



What my 10 months at +972 taught me about truth, generosity, and apartheid

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The Landline



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Last month, I both concluded my time at +972 and headed back to the United States.

As my 10 months of editing, reporting, and writing came to an end, I thought constantly about how I would answer the inevitable “How was it?” questions from friends and family. I’ve always struggled with them – the classic but oddly paralyzing ritual of reunion. And this time, the question felt heavier. I returned carrying the moral responsibility and political urgency of conveying the atrocities I know Israel is committing across this region to those who may still have some influence in bringing them to an end.

I could have said my year in Israel-Palestine was “enraging and illuminating,” that it was challenging but productive,” or “quick yet full.” All of those would be true. But none evoke the tightening in my chest when I heard Awdah Hathaleen’s 3-year-old son crying for his father in the middle of the night, or when I sat with a bereaved mother near Nablus who has been searching for her teenage son, missing inside the Israeli prison system for two years, or when I began noticing the “Finish Them” stickers plastered on the windows of cafes around my apartment in Jerusalem.

So this is how I’ve been responding: “It’s so much worse than you think it is.” Everything those back home have been reading, watching, and listening to captures only a fraction of the oppression and terror Israel’s military and its political leadership are inflicting across the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon, and within Israel’s own borders. The stories that reach international audiences are not exceptional, but a minuscule glimpse of daily reality.

Of course, I also tell people that I learned how to ask sharper interview questions, edit both the work of emerging and experienced writers, and internalize the ins and outs of +972’s house style. This magazine has shown me what independent, long-form journalism demands, and what it can accomplish.

But just as formative was being immersed in the values that sustain the organization. Privileged with freedom of movement, I crossed repeatedly between Israel, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank — separate worlds sculpted by the hands of Israel’s occupation. Moving between them made clear just how uncommon work that effectively transcends apartheid’s strict separations is. It is logistically challenging, emotionally sensitive, and can be slow or tedious.

+972’s work — across three languages, unequal freedom of movement, different countries and continents, and under an increasingly violent and repressive regime — is not intuitive or natural, but an active choice. For Palestinians to have trusted me, a Jewish American whose people and government have helped engineer their oppression, enough to work alongside me, insist I eat at their table, and make up an extra mattress for me to sleep on, is an extraordinary act of generosity.

The writers, editors, staff, and supporters of +972 are a rare example of those bound together not by ethnicity, nationality, language, or any other traditional identity marker, but by a shared commitment to telling the truth about this place. More than anything else, that is what I will carry with me.

It sounds obvious, even trite, but here, where the stakes are so high — where violence between the river and the sea continues to intensify, the world largely fails to act, and public attention so often shifts away from the reality itself —