

# **There is Another Way: The Life of Galia Golan of Israel**

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**2015 Women PeaceMakers Program**



University  
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JOAN B. KROC  
SCHOOL OF PEACE STUDIES  
*Institute for Peace and Justice*

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## **A NOTE TO THE READER**

In the following pages, you will find narrative stories about a Woman PeaceMaker, along with additional information to provide a deep understanding of a contemporary conflict and one person's journey within it. These complementary components include a brief biography of the peacemaker, a historical summary of the conflict, a timeline integrating political developments in the country with personal history of the peacemaker, a question-and-answer transcript of select interviews, and a table of best practices in peacebuilding as demonstrated and reflected on by the peacemaker during her time at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice.

The document is not intended necessarily to be read straight through, from beginning to end. Instead, you can use the historical summary or timeline as mere references or guides as you read the narrative stories. You can move straight to the table of best practices if you are interested in peacebuilding methods and techniques, or go to the question-and-answer transcript if you want to read commentary in the peacemaker's own words. The goal of this format is to reach audiences through multiple channels, providing access to the peacemaker's work, vision, lives and impact in their communities.

## **ABOUT THE WOMEN PEACEMAKERS PROGRAM**

The Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice's (IPJ) Women PeaceMakers Program annually hosts four women from around the world who have been involved in human rights and peacemaking efforts in their countries.

Women on the frontline of efforts to end violence and secure a just peace seldom record their experiences, activities and insights — as generally there is no time or, perhaps, they do not have formal education that would help them record their stories. The Women PeaceMakers Program is a selective program for leaders who want to document, share and build upon their unique peacemaking stories.

Women PeaceMakers are paired with a Peace Writer to document in written form their story of living in conflict and building peace in their communities and nations. While in residence at the institute, Women PeaceMakers give presentations on their work and the situation in their home countries to the university and San Diego communities.

The IPJ believes that women's stories go beyond headlines to capture the nuance of complex situations and expose the realities of gender-based violence, thus providing an understanding of conflict and an avenue to its transformation. The narrative stories of Women PeaceMakers not only provide this understanding, but also show the myriad ways women construct peace in the midst of and after violence and war. For the realization of peace with justice, the voices of women — those severely affected by violent conflict and struggling courageously and creatively to build community from the devastation — must be recorded, disseminated and spotlighted.<sup>1</sup>

## **BIOGRAPHY OF A WOMAN PEACEMAKER —** **GALIA GOLAN**

Galia Golan of Israel knows well the subjects of Israeli-Palestinian politics. She is a professor emerita who lectures internationally and is a recognized expert in international affairs and foreign policy. That Golan is also a grassroots activist with several decades of experience focused on advancing women's roles in peacebuilding and a key strategist in parliamentary activism, speaks volumes about her considerable and multilayered contributions to peace and justice in Israel.

Golan has been an instrumental figure in leading the Israeli peace movement, beginning with her role as a founder and leader of Peace Now, Israel's prominent mass peace movement. She was an organizer of the unprecedented demonstration of 400,000 Israelis during the war with Lebanon, and the movement's representative on stage at the fateful peace rally at which former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated in 1995.

Golan co-founded and led two joint Israeli-Palestinian women's peace organizations: the Jerusalem Link (Bat Shalom) and the International Women's Commission for a Just and Sustainable Palestinian-Israeli Peace. She was also a founding member and deputy chair of the Israel Women's Network, a feminist lobby group that played a critical role in advancing women's rights in Israel over the last quarter of a century. She has been in the leadership of the Meretz (social democratic) Party since its inception. As a colleague of hers observed, "She has been a role model for many of the young people, especially women, in the peace movement."

Golan has become deeply convinced that joint Israeli-Palestinian activity is the key to resolution of the long-standing conflict. She is active in the leadership of the joint Israeli and Palestinian Forum of Peace NGOs, and the more recent Palestinian/Israeli peace movement Combatants for Peace, which consists of former combatants working together in grassroots groups and public activities.

As the first woman political scientist in Israel, Golan has bridged the worlds of academia and activism. Currently a sought-after advisor, she is a member of the board of the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Studies, and she founded both Israel's first women's studies program and the first master's program in conflict resolution (in English) in Israel. Now retired, she is the academic advisor for a new international master's program in conflict resolution to be held at the Arab-Jewish village of Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam (Oasis of Peace) in Israel (under the auspices of the University of Massachusetts) with Arab, Jewish and international faculty and students.

## **CONFLICT HISTORY — ISRAEL**

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict primarily regards the aspirations of Arab and Jewish peoples for security, statehood and wellbeing in the areas now known as Israel and Palestine. As one of the longest protracted conflicts in modern history, the situation has transformed and changed over time. A shifting political and military landscape in addition to social and religious elements complicate the potential for a lasting peace in the Middle East.

Although some perspectives on the conflict contend that it is a centuries-old conflict between the Jewish and Arab peoples, the modern Israeli-Palestinian territorial conflict first surfaced in the late 1800s. Beginning in 1881, Jews migrated to Palestine following increasing anti-Jewish sentiments and large-scale riots targeting Jewish populations in Europe and the Russian Empire. These resettlements came to be known as the first *Aliyah*, or “ascendance,” to their “ancestral homeland” of *Eretz Yisrael*.

The idea of creating a state for the Jewish diaspora, known as political Zionism, was conceived of and promoted by Theodor Herzl, who became the first president of the World Zionist Organization, established at the first Zionist Congress in Switzerland in 1897. Herzl led diplomatic efforts, fundraising and lobbying to obtain international support for the creation of a Jewish homeland.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian territory then under the control of the Ottoman Empire was being eyed by various powers. One agreement by Sir Henry McMahon promised British support for Hashemite rule in the region, contingent on a successful Arab revolt against Ottoman rule. In another agreement, Lord Arthur Balfour declared that Britain would support the establishment of a Jewish state in those same areas.

This created complications upon the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. The large swath of territory was entrusted to the British by the League of Nations in 1922 through the British Mandate for Palestine. Shortly thereafter, the British gave the territory east of the Jordan River, known as the Transjordan, to the Hashemites. The remaining territory west of the Jordan River came to be known as the mandate of Palestine, and was contested by the Zionist movement, which had continued to support Jewish settlement. With rising atrocities against Jews in Europe leading up to the Holocaust, Zionists urgently pushed for a Jewish homeland.

Unable to resolve the contentions between the Jewish and Palestinian claims to the territory, the British eventually turned over the negotiations to the newly formed United Nations, a successor to the defunct League of Nations. The UN Special Commission on Palestine was established and recommended a partition plan, which established tentative boundary lines to divide the territory into a “Jewish state in Palestine and an Arab state in Palestine.”

Members of the Jewish Agency delegation study a map of proposed partition of Palestine at United Nations interim headquarters. Left to right: Dr. Nahum Goldman, David Horovitz, Emanuel Neumann and Rabbi Wolf Gold. November 12, 1947. (UN Photo)

In 1948, upon the expiration of the British Mandate of Palestine, the World Zionist Organization declared the establishment of a State of Israel, to which a coalition of Arab states (Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Egypt) immediately responded with military force in support of the Palestinian Arabs. This day is marked very differently in the histories of these two peoples, known in Israel as the Day of Independence, and by the Palestinians as *al-Nakba* or “the Catastrophe.”

After about 10 months of intensive fighting which resulted in great casualties on both sides, the recently established Jewish state held the territory allotted in the UN resolution, in addition to great swaths of the territory which had been allotted to the state of Palestine. In 1949 Israel signed armistice agreements with each of the Arab states. At this point, Israel encompassed about three-fourths of the original British Mandate west of the Jordan River. These armistice lines became Israel’s unrecognized border until 1967, when they came to be known as the “Green Line.”

Israel led a pre-emptive strike against Egypt and Syria; Jordan attacked Israel. By the end of the war, successfully winning on three fronts in just six days, Israel now occupied Egypt’s Sinai desert in the south, Jordan’s West Bank of the River Jordan in the east (including East Jerusalem), and the Syrian (Golan) Heights in the north.

The military conflict then shifted into a new era as Israel reached peace agreements with two neighboring countries. In 1977, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat surprised the world by initiating a visit to Israel, where he delivered a historic speech to the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) in Jerusalem, declaring a desire for peace between the countries. After U.S.-mediated efforts at Camp David under President Jimmy Carter, a bilateral peace treaty between Egypt and Israel was signed in 1979. In 1981, Sadat was assassinated by Islamist militants, but the peace with Israel has held to this day.

Days after the 1982 fatal attack on an Israeli ambassador in London, Israel launched a full-scale invasion of Lebanon which forced Yasser Arafat, leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), to relocate from Beirut to Tunisia. After the Israeli army moved into west Beirut, the Lebanese militia known as the Christian Phalange carried out a massacre in the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila. The investigation of the Kahan Commission determined that that the Israeli military played an indirect yet complicit role in the massacre.

In December 1987, a Palestinian uprising that came to be known as the First Intifada began after the death of four Palestinians inside a refugee camp when their car collided with a truck of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). This built upon Palestinian frustrations as a result of the intimidation and indignity of life in the Israeli occupied

territories. Numerous non-violent and violent tactics were used in the uprising, including blockades, tire burning and rock throwing.

Meanwhile, Israel began implementing an “iron fist” policy and deported Palestinians, implemented curfews and demolished Palestinian houses.

The Intifada brought greater Israeli readiness for compromise according to public opinion polls. It also created pressure from within the occupied territories for the PLO outside to take action.

A breakthrough and dramatic milestone in the peace process occurred in 1988 when the PLO publicly accepted the idea of a two-state solution. In letters of recognition, Palestine recognized “the right of Israel to exist within secure and recognized borders” and renounced the use of terrorism, with Israel recognizing the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and partner in peace negotiations. The Oslo Accords were signed in Washington by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat in 1993, agreeing to an interim framework of governance with permanent peace talks to take place within five years. A Palestinian National Authority (PNA) was established to which Israel would gradually transfer power, accompanied by the withdrawal of Israeli forces from areas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Increasing provocation from Israel’s political right-wing, of which future Benjamin Netanyahu was a figurehead, also resulted in internal tensions in Israel, with agitating and inciting rhetoric becoming more common. At the end of a demonstration in support of the Oslo Accords in 1995, Rabin was assassinated by a right-wing Israeli student. Netanyahu was elected prime minister in 1996 and the Oslo process came more or less to a halt.

In 2000, following the return of the Labor Party to power, the United States invited Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak for peace talks at Camp David. These talks ended in failure.

Two months after the talks, a Second Intifada began in the wake of a visit by right-wing leader Ariel Sharon to the Temple Mount (a holy site for Jews and Muslims, and known to Muslims as al-Haram al-Sharif) in East Jerusalem. Palestinian demonstrations erupted into riots, turning quickly into an armed uprising with near daily terrorist attacks inside Israel, and Israel’s military forces moved back into West Bank cities from which it had previously withdrawn.

In 2002, the Arab League — including the Palestinians — unanimously adopted the Arab Peace Initiative which called for peace with Israel, end of the conflict, normal relations, and security in exchange for Israeli withdrawal to the pre-1967 lines, creation of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a just and agreed upon solution to the Palestinian refugee problem.

In Israel, the peace initiative was overshadowed by a suicide bomb attack at a Passover Seder being held in the Park Hotel in Netanya, Israel, which killed 30 Israelis and injured many more. It was subsequently ignored by the Israeli government.

Under the leadership of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, in 2005 Israel completely withdrew from the Gaza Strip, including the evacuation of all the settlers, despite right-wing Israeli opposition. The next year, the internal political situation in Palestine took a dramatic shift when Hamas overthrew Fatah as the majority political party in the Palestinian Legislative Council. This essentially divided the Palestinian territories into two separate entities: the Gaza Strip under Hamas, and the West Bank under the Fatah-controlled Palestinian Authority.

Attempts at peace talks continued, and in 2008, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas began direct negotiations. Although quite close to a final agreement, the talks ended inconclusively because of the pending resignation of Olmert due to corruption charges. Both leaders later said they believed they could have reached full agreement with only a little more time.

In 2013, the U.S. again spearheaded negotiations, with Secretary of State John Kerry facilitating between Abbas and Netanyahu. However, deep concerns over good faith in negotiating poisoned the talks, and no agreements were reached. During the summer of 2014, Israel attacked Gaza for a third time, following Hamas rocket attacks on Israel.

As of October 2015, there has been a surge of violent incidents which is gradually coming to be called a “Third Intifada.” Stabbings in public areas of Israel, such as bus stops and in front of shopping locations, appear to be random and unorganized, mainly carried out by younger Palestinian perpetrators. With increasing escalations elsewhere in the Middle East, notably in nearby Syria, the path to peace looks increasingly unclear. Future possibilities for peace lay in the continuing efforts of Palestinians and Israelis seeking peace and security together, as newer generations that have known only occupation and violent conflict come of age.



## **INTEGRATED TIMELINE**

### Political Developments in Israel and *Personal History of Galia Golan*

#### **1881**

- Diaspora Jews migrate to Palestine following increasing anti-Jewish sentiments.
- Political Zionism, as led by Theodor Herzl, begins.

#### **1922**

- Palestine becomes a British Mandate.

#### **1938**

- ***Gail Greenbaum is born in Cincinnati, Ohio. The family later changes its last name to Greene.***

#### **1945**

- World War II ends.

#### **1947**

- The UN Special Commission on Palestine establishes a partition plan.

#### **1948**

- The State of Israel is established.

