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+972 Magazine editor-in-chief (Israel) - My last letter: Speak the words we were taught to fear

Saturday 4 May 2024, by [KONRAD Edo](#) (Date first published: 15 September 2023).

+972's outgoing editor-in-chief reflects on the changes to the site and on the ground during his tenure, and calls for courage to confront reality head-on.



Edo Konrad. (Oren Ziv)

*There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:*

*a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build.*

(Ecclesiastes 3:1-3)

In the summer of 2010, I was working at a small law firm in San Francisco. Fresh out of college, I got the job through a family friend who saw some potential in me as a kind of quasi-paralegal. The days were long and the work was consuming, but my mind was elsewhere, hardly ever focused on spreadsheets or trying to decipher legalese.

That spring, Israeli soldiers had raided the [Mavi Marmara](#), a passenger ship carrying aid to Gaza, killing nine activists on board. A year earlier, Israel [rained down hellfire](#) on Gaza during Operation Cast Lead, killing 1,400 Palestinians in the besieged strip. I grew up in an Israeli home in northern California, and had been politicized on Israel-Palestine during my university years, but I was in dire need of someone to tell me what the hell was actually going on in a country whose fate felt intertwined with mine, despite only beginning to grasp the fundamentals.

I can't remember how I came upon +972 Magazine during those months, but, like many others, it was the writers' cartoon profile pictures that captured my imagination. They were the hallmark of the site — which, back then, was more of a rag-tag collectivized blog run by Israeli leftists and

Palestinians — and an invitation to engage with people who thought like me, asked questions like me, and to a certain degree looked like me. Suddenly, being an Israeli who questioned the occupation, or even Zionism, didn't feel so lonely anymore. I read the site daily, voraciously waiting for the next blog post, group discussion, or analysis to appear. A few years later, after I moved to Tel Aviv, I would become the bloggers' colleague and friend.

I am here writing this letter because of a mix of luck and chutzpah. I was asked to join +972 in 2012 after [Noa Yachot](#), then the managing editor of the site, liked some of the snarky things I wrote about Israel on social media. I had little journalistic experience, had never commissioned a story, and couldn't have told you what makes a headline pop or a subhead work. In short, people I looked up to took a chance on me.

Now, 11 years later, I am leaving the site, and finally have an opportunity to reflect.

+972 expanded my curiosity and turned me into a diligent student. I learned from up close what the Zionist project had wrought upon Palestinians; about the struggles of people living under more than half a century of [military occupation](#), [siege](#), and [land theft](#); about Palestinian refugees, [where they once lived](#), and who lives in their stead today. I also learned about the history and present of other communities who make up this land: [Mizrahi Jews](#) who were humiliated and subjugated by the state; African [asylum seekers](#) struggling for shelter and basic dignity; [Ethiopian-Israelis](#) facing a brutal police force and a carceral state. And so many others.

Perhaps most importantly, I learned about myself, my place in these struggles, and what it means to be a human being in a land where some human beings count more than others.

I am proud to say that during my time at +972, I pushed to expand the kinds of voices that appeared on the site. I set out to turn what started as a platform built by brilliant but relatively homogeneous writers into one that included more Palestinians and women, and shined a light on topics without a real corpus in English, such as the Mizrahi struggle or alternative and radical culture.

By the time I became editor-in-chief in late 2019, I knew we had to steer the site toward a true form of binationalism, in which the diversity of the staff would not merely be a means to check off boxes. I wanted +972 to challenge our readers, our writers, and ourselves, to imagine a shared existence based on real equality. To be part of a struggle against settler colonialism, state violence, and racism from the river to the sea, running contrary to the very essence of this regime.

A site like +972 can never bring about liberation or equality. But it could, perhaps, play a role in tackling the questions that need answering (just like the ones I desperately needed answering 13 years earlier), inspiring people to take action, and keeping even the smallest flame of hope alive in a place where there is often no choice but to believe that things can be different. In that, despite the relentlessly violent reality and the grueling hours, I think I succeeded.

