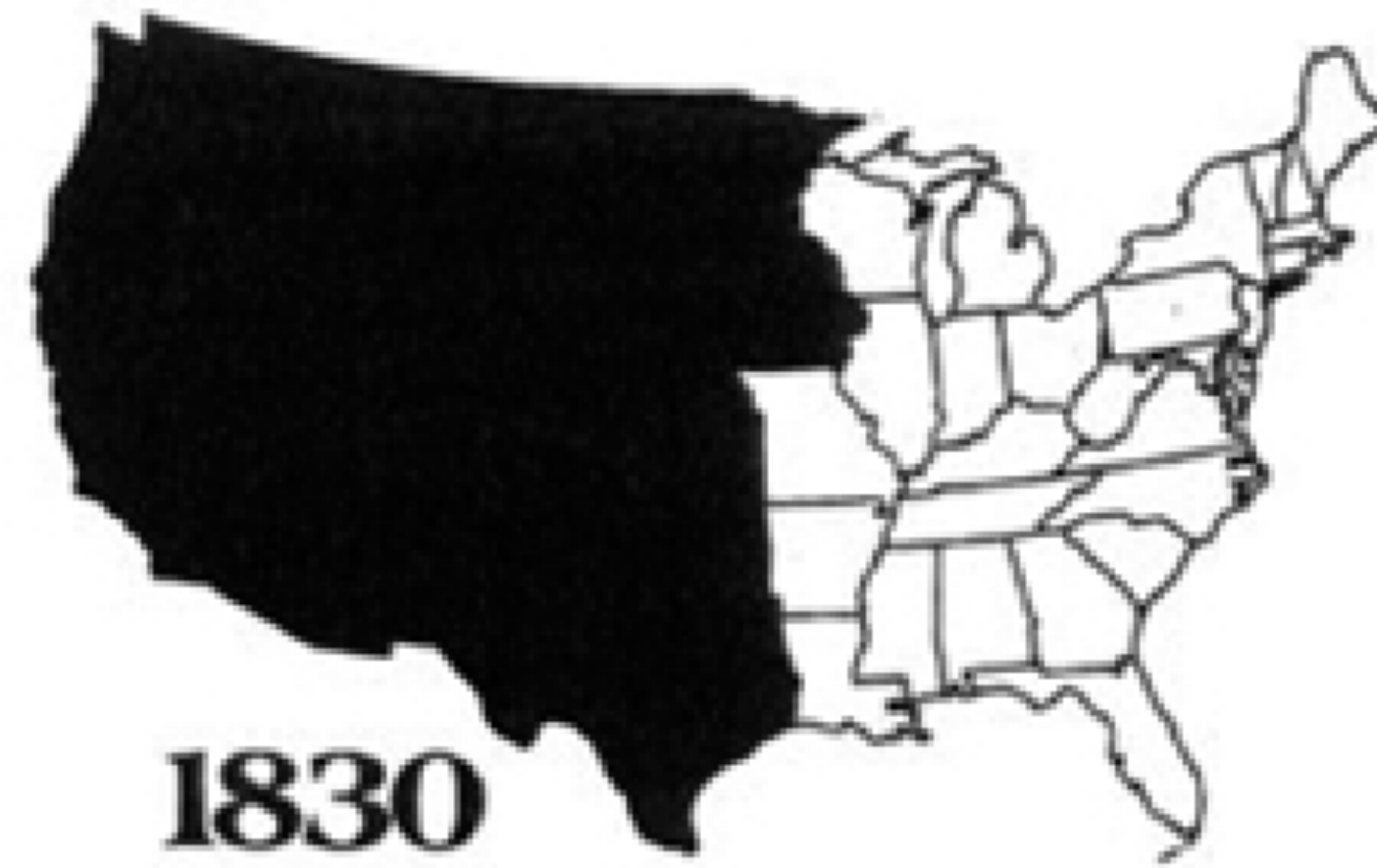


Settlements, Wall, and Jordan Valley
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Loss of Indigenous Lands



“It is quite common to hear high officials in Washington and elsewhere speak of changing the map of the Middle East, as if ancient societies and peoples can be shaken up like so many peanuts in a jar.”

– Edward Said

As Koreans whose homeland is divided, we know that imperialism is our common enemy. Following our liberation from Japanese colonialism and the beginning of independent socialist construction in Korea, the US split our country in two and indiscriminately bombed and killed our people. There is a reason that the Nakba and the division of Korea coincided in 1948, backed by the same imperialist interests.

Both Korea and Palestine are geographically strategic sites for the US empire's grip across the world. Occupying Korea gives the US a foothold in East Asia, and funding the Zionist occupation of Palestine gives the US a foothold in the Middle East. The US knows that an independent Korea and a free Palestine would strengthen liberation struggles everywhere and threaten the imperialist partition of the world.