#### **1949**

- Israel signs armistice agreements with neighboring Arab nations.
- ***Gail Greene and her family move to Florida, again.***

#### **1953**

- ***Gail attends a boarding school in New England.***

**1954**

- In *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court of the United States rules against the segregation of public schools, refuting the idea of “separate but equal.”
- The McCarthy hearings are shown live on television from April to June.
- ***Gail transfers to Forest Hills High School in New York.***

**1956**

- ***Gail graduates from high school and begins school at Brandeis University as a philosophy major, as a protégé of Herbert Marcuse.***

**1958-9**

- ***Gail visits Poland and Czechoslovakia.***

**1960-2**

- ***Gail studies abroad in Paris and spends a summer in the Soviet Union.***

**1962**

- ***Gail begins working as an Eastern European specialist at the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.***
- In October, tensions between the United States and Soviet Union escalate over Soviet missiles in Cuba, an incident now known as the Cuban Missile Crisis.

**1963**

- Martin Luther King, Jr., delivers the “I Have a Dream” speech at the March on Washington. ***Gail participates in the march.***
- ***Gail makes her first visit to Israel as a tourist.***

**1965**

- The Selma to Montgomery March takes place in Alabama.
- ***Gail visits Israel again as a tourist.***

**1966**

- ***Gail immigrates to Israel and takes the name Galia Golan.***

**1967**

- The Six-Day War takes place. Israel occupies the West Bank and Gaza Strip territories.

**1968**

- Martin Luther King, Jr., is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.
- In Czechoslovakia, Alexander Dubcek pushes through liberalizing reforms to advance “socialism with a human face,” in what would later be called the Prague Spring. It was crushed some months later by the invasion of Soviet troops.
- ***Galia regularly appears on television and radio to explain what is happening in Czechoslovakia, gaining fame and recognition in Israel.***

**1972**

- ***Galia marries David Gild. She attains tenure on the political science faculty at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.***

**1973**

- The Yom Kippur War takes place when Egyptian and Syrian forces attack Israel on Yom Kippur.

**1977**

- The Labor Party falls from power for the first time in Israeli history and a right-wing government takes over.
- Egyptian President Anwar Sadat becomes the first Arab leader to visit Israel.
- ***Galia and a group of intellectuals, later known as Circle 77, join the Labor Party.***

**1978**

- Peace Now is established, ***and Galia is one of its leaders.***

**1981**

- ***Galia creates the first women's studies program in Israel, at the Hebrew University.***
- ***David undergoes an operation for a brain tumor.***

**1982**

- Israel invades Lebanon. The Kahan Commission is established to investigate Israel's role in the Sabra and Shatila massacre in Lebanon.
- ***Peace Now's demonstration to protest the massacre draws 400,000 people.***

**1983**

- ***Galia's colleague, Emil Grunzweig, is killed by a hand grenade at a Peace Now demonstration.***
- ***Galia is diagnosed with cancer and undergoes a surgery and chemotherapy.***

**1985**

- The United Nations 2nd World Conference on Women is held in Nairobi, Kenya. ***Galia attends as a representative of Israel's Women's Network, which she helped create a year earlier.***
- ***Galia becomes a full professor.***

**1987**

- The First Intifada breaks out.

**1988**

- The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) accepts a two-state solution, recognizing Israel's right to exist within secure and recognized borders.

**1989**

- ***Peace Now, including Galia, holds the "Hands Around Jerusalem" demonstration, bringing together thousands of Israelis, Palestinians and Europeans to encircle the Old City.***

- ***Galia attends an event in Brussels, Belgium, called “Give Peace a Chance — Women Speak Out.”***

**1991**

- The Soviet Union collapses.

**1992**

- ***David stops his work as a doctor in family practice.***

**1993**

- Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat sign the Oslo Accords on the White House lawn.
- ***As a result of the meetings in Nairobi and Brussels, the Jerusalem Link is created. It consists of Bat Shalom (Daughter of Peace) and Markaz al-Quds la I-Nissah (the Jerusalem Center for Women). Galia is one of the founding leaders.***

**1994**

- ***David’s health deteriorates to a point where he needs to be admitted to a hospice. Galia visits him every day or every other day.***

**1995**

- ***Galia is diagnosed with cancer for a second time and again undergoes chemotherapy.***
- Rabin is assassinated.

**1996**

- ***David passes away.***

**2000**

- The Camp David peace talks fail.
- The Second Intifada breaks out.
- ***Galia retires from Hebrew University, moves to the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, and creates a program in conflict resolution.***

**2005**

- The International Women’s Commission for a Just Peace in the Middle East is formed, consisting of Israeli, Palestinian and international women, ***including Galia.***

**2008-9**

- Israel invades Gaza, leading to a month-long war.
- ***The International Women’s Commission is dissolved after its members failed to find common ground on the issue of boycotting and sanctions on Israel.***

**2014**

- Israel launches another attack on Gaza, lasting nearly two months.
- ***Galia joins Combatants for Peace, an Israeli-Palestinian peace movement of ex-fighters advocating non-violence.***
- ***Galia publishes her 10th book.***

**2015**

- ***Galia becomes a Woman PeaceMaker at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice, at the University of San Diego.***

**NARRATIVE STORIES OF THE LIFE OF**  
**GALIA GOLAN**

**When Words Fail**

**Galia:**

*Nobody, even from the inside, is able to tell the stories in a fair way.*

*You can't, and I knew that you would not be able to.  
I don't think anyone can do it.*

*But you'll do the best you can trying to put something together.*

*But I know that it can't be done.*

*It can't be done even inside — where it counts. It's so hard to do.*

**Claire:**

*I want to at least make sure I'm not telling the wrong story in the wrong way.*

**Galia:**

*I know, and that's why we're going to try together.*

*I knew that we'd reach this point; I didn't know how early.*

*So, what we have to try to do together is get it as close as it can be.*

## **Becoming Galia Golan**

To get to the Casa de la Paz, step through the Garden of the Sea at the University of San Diego. The rectangular pond just begins to swell over the turquoise tiles; the gardeners are turning on the pump. Choose between the ramp and the stairs; both pass beneath the low-hanging trees with their strange leaf-green seedpods, long as a forearm and thick as a man's thumb.

A westward glance scans Mission Bay and the San Diego cityscape, with a modest border of ocean and a generous portion of sky. The panorama is interrupted only by two iron statues, a few cement benches, and one great pine tree.

Here it stands on the south side of the garden: a modest, standalone building with two impressive wooden doors and a small box on the right-hand side to buzz the apartment. The mauve pillar has a tiny ledge where the square foundation meets the column — the perfect place to set one's coffee cup while shuffling binders and phones and reaching to press the button for "2 West."

"Hello?"

"Hi Galia, it's me."

"OK, I'm coming down."

The doors swing open and Galia peeks around the corner in a crisp white shirt with thin dark stripes, and dark pants. Her short hair is slightly yellow, damp from the shower. Over the course of the morning interviews, the dandelion color eventually fluffs into white. Each day it is a marvel where that golden yellow color disappears to, but the next morning it is back again, and then vanishes.

"So, what are we talking about today?" she likes to ask, sharp eyes sparkling behind her glasses.

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On January 5, 1968, the reformists in Czechoslovakia came to power, and Galia was one of the few people in the world who knew what was going on, because no one had been looking there before. She appeared on the one newly established television station in Israel, and commented in the press. Suddenly, she was famous.

She had once been Gail Marjorie Greenbaum. It was Greenbaum when she was born in Cincinnati shortly before World War II, back when it was a pro-German and anti-Semitic town. It wasn't until much later that she understood why her father had changed the name, dropped the "baum." Safer.



Growing up, she was Gail Greene. There are friends from the [kibbutz](#) who still call her Gail when they ring to wish her a Happy New Year. Her brother calls her Gail. Her mother used to call her Gail. There's a guy who likes to act like he knows her from long ago, so he calls her Gail.

But the truth is she feels more like Galia. It's one of those things that stuck.

In college, she let loose her pin curls, and her light, reddish-brown hair grew long. She traded her crinolines, skirts and stockings for chinos, and went on summer exchange in the Soviet Union. There, they referred to her as Galina, nickname Galia.

The name Galia also exists in Hebrew, albeit with a slightly different pronunciation. So when she immigrated to Israel, she took the name. After her first year, in the summer of '67 she went to the Interior Ministry to apply for her citizenship and ID card.

"You can change your last name, too," the administrators told her.

Well then. She considered the literal translation of "[green](#)" in Hebrew, but was unsatisfied. She wanted instead a name that was as common in Hebrew as the last name "Greene" was in the United States. Her philosopher friend suggested Golan — this was before the Golan Heights were called that. Back then they were the Syrian Heights. Many things change names.

And sometimes, the name adheres, fastened by crucial points in history.

She was well-known, and had already published books under her name by the time she and David married. However, during that time, when a woman married in Israel she was assigned her husband's name — the bureaucratic change was automatic. So back she went to the fellows in the Ministry of the Interior to officially change her name to include "Golan-", and became Golan-Gild.

She also became "Professor." In Israel, almost all university lecturers who have a PhD and are called doctor, but professor is a rank and there are very few professors. She gets a very different reception with the title. She used to say, "Full professor is next to God." Times have changed, but it's still an honor earned.

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In San Diego, GALIA GOLAN is printed on the colored flyers taped to doors and stacked on desks. "Galia Golan of Israel" is featured on the poster boards propped up in the echoing halls where students shuffle past. In the Peace and Justice Theatre, lip-sticked plum mouths announce her and intone GAH-liyah go-LAHN into microphones, syllables pooling in shell ears.

She sits on stage beneath the lights, prepared notes in her hands, waiting for her cue to speak.

But in the morning chats in the West Suite breakfast parlor in the Casa, or interviews in the living room, it is just Galia. Two white armchairs face each other, with a scarlet pillow ready to soothe her lower back. She wants them pulled close, writer and interviewee, knees threaded like zipper teeth, so she can hear the questions. The voice recorder runs. The sun walks across the floors, illuminating specks of dust suspended in air.

Clever, joyful smile, bright eyes, damp hair and ready to work: Galia.

“So, what are we talking about today?”

## One Day, It's Going to Explode

Gail was 5 years old when her big brother Danny had her box a little boy. When she looked up through her slipping glasses and her small, clenched fists, she saw Danny beaming. He was so proud that she fought just as well as the boys, Galia knew, yet she also had the feeling that maybe this wasn't what a little girl was supposed to be doing.

She loved her brother, did everything that he did — and he would take her everywhere. They were lucky, being so close as siblings.

These are the memories of the golden age, the early years: growing up, following her brother around, playing with the dog. Their family had been fairly normal, doing all kinds of things together. All before she reached the age of 7. All before her parents' divorce.

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Their mother's announcement would often come in the middle of the school year: "We're moving." Their mother would move Gail and Danny from Ohio to Florida, Illinois, Florida again — and Gail hated it. She would finally get settled with her school friends and activities, even elected to the student council, then again: "We're moving."

Her mother's brother, Uncle Charlie, would visit and take Gail out. In those days, Uncle Charlie drove a brand new Nash, light brown — and he was convinced it was the best car, though it was never a successful model. But if Uncle Charlie drove it, then rest assured it was the best. He was always certain about things.

He was a character. In later years he converted to Catholicism; was a libertarian who built himself a house in the forest in Northern California, and then moved to Las Vegas so he wouldn't have to pay state taxes; a [purser](#) flying all over the world for PanAm in the 1940s and '50s, when all of the other uncles and aunts had normal family lives. He was the bachelor uncle of big hugs and wet kisses, funny sounds and imitations.

Everywhere they went on their outings, he'd exclaim, "Oh, look here! There are kids your age!" It was a joke, because everywhere she moved Gail had to make new friends.

But it wasn't all bad. Gail enjoyed each place, loved seeing different things. During World War II, they spent the winter months in Florida, and she liked being near the ocean at Miami Beach, where she and Danny would hang out with the soldiers. She made friends easily and was independent, and at least she and Danny had each other. It was the moving and having to be the new kid that was terrible.

She had been enjoying Florida for 6th through 9th grades when her mother said, “We’re moving to New York.” Gail should have known it wouldn’t last.

Uncle Charlie piped in, “So you were a big fish in a little pond. Now you can be a big fish in a big pond.”

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When Gail’s mother became unemployed, Uncle Charlie took an apartment in Forest Hills in New York so Gail could go to a good high school for her last two years. He rented a studio elsewhere in the city for Danny, who had dropped out of high school and decided on art school instead.

Those two years living with Uncle Charlie and attending Forest Hills High were extraordinary years for Gail. The kids in the neighborhood were inspiring, bright:

Armand, who went on to be a civil rights lawyer; Frank, Gail’s puppy love who danced and sang and went on to be a writer; Emmy, who became an Emmy award-winning writer for the children’s television series “Sesame Street”; Steve, who became the head of cardiology at a New York hospital. Her friend Posey, who also went on to become an acclaimed writer, had a brother who was a jazz musician and taught Gail opera by putting on a record and explaining what the singers were doing. For a date, these kids might go to a museum, or one of the amazing plays at the theatre — or the opera, standing-room only, following the score in their hands. It was an amazing time to grow up in New York.

The circle of friends would sit in the living room and discuss philosophy and literature with Uncle Charlie and his friend, John Sternberg. The two men would throw out questions and facts, challenging each young person’s stance. During these conversations, Uncle Charlie introduced them to Aristotle and Plato, played Tchaikovsky and Beethoven on his phonograph. He took Gail and Danny to see a renowned flamenco dancer and told them of Marcel Marceau. It was all intellectual training — rigorous and exhilarating.

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Gail would get to Forest Hills High a half-hour before school started to tutor two kids in English: one from Japan and one from Czechoslovakia. One day, the young Japanese boy was talking with Gail when the conversation turned to his memories of Tokyo.

