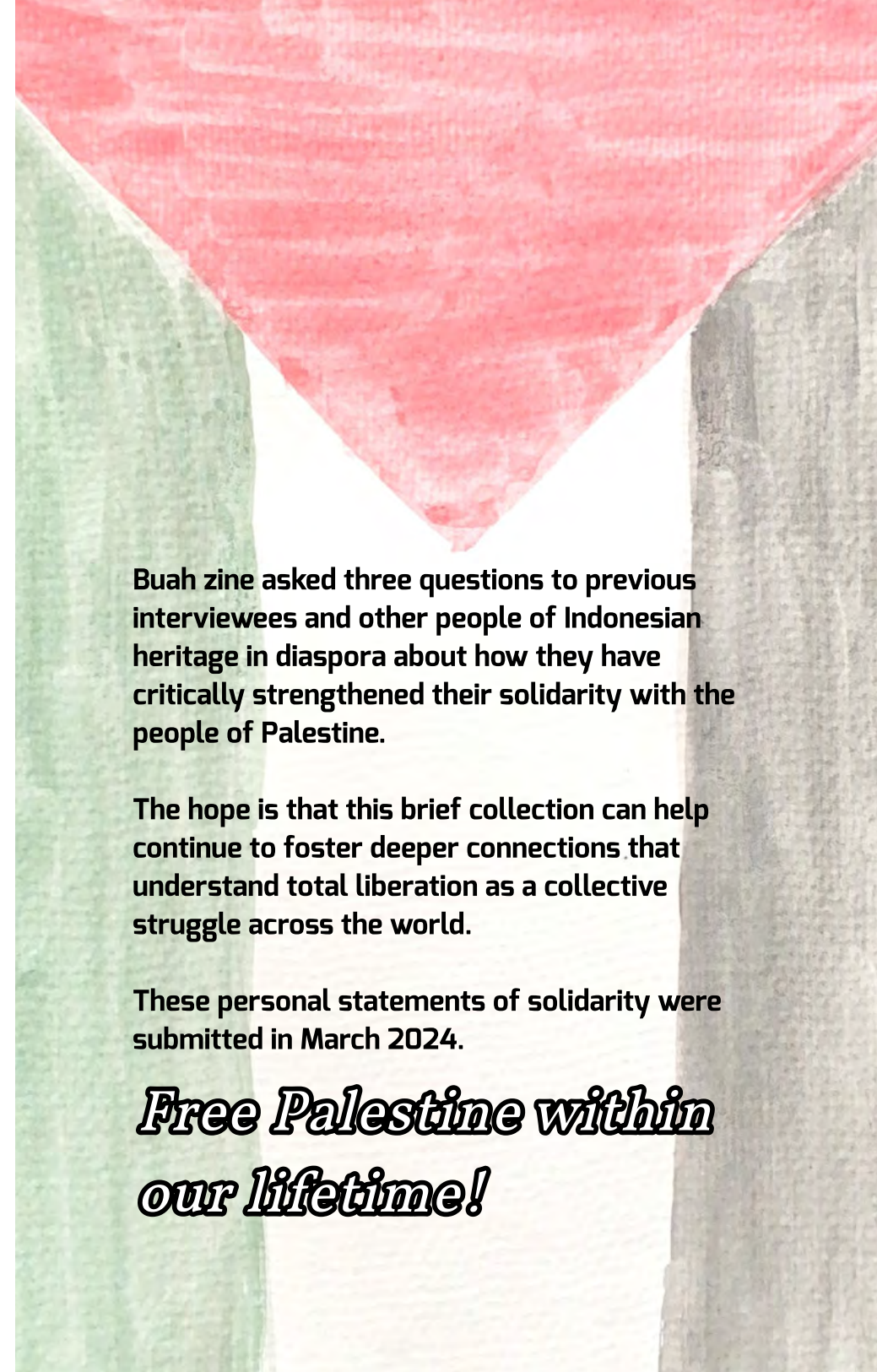


A close-up photograph of a watermelon slice, showing the red flesh with black seeds and a green rind. The slice is cut diagonally, creating a triangular shape.

# Buah zine

// Solidarity with Palestine //  
Spring 2024

A close-up photograph of a watermelon slice, showing the red flesh with black seeds and a green rind. The slice is cut diagonally, creating a triangular shape.