I am leaving +972 on the best of terms. Eleven years after people took a chance on me, it is time for something new, and to allow the site to grow further. I have absolutely no doubt that [Ghousoon Bisharat](#), the incoming editor-in-chief of +972 and a journalist with years of experience, will not only continue to build this legacy, but will shepherd the site into a new era. I am leaving +972 in the hands of my colleagues and friends, the greatest editors and co-workers I could have imagined for myself, who constantly challenged me and the site to improve and strive for more. Everything you read on +972 is the product of our collective work, and behind every article are hours of painstaking care, thought, and professionalism.

I would be remiss if I did not say a word about this perilous political moment. The Israeli far right is

at the height of its power, and its campaign to effectively [neuter the Supreme Court](#), or any other people who have acted as gatekeepers of “Israeli democracy,” is one that seeks to unleash the full wrath of a colonial, apartheid state. The man in charge of governing the occupation is a [fundamentalist settler](#) actively working to accelerate the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians — a dream for him, and a nightmare for millions. The man in charge of the police is a [Kahanist buffoon](#) whose sole goal is to sow chaos and turn the lives of Palestinian citizens and Israel’s minorities into a living hell. The man in charge of the entire country is a [weak, fading authoritarian](#) whose reign is slowly creeping to an end. I shudder to think who will replace him as the leader of this emboldened right.

The writing of this crisis — and make no mistake, it is an extremely dangerous one — has long been on the wall. Its roots were planted long ago by the Zionist movement, which sought to dominate the land and its Palestinian residents, consequences be damned. It can be traced back before the settler movement in the 1967 occupied territories took over the state, to the establishment of a “Jewish and democratic” regime that decided, from its onset, that the lives of its Jews would come at the expense of native Palestinians.

To understand how to act today, we need to stop fearing the language that so accurately describes the regime that rules the lives of Palestinians and Jews between the river and the sea. Do not fear terms like [settler colonialism](#). Do not fear a word like [apartheid](#). Do not fear [BDS](#). The faster we normalize them for ourselves, our friends, our families, our communities, the faster we can dream of new formulations for resistance.

There is no time left. The transformations in Israeli politics that are taking place before our eyes, in which large swathes of the Jewish-Israeli public are [finally forced to reckon](#) with the brutal violence of the occupation and the vision of the settler leadership, are a positive development that presents new opportunities for change. But we are on a precipice, and no amount of hope or wishful thinking will walk us back — only courage and a willingness to speak the words we were taught to fear.

Finally, this will be the first time in which I can step away from +972 and become a paying member of the site, to make sure that we — I’m sorry, *they* — can keep doing this for years to come. If you can afford to, I [urge you to do the same](#), to welcome Ghousoon as the new editor-in-chief, to support our editors and writers, and to make sure +972 remains a place for the kind of journalism that is so lacking between the river and the sea: truthful, brave, and compassionate.

Thank you endlessly for your support throughout these years. It has truly been an honor to do this work.

With love,

Edo Konrad, September 15, 2023

P.S.

- +972. September 15, 2023:
<https://www.972mag.com/edo-konrad-last-letter/>
- Edo Konrad is the former editor-in-chief of +972 Magazine.
- Our team has been devastated by the horrific events of this latest war. The world is reeling from

Israel's unprecedented onslaught on Gaza, inflicting mass devastation and death upon besieged Palestinians, as well as the atrocious attack and kidnappings by Hamas in Israel on October 7. Our hearts are with all the people and communities facing this violence.

We are in an extraordinarily dangerous era in Israel-Palestine. The bloodshed has reached extreme levels of brutality and threatens to engulf the entire region. Emboldened settlers in the West Bank, backed by the army, are seizing the opportunity to intensify their attacks on Palestinians. The most far-right government in Israel's history is ramping up its policing of dissent, using the cover of war to silence Palestinian citizens and left-wing Jews who object to its policies.

This escalation has a very clear context, one that +972 has spent the past 14 years covering: Israeli society's growing racism and militarism, entrenched occupation and apartheid, and a normalized siege on Gaza.

We are well positioned to cover this perilous moment - but we need your help to do it. This terrible period will challenge the humanity of all of those working for a better future in this land. Palestinians and Israelis are already organizing and strategizing to put up the fight of their lives.

Can we count on your [support](#)? +972 Magazine is a leading media voice of this movement, a desperately needed platform where Palestinian and Israeli journalists, activists, and thinkers can report on and analyze what is happening, guided by humanism, equality, and justice. Join us.

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