When only 6 or 7 years old, he woke one morning to a red sky. The entire city was on fire. In a moment, his reality had turned to waste and horror. Sitting next to him and listening to his telling, Gail felt the story catch hold of her. Though she hadn’t experienced it herself, she can still see it — a view of war that never left her.

On another day, Gail was walking down the street trying to come to grips with a figure she had just heard: 6 million. Six Million Jews Killed. She couldn't even picture 1 million people. How could she possibly understand 6 million people killed by the Nazis?

•

The tall apartment buildings lining 64th Road cast their blue afternoon shadows across the roads and amplified the sputter of cars and the chatter of just-released schoolchildren. It was just another day in the quintessentially middle-class, predominantly Jewish neighborhood of Forest Hills, not to be confused with the rich part: of the famous tennis courts where the tournaments are held. Jews weren't allowed to live there in the 1950s.

On one of the upper floors, the apartment's front door swung open like an announcement, followed by energetic footsteps and the thud of a suitcase.

Greeting Uncle Charlie usually involved great energetic hugs and wet kisses and laughs, but today he remained leaning in the bedroom doorway. "What, are you still in bed? It's 5 o'clock in the afternoon! And you couldn't even be bothered to wash the dishes?"

Gail looked up foggily through her glasses, evaluating the likelihood that he was real. She was sure her uncle had already come home once today. She'd had a brief conversation with him, only to realize that nobody had been there. She was uncertain whether the hallucinations were caused by the fever or the medications.

Clearly, Uncle Charlie would make a joke. He would definitely make a joke. The grin and mischievous glint in his eye were a dead giveaway. It must really be him this time.

"Chicken pox. Nobody gets chicken pox at 16!" she complained, grinning weakly and pushing herself upward in bed. She closed the book that she had been reading and held out a blotchy, skinny arm for his inspection.

"Well, who's been keeping you company there?" he asked.

"Howard Fast on the Haymarket strike," she said, turning the book over in her hands and angling the cover toward him.

With more energy, she would have been prepared to report a summary of her reading and pose her thoughts on its merits. Uncle Charlie would have asked difficult questions, smiling approvingly when she drove home a particularly well-argued point. She loved it, always rising to the challenge. She wanted to shine in his eyes.

But today she simply said, "Tell me about South Africa."

Each time he returned from week-long trips working for PanAm, Uncle Charlie brought back captivating stories of places far and wide. Gail loved hearing of things beyond the various cities that she, her brother and her mother were always moving between.

He sat down nearby and obliged. In a solemn tone, he recounted stories about the ways that human beings treated each other and created separations, and named those divisions “apartheid.”

She laid against her pillows and listened intently, watched the expressions flicker across his face.

It sounded a lot like the concept of “separate but equal” in America. Gail had recently worked on an art project on it at school. She had the idea of two kids holding one another’s hand. One black. One white. She’d ultimately had her brother Danny finish it for her; he was the artist, after all.

As Uncle Charlie spoke, Gail kept thinking of that painting. The conversation spun those concepts together until they were inextricably connected in her mind: the two children holding hands, her brother’s painting of it, her uncle’s conviction that apartheid was wrong. Separate but equal. That too must be wrong.

The details of the conversation would later fade, but one ominous sentence would echo in her head against those discordant images.

“One day,” he said, “it’s going to explode.”

### For Every Dollar Saved

Uncle Charlie and his friend John made a deal with Gail.

“For every dollar that you save, we’ll give you two — one dollar each,” Uncle Charlie said.

He had persuaded her mother to let Gail apply to college. In the Jewish tradition, it was the boy who was meant to go to university. But Danny was the artist; it was only Gail who yearned to study.

Gail immediately set to saving. Of her \$5-dollar weekly allowance, \$2.50 was meant to buy lunches, \$2.50 was spending money. She made her own lunches and saved all of her allowance.

She searched a catalog of universities and found some co-ops and teachers seminaries that could offer her scholarships. She glanced, contemptuously, at the letter on the table next to her, from her cousin: *You will never find a Jewish husband, going to universities like those.*

•

All dressed up, Gail began her walk to high school. She wasn’t particularly keen on the heels, but today she was going into the city to be presented the Generoso Pope Award at City Hall. *\$200 from the City of New York — from a famous Italian politician I know nothing about,* she mused.

Gail had been accepted into Brandeis, but needed funding. With the help of her savings, a high school advisor who got her more scholarships, Uncle Charlie, John and her mother, Gail managed \$500 for the tuition at Brandeis and \$500 for room and board. The second year, Brandeis paid for everything.

•

At Brandeis, the women who dressed conservatively in skirts and followed Max Lerner were nicknamed “The Knitters,” from an ongoing joke that they were knitting in class instead of listening. There were cheerleaders, like Letty Cotton who would go on to be a founder of *Ms. Magazine*, and people who went to football games. There was Abbie Hoffman who sold sub sandwiches and later gained notoriety as one of the Chicago Seven, charged with disrupting the Democratic Convention in 1968. There were so many different people and ideas all brushing shoulders on campus and in the coffee shop.

At Brandeis, Galia was in good company. One of her fellow classmates, Letty Cotton, would go on to start *Ms. Magazine*, a liberal feminist magazine, with Gloria Steinem. This Spring 2002 edition features Steinem.

Gail was bohemian those college years. She grew her hair long and wore chinos, sang with her friends, making up lyrics along to the strumming guitar, attended folk music concerts by Pete Seeger and Odetta, and identified with the oppressed.

The faculty was made up of extraordinary people: refugees from Germany and from [McCarthyism](#). Students had personal contact with all of them, as there were only a few hundred students in total. Gail was a protégé of Herbert Marcuse, and her roommate was a protégé of Abe Maslow. And the conversations she had there — college was a gift. Occasionally, she would sit lost in thought and wonder: *This is just amazing. All I have to do is what I want to do — sit here and study!*



### In the Center of Things

The laughter that burst out of Gail dissolved like smoke in the clatter of the Eastern European train station. She looked around in wonder, clutching her bags. In Western Europe, she could get by with English, French and the little German that she knew. But here? The words of this Slavic language didn't resemble anything she knew. How would she ever be able to leave the station if she couldn't figure out what was exit and what was entrance?

It was like walking out of cinematic color into movies about hard times, all grey and dark with fear bred of uncertainty. She assumed that all she had heard about Eastern Europe, communism and the Soviet Union was propaganda, but now she saw it with her own eyes and it shocked her. These were dictatorships. And the people were terrified.

When she met up with a gaunt journalist, he insisted that they walk. Her legs wove the arterial streets of Warsaw into knots, and Gail wished desperately to just sit down at a café. But she couldn't ignore the constant backward turning of the journalist's head and the fearful flashing of his eyes. "No, they will be listening there." In the streets they passed not a single smiling person.

In Warsaw, some students clandestinely handed her photos of a demonstration that had been broken up with violence. Gail held the images in her hands, not knowing what they expected her to do with them. In Czechoslovakia, another student took her to his home, where his parents drew black curtains over the windows before huddling near the radio to listen to [Voice of America](#).

The people had none of the formal freedoms Gail took for granted: They couldn't leave the country, take money out or get a passport. One Czech fellow urged her to take a message to his uncle, who happened to live in the same city as her mother, who was now working in Germany. He managed to escape there eventually. A girlfriend he left behind in Prague kept writing him letters. *Come back*, the letters pleaded. So he did.

Many years later Gail was in Prague for a conference and looked him up in the phone book. "The police had put her up to the letters," he said. Upon his return to Czechoslovakia, he had been arrested and put in jail.

•

Gail was deeply affected by what she saw and couldn't bring herself to go back to studying philosophy while at Brandeis. She wanted to switch to East European studies, to help free these people she had met. Some of her colleagues at Brandeis found it strange that she wanted to do something for Poles, who had been terrible to the Jews. But Gail never connected the two.

During her senior year, she took as many politics courses as she could and learned Russian. She attended the Russian church in Boston, immersing herself in the language, and applied for an official exchange program — an international sports camp. It was well-known that all the Soviet citizens accompanying the students worked with the secret police. But Gail naively introduced a few people she had met outside of the camp to these staff, and only in their chilly and expressionless greetings realized her error: Social introductions could endanger others. It was a world of its own in the 1950s.

With the Soviet launch of Sputnik, funding for Soviet and East European studies increased dramatically. The best places to study were in the United States: Harvard, Columbia, Ohio State, Indiana. But Gail wanted to live in Europe — to be in Paris and travel to Poland.

She cooked up a story to justify her research and get a fellowship: Polish émigrés in Paris and how French culture influenced Poland. She was stretching it, but she got the grant. She continued learning Russian and began taking Polish, but the language was taught from a linguistic point of view and no one knew East European studies. Paris, apparently, was no place to study these things.

And then the Berlin Wall went up. Gail could no longer do her research in Poland. But she insisted she was going to do it anyway.

She got on the bus to the airport, but it was the wrong bus. It made many stops, and by the time she arrived at the airport her plane to Poland had left. Shortly after arriving back at home, she cut her finger on a tin can she was opening and needed stitches.

“You’re not meant to go,” her mother said.

Gail gave in. She would do her thesis instead on the Marxist concept of freedom — but at least from Paris.

•

The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had not factored into her plans. Gail and a friend in Paris were studying for the Foreign Service Exam to work for cultural centers such as the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) or Voice of America.

Marcuse, her mentor, had once worked in intelligence for the [Office of Strategic Services \(OSS\)](#) as a German Jewish refugee in America. He was on sabbatical in Paris while Gail was there, and during the Christmas break, he suggested Gail meet a friend of his in D.C., the head of the Soviet Intelligence Unit at the State Department.

Before boarding her Icelandic Airlines flight, the cheapest for students, she bought a wheel of French cheese for her brother still in the States. Just about all the passengers did the same. A delay forced them to stay overnight in Paris. Boarding the

plane the next day, Gail thought for sure the smell was a bad omen of things to come: the cheese so ripe it practically walked down the aisle.

Gail met the man at the State Department. “There’s a job open on Eastern Europe if you’re willing to work for the CIA.”

“I have no objection,” she responded.

“They’re having their test right now,” he replied, “which is very similar to the exam for the Foreign Service.”

Gail took the exam, and had interviews for the USIA and CIA, and then was in a position to choose. When she realized that USIA couldn’t promise her that she would work on Eastern Europe, she chose the CIA.

•

That first day of class in Washington, the curiosity was palpable and professionally checked. In a room full of men, Gail was told to sit next to one of the only other women, and her initial wonder turned slightly to anger. *There are so few women here, so why are we seated next to each other?*

The officer training class was simply seated in alphabetical order, and it just so happened that they both shared the same last name, Greene.

Shortly after the start of class, instructors pulled Gail out and sent her home. “Your security clearance didn’t go through. You’ll just have to wait.” Her name had been flagged because of her time in Eastern Europe and her [“pinko”](#) university, Brandeis, and its professors.

•

When the security clearance came through a few weeks later in the summer, the class had already moved far ahead. Gail was assigned to on-the-job training with a woman working on East Berlin, until she could join the next round of classes in January.

The Office of Current Intelligence (OCI), Gail’s department, was second in prestige only to the Office of National Estimates. Tasked with writing daily intelligence summaries and briefs for the president, the office was all bustling people and open cubicles. Gail joined the East European branch, but Soviet Affairs was only just next door, along with the Sino-Soviet specialists.

She had only been there a short while when October ushered in the Cuban Missile Crisis. Adjacent to the Soviet desk, she was in the center of things. It meant being alert. It meant 24 hours a day. It was the most exciting thing imaginable. She

decided there was no need for her to go back to the class after that — she would stay just where she was.

•

Although she wanted to be working on Poland, when there was an opening in the department on Czechoslovakia she went for it. She learned Czech and loved her job and working with her colleagues. They marched, as she did, against the war in Vietnam, and at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, where Martin Luther King, Jr., gave his famous speech in 1963.

[Sovietology](#) is about catching the clues. It is reading a sentence in a Soviet newspaper and noticing details in a photograph: *Someone has moved positions on the podium since the last parade. He is no longer standing next to this other guy. Why? Maybe he was demoted?*

That is often what intelligence is about, looking at the clues and trying to make sense of them. Intelligence means extraordinary care in resisting preconceived notions, and what everyone else thinks.

The flickering of [Milos Forman](#) films glinted across the lenses of Gail's glasses.

"You have to understand, these movies were avant-garde — almost underground," Gail explained to her supervisor. "They couldn't happen unless someone in the party was allowing this to happen, with the censorship they have. The only conclusion is that there are people in the party interested in reform, and they are allowing these things. These are amazing things!"

"Look, I believe you, but no one else in Washington believes anything is happening," her supervisor said. "I'll see what I can do, but we can't just say what we want. We have to convince the guys in the State Department, the Defense Department. And they're always saying, 'No, no, no, they're all Stalinists,' or 'Czechoslovakia is a model satellite, nothing is happening there.' You know how it goes."

Gail was determined to get this into the president's daily bulletin. She trusted her analysis, even when it went against the grain of the senior male experts. She knew that she had seen something important. She argued her case and got it to the White House.

•

But it was Selma. *Selma*.

It wasn't just a civil rights march. It was enormous — a symbolic statement. Of what Gail believed in. And where she wanted to be. And with whom she wanted to be.

Her high school friend Armand had called, "Come to Selma and march with us."

She thought for too long. She would have to use the vacation time she had accrued, and it would cost her a not-inconsiderable \$35 return train fare. Those were her calculations — but she had not factored in the heavy weight of later remorse.