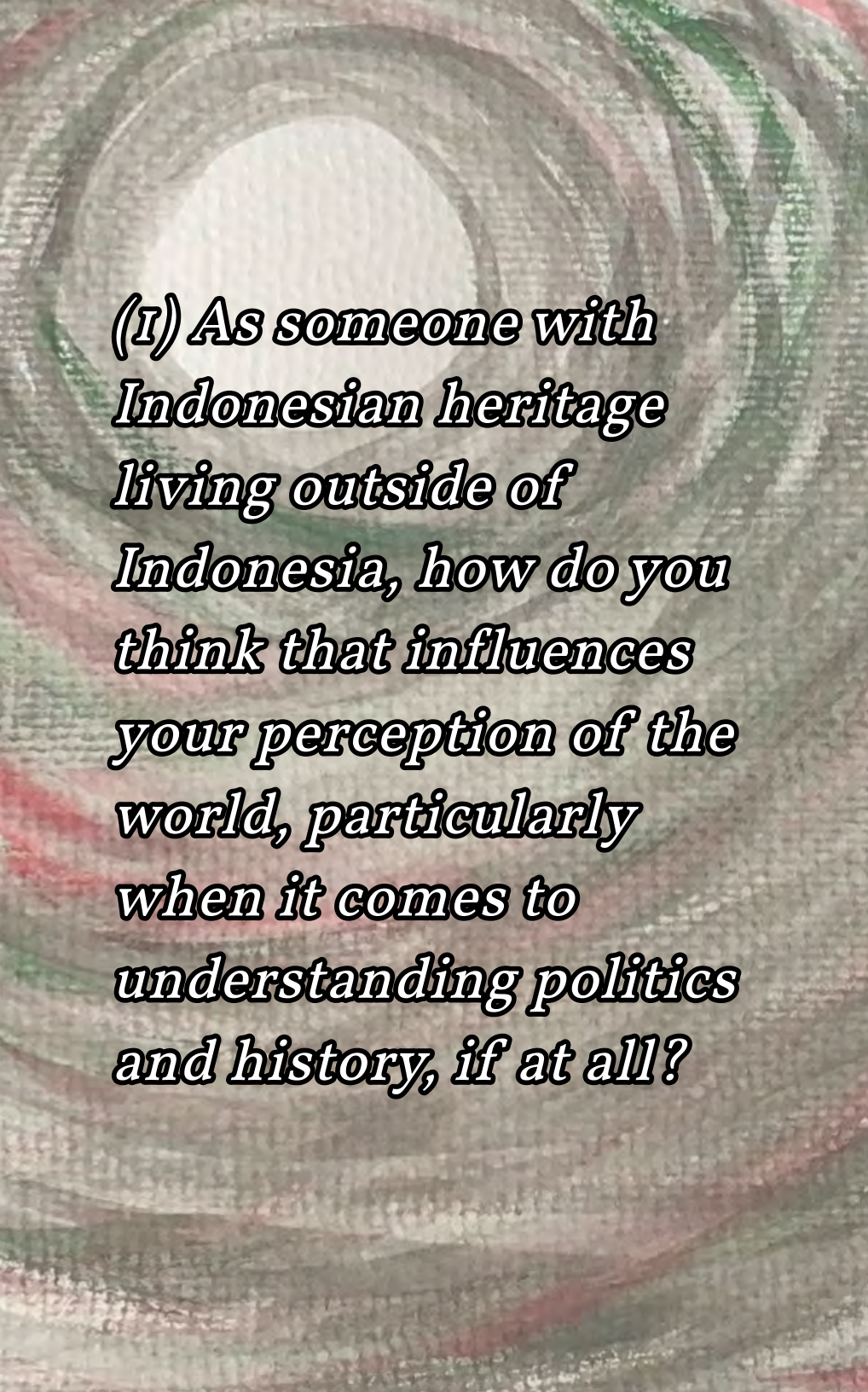
Buah zine asked three questions to previous interviewees and other people of Indonesian heritage in diaspora about how they have critically strengthened their solidarity with the people of Palestine.

The hope is that this brief collection can help continue to foster deeper connections that understand total liberation as a collective struggle across the world.

These personal statements of solidarity were submitted in March 2024.