Grounding back to our energetic resource



White Supremacy



White Supremacy

- Whiteness is not about skin color; it is about a set of power relations
- The system of policing in the U.S. is rooted in white supremacy
- Evangelical Christian nationalism in the U.S. is rooted in white supremacy

U.S. Policing and Israeli Military (IDF)

- Exchange program began after 9/11
- Thousands of US police officers, FBI, CIA, and ICE agents
- Focuses on trainings in racial profiling, mass surveillance, suppression of protests, how to coordinate with media to spin coverage, infiltration into mosques and BLM organizers
- US police delegates witness “live demonstrations of repressive violence in real-time, in protests across the West Bank, patrols in East Jerusalem, and visits to the Gaza border” (Eran Efrati, executive director of Researching the American-Israeli Alliance)



Robert Mackey

@RobertMackey · [Follow](#)



Jamestown, PA's CTS brand tear gas fired in [#Ferguson](#) tonight [twitter.com/ryanjreilly/st...](https://twitter.com/ryanjreilly/status/3011111111) in the West Bank last week



Mariam Barghouti مريم البرغوثي @MariamBarghouti

Made in USA teargas canister was shot at us a few days ago in [#Palestine](#) by Israel, now they are used in [#Ferguson](#).



8:58 PM · Aug 17, 2014





— Police officers wearing riot gear push back demonstrators shooting tear gas next to St. John's Episcopal Church near the White House on June 1, 2020. Jose Luis Magana / AFP - Getty Images



Mariam Barghouti مريم البرغوثي

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Solidarity with [#Ferguson](#). Remember to not touch your face when teargassed or put water on it. Instead use milk or coke!

8:06 PM · Aug 13, 2014



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Mariam Barghouti مريم البرغوثي

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It feels so weird using my experience from [#Palestine](#) and Israeli oppression to give advice to [#Ferguson](#). Much love and solidarity!

9:01 PM · Aug 13, 2014



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Always make sure to run against the wind /to keep calm when you're teargassed, the pain will pass, don't rub your eyes! [#Ferguson](#) Solidarity

8:07 PM · Aug 13, 2014



266 Reply Share

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Rajai Abukhalil

@Rajaiabukhalil · [Follow](#)



Don't Keep much distance from the Police, if you're close to them they can't tear Gas. To [#Ferguson](#) from [#Palestine](#)

9:02 PM · Aug 13, 2014



210 Reply Share

[Read 12 replies](#)



Christian Zionism

CW: anti-semitic language

- By far the largest movement supporting Zionism outside of Israel
- Is a powerful bloc within the Christian right (Christian Nationalists)
- Motivated by the belief that Jews taking control of the Biblical land of Israel will bring about the second coming of Jesus and only Christians will be saved, Jews and Muslims will be forced to convert or be killed [*this is anti-semitic and anti-muslim*]
- Arthur Balfour (of the Balfour Declaration) and Woodrow Wilson (co-signed the Declaration) were Christian Zionists

Christian Zionism

“The backbone of Israel’s support in the United States is the evangelical Christians. It’s true because of numbers, and also because of their passionate and unequivocal support for Israel... About 25% of Americans — some people think more — are Evangelical Christians. Less than 2% of Americans are Jews.... If you look just at numbers, you should be spending a lot more time doing outreach to Evangelical Christians than you would to Jews. But also look at the passionate support. For most Evangelicals in the United States, certainly for many of them, Israel is one of the most important issues to them.” (Ron Dermer, close ally of Netanyahu and a former Israeli ambassador to the United States)

Christian Zionism

- Powerful lobby in Trump's administration; Mike Pompeo and Mike Pence are both Christian Zionists
- Trump formed an Evangelical advisory committee, the top two agenda items they asked for were 1) restricting abortion 2) moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, both were accomplished
 - Cut funding for United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
 - Recognized Israel's illegitimate claims to the Golan Heights
 - Withdraw from Iran nuclear deal

Christian Zionism

- Money difficult to track because most of it flows through churches
 - Support Jewish immigration to Israel
 - Support Israeli settlements in Occupied Palestine
- Christian Zionist movements outpace Jewish Zionist movements in their numbers and in their extremist, authoritarian views
- “As many Jewish Zionists hail Balfour, an avid antisemite, as a hero, they are very happy to overlook the antisemitism of Christian Zionists to bolster the shared vision of an apartheid Jewish supremacist state in historic Palestine.”
(Jonathan Brenneman & Aidan Orly, journalists)
- Hand shake between Netanyahu’s settler base and Trump’s Evangelical base

Grounding back to our energetic resource



Reflection and Journaling

- Take a moment to notice your body. How are you seated? Is your jaw clenched? Are your shoulders tight? What do you notice the most in your body?
- What feelings are you experiencing right now?
- Did anything surprise you? What are the most salient thoughts running through your mind right now?

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 - **Religion**
 - **Safety**
- Hope and Solidarity

What this is NOT about

**aka what is being weaponized to justify what is
going on**

We Speak Life