As Gail saw the events in Selma unfold, a small conviction grew in the aching burn of regret. She determined she would be out there next time, acting on her beliefs.

### **No Longer a Minority**

“I know exactly what I want — to be on a border kibbutz, with young people my age, and not too far to the left. I don’t want to be arguing Marxism all the time,” Gail said, running her finger along the map. She sat at a table in Jerusalem, visiting a professor and his wife while on a vacation from Washington. “I was thinking of going to one of these three kibbutzim in the north by the Sea of Galilee, right there on the Syrian border.”

“No, that’s not a good place for you to go. You’ll get shot at,” the wife scolded. “Someone has just been killed up there. Try Nahal Oz, on the border of the Gaza Strip. That border has been quiet since the ‘56 war.”

So Gail went. She met people on the kibbutz, and traveled alone in the north as well. She met some Arab guys who took her out to see the area, not realizing that this was dangerous for them, especially at night. Having only just arrived, Gail was unaware of the [military rule](#) that dictated curfews for Arabs in the north of Israel in the early 1960s.

Israel was indeed a young, socialist country, as she expected from all the movies and books about the pioneers and life on kibbutzim. But that’s not what struck her.

When she stepped onto buses, Jewish drivers greeted her. The first-aid kits at the front dash were printed with the Jewish six-pointed star, instead of a Christian cross. When she knelt in the dust at the archeological ruins of biblical sites and gazed upon the familiar religious symbols carved into the stones in ancient times, she felt a connection. Visiting Greek and Roman ruins hadn’t felt anything like this. This was *her* history. It was hard to describe, being moved by being among one’s own people. Here, she was no longer a minority.

Her family and old friends were surprised when she told them she was going to emigrate. Aside from folk dancing and singing, which she enjoyed, Gail hadn’t shown any interest in either religion or [Zionism](#). Her identity as Jewish was being part of a people, a feeling that had developed from living in Europe. It created her connection to Israel.

There was a state out there to fulfill national aspirations, and Israel was exciting. It was different. It was unfinished. Israel was where Gail wanted to build her life.

She sold her things.

She immigrated to Israel on a boat named *Shalom*, “Peace.”

She took a trunk locker full of unclassified papers she’d copied at the CIA. She wanted to write a PhD dissertation about what she saw happening in Czechoslovakia.

The trip didn't take that long — a week. She got off in Portugal, stopped in Paris to see old friends, went to London, and then made it to her new country.

Gail Greene the American became Galia Golan — Israeli citizen.

•

The year she arrived, 1966, Israel was in a recession, which brought with it a low morale among the people. For the first time, there were more people leaving than coming in. A joke resonated at the time: “The last person at the airport, turn off the lights.”

People welcomed her warmly, but asked, “What are you doing here, coming from America?”

Galia's first year was entirely occupied with learning the language and meeting people through immersive life in an *ulpan*, an intensive school to learn Hebrew. Most immigrants had at least known the alphabet. The men had been Bar Mitzvah-ed so they knew how to read Hebrew. But Galia wasn't even at the first-grade level in the ulpan, yet next year, she would have to teach in Hebrew.

She started as a teaching assistant at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where her years of experience at the CIA didn't matter much. And there was a slight translation problem. In English, Galia could say that she was an “East European specialist.” But in Hebrew, to use that term meant that she was an “East European expert.” That sounded like boasting.

There was an American professor, head of the political science department at Tel Aviv University, who understood and appreciated the people with whom she'd studied and her work at the agency. He offered her work right away, but she declined. Galia wanted to be in Jerusalem.

She quickly made her way into the right social circles. Her Hebrew teacher was a doctoral student and they became fast friends. Israelis she had met in Washington who worked at the embassy and the World Bank had given her people to look up. As an immigrant, she was also given a family — a South African doctor and his wife who lived nearby who would have her over for Friday night dinners.

And slowly, slowly, Israel became home.

### **Mary Rat Shim Shone**

Galia watched the airplane lifting free of the land, carrying the young Israeli man who she'd been dating back to America. The atmosphere at the airport was one of teetering panic — the tourists were all trying to get out. In the weeks previous, Egypt had moved troops into the Sinai and sent the United Nations forces home. The future was uncertain, but slowly the country began realizing the likely outbreak of war.

"I don't want to get stuck if the airports close," he had told her as she drove him to the airport. "I have to get back and get to my office in time for work."

She knew it was an excuse. Officially, he was in the Israeli reserves (though working abroad) so he should have stayed. But he was also afraid. Galia had watched him fret, and ultimately make the decision to leave. At the airport she saw the relief fall over his mother, whose other son had gone to a tank unit; at least one son would be safe. Galia observed the tangled interplay of their emotions, but didn't fully understand.

With the airplane little more than a small speck in the sky, Galia climbed into her cream-colored VW bug and headed back to Jerusalem to pack her suitcase. While she drove she thought of Selma — this time she would not have to regret staying behind.

She headed south to Nahal Oz. The frontline was hot.

•

*This was not my idea of being in the war, Galia thought furiously as she strode through the lemon groves, dust rising in her wake and scattering the dappled sunlight. I am not going to be trapped in a shelter taking care of kids.* She made her way through the kibbutz and stopped someone who looked in charge.

"I just wanted to inform you that I have been given permission to be in the trenches facing Gaza," Galia lied matter-of-factly.

Eyeing her briefly, the man nodded and said OK before returning to the preparations at hand.

Suppressing any outward display of the relief, she wove her way through the men walking toward the trenches and approached another man who looked in charge.

"What are you doing here?" he said incredulously.

"I was given permission to be here," Galia said. "Tell me where I can do something."



He sighed, closing his eyes briefly in thought. “Come with me,” he said. She eyed the dirt walls that wove their way through the dug channels until they came to a section reinforced with a big cement sewage pipe.

“This is The Position,” he told her. “If it starts, we come here. This will be your weapon.” He pointed behind her. It was a World War II-era field telephone, dull black under a layer of dust.

“What am I supposed to do with it?” Galia asked incredulously. “I can’t use this, I speak hardly any Hebrew.”

He knelt down and indicated for her to do the same, reaching for the side of it. His rough fingers grabbed a big lever and began slowly cranking. He caught her eye and grinned.

“Your job is to crank up the phone. I’ll do the speaking.”

•

They were awoken in the early morning with a terse, “It’s started.” The women and children were ushered to the shelters, and Galia headed to The Position, facing Gaza. The Israeli army pushed forward in their tanks, as the Egyptian army fired at them.

During those six days, time spilled through the rapid heartbeats and caught breaths of those waiting in the trenches. The sky echoed with whistles, cracks and shuddering explosions, channeled through the large cement sewage pipes they sat in. Once, during the day, Galia slipped out and stood on her tiptoes, positioning her head to look through a slit in the cement reinforcement. *My god, she thought. This is extraordinary! It looks just like a war movie.* The tanks were grinding forward amid the blue skies and puffs of smoke.

The combatants slept close together in their sleeping bags, as much because of the frigid desert nights as for the sense of safety. They were only there two nights, but they were sleepless. As Galia lay with her eyes closed, listening to the soft breathing of her dozen or so companions, she replayed the scenes upon the screens of her eyelids.

•

A messenger came around and told everyone the password for use at night should they need to venture into the connected trenches: *mahrot shimshon* — it meant “Simon’s Cave.”

Galia and the only other woman in the trench, a volunteer from Sweden, couldn’t pronounce it. Under their breaths they practiced: “Mary Rat Shim Shone, Mary Rat Shim Shone.”

•

It occurred to Galia that the new, bright blue [\*kova tembel\*](#) that she'd been wearing might be seen from a distance from Gaza. She nervously plastered some dirt and mud on it. When one of the men commented, "Why is your hat so dirty?", she felt a bit foolish. Perhaps she hadn't needed to do it, but it had seemed like the right thing.

•

They taught her how to use a bazooka.

One guy said, "If *you* end up needing to use that, we're in trouble."

•

Although they had only been in the trenches for two days, they continued to follow news of the action on the other fronts during the Six-Day War.

They sat atop the trenches, looking across the surreal landscape of war that extended before them, when suddenly a dozen glints of silver appeared on the horizon. With a shout, they all slipped back down into the trenches as the silver screamed overhead. She never did find out what they were.

At no point did Galia ever remember being afraid.

### A Glimpse of Peace

“And now for the daily weather report,” the radio droned. Galia began to settle in to the end of the newscast.

“Jerusalem ... Tel Aviv ... Haifa ...” But then they started naming new places.

“Bethlehem ... Jericho ... Nablus ...”

Galia sprang up, grinning. *This long list of places — suddenly we're not just a tiny country!*

•

“Quickly, let's go see it before we give it back.”

That summer, Galia and her friends traveled to see the territories, in the euphoria of this unexpected and tremendous victory on three fronts. *Israel finally has something to bargain with, something to exchange. The Arabs will give us peace, they thought. This is a deal.*

Galia went to see where the wall had been taken down dividing East and West Jerusalem. She went to the Temple Mount, to Bethlehem and to Jericho.

Jericho is deep in the desert. At first there is only desert, then an oasis of green and trees bearing orange flowers. Galia saw a little bridge collapsed into the river Jordan. Its center had been destroyed, causing the two ends to groan and bow downward into the water.

There were many women in Palestinian traditional clothes, bearing bundles on their head. They walked down one side into the water and then up the other side.

There was nothing around them. This wasn't a checkpoint. It wasn't a border. But they were leaving. They were refugees.

The significance didn't register for Galia, because the image was so unfamiliar, one that she had simply never seen before that moment.

In East Jerusalem she drove through the streets, passing crushed car after crushed car — even expensive cars in a well-to-do neighborhood. There weren't many cars in Israel at the time, and on the Arab side there would have been even fewer. But the cars along both sides of the road from Jerusalem to Ramallah were destroyed. Galia thought it gratuitous for the tanks to have driven over every last one.

A friend she had made that first year in Israel, a paratrooper in the reserves, had been killed. His wife was told that he and his unit had been going up to the roof of a

hotel in East Jerusalem, and when he reached it he was shot and killed. As Galia drove through the streets of East Jerusalem, she tried to find it. She thought she came across it, but was never sure — *how do you ask that kind of thing?* Galia wondered to herself.

People stopped to look at the tanks and sometimes clamber over them. One still had a shell casing on it, and she worried it could go off.

She visited the biblical sites she had only read about. But mostly she found scattered remnants of war.

•

“Do you want to see the most beautiful view there is in all of Jerusalem,” her friend asked. “You’re not allowed there, but there is a way to do it.”

Following the instructions, Galia drove the long dirt road that stretched into the distance. This was no-man’s land. It sat on the border of East Jerusalem and West Jerusalem. Seated upon this hill was the old Government House, where the UN was based at the time.

The Government House was the residence of the High Commissioner during the British Mandate, circa 1920. Eventually, the Government House would become the headquarters of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, 1986. (Wikipedia)

She arrived at the rope barrier that was lifted for UN cars to drive through. She opened the car door and walked nonchalantly up to the barrier, lifted it, got back in the car, and drove through like she belonged. A little bit further was the view, for which Galia would return time and time again.

It is one of the most magnificent sights. The mountains in the distance — Jordan. The sparkle over there — the Dead Sea. Hills with little houses. To the left the Temple Mount, where the gold- and silver-domed mosques stand. It was almost spiritual to Galia. Her breaths came easier there, and for a moment she felt free of the conflict.

•

The following months, Israel began establishing settlements inside the acquired territories. A group of settlers even went to a hotel in Hebron and planted themselves there.

The public — including Galia — wasn’t well-informed about it. Though fairly apolitical at the time, the settlement attempt in the hotel spurred Galia’s first political act in Israel: she signed a petition against the Hebron settlement. Her reasoning was straightforward: *We’re going to give this land back in exchange for peace. If we build settlements, how are we going to give it back?*

It was the beginning of her life of peace activism.

### War/Love Stories

It was winter, and Galia had the flu.

“Dr. S. isn’t in, but Dr. Gild is covering today,” the receptionist told her.

Galia was startled as she stepped through the doors. *This gorgeous guy?* Dark-haired and handsome, he was sitting behind the desk wearing a brown suit and tie — not the usual casual Israeli attire.

•

The telling of a love story in Israel quickly becomes the telling of a war story.

First date, early 1972: Galia and David go to lunch in East Jerusalem, at a restaurant run jointly by Jews and Arabs.

Wedding preparations, September 1972: Galia’s mother arrives for the wedding. They hear the first radio reports of members of the Israeli team being taken hostage at the Olympics in Munich. Galia would soon learn they had been killed: a terror attack.

Marriage, September 19, 1972: The day after Yom Kippur.

One-year anniversary, 1973: The Yom Kippur War.

•

It was October 6, and at 2 o’clock in the afternoon a jeep sped down the empty street. Galia and David grabbed the girls and scattered quickly to the sidewalks. They had been walking down the middle of the street because there shouldn’t have been traffic on the holiday.

A minute passed. Then another.

A slow wailing undulated through the streets: air raid sirens. They should have known. No one would be driving on Yom Kippur without a reason.

David, a combat medic in a reserve unit, left immediately when they heard the sirens. After those first few nights of the Yom Kippur War in 1973, just over a year after Galia and David married, Galia sat in the quiet of the nights after the kids had gone to bed, snapping puzzle pieces down into a jigsaw frame on the dining-room table. The landscape was slowly coming together, resembling the picture on the box.

Most nights she convened the team. They were men, academics, who for one reason or another had not been conscripted. The Knesset Foreign Affairs Committee had asked Galia to organize a working group to report every day on the Soviet

involvement in the war. They met in her kitchen because she couldn't leave the girls. The room also had the smallest window, which she covered as night fell so she could turn on the lights.