***Free Palestine within  
our lifetime!***





***(I) As someone with Indonesian heritage living outside of Indonesia, how do you think that influences your perception of the world, particularly when it comes to understanding politics and history, if at all?***

I grew up in an Indonesian household in the U.S. For as long as I can remember, I've been at least tangentially aware of the Palestinian struggle. I knew growing up that it was a place in the Middle East whose people were beset with war, though I could not distinguish this struggle from the milieu of violence in the broader Middle East. Still, I sympathized with the cause vaguely because I understood it as part of a shared Muslim struggle against U.S. and European dominance.

It wasn't until 2014 when I spent a summer in Indonesia that, for the first time, I saw the nature of the struggle on mainstream news, which covered the relentless Israeli bombing of Gaza. This was the first time I could actively discuss the subject with Indonesian family members, whose support of Palestine was defined more by nationalist and religious elements. While I was notably less religious than they were, I still saw the Palestinian struggle as part of my own, connecting the active U.S. backing of Israeli militarism with the surveillance and racial profiling of Muslim-appearing people in the West. Since then, I became more vocally in support of the Palestinian struggle.

In 2021, I became a socialist organizer and played an active role in participating and even organizing rallies for Palestine in the DMV [D.C., Maryland and Virginia]. This was motivated by a newer analytical framework: Marxism. I saw the struggle of Palestine as one with the struggle of poor and oppressed people everywhere. I learned about the Indonesian massacre of 1965, also U.S.-backed, and to this day, I see Palestine as just a continuation of the same neocolonial project.

**Syihan, 25-34  
Maryland**



I was born in Indonesia during Suharto's presidency and lived there until I was 10 years old, when my family moved to America. In Indonesia, I grew up with the propaganda of the New Order regime. I remember watching the "G30S" movie as a kid each year. As a child, I didn't yet realize we were living in a dictatorship, but I knew there was something wrong with our country and the way people couldn't talk openly about the government. I remember learning the word "coup d'état" in junior high school in the U.S. and realizing that was what happened in Indonesia in 1965. I started to realize that my sense of history was skewed and obscured by the propaganda I was raised with, especially after watching the movie "The Act of Killing."

**kat, 45-54**  
**Philadelphia**

There are many stories untold of a country. You never can just learn of the surfaces of its name, its capital city, its landmarks like what you have to remember for your IPS test in SD level in Indonesia. Indonesia's history is not only Java-centered – it's all over the archipelago. Understanding your own heritage – your indigenous knowledge – is important to tackle the white-washing writings.

**SS, 25-34**  
**Indonesia**



Understanding diversity and plurality is something anyone who has lived in Indonesia would fundamentally understand. The striking number of languages, cultures, religions and diversity is so special. This has shaped my understanding of politics and history, as has growing up as a Person of Colour in a White Settler Colony. This led me to understanding the importance of dismantling systems of oppression and the importance of anti-imperialism, knowing the history of Indonesia's independence and the legacy Indonesian feminists, trade unionists and Communist Party members have left for us.

**Bridget Ying Harilaou, 25-34  
Narrm (Melbourne, Australia)**

As someone who is deeply interested in politics and history, I see our identities as political choices. I find myself shaped and reshaped by my interactions, through each encounter with a new language or a book or a conversation with a neighbour from a different part of the world. I am Indonesian and I am also Palestinian poems by Noor Hindi, historical analyses by Aimé Césaire, and the Black liberatory treatises of Angela Davis. Our histories are intertwined and so too is our liberation. My political choice is to live in community and in struggle with others across borders and time, perhaps because I have been fortunate to grow up much like a vine twisting transnationally and, as a result, cannot imagine existing any other way.

**Mita, 25-34  
U.K.**



When I first moved to the U.S. in 1988 for college, I spent a lot of time at the library learning Indonesian histories that had been suppressed under my Orde Baru education. Some of it seemed completely outrageous and turned out to be true. Some of it was an oversimplified outside lens that my lived experience allowed me to read critically. But mostly, my focus was on accessing histories and views that had been hidden from us by the New Order public school propaganda machine.

**Innosanto Nagara, 45-54**  
**Oakland, California**

As I have Indonesian (Moluccan) and Dutch heritage, I think this definitely influences the way I see politics and history: I am familiar with the colonisation some of my ancestors committed and the colonisation other ancestors endured. It can be confusing, sometimes, to come to terms with this myself. But hearing the stories about how each family member or ancestor came to terms with this, in their own ways, has helped me shape my own perspective when understanding politics and history. What did my ancestors do that inspires me, from my Indonesian, Dutch and Indo sides? What different choices can I make in my own lifetime? Especially living on unceded Aboriginal land (in so-called Australia) as a white-passing settler ... what is my own position in this colony? I come from a line of Indo matriarchs, who were proud of their cultural heritage, and I often draw on their wisdom when forming my own understanding of the world.

