



# Golden Silence? – Inaction, Non-engagement, and Avoidance in the Israel-Palestine Conflict

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Part of IRC Project: Religious Conflicts and Coping Strategies - The Use and Abuse of the Israel-Palestine Conflict

**May 19/20, 2022**

Alte Kaserne (Kasernenhof 8, Basel)

Register by May 12: <https://forms.gle/BEKUdizEp8ryscdC8>

The conference will discuss the role of inaction in the Israel/Palestine conflict. It invites studies of different practices and policies reacting to or engaging with the conflict through non-engagement, inaction, avoidance, or silence. The Israel/Palestine conflict is commonly defined by action and agents – both violent and consolidatory. Acts of violence are condemned and responsible actors retaliated against. This workshop, however, looks to investigate other forms of agency and interaction. It starts from the assumption that inaction is not to be equated with passivity and silence, or with surrender. Rather, these forms of non-engagement make up a particular form of response to the conflict and open up for different forms of solutions to it. They present different forms of violence and injuries, as well as different forms of resistance and power.

### **Thursday, 19 May 2022**

10:00–10:30 **Opening remarks**

10:30–12:30 **History**

*Arie Dubnov* (George Washington University): Between Testimony & Agnotology: The Teddy Katz Affair and the limits of reckoning with the Past in Palestine/Israel

*Daniel Levine* (University of Alabama): “It’s Been a Minute.” Toward a Hebrew Language Political Catechism

*Discussant:* Efrat Gilad, University of Bern

12:30–14:00 **Lunch Break**

14:00–16:00 **Theory**

*Maria Birnbaum* (University of Bern/University of Cambridge): Religion, Race, and Borders: Agnotology and the Palestine Peel Commission

*Elad Lapidot* (University of Lille): Politics of Not Speaking

*Discussant:* Dana Landau (Swisspeace)

16:30 Short Inner City Tour 'Basel in Peace and Conflict' (Georg Kreis, University of Basel)

19:00 **Dinner**

## Friday, 20 May 2022

10:00–11:30 **Politics and Activism**

*Oded Leshem* (Hebrew University of Jerusalem): The role of hope for action and inaction

*Oliver Fink* (University of Basel/Bern): Social Agency between Resistance and Acceptance in the Palestinian Territories

*Discussant*: Laurent Goetschel

12:00–13:30 **Lunch Break**

13:30-15:00 **Education**

*Orly Idan* (Reichman University) and *Sami Adwan* (University of Bethlehem): Building hopes in the Israeli-Palestinian context: Educating generations through language and shared narratives towards a better future

*Discussant*: Maurus Reinkowski

15:00-15:30 **Coffee Break**

15:30–16:30 **Final Symposium & Discussion**

*Moderator*: René Bloch (University of Bern)

## Saturday, 21 May 2022

Bordering differently: Tri-state Basel: Switzerland, France, and Germany

## Biographical Notes on Contributors

**Sami Adwan** is Co-Director of PRIME (Peace Research Institute in the Middle East) and a professor at Bethlehem University. His work focuses on educational models that enable both Palestinian and Israeli educators to create school history curricula that include both historical narratives in a single textbook. He has published widely on the role of education in peacebuilding.

**Maria Birnbaum** is a Postdoctoral researcher at the University of Bern and currently a visiting fellow at Cambridge University. She received her Ph.D in International Relations from the European University Institute (EUI). Her work focuses on the relationship between diversity and order with a particular focus on religion and global politics. Her most recent publication *Entangled Empire: Religion and the transnational history of Pakistan and Israel* traces the interconnected histories of British India and the Palestine Mandate and shows how the terminology of religion came to form a distinctive part of a transnational vocabulary defining minorities, borders, and conflicts. In her new project, *Histories, and Hierarchies of Ignorance*, Maria Birnbaum studies cases where political and legal unintelligibility are conceived as forms of power rather than forms of suppression.