Galia offered them her acrid attempts at coffee as they put the pieces together: presenting what little daily intelligence they had, sharing bits of information about what the Soviets were doing, and analyzing it to report to the Knesset.

The team largely agreed in their analysis. Unlike the Cold warriors, they did not believe the Soviets were behind this war. The Soviets did not want this war. Galia defended their analysis, and it was on this very point that she later clashed with Golda Meir. As it turned out, the team's analysis was right.

So Galia fought the war from her kitchen, while David was on the frontlines. For the first time, she used "Galia Golan-Gild" as a byline for an article she wrote in the paper. She wanted the connection. He was out there fighting, representing her and her analysis, while she defended them in the public eye.

•

Shortly after the fighting, one of her colleagues came back on leave and asked her to lecture to his unit. After some consideration, Galia said, "I will do it if you bring me to my husband, or him to me."

He agreed, and she arranged for the girls to stay with friends as she went to "Africa" — as the other side of the Suez Canal was called. Technically, it was illegal for her to be across the canal, yet there she would stand: a civilian dressed in khaki, hoping it would pass for a uniform.

The first night, she lectured to high officers in a deserted Soviet missile base. The location fit well for lecturing on the Soviet role in the war.

The next day, the IDF drove her out to the smallest army units, *mahlakot*, all along the frontline facing the Egyptians, and she got to see David.

Then they rumbled through the desert, stopping at spots with seemingly no significance. She saw the trails of dust rising as the tanks drove up to her. Galia sat upon a tank, while surrounded by tanks, lecturing about the Soviets, spitting out the occasional fly.

And David fumed. He later told her this was the only time he had been afraid during the war.

•

In her office at the university, Galia had two desks. On one she had neat stacks of notes for a new book on Eastern Europe, the other sometimes sat empty. One day when David finally returned from the Yom Kippur War, he said she should write about the Soviet role, since she had done so much work on it already. Galia walked over to the empty desk and started writing.

A few years later, that book too was published by Cambridge University Press: *Yom Kippur and After: The Soviet Union and the Middle East Crisis*, by Dr. Galia Golan.



## **Everybody Goes**

A few days into the war, Galia picked up the phone to call her family doctor. Someone quietly intervened: “You can’t reach him right now. They just got word their son was killed.”

Galia dropped the phone, left the girls with her friends, and went straight to the doctor’s home. It was the first casualty of the war of someone she knew.

The deaths grew closer and closer.

They would be sitting in mourning at the apartment of a friend who had immigrated in the 1940s, whose son was now missing. It wasn’t exactly mourning, because they didn’t know yet if he was dead. Their baker and his wife were among those sitting in the house, and the next day the news was for them — their son had been killed.

So the community gathers at their mourning, and the next day it is another one of them who receives the news. The community gathers from mourning to mourning to mourning, like a terrible chain of death.

•

Galia had just finished giving a lecture as a volunteer for the army’s education unit, at a kibbutz guesthouse just outside of Jerusalem. It was a lovely place, with a swimming pool. But now, it was filled with the war-wounded.

She sat with a former student, who had pulled her aside. He wanted to tell her what it was like in those first days.

When the war broke out on Yom Kippur and the Egyptian army crossed the Suez Canal, the Jerusalem reservists were manning the Israeli line. They were in trenches, little bunkers right on the canal. They were completely surprised, and worse, completely unprepared.

The tanks that were supposed to be lined up behind them weren’t there. The Bar Lev line, built along the canal to stop any potential Egyptian advance, collapsed. The Egyptian army was in the trenches on Yom Kippur, when nobody was prepared for anything. It was hand-to-hand fighting.

They would radio back, “Can we surrender? Do we fight to the last person or what?”

Galia listened as he recalled the fighting, and she remembered how the government went on television and declared, “We’re winning. We counter-attacked. Everything is great.”

It was darkly true, what conscripted young men just graduating high school would say as a farewell: “We will meet on the information board” — where the death notices were posted. Israel was a tiny country, and during times of war even Israeli reservists abroad would come to fight. Everybody went.

And still, Galia wondered, *Who says that these kids have to go off and get killed?*

•

The woman whose son was missing would go to every soldier who came back on leave and ask, “Did you see him? Where was the last place you saw him?”

She finally left, back to America. Her son was all she’d had in Israel.

## Women's Organization

Galia remembers the day she became [gveret](#). Like how being a woman is distinct from being a girl. She was about to cross the street in the neighborhood where she lived. A woman said to her child, “Let the gveret cross the street,” and just like that Galia became “ma’am.”

•

Motherhood revealed to Galia something important: Who stayed home when a child was sick? The answer was obvious. Galia was suddenly a feminist.

She sat in the university senate. Next to her was a professor of Shakespeare, a religious woman with six kids. Galia figured that with six kids, this was a woman who could certainly give her some advice. She asked how she did it.

“Organization. Organize your time.”

•

6:50 a.m. — David and Galia wake up, get the kids up, and shower. The kids have breakfast cereal, except in the winter when David makes hot oats. Galia and David have toast with coffee or tea. David always has tea.

7:45 a.m. — David leaves for the office. Galia walks the kids to the kindergarten and elementary schools, around the corner from their house.

8 a.m. — Galia drives two minutes to the Van Leer Institute and begins her academic and Peace Now work.

12 p.m. — School ends, and the two older girls come home, where a nanny awaits them.

1 p.m. — Kindergarten ends, and the young boys return home to the nanny.

2 p.m. — Galia and David return to have lunch, their main meal of the day prepared by the nanny, together with the family, and typically talk about their work days.

4 p.m. — David returns to the office for the second half of his work day, and Galia drives the kids to their extracurricular activities.

6 p.m. — The family has a light dinner, prepared by Galia or David.

7 p.m. — The children are tucked into bed. Galia and David attend meetings or watch television.

10 or 11 p.m. — Galia and David go to bed.

The problem was time. Women didn't have it. At least in academia women had the freedom to set their own deadlines, the times that they wanted to teach. Even still, they needed to figure out how to do what they wanted in the time they had.

This meant no coffee breaks. No lunch with the guys. Galia wouldn't let the university hold meetings at 6 o'clock. She explained, "Women have to go home. That's the time we're taking care of dinner and putting the kids to bed." It was hard to get the men to understand — to women, time is so precious.

Galia was lucky to be married to David, a self-identified feminist before even she considered herself one. He did the cooking and the grocery shopping, and did more than most people, but he was also an old-style family doctor who went on house calls. He couldn't always be there. Fortunately, he had an extra room in his office, so usually a sick kid went with Daddy to work.

•

Galia first organized the women at the Hebrew University in 1974. They elected as their leader the professor of Shakespeare, religious, with six children. Her reputation was impeccable — who dared challenge her?

She brought their professional demands to the president of the university. He would have nothing to do with them.

Galia decided that, since that didn't work, they should set up a women's studies program. She spoke to women from the psychology, sociology, linguistics and literature departments, and pitched the idea. They were interested.

The first step was to go to the dean of social sciences, an economist.

"I want to organize a master's seminar on Women in the Western World," Galia said.

He agreed.

There was no fanfare. The seminar course was printed in the catalogue alongside everything else.

But at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday morning, as Galia walked through the hallways to the seminar room, she could hear a buzz. Her skin began to prickle with anticipation.

She could see some students clutching their notebooks in the hallway, grinning. She passed by, through the doorway, and into the classroom. It was packed. There were easily 80 students, mostly women but some men as well.

“Obviously, we’re going to have to move rooms,” she laughed.

Every Tuesday morning became an event. There were even women joining from the administration and the faculty.

Galia went to the dean. “Look, there’s a demand.”

They lobbied among the faculty to get a program called “Sex Differences and Society.”

There were only two votes against them in the faculty council — both were women.

There were already women teaching women’s studies in the universities. Women in Haifa and Tel Aviv had been doing it all along, but no one had ever succeeded in establishing a program. Galia was not an expert, but she saw herself an entrepreneur, an activist.

In 1981, at the opening session of an International Women’s Conference in Haifa, Galia stood and announced the opening of the program — the first in Israel. It took a few more years to be able to call it “Women’s Studies.”

### **To Strengthen the Dovish Wing**

Stretching to the left and to the right, Israel's political wings can be identified by their stance on the ongoing conflict. On the left are the doves for peace. On the right the hawks.

Stunned by the defeat of the left-wing, the Labor party, in 1977, a group of intellectuals from Hebrew University gathered in Galia's living room the day after the elections and demonstratively joined the Labor party. It was a statement of support for peace, and of what they believed in.

They were called "Circle 77," and the Labor party immediately brought them into the inner circles for political grooming.

Walking into a Labor Party meeting, Galia would count: How many doves? How many hawks? It was always a numbers' battle for the party platform.

In time, her party activities became an arm of Peace Now. She would stand and be counted as a dove, and strengthen the dovish wing.

•

In March of 1978, a group of 348 reserve combat officers and soldiers wrote an open letter to the right-wing government and Prime Minister Menachem Begin. Talks with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat were faltering, yet still the government offered economic incentives for mass settlements that were obviously not meant to make peace.

["We write with a sense of deep alarm. We have doubts about the policy of a government which prefers settlements beyond the Green Line to terminating the historic conflict, and establishing normal relations with the countries in our region ... We call on you to choose the road of peace, and therefore strengthen our belief in our cause."](#)

This movement was different, something that Israel had never seen before. It wasn't the ivory tower intellectuals, with their small Movement for Peace and Security. It wasn't the political and ideological stance of the communists. These were reserve combat officers and soldiers, whose loyalty was above reproach. This was the beginning of Israel's popular peace movement and, with time, it would become the biggest Israel had ever seen.

•

The newspapers reported enormous numbers at the Peace Now demonstrations. Often 100,000 people. Even 400,000 people on one occasion.

She never felt like she was on the fringe. To the contrary, she was at the heart and soul of the country, representing the majority. Their peace movement felt like a popular movement.

Well-known and highly respected academics, heads of universities, artists, actors, writers — these were the people raising their voices in protest at the demonstrations.

And when Galia lectured to security and military officers, she actually felt that she was among like minds. The upper ranks surprisingly were all doves.

•

To demonstrate in Israel you need a permit. It isn't hard to get — the court protects the people's right to demonstrate. But it's a different story in the occupied territories, where the army is in charge.

As Peace Now protestors made their way to an area, sometimes the army would declare it a "closed military area" so that they couldn't demonstrate. So the group would stop on the road and protest anyway. One time, some Palestinians in a truck piled high with watermelons for the market stopped and sat with the Peace Now group. Together they ate watermelons, red and crisp and sweet.

Sometimes the person in charge of the army stopping them would be an old kibbutz or reserve buddy of one of the Peace Now members. They would laugh and embrace, clasp hands. One day a man would be serving in the army stopping the demonstrations. The next day he was out demonstrating.

They shouted slogans, carried signs, made lots of noise. Galia always wanted to be holding a sign, though other friends stayed behind the scenes. Everyone found their own way to participate, to be seen and heard.

The main purpose was to get an issue into the media, like the building of a new settlement, to call attention to it with the hope of bringing pressure and stopping it. The other purpose was just to interfere, and show there are people who disagreed with what was happening.

Peace Now was often very active in East Jerusalem, where, sometimes in the dead of night, settlers would physically move into Palestinian homes and push the families into the upper floors or out onto the street. Peace Now would respond and demonstrate, trying to stop the demolitions of Palestinian houses and villages.

Occasionally, they would trap a minister from the government or a settler leader with their demonstrations. They would hear that settlers were trying to stake a claim to set up a settlement, so Peace Now showed up, chaining themselves to tractors and bulldozers or whatever was there. They would bring famous people, members of the

Knesset, to bring attention. There were small left-wing movements that would very often be there before Peace Now, but Peace Now would get the publicity.

Galia vividly remembers crawling around the construction sites of new settlements in East Jerusalem with Peace Now, when she was over 50 years old. Once, she was climbing the ladder behind a young border policeman when his rifle butt smacked the top of her head. He turned around, mortified and apologizing profusely. “Are you OK?” he asked, worriedly. Galia winced and laughed at the whole situation. Somehow she never felt that she was in danger.



## Hands Around Jerusalem

The winter sky was clearing and Galia stood at her folding table on the sidewalk, still damp from the morning rain showers, conversing with a journalist from the *New York Times*. More rain was expected.

“The government closed the borders,” she explained, “but the whole point is to have a joint event, to have Israelis and Palestinians holding hands around the Old City. If the Palestinians can’t find a way through, it will just have to be the Europeans and us.”

The event, which they were calling “Hands Around Jerusalem,” coordinated with European peace movements that were walking across Europe and into Israel and Palestine in protest. This had concerned Peace Now — these European groups had come in solidarity with the Palestinians and probably with an anti-Israeli message. So Peace Now had suggested holding a massive Israeli-Palestinian event together with them — an enormous human chain around the entire Old City in East Jerusalem.

Galia looked about at the milling Israeli and European activists. Well before the event, Peace Now volunteers had paced the perimeter of the Old City, ascertaining how many people it would take to link hands. According to their calculations, it would take at the very least 7,000 people. It seemed like they would still have the numbers even if the Palestinians weren’t able to find a way.

•

The sky was beginning to darken again, and slowly people began appearing in the white plastic coats that Peace Now had prepared in the event of rain. Then, Galia began to notice men and women, some in traditional Palestinian dress, arriving. Somehow, despite the closure of the border, the Palestinians had come through. She could guess at the difficulties they had overcome to be here.