**J, 25-34**  
**Gadigal**



***(2) As someone with Indonesian heritage living outside of Indonesia, how did you first learn about Palestine? What were you taught or not taught growing up that you had to unlearn or learn as an adult?***

It was actually when, as a teenager, I lived for a few years in Indonesia, attending a very Islamic school. My classmates were extremely religious and called for joining the jihad in Palestine. And then, I went to university in the U.S. at a very liberal school, where my classmates were progressive Jews who campaigned against Zionism and for Palestinian liberation. Both were probably atypical experiences, but I learned a lot through my Jewish comrades, and that's when I began to read up more about the colonial anti-semitic history of Zionism, the violent establishment of the Israeli state, and of Nakba and the ongoing dispossession and oppression of Palestinians. That then brought me back to Indonesia, figuratively, as I learned about the centrality of the Palestinian struggle in our own road to independence.

As for unlearning, it was more that I had to unlearn the fiction of western 'human rights' or 'rule of law' and became acutely aware of how the west – including the U.K., western Europe, and settler colonies like the U.S., Canada, Australia and NZ – very much profit politically and financially from Israel's supremacy in the Middle East, even if it means supporting a genocide.

**Mita, 25-34  
U.K.**



I watched a PBS documentary called "New Americans" that chronicled a Palestinian family's journey to emigrate from the West Bank to the U.S. as refugees around 2004. It was the first time that I saw Palestinians depicted as humans; in the news media in the U.S., Palestine was always referred to in conjunction with Yasser Arafat and as a "militant" liberation organization. In this documentary, I saw that Palestinians were just like humans anywhere in the world: They were dreaming of a better life; they wanted the simple things in life; they wanted better futures for their children; and they wanted to get away from occupation and political turmoil. I saw images of Palestinians being dehumanized as soldiers checked their papers. I saw people whose only defense against this occupation was to throw rocks. As I saw that people around me decried these acts, I only saw the desperation of the occupied people. They were fighting with whatever they had.

Although their occupation was nothing like I've experienced in my life, I drew parallels to my own situation at that time: an undocumented Indonesian without papers. The way the Israeli soldiers treated the Palestinians stuck with me. I saw that they just wanted a better life for their children, the same reasons that Indonesians wanted to leave our country. I thought about the Dutch occupation and started to realize it is not unlike what Israel was doing to the Palestinians – it was present-day colonization. In human history, we have always dehumanized our enemies, and the western world was very successful in doing this with Palestinians. Even as I started to sympathize with the Palestinian people, my upbringing still made me believe that the Israelis, too, deserved a homeland for what they went through in the Holocaust.

But I started thinking more deeply about what was going on in Palestine about 15 years ago. My partner started challenging me to pay attention to what was actually happening there. I think it's important to note that he didn't grow up in America, so he didn't grow up with the media depictions and messaging that we have here in the U.S. regarding Palestine. I had to let go of the idea of a Zionist state as inevitable. I started to see what was actually happening in Palestine: a settler-colonial occupation building developments on Palestinian land, displacing people and creating an apartheid state.

And, in the last 15 years, we have seen the Israeli settler-colonial project in full force as settlements encroach Palestinian territory. I saw the hypocrisy of the world decrying religious extremism among Palestinians without acknowledging religious extremism in Israel.

It sickens me to see the U.S. support of Israel during this war. Now I believe that trauma does not give a group of people the right to inflict that trauma on another group.

Who gets the right to a homeland?  
Who gets the right to return?  
Who gets to move freely in this world?