**Arie Dubnov** is the Max Ticktin Chair of Israel Studies at the George Washington University and is a historian of twentieth-century Jewish and Israeli history, with emphasis on the history of political thought, the study of nationalism, decolonization, and partition politics. His publications include the intellectual biography *Isaiah Berlin: The Journey of a Jewish Liberal* (2012), and two edited volumes, *Zionism – A View from the Outside* (2010 [in Hebrew]), and *Partitions: A Transnational History of Twentieth-century Territorial Separatism* (2019, co-edited with Laura Robson). His current book research project, tentatively entitled *Dreamers of the Third Empire/Temple*, examines ties between Zionist and British imperial thinkers in interwar years and to uncover alternative, neglected federalist political schemes for the future of the region that were circulating at the time.

**Oliver Fink** is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Basel and formerly engaged with the University of Bern (IRC 'Religious Conflicts and Coping Strategies'), affiliated with swisspeace and the Kelman Institute for Conflict Transformation. His research focuses on the psychological dimension of intergroup conflict, and specifically, how emotions contribute to violent collective action.

**Efrat Gilad** is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Institute for Jewish Studies at the University of Bern. She is a social and cultural historian and her current research project focuses on livestock ecologies and economies in Palestine and Israel as part of her broader interest in the intertwined histories of food and animals in urban and settler-colonial settings. Efrat completed her Ph.D. in International History at The Graduate Institute, Geneva, where her doctoral project was funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation's Doc.CH grant. At the University of Bern, she teaches courses related to Jewish history and environmental history while also working towards the publication of a book manuscript - *Meat in the Heat* - on the history of meat production and consumption in British Mandate Palestine.

**Orly Idan** is a lecturer in psycholinguistics at Reichman University (Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya) and a senior associate researcher at the 'Psychology of Intergroup Conflict and Reconciliation' Lab at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her current research interests and teaching domains are the effects of linguistic cues on emotions within the context of intractable conflicts and negotiations; discourse analysis; a comparison of native and foreign language use relating to conflict; and mentalization and language development.

**Dana Landau** is senior researcher (postdoc) at swisspeace, an associated institute of the University of Basel. She holds a DPhil (Ph.D.) from the University of Oxford, Department of Politics and International Relations. Her research interests include mediation and peace processes, minority rights, and questions of diversity in international peace- and state-building, with regional foci on the Balkans and the Middle East. Her work has been published in *Security Dialogue*, the *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, and *Nationalities Papers*. She also teaches political science at the University of Basel and co-chairs the Swiss Political Science Association's Peace and Security Section. Before joining swisspeace she held a postdoctoral position at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID) in Geneva.

**Elad Lapidot** is Professor of Hebraic Studies at the University of Lille, France. Holding a Ph.D. in philosophy from the Paris Sorbonne University, he has taught philosophy, Jewish thought, and Talmud at many universities, such as the University of Bern, Switzerland, and the Humboldt Universität and Freie Universität in Berlin. His work is guided by questions concerning the relation between knowledge and politics. Among his publications: *Jews Out of the Question. A Critique of Anti-Anti-Semitism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2020), Hebrew translation with introduction and commentary (with R. Bar) of Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: Resling Publishing, 2020), *Heidegger and Jewish Thought. Difficult Others*, edited with M. Brumlik (London/New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), and *Etre sans mot dire : La logique de 'Sein und Zeit'* (Bucarest: Zeta Books, 2010).

**Oded Adomi Leshem** is a senior research associate at the 'Psychology of Intergroup Conflict and Reconciliation' Lab and postdoctoral fellow at the Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace, both at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He works on the formation and transformation of political attitudes during violent conflicts, particularly how future-oriented perceptions such as hopes or fears impact political behavior.

**Daniel Levine** is Aaron Aronov Associate Professor in Judaic Studies at the University of Alabama. He is the author of *Recovering International Relations: The Promise of Sustainable Critique* (Oxford, 2012), and has articles published or forthcoming in *Perspectives on Politics*, the *European Journal of International Relations*, *Global Studies Quarterly*, and *Millennium*, among others. His current project is titled 'Israel, Palestine, and the Politics of Jewish Fear.'