That day some 30,000 Israelis, Palestinians and Europeans joined hands around Jerusalem, enough to encircle the Old City at least four times over. Palestinian women in village dress stood alongside well-known Israeli intellectuals — this was truly a joint event.

But the tension was palpable. The numbers — and the presence of the Palestinians — were a cause for celebration for the organizers, while the demonstrators, three to four people deep on the sidewalks, made the police nervous.

The police began yelling at them: “Stay put!” “Don’t step off the sidewalk!”

The only time Peace Now ever had violence or trouble was when Israelis were demonstrating alongside Palestinians, whether from the territories or Israeli citizens themselves. In Jerusalem, the police would be there. In the occupied territories, the West Bank, it would be the army. In East Jerusalem, which had been illegally annexed

in 1967, it would be the border police because the army was not allowed to operate inside Israel.

Galia continued watching the police, who were walking up and down the sidewalks, shouting and pushing people back.

Maybe someone stepped off the sidewalk. Maybe stones were thrown. Suddenly people began running past her and she could hear bullets.

Her 12-year-old son Yohai came running through the crowds with his white rain cape whipping about, stopping to show Galia a small indentation above his knee — he had been shot with a rubber bullet.

The police had opened the fire hoses, and the pressure of the blasts shattered the glass windows of a nearby hotel. One Italian woman with the European delegation was inside. She lost an eye to the violence.

But what Galia would remember was the perseverance of the people. Despite the rain, the jumpiness of the police, the closure of the borders — somehow the Palestinians were able to cross and join hands in solidarity, around a holy site so hotly contested. Thirty thousand people encircling Jerusalem in peace.

## Hand Grenades

Occasionally while playing, the kids came across a “suspicious object.” Recognizing these objects was the responsibility of every Israeli eye, in the name of safety. It was a brightly shining candy bar wrapper on the ground; it was a large glossy button; it was a solitary handbag on a park bench.

War was constructed in those hundreds and thousands of moments that parents knelt by their children and solemnly instructed them not to pick up toys, candy, anything from the ground.

Once, in the road in the lot, there was a refrigerator, hot and dry from the Jerusalem sun. The children tumbled over themselves to be the first to tell their parents, who dutifully dialed it in. Police officers closed off the little section of the neighborhood street and the men of the bomb squad came with their robot. Families stood about in rapt fascination.

“Yes, you were right to report this,” the men said warmly to the excited children who wove between the socializing adults.

Eyes of all ages watched the shiny, metal robot approach and prod the suspicious object. It deemed it only a refrigerator after all. But many unsuspecting leather suitcases with office documents and purses stuffed with photos of faces, mints and medications fell victim to caution in other locations. Branded with the label and stigma attached to unattended items, they were called in to the bomb squad. The robot exploded them.

•

Galia felt the anxiety in her chest loosen into relief as she backed up the family’s Volkswagen minibus through the dark, the red lights illuminating the disappearing figures of the thinned and milling crowd. She was glad the march was over; it had been violently harassed along the way. With any luck, the demonstration had made the 8:30 evening television broadcast.

As she checked her mirrors, Galia caught a glimpse to her left of police officers exiting the prime minister’s building, where by day the Israeli cabinet examined and discussed the findings released by the Kahan Commission. Two days prior — February 8, 1983 — the report had been made public.

When Peace Now organizers heard that the commission had found the Israeli government indirectly responsible for the harrowing massacre of Palestinians in Shatila and the nearby refugee camp of Sabra, they were quick to organize. The day’s march voiced their demands that the government implement the report’s recommendations, and specifically, force the resignation of Defense Minister Ariel Sharon.

To the right of her VW, the organizers were gathering the protest signs and chatting on the steps of the national bank, in the near-daylight of the flood lights left on for the demonstration.

Galia hadn't marched that evening. Her task had been to stake a claim at the end point, in front of Prime Minister Menachem Begin's office, for the demonstration to conclude on a dramatic note.

Earlier that day she had pulled up in her VW, where a small group of right-wing protestors were already gathering — and a lot of border police. When some of the group approached to ask Galia her purpose, it must have been at least rhetorical in part. After all, the cream-colored VW minibus was festooned with Peace Now bumper stickers and piled high with protest signs, over the seats and seatbelts, and even balanced across the tops of the seats.

Everyone knew Galia's minibus. It had become part of the movement, like a mascot. In the beginning David had a little Fiat, and Galia had her Volkswagen Beetle and then slightly larger cars, but when their fourth child was on the way they purchased this commercial VW minibus and converted it. This VW carried children to their lessons, signs to the protests. Oftentimes, it carried the children and the signs to the protests simultaneously. Galia and David brought the children, even as infants in their strollers, to the Peace Now demonstrations. They never seemed dangerous.

Occasionally, the minibus packed in famous writers and important politicians, even some members of the [Knesset](#). Once, outside of Nablus, she and a handful of these leaders poured out of the VW's doors and dashed through the army lines together, to the little tents set up in the valley between the settlement and the army. The army didn't shoot at them. They would shoot at Palestinians but they didn't shoot at Israelis.

But that morning, parked between the prime minister's office and the steps of the national bank, the minibus was surrounded. It was a slow, testing circle of intimidation by right-wing protestors. The hawkish government had been calling Peace Now protestors a "[5th column](#)," inciting the public against them.

Galia sat still as fear began to prickle through her body. The men leaned casually against the cream-colored VW. Examining the grill on the front of the bus, they began wedging their signs of right-wing slogans through the chrome bars.

Galia's eyes flashed to the border police. *Come here*, she willed them silently. *The reason that you are here is to help me, and I need help now.*

The border police watched disinterestedly. She was afraid, but then realized if she — a well-known Israeli woman — was afraid and the police would not help her, how much more a Palestinian simply demonstrating for peace?

Shaking off the lingering memory of the afternoon, which ended without further incident, Galia turned off the engine now, hopped out into the dark, and walked around the left to the back of the van. Usually David would have been there, directing her and then opening the back door for the signs and posters, but he had been summoned to a house call that evening. Without him to assist, she went to unlock the back so that Emil, one of the Peace Now activists, could load the signs.

And then the world flashed with light.

There was sudden, deafening noise. Galia was knocked backward and onto the ground. The world was suspended in silence.

After a few seconds, she was able to prop herself up to survey the area.

*Was it one of the electric lights?* she wondered.

The bright floodlights above the steps filtered through rolling clouds of dust, and she could see figures on the ground. Then slowly, those figures began to rise and stand weakly, casting long shadows. All except for one.

*Get up.* Galia's eyes flickered over the motionless figure. *Get up!*

•

The next day, the police had the survivors return to the scene to retrace their steps in a macabre choreography of the moment the hand grenade exploded: the details of the weather, the positioning of each person, the injured carried to Galia's car — and where Emil was when they found him, lying beside the hill of posters that were demanding peace while he died.

That a Peace Now demonstrator would be killed shocked the country. The government sent one of the cabinet ministers to the funeral. Their speeches and activities of incitement were quickly hushed. The whole country seemed as if it joined in seven days of mourning for the loss of a young man, a student, a [kibbutz](#)nik, a divorced father.

The man who threw the grenade had been one of Galia's neighbors, who lived two blocks down.

This kind of thing didn't happen at protests in Israel. At least, until it did.

## Speaking Women's Peace

### ***Nairobi, 1985***

The Peace Tent was a battleground — but under billowing blue and white striped fabric; sparse pink and purple balloons fluttered gently from the poles.

Galia had been anticipating this conference, the 2nd UN World Conference on Women, and its parallel meetings for civil society. Women were gathering to raise their voices collectively, to say they had something new and different to offer peace.

Photographs of conflicts and massacres hung at eye level throughout the tent. Galia paced the perimeter and grimly scanned the harrowing images. Here were photos from the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacres, carried out by the Christian Phalange in Lebanon, but presented as Israeli atrocities.

Amidst these pictures, Galia — who with Peace Now had been demonstrating for an investigation into the massacres — would be representing the Israeli perspective, alongside a Palestinian woman introduced to her the day before.

Galia arrived a little early to the event, in her standard blouse and pants. She waited for her Palestinian counterpart. The woman arrived in tight black jeans and a black top. *She looks for all the world like a freedom fighter*, Galia thought grimly.

They both spoke with great restraint — Galia with her usual moderate speech, and the Palestinian woman very moderate as well.

Audience members lined up to the microphone after to ask questions. One after the other, scathing criticism and vitriol incited the rest of the audience, who responded with whistles and hissing — all directed at Galia. Everything the Palestinian woman had not said, these women said.

Stricken, and in tears, Galia quietly escaped under the flap of the tent.

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### ***Brussels, 1989***

Thirty grim-faced, groaning women rose heavily from their chairs, quiet mutters echoing in the ornate room of the European Parliament. The last speaker of the morning had concluded her passionate, hostile remarks, and lunch was a welcome reprieve.

The morning had been terrible, uncompromising. From the podium, Palestinian women decried the terrible occupation, speaking out about their experiences living under occupation. Israeli women had condemned Palestinian terrorism and violence. At

home, there was an uprising — they were calling it an Intifada. Lives were being lost, while here their words were cracking and lashing through the Parliament hall.

Each of the 15 Israeli women and the 15 Palestinian women, handpicked for this peace meeting in Brussels, was scheduled to speak. This wasn't a grassroots dialogue; the women here each represented something. They were recognized leaders. Some were members of the Israeli Knesset, some from the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

Galia had recognized one of the PLO women immediately. Stern, with her slightly kinky hair pulled back tightly, the woman had been one of the protestors who had stood up, shouted, and sang and disrupted one of the Israeli-sponsored meetings in Nairobi.

Galia gathered her pen and notepad and followed the procession of women for the lunch break. She had been so hopeful before coming to Brussels, but the sour burn in her stomach, the tightness in her chest, were the too-familiar symptoms of being in the presence of bitter and harsh accusations.

She had been demonstrating in the territories for years, and had stood in solidarity with Palestinians as their houses were demolished, outside the tents they now lived in. She knew there needed to be joint women's peace movements, joint dialogue that could happen behind closed doors — without the public and the vocal, agitated audiences.

During the lunch, a small group of the Israeli organizers and the Palestinian organizers sat down around a big square conference table with their lunches, paper and pens. As Galia sat, she searched the faces and body language of the Palestinian women. She wanted to know how they felt.

“Well,” one of them said, “we've got to do something here.”

*So this feeling is mutual*, Galia mused with a mix of relief and pleasant surprise.

They could not let this meeting fail, but they did not really have any ideas about what to do. They set forth with their task of writing a joint statement.

•

When the lunch break ended and they headed back to the parliament room, one of the Palestinian women who had been working on the statement, took her place at the podium.

“I don't know about all of you, but I have a stomach ache from this morning.” Her words were poetry, her gentle recognition a balm for the invisible and previously unacknowledged aching guts.

She continued, “You can have my grandfather’s house in Jaffa. Just give me Ramallah, please.”

It was amazing, the shift in the room with these words, encompassing volumes of history. She spoke about accepting the state of Israel, allowing it to continue to exist within its borders, rather than wiping it off the map as was outlined in the PLO charter. She was talking about forgetting the past — her family’s house in Jaffa — and moving onto the chance for a future: Ramallah in a state of Palestine.

These few words transformed the tone of every speech that followed that day — from accusatory to conciliatory.

At some point during the speeches, Galia found her eyes returning to that one woman’s stern face, hair pulled back tightly. Between the sessions, Galia approached her. “Why were you so hostile to us in Nairobi? We came to try to be conciliatory.”

The woman’s eyes met hers directly. “Because we didn’t know you then. We didn’t trust you.”

•

They established Reshet, or “Women’s Network for Peace,” where the Israeli and Palestinian women would work to create wide support for the document they had written in Brussels.

They brought Palestinian women to meet in private homes with Israeli women. The idea was that with no men around, the Israeli women might begin to speak out.

They did. The meetings weren’t easy. The Israeli women could be very hard on the Palestinian women, accusing them of sending their children out to throw stones. The group also brought Israeli women to visit the Palestinian’s women’s groups in the occupied territories, and have conversations there.

One day in East Jerusalem, Galia had lunch with a Palestinian lawyer from their post-Nairobi group. She was educated, active, working for a civil rights organization. The more they talked, the more Galia couldn’t shake this feeling that she was talking with someone just like herself.

She knew then for sure that there was a partner for peace on the other side.

•

The women continued to meet in Israel, at Harvard, and again in Brussels, and it was decided to formalize their cooperation into an NGO. It would be called the Jerusalem Link: A Joint Women’s Venture for Peace.



The Jerusalem Link was, in a way, a model for Jerusalem. In West Jerusalem was the group [\*Bat Shalom\*](#) (“Daughter of Peace”) and in East Jerusalem was [\*Markaz al-Qudsia L-Nissah\*](#) (Jerusalem Center for Women) connected under the umbrella of the Jerusalem Link. It provided joint leadership trainings in English, held parlor meetings and demonstrations, and importantly, put out a joint statement of their platform.

On one issue, the refugee issue, they were not able to reach an agreement. So they printed their two different points, side by side.

•

One major joint event they held was on the controversial topic of Jerusalem, a divided city. They organized a Jerusalem week, with tours of East and West Jerusalem for Israelis and Palestinians. They had a jazz concert, an art exhibit and more. The well-known U.S. singer who was to perform in the no-man’s land between East and West Jerusalem received death threats and canceled.

On the Israeli side, they were happy, thinking the event had been a big success. But later at a follow-up meeting, one of the Palestinian women said that the event had actually been very problematic.

“This was not a success. This was hugely problematic!”