**kat, 45-54**  
**Philadelphia**



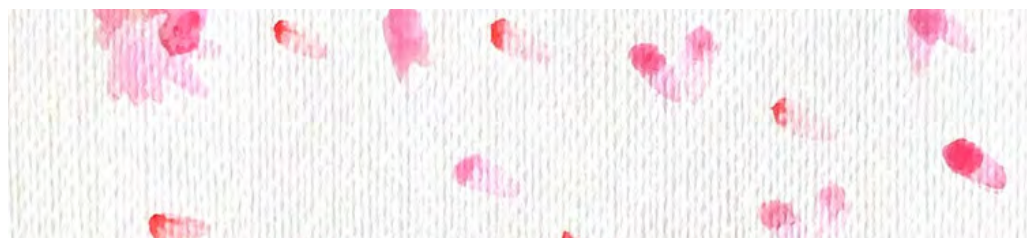
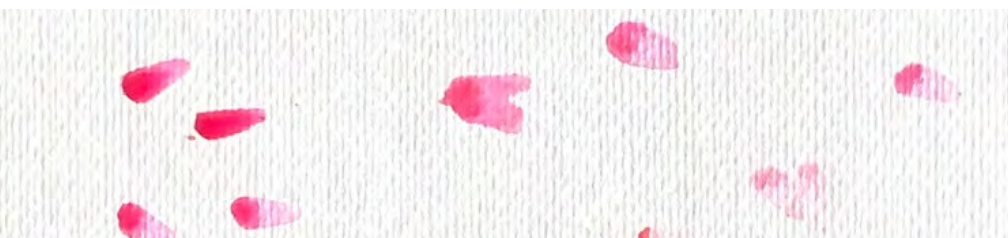


As alluded to in the first question, the key difference between understanding the Palestinian struggle in Indonesia versus in the United States is the religious and national elements. While these elements were what initially drew me to support Palestine, I began to associate my support more with classist, racist, and imperialist oppression into my adulthood.

**Syihan, 25-34**  
**Maryland**

I first learned about Palestine in depth after October – I had just returned from overseas and began getting more involved in local communities. It was difficult for me to come to terms with the "both-sideism" that I was drawn to in the early days of the conflict. My Indo heritage definitely had an influence on this position that I initially took. It didn't take long at all for me to realise how damaging that perspective was. I felt a great deal of anger at the injustice following those initial days as I learned more about how Palestine had become increasingly occupied by Israel, with an upsetting familiarity to my own generational memories.

**J, 25-34**  
**Gadigal**



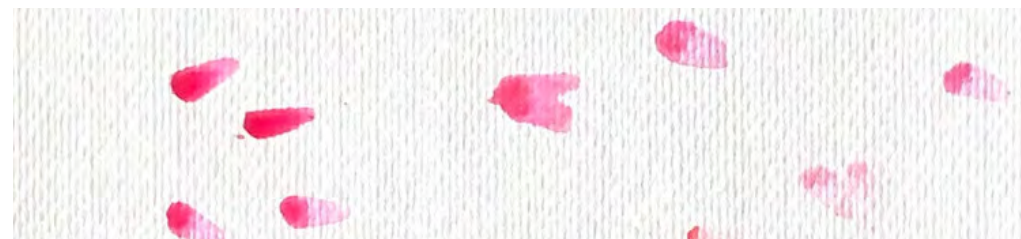


Because I came to the U.S. as a young adult, I was already familiar with the rest of the world's view of Palestine. So, when I got involved in anti-war activism (Gulf War, 1990) in college, the General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS) was one of the organizations in the anti-war alliance and it was very clear where we stood. What was new to me actually was the anti-Zionist Jewish perspective. Having never met any openly Jewish people in Indonesia, where even the term Yahudi was regularly used interchangeably with Israeli/Zionist, more of my learning was there. I met people who were very progressive on all issues we agreed on, except on Palestine. So I learned a lot from them. Later I moved to San Francisco and worked at the Arabic Bookstore on Valencia Street, a hub for the Palestinian activist community. Most were supporters of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a more left-leaning wing of the movement, and learned a lot about the internal differences in the PLO and the various movements fighting against Israeli occupation across the region, and the ways that they represented a very diverse range of ideologies, strategies, and tactics. But what was clear was that everyone understood the occupation to be a colonial endeavor and, Palestinian or otherwise, everyone coming out of the liberation movements of the previous generation felt Palestinian liberation, along with the dismantling of South African apartheid, was pivotal.