She pointed out one glaring mistake. In Hebrew, the slogan for the event was “Sharing Jerusalem.” But in Arabic, it translated as “Dividing Jerusalem.” The Israelis had not known.

It was a sign of things to come.

## Hope for Peace

Galia grinned in anticipation as she entered the spacious Pasha room of the American Colony Hotel in East Jerusalem, soaking in the atmosphere. She had arrived alone to the stone hotel with its lush gardens and ponds — where all the journalists stay. She and David used to take the kids here to see the fish pond, but after the first Intifada, people had stopped going there for pleasure.

She hadn't been part of organizing the event, but she recognized a few people from Peace Now along with some of the Palestinians they had worked with. There were many others that she didn't know, but on this day, it didn't matter.

Glowing, Galia took a seat next to a woman in traditional Palestinian dress, in one of the rows of chairs arranged to face the wall where the news coverage flickered across an enormous screen. They could see that it was a sunny, breezy day — September 13, 1993 — in Washington as the men sat at the table. The pages were held open against the wind as they scrawled their signatures.

As each man stood after adding his signature, the cameras panned out to capture the applause of the audience in rows of chairs on the White House lawn. The news interspersed videos of celebrating audiences watching from afar.

When Yasser Arafat offered his hand to Yitzhak Rabin, who took it (albeit with a grimace), everyone in the Pasha room jumped up, ecstatic cheers breaking free from their chests. They couldn't contain themselves. One of the Peace Now members popped open a bottle of champagne. Here, too, Israelis and Palestinians clasped hands, drew strangers in for embraces through laughter and tears. This scene was what they had been hoping for so many years — this was what every protest, every petition, every demonstration had been calling for. The signing of the Oslo Accords was one step closer to a lasting peace. They were lost in celebration, and time seemed suspended with the intensity of their emotion.

Galia's eyes, still lost in joy, flickered to the clock. She had to go. It was almost time for her television interview about the Israeli reaction to the signing. Grinning and laughing, she continued shaking hands as she made her way to the door. As she stepped out onto the street, she passed what looked like the Palestinian boy scouts' band in their uniforms, kept in rhythm by the proud tapping of a drum. Then, in West Jerusalem, there was a small demonstration with people dancing.

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Around a long table that seemed to stretch forever were dozens of dark eyes and thick mustaches. There could have been 50 men in there. Galia was in Hebron — one of the more recalcitrant towns in the occupied territories.

*We're walking into the lion's den*, Galia thought as she nervously took her seat with the others from the Peace Now delegation.

One of the men stood, tall and muscular. When he began to speak, Galia and her colleagues were visibly startled, casting surprised glances at each other.

*He's speaking to us in Hebrew! How does he know Hebrew?* Galia thought, astonished.

These were not Palestinian citizens of Israel who learned Hebrew in school; they were Palestinians from the occupied territories. They had learned Hebrew while in Israeli prisons.

These were the people they had been fighting. But just as the Peace Now movement had been started by men who drew their legitimacy from having served in combat units, these men held legitimacy within their own Palestinian communities from having spent time in prison. And for not insignificant acts of violence.

But the meeting was another step toward peace.

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It was surreal for Galia to be returning to Nahal Oz under these circumstances. She stood on a small stage in the field with a microphone before her and a peace banner at her back. This was a small demonstration, maybe 2,000 or 3,000 people. A number of Palestinian kids from Gaza had made their way through the trees and were watching curiously. Although she could not see the tanks from here, she knew they were leaving in the distance. The army was evacuating Gaza, as per the agreements.

"It is very emotional to be here on this day, because I was here in Nahal Oz when the battle for Gaza took place. And now the Israeli army is leaving Gaza ..." she began.

This place where she picked lemons, cranked the old, black field telephone in the trench, looked out across the fields churning with tanks and groaning with explosions. Those were the times of "us" against "them," as seen through the cracks in the trench fortifications and the sights of guns.

Now, here at Nahal Oz with Peace Now, she would be approached by Palestinians interested in starting a joint kindergarten with Jewish children.

"We cannot have peace unless our children learn to grow together," they insisted, "to learn a culture of peace."

Like the promise of a small sprout emerging from a seed, during the changes of the Oslo period the shells of two hardened peoples cracked. Latent creativity and

enthusiasm awakened with the promise of peace — but too soon crumbled with the accord's collapse.

### Asymmetry and Anti-Normalization

It was always kisses on both cheeks, sometimes a third kiss. This was the standard greeting as the women arrived for the meetings. But the moment the meeting started, the friendly social atmosphere turned to the political.

The International Women's Commission (IWC), which had grown out of the Jerusalem Link, consisted of 20 Israeli women, 20 Palestinian women and 20 international women. They would meet in East Jerusalem or Ramallah out of sensitivity for their Palestinian members — the waiting, the long lines at the checkpoints, even having to get a permit.

Their meetings were efficient. First, they'd talk about the current situation. And then, they would usually get to planning something together. It might be a statement, an event, or even an invitation to speak abroad. Their two main principles were to speak in one voice, and to recognize the asymmetry between the Israelis and Palestinians.

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Standing in front of the members of the UN Security Council, a Palestinian woman said, "One of the most important things is that we recognize asymmetry in our organization. Hearing these Israeli women acknowledge this asymmetry — this means a great deal to me."

From the beginning, the Palestinian women took the stance, "We're not talking women's issues. This must be political." They couldn't relate with Israeli women on a level of sisterhood — they were under tremendous pressure from their communities on this point and also open to accusations of "normalizing." The anti-normalization campaign argued that cooperation and joint events between Israelis and Palestinians portrayed a fictitious normalcy between the two peoples, and veiled the terrible realities of occupation. Palestinians seen fraternizing with Israelis were subject to harsh criticism and pressure. For any national liberation movement, solidarity is critical — and these women were doubly vulnerable and sensitive to what their communities thought of them.

Additionally, they watched their Palestinian men saying what they wanted, taking positions, and not worrying. But the women couldn't and wouldn't.

It wasn't like this for the Israeli women, either. Galia more or less represented herself as an individual. *Nobody from the Israeli public paid much attention to us anyways*, she thought. By and large they could say what they wanted, maybe because some of them were in the Knesset or well-known.

Somehow, in the face of asymmetry, the women were challenged to rise to a common principle of speaking in one voice. This was the other principle of the IWC that distinguished it from Jerusalem Link. Whereas Jerusalem Link would publish two

positions when they couldn't agree, that wouldn't work for this group. The whole idea was to speak in one voice. And it was never easy.

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Within the first hours of the Israeli attack on Gaza in 2008, the steering committee began working on a very strong statement against it. The Palestinian women were tremendously sensitive — the statement wasn't fast enough. And several Israeli women were apprehensive — the statement was too harsh.

Later, the Palestinian women demanded that these apprehensive women be expelled. In the end, there was a sort of forced resignation, but the Israeli women who remained weren't at all happy with it. It felt like censorship.

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They then got nowhere trying to write a joint statement about "accountability." It was a euphemism for supporting the boycotts of Israel. All the women were in agreement on boycotting products from the settlements, but whereas the Palestinian women called for boycotting anything that supported the occupation, the Israeli women couldn't agree to such blanket sanctions.

Each one of the 20 Palestinian women spoke, and then each one of the 20 Israeli women spoke. This was basically the last big meeting. If they couldn't speak in one voice there was no point, the Palestinians argued.

The organization was dissolved. The idea to speak in one voice across the lines was gone.

### **"The Worse It Gets, the More Groups I Join"**

Galia's memories are of sitting in the middle of the road eating watermelons with Palestinians, of clambering over the foundations of settlements in East Jerusalem, the dialogues that were so difficult but through which she had experienced so much.

There have been fewer and fewer meetings or dialogues with Palestinians. The big campaigns, the huge demonstrations, are no more, though small ones are sometimes organized.

Some people say that the peace camp fell apart in the Second Intifada, and Galia used to insist that she only knew one person who had quit the movement because the terrorist attacks had been so bad. But later, she saw that things were no longer the same.

There was something in the collective pain, the collective fear within Israel that had hardened the public. The Israeli people felt so vulnerable. They supported the use of Israeli military force. And within the leadership of Peace Now, there was disagreement about what direction the movement should go.

At the heart of the issue was Peace Now's identity as a mass peace movement, unprecedented in the numbers it could mobilize. It drew its value and legitimacy from its numbers.

One side argued that Peace Now should not be too far ahead of public opinion — out there one step ahead, certainly, but not too far ahead. They couldn't lose the public. This was a tremendously valid argument for Galia.

But on the other hand, it meant going with public opinion: supporting war. It meant war. And it meant dropping bombs on densely populated areas, in Gaza for example. Over the years, she had moved more and more to the left.

The dilemma for Galia: Would we rather be right, and tiny, and ineffective — or stay with public opinion and bend a little on the position? Her identity was so closely knit with the movement, and her comfort drawn from feeling that she basically represented the opinion of the public majority.

In this climate, Galia now sports a "Combatants for Peace" shirt at grassroots peace activities, as she assists with fundraising and setting up international friends groups for this 10-year-old joint Israeli-Palestinian non-violent movement of former soldiers and armed activists.

Retired now at 77 years old, Galia's activism has not diminished. Her main endeavor is the creation of an international MA program in conflict resolution (sponsored by the University of Massachusetts) at Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, a

joint Israeli Arab and Jewish village in Israel. The youth need to learn the tools of peacemaking.

Galia's current list of projects and groups she works with is lengthy: Israeli-Palestinian Forum of Peace NGOs; *Palestine-Israel Journal*; a new centrist group of Israeli women called Women for Peace; the Center for Peace Studies at Tel Aviv University; and most of all, Combatants for Peace — to name a few.

Galia Golan likes to say, with a glint in her eye, "The worse it gets, the more groups I join."



## **CONVERSATION WITH GALIA GOLAN**

*The following is a compilation of quotations taken from public events and private interviews between Galia Golan and her peace writer, Claire Doran.*

### **On Peace**

#### ***What is your definition of peace?***

I'm very concentrated on the Arab-Israeli conflict. I'm not talking about world peace or personal peace. For me, it's a very, very specific thing. And a lot of times, interchangeable words are "end of the occupation," "end of the conflict," or "peace agreement."

Every day now there are killings, kind of like a Third Intifada has started. A local person from J Street wrote me and asked, "When will this stop?" And I said back, "When the occupation is over or stopped and we have a peace agreement." She wrote back, "That will happen when we have a different government." And yeah, she threw the ball back into our own court and in our own electorate.

In Israel, oddly enough, the people say the word "peace" has been discredited, and that we should talk about "agreement." Everyone is disillusioned by past attempts. They say, "Don't talk about peace. Talk about a final agreement, a settlement." Meaning peace.

I think it's also because people don't believe real peace is possible. The right wing always talks about "real peace" or "genuine peace," as if what we were working toward in the past wouldn't really last.

But when I use the term, I clearly mean an end of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which means of course ending the occupation.

### **On Purpose**

Maybe they're right, the people on the right. Maybe it's too late. A lot of people on the left are saying it's too late. But I can't quite accept that.

My usual answer is, "How can I get up in the morning if I think this is impossible to change." But I guess that anything that is wrong or bad or painful, you have to think you can change it, or else what can you do?

I guess somewhere along the line, every one of these little things that I do — going out and demonstrating or signing a petition, or meeting with diplomats — in everything we do we think we're trying. I know we're trying to make a difference. The question is: Are we really making a difference? Occasionally something happens where you think that you really did make a difference, but such times are very few and far between.

There was a historian who was a Holocaust survivor, very active with us before he left Israel. In the first Lebanon war there was a conference, a big public meeting by Peace Now. One of the things he said to “Why do you do it?” was that he always thinks to a situation in the future where a grandchild asks, “Where were you and what did you do?”

I have another colleague who is a good friend — very, very good, writes a lot in the press, also a survivor, a child in the Holocaust. Once, we were talking on the phone and he was very critical of Peace Now, and I said, “Do you prefer we didn’t exist, that there was no Peace Now?” That of course held him up.

That’s it — maybe we’re not making a difference, and all this running around isn’t changing things, but there’s this feeling that you’ve got to do something, and somebody’s got to do something. I can’t not do something. That’s been there all along.

Whereas somebody asked, “Why are you active?” I asked “Why isn’t everybody active?”

For me it feels like something very personal that I have to do. I look at other people, and some are active and others aren’t. For others it’s their whole lives. I have my whole professional life, which takes up much more of my hours of the day than my activism, but I have friends for whom the activism is everything — their jobs will be in that area and everything. I look at my daughter who is a civil rights lawyer, and she feels tremendous frustration of course, trying to stop this anti-democratic legislation, dealing with so many of the issues. But no other work satisfied her. She wasn’t interested. I don’t think there are answers to this.

But I love Pauline’s answer when Stephanie asked her, “Why did you do this or get into this?” And she said, “Because it’s the right thing to do.” And that’s a beautiful answer, it is.

### **On *Peace Now* Activities**

There are two very big cases where we at least managed to delay settlements in East Jerusalem. The best we could do was delay them, for three years, because we brought attention to them in America. That’s still what Peace Now mainly does today — bring attention to the creation of a new settlement or expansion, and get a lot of attention and pressure on the government to stop it. I was trying to find out if we ever succeeded, and there is apparently one settlement that we actually succeeded in stopping.

Going back to the very early years, there was a famous case where we demonstrated, and as a result of the demonstration there was a Supreme Court case, which was one of the few times where the opposition to setting up a settlement won. The court said that according to the Geneva Convention you could only set up or take private land for security purposes. In court it was proven that there was no security need; actually the former chief of staff, who was a defense minister under the Labor party testified that there was no security purpose for this. This set the precedent.