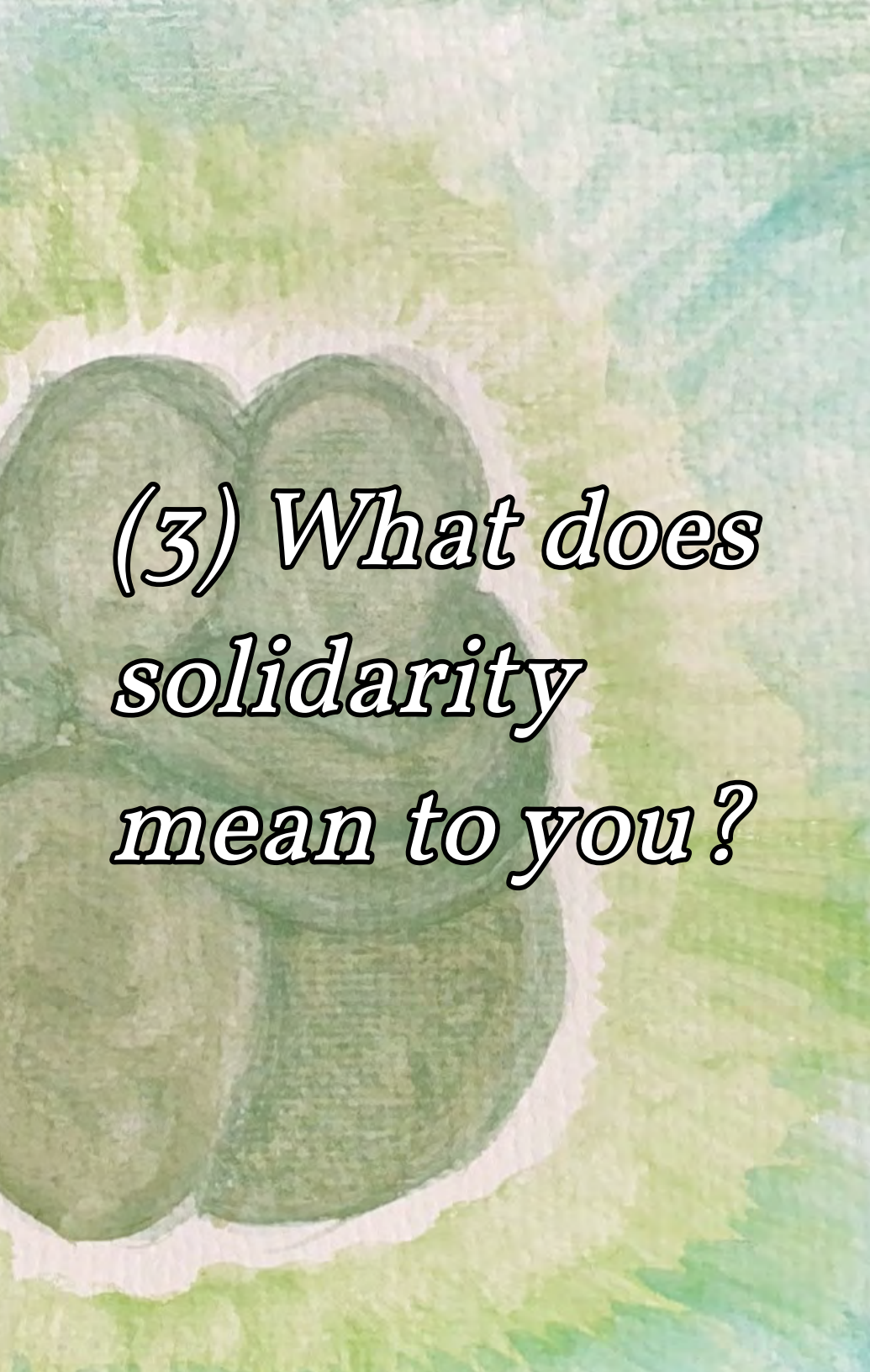
**Innosanto Nagara, 45-54**  
**Oakland, California**

I learnt about the colonial occupation of Palestine in university: the apartheid Palestinians lived under and how there were nets in the street to catch rubbish that Israeli settlers would throw at Palestinians from their apartments. The inhuman checkpoint system that saw Palestinian mothers giving birth without medical support if they were stuck at the border crossing. The huge walls. The tanks that would roll into villages to dispossess people of their land and homes. The refugee crisis and Palestinians forced to move to Western countries, such as those I encountered in Australia and America. Every piece of information I found, whether directly from a Palestinian or through research, articles, video footage, media, and now icons like Bisan, allowed me to make an educated and informed opinion that genocide is now occurring in Palestine, and the Israeli state is one of the most disgusting regimes, funded by the U.S., to commit crimes against humanity.