So that settlement didn't get set up. It was called Elon Moreh, but they did set it up somewhere else and that was called Elon Moreh 2. At that demonstration, my husband went. I was breastfeeding and couldn't go. Our very close friend went together with my husband to that demonstration and they chained themselves to tractors and bulldozers. They trapped — I think it was the defense minister at the time. We'd demonstrate and whatever minister was there from the government couldn't get out and would be there for hours. That was Elon Moreh 2 — but that settlement we didn't stop.

At a recent conference I was at, one of the leaders of the settlement movement actually said, "What happened to you guys? You used to be so strong, demonstrating against us."

### **On Taking Risks and Choosing to Change**

Every time that I've had a decision where I hesitated, I think back to how much I regretted not having gone to Selma, where I should have been. So then I do it, whatever it is, instead of hesitating. I mean, I really believe in that. I look at myself and I don't always think of it consciously, but I just feel that it's your life! It's important. These are gambles, to pick up and do this, or to change your field. They're all gambles. But sometimes you have to.

But it's jumping into the unknown. I don't want to say "jumping into a pool" because I don't jump into pools, I go very gradually! But I've done a lot of things, like even leaving Peace Now. I was so totally identified with the movement, having been involved since almost the very, very beginning. Really, it was not an easy decision. I left one political party to join another political party, and all kinds of things like that. Sometimes I feel that, "Alright, I've got to do something drastic."

Regarding my work, my profession, I have sort of a lesson: If you can put yourself in a position where you have a choice, I just can't think of anything worse than spending the bulk of the day doing something you don't like.

My work is literally an expression of myself, I love my work.

### **On Appreciating Donors**

I was shameless and very successful about raising money. One reason is that I have a lot of respect for donors, because I could not have gone to university without scholarships. I have tremendous admiration, gratitude and respect for donors. That's one thing that helps me solicit funds — I really do like them. I do think people are wonderful for giving money to things that are not theirs necessarily.

The second thing is that I know no shame, and if you believe in something it's very easy to ask for the money. But there was a brief period when I was going to run for the Knesset and I had to raise money and I could not write a fundraising letter for myself. I had written all these fundraising letters for the university, Peace Now, the women's

movement — and I could not write the letter for myself. Some old friends from university were visiting and they wrote the letter for me. But that taught me a lesson, and it was one of the reasons that I didn't continue running for office — I realized it wasn't for me. You had to have very thick skin. It's all ego. And I have ego, but not that kind!

But as I say, I have no shame when it comes to pushing for a cause I believe in. These are all things that affect my life very directly: the peace movement, the women's movement, the research centers at the university. These are important, so it's easy.

## **On Propaganda**

### ***From your vantage point, do you feel deceived by the propaganda?***

No, I don't feel deceived. We were deceived during the Yom Kippur War, in the first days of the war. We were attacked — that's not deception — but the leadership said that we were winning, that we counterattacked and that everything was fine. But we were losing. Later we realized that we'd been lied to.

It's manipulation, it's politics. But the reason I don't feel that it was deceit was that they [the government] believed that what they were doing was right. They really did. I mean, I see it in the archives. They really sincerely believed that the Arabs would not let us live here. And therefore, we had to have more land — defenses — to protect ourselves. I don't like it. It means that it was conscious. But they believed that why they were doing it was right.

Looking at our history, history of Jews and the persecution over the centuries, and in the Holocaust, I understand it. They really believed what they were doing was right. And in that sense, I don't justify it, but I don't feel that they were evil. I really don't. I feel that a lot of what they did was wrong. But I've come to understand it. I was depressed for three years as I was researching the book, because I went into the archives and saw decisions to set up settlements immediately [after the 1967 war] and to hold on to much of the territories. They really did it in a genuine belief that this is ours, and that we needed more to protect ourselves.

## **On Responses to Violence**

There are a couple of reactions. The first one is "They started it." A lot of it is about inciting people, and I always say, the big thing in the government is incitement, as if the Palestinian television or radio or leaders are inciting the people. My reaction is that they [the Palestinians] don't need incitement — they just step out the door. They don't even have to step out the door because the army comes at 2 or 3 in the morning looking for someone.

Another reaction is that "Maybe these things are happening but there's nothing we can do about it; there's no partner on the other side." There's this sort of tuning out. I don't know how to explain it.

I don't think people want to hear about the occupation. There's a sense that we're the victims, and if they just made peace with us this wouldn't be happening. Then you point out that there are these peace efforts, and they'll go, "Well, they rejected this proposal and that proposal."

There's this tremendous self-righteousness, because people can't see themselves the way I see us, and that's not pleasant. That's not a pleasant thing.

### **On Peace, Justice and Refugees' Right to Return**

I often say that I'm not sure that there is a just solution. There can be peace, but I'm not sure that there can be justice. Because justice would be for all the Palestinians to come back to the villages that were destroyed — but then we would not have a state. There is no government in Israel that would ever let all the refugees back because there are millions of them and their descendants.

The PLO leadership understands that, and what they want from us is basically to admit our part in pushing the refugees out, to at least admit that and some limited return. But it will never be full return. It will never be full justice.

And in the peace movement, these are issues. These issues are big for the Palestinian citizens of Israel (the Arab-Israelis; there's a distinction between the terms that you use). I have Palestinian friends in the north and for them this is a really hard issue. A lot of the refugees are their descendants sitting in camps in Lebanon. And the Lebanese were particularly bad with the refugees — wouldn't let them work outside the camps. The Jordanians gave them citizenship, and their situation there is much better. But I have no idea what will happen and that's tomorrow's problem. That's not going to be solved by the two-state solution.

### **On Public Discourse, Civil Society and Politics for the Next Generation**

For a Palestinian teenage girl to go to a meeting with Israeli teenage girls, that is totally political, whatever they're talking about. There's no question to me that these things are political, and thank goodness they're going on.

In our case, though, there are two things: it's problematic because of anti-normalization, and it's not enough. We have to penetrate the formal political level. There are a lot of different points of view here, but there is a theory that if you do a lot of grassroots things then we can change how people vote, and that's how we can get rid of this government. I'm a little skeptical because public opinion, in fact, is in favor of a two-state solution and ending the conflict. The question is: what are you willing to do for that, and what does it mean?

I think it's terrific [that groups still meet]. I think it's important, but it's not enough. And there's no question in my mind that we have to press the political parties and hopefully

even join the political parties. We're not going to get change only through the activities of civil society, and we know that.

It's important because otherwise the public discourse is all one-sided. With all the violence of the past few weeks, I saw in the paper that over 1,000 people were demonstrating outside of the prime minister's residence. What about? To take stronger action against the Palestinians. So you have to have another voice.

And it's very hard to have that. The group I belong to went for a silent demonstration against violence in Tel Aviv. It's very hard to demonstrate against violence when a Jewish settler couple has just been killed. The fact that the next day Palestinians were killed — we care about that, but that's not what the society cares about.

We know why idealistic young people don't go into political parties. There's very little respect in Israel for the political system, the political arena, and rightly so. If you look at the people there — there's not much to respect. So it's a vicious cycle.

### **On Choosing to Stay**

There was a terrorist attack when 22 soldiers were killed in Israel near an army base, at the bus stop. This was in the '90s. They called me from the radio and wanted the response of the movement. The journalist said, "Does this make you change your mind about peace activism." And I said, "No, it makes me all the more determined and want to reach a peace agreement." That is my response to war.

There's this side to it: It's not just that what we're doing is wrong and the occupation is wrong, and that Palestinians are being killed. Our people are being killed. *Who says that these kids have to go off and get killed?*

If I could have had my way, I would have been very happy if my grandsons hadn't gone to the army. They're not in combat units and I'm very glad about that. But even that's a different attitude, because I didn't support the movement of refusing to serve when it started. I thought, "You're a citizen, it's your job, it's your duty." I only supported it during the Second Intifada; we were really in danger. But what we did in the occupied territories was even worse, so that was the first time I supported the refusal to serve.

But you have to understand, refusing to serve in Israel is a very, very complicated thing. It's not a volunteer army. It has at least the myth or the ethos of being a people's army, but it's not anymore. But it's very hard to convey this. It's a tiny country, everyone is connected, and it's not distant. It's all very real. It's all right in your face.

Why would somebody go back to fight? Because it's his *country*, it's a little country, and it's a new country. I have the same feeling when I talk about the things the government is doing that I disagree with. It is this little country that you helped build or were a part of building, and you can't be indifferent.

## **On Combatants for Peace and Learning**

A few weeks ago, I joined Combatants for Peace formally. One of the things that is significant and unique to them is that they have paired up towns. Tel Aviv and Tulkarm, which is a small town in the West Bank, Tel Aviv and Nablus, Jerusalem and Jericho, and Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

So I joined the Tel Aviv-Nablus group, and I've done two things with them so far. They were having a regular meeting at the house of a Palestinian, so I went to that. One of the things the discussion was about was organizing to bring Israelis to the territories to see what is going on and meet with Palestinians in their homes and hear their stories. Combatants for Peace is all about telling their stories, and whatever the activity it always ends sitting around inside or outside, and a Palestinian telling her story, or his story, then the Israeli Jew, the same.

I brought two couples. One couple is super active and I always go with them to demonstrations, and the other couple were old friends, dear friends, who were definitely in the right place and would go to the demonstrations but weren't very active. First we went to a settlement area. Peace Now used to do this but not anymore. In the bus, one of the fellows from Combatants for Peace gave a briefing — a bit of the history and explains how many settlers there are, where, etc.

They took us to an area full of warehouses next to a settlement, and I learned these are warehouses for the goods for the supermarkets inside Israel. They come and put them there because the property is cheap and the workers are cheap, because it's the occupied territories. I didn't know that, and there they were — all these warehouses.

## **On Being Called for the Peace Issue**

I definitely want to be known in Israel primarily on the peace issue. That's really important to me. But I think that because a lot of what I do is not necessarily in the limelight, I prefer to be #2. Everybody on the inside knows my work, and a lot of times I spoke at demonstrations. It's usually the men who are upfront: this one is the leader, and this one is known, and this one's opinion is asked for. That's what I wanted. I was very well known as a Soviet specialist because I was on television all the time. So whenever the radio or television come to me about Russia, I say "No" because I haven't dealt with Russia since the Soviet Union, but I want them to come to me on the Arab-Israeli conflict. They know me as a Soviet specialist and as a peacenik, but not as an academic whose opinion on the conflict is important. That's the men.

## **On Feminism**

In the late '70s and then the '80s, I was helping young women — not that I set out to help them. Maybe they would come to me, or not, but I knew that so-and-so just finished her PhD. So, I'd try to get the dean to let her teach a course, because I wanted another course on women. I got a number of women then first job.

The women's studies program was a minor, but then I raised money or money was brought to me, and I built on that to create a women's studies center which ultimately included the teaching program. We set up scholarships for MA students, doctoral and post-doc. It's not really mentoring, but there are a lot of women that are today professors in different fields.

And I hire women. When I was head of the department, I wasn't able to hire a woman because it's a committee thing and I didn't succeed in getting a woman in. But if I'd go and hear young people speak, there was no question that I consciously and vocally preferred women over men in all the hiring we did these past 10 to 15 years. I would mentor without realizing what I was doing, trying to make sure they were getting their promotions. And that part was very conscious — because that was always as a feminist trying to promote women, wherever and however.

And they're good women! Very often now I'll create a panel at one of the conferences. For years I have refused to go to a conference of all men — and I do it demonstratively. They'll write an invitation and I'll write back, "I won't go to something where that doesn't have women on the panel." But that's all feminist activism.



**BIOGRAPHY OF A PEACE WRITER —**  
**CLAIRE DORAN**

Claire Doran is a mediator, writer and teacher, and currently a teaching fellow in sociology at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. Prior to her work as a peace writer at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice, she completed an MA in peace studies at International Christian University in Tokyo, Japan, as a Rotary World Peace Fellow.

Her research interests are diverse, encompassing intersectional identity, gender and sexuality, cross-cultural communication, intergroup conflict, the politics of language, and critical approaches to peace and violence.

Doran has a BA in peace and conflict studies from the University of California at Berkeley and served as program director of the Asian Pacific American Dispute Resolution Center, a community mediation center with a focus on supporting monolingual Asian and Pacific Islander immigrants in Los Angeles.

A California native and avid reader, Doran draws particular inspiration and courage from the writers of the New Journalism movement. She believes that skillful storytelling is critical for encouraging informed and vibrant civil society, and has taken coursework in creative nonfiction and journalism through the UCLA extension program.

**JOAN B. KROC INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE**  
**at the University of San Diego's Kroc School of Peace Studies**

The mission of the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice (IPJ), based at the University of San Diego's Kroc School of Peace Studies, is to foster peace, cultivate justice and create a safer world. The IPJ was established in 2000 through a generous gift from the late Joan B. Kroc to the university to create an institute for the study and practice of peace and justice.

The institute strives, in Joan B. Kroc's words, to not only talk about peace, but also make peace. In its peacebuilding initiatives in places like Nepal and Kenya, the IPJ works with local partners to help strengthen their efforts to consolidate peace with justice in the communities in which they live. In addition to the Women PeaceMakers Program, the institute is home to the Joan B. Kroc Distinguished Lecture Series and WorldLink Program, and produces several publications in the fields of peace and justice.

## **ENDNOTES**

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<sup>i</sup> A version of this paragraph first appeared in the article “‘Women Cannot Cry Anymore’: Global Voices Transforming Violent Conflict,” by Emiko Noma in *Critical Half*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (2007). Copyright 2007 Women for Women International.