**Bridget Ying Harilaou, 25-34**  
**Narrm (Melbourne, Australia)**







*(3) What does  
solidarity  
mean to you?*

To me, solidarity means love. I used to think solidarity meant only a shared anger at injustice, which it certainly can and should be ... but as I have gradually become a part of the community that is fighting for Palestine, what has struck me the most about Palestinians during this time is their unshakable faith in the future of their culture, their nation, their land, and their children, and their warmth, grace and strength. It's a love and steadfastness that has made the whole world stop and listen in solidarity. And the key to that solidarity is the immense heart that the Palestinian people have in the face of quite literally the worst side of humanity.

**J, 25-34**  
**Gadigal**

Everything. Any kinds of support should be stated as solidarity. Solidarity is not a scary word. It's an essential word that is placed to be immoral, marginalised for its kindness and purpose.

**SS, 25-34**  
**Indonesia**



A collective being that is alive — always in motion, supportive, and emotionally aware in tending the fire to fight.

**Yanti, 25-34**  
**Stockholm**

In my opinion, solidarity is a measure of sacrifice, which comes in many flavors. The smallest (and perhaps most common) form of solidarity is emotional sacrifice; in other words, feeling bad and sympathizing with the struggle. The most committed (and most necessary) form of solidarity is material sacrifice; in other words, devoting personal time, energy, and resources towards resolving the struggle.

Every supporter of Palestine exists in a spectrum between the two ends, and even at each level, there is broad disagreement on tactics, but what is most needed to see any liberation struggle through is organized and collective material sacrifice.

**Syihan, 25-34**  
**Maryland**

Solidarity means standing up and speaking up for occupied peoples in whatever way we can. I was relieved when I finally became a U.S. citizen and could speak up in protests. During the Trump presidency, I was never afraid to say what I wanted. I was grateful that I was no longer a kid living in the Suharto era, where you could not say anything. But this is the first time that I've felt that it's risky to talk about this issue openly. I didn't think I would ever feel like that in the U.S. It now feels like the Indonesia I grew up in: People afraid to criticize Israel for fear of being labeled. But I am so inspired by the Free Palestine movement that the rest of the world now sees the occupation and genocide for what it is. I have hope that the momentum and the tide will turn.

**kat, 45-54**  
**Philadelphia**

Solidarity means expressing unconditional support with the struggle of a person, class of people or ethnic group towards equity, justice and liberation.

**AP, 25-34**  
**Unceded land of the Ngambri People**  
**(in so-called Australia)**



I have been thinking about this a lot in light of anarchist comrade Aaron Bushnell's recent martyrdom. I wrote elsewhere: There are different kinds of love and arguably the deepest kind is between comrades – a love with no conditions other than your struggle entwined with mine. Solidarity is that love. It's the love Aaron expressed in his act and I hope we carry, because no matter where you were born or where you live, none of us are free until all of us are free.

**Mita, 25-34**  
**U.K.**

Solidarity is simple. To quote Lilla Watson, Gangulu woman and visual artist, and Queensland Aboriginal activists of the 1970s: "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."

**Bridget Ying Harilaou, 25-34**  
**Narrm (Melbourne, Australia)**

I think of solidarity in two (related) ways. There is the traditional labor movement use of the term in relation to creating a unified front across a sector. It has to do with movement discipline, marching in step, and adhering to principles (i.e. never cross a picket line).

Then there is the International Solidarity idea, in particular in relation to those of us who live in the belly of the beast (the imperialist countries) and our role in supporting liberation movements. The key piece here being finding ways to follow the lead of the on-the-ground impacted folks while also actively doing what we can in our sphere of influence. In Indonesia, this was always tricky, because different on-the-ground organizations will have different asks of the international solidarity movements. And, after a long history of western colonialism, admonitions from foreigners is something that can have the opposite effect than what was intended (strengthening rather than weakening the hand of the repressive regime). I expect it is similar elsewhere. The U.S. government has very little standing to do anything but harm in relation to Palestine. But there are many people in the U.S. who have or are beginning to understand what's really going on despite the Israeli propaganda machine.

**Innosanto Nagara, 45-54**  
**Oakland, California**



**From the River to the Sea, Palestine Will Be Free**

