

Recall This Book  
Episode 119  
Episode 2 of Violent Majorities: Indian and Israeli Ethno-nationalism,  
Natasha Roth-Rowland (Ajantha, Lori)  
December, 2023

Lori Allen:

Welcome to Recall This Book where we assemble scholars and writers from different disciplines to make sense of contemporary issues, as well as problems and events. Temporarily replacing your usual hosts, Elizabeth Ferry and John Plotz, are Ajantha Subramanian and me, Lori Allen.

This is the second episode of a three-part series on ethno-nationalism and fascism. In the first episode, we talked with Balmurli Natrajan, a scholar of caste in India. In this episode, we're talking with the scholar of the Israeli extreme right. And the third and final episode will be a conversation between the two of us and our fellow interviewer, Professor John Plotz of Brandeis University.

Today, we're joined by Natasha Roth-Rowland. Natasha is a writer and researcher at Diaspora Alliance and a former editor at +972 Magazine.

Ajantha Subramanian:

Natasha has a PhD in history from the University of Virginia, and she wrote her dissertation, phenomenal dissertation, on the history of the Jewish far right in Israel-Palestine and the United States.

And Natasha, thank you so much for joining us.

Natasha Roth-Rowland:

Thank you very much. It's a pleasure to be with you.

Lori Allen:

As Ajantha mentioned, Natasha, you've written a really remarkable dissertation that shows how integrated the far right has been in Israeli society and politics nearly since the beginning of the Zionist movement.

Radical right ideas are not exceptional, but have really been fundamentally part of the ideology as well as the personnel and the politics of the Israeli state and its Zionist supporters in the U.S. which you show. Leading figures in Israel's government have been leaders and members of

organizations that can really only be described as radically right wing, if not fascist.

And we were just wondering if you could start by introducing listeners briefly to Jabotinsky and the Revisionist movement from the thirties, the Kahanist movement from the sixties, and if you could briefly summarize what the goals and ideologies of this extreme right wing movement throughout Israel's history has been.

Natasha Roth-Rowland:

I really want to stress at the outset it's a transnational movement. That's a key argument that I'm making in the dissertation.

And really I think it's the only way to adequately understand the Israeli far right is to actually understand it as a transnational Jewish far right. That's the context it's born in even though the transnational component moves across continents as the huge events of the 20th century unfold. And that's the context in which it lives today. Betar and Jabotinsky and the Revisionist movement. And that's really the birth of the transnational Jewish far right.

Vladimir Jabotinsky is born in Odessa in the late 19th century, and he's living at the edges of empire. It is also in a context where you have the nationalism of small nations bubbling up all around him in interwar Europe, and that's what he draws on. He's influenced by the Polish far right and by other far right movements around him.

And that's what he draws on when he is developing his Revisionist movement, which is a reaction to the more "mainstream" Zionism that is, on its face, less militaristic, is more about slowly upbuilding settlements in Palestine. And the Revisionist movement is "revising" that. And the sharp end of that is, as you mentioned, Betar, which is the youth movement of the Revisionist wing.

This really took its politics, its aesthetics, a lot of its ideology from the far right nationalist and fascistic movements that surrounded it in interwar Europe. So they're wearing uniforms of brown shirts and brown ties. That uniform is abandoned very quickly in the wake of the book burnings in Germany.

There's a glorification of youth, the glorification of the redemptive power of violence, especially in lieu of the context of Jewish history, which is very much presented as one of just pogrom after pogrom, subordination,

submission, repression, persecution. And this violent, militaristic territorial movement is posited as the response to that.

So that movement persists through World War II. It's heavily involved in the war that surrounds the creation of the State of Israel.

The military wing of the Revisionist movement is the Irgun, Jewish underground terrorist group that was involved in numerous infamous terrorist acts during the years of Mandate Palestine.

And then when the State of Israel is founded, the far right recedes a little bit, it's subsumed by the demands of state making, of politics. Its *raison d'être* is the establishment of a state. And although the state isn't the one that they wanted because a huge part of their ideology is territorial maximalism. So in this context, that means a Jewish state on both sides of the River Jordan. And obviously, what there is there now is basically just on the west side.

Fast forward to the 1960s, the occupation starts. There's a reenergization of both the desire for maximum territory and the religious imperative that drives it. There's a messianic zeal that infuses the far right, which was a little less pronounced in its early iterations.

In the United States, this also generates a real upswell of not just Zionist feeling, because Zionism was by no means a consensus in the kind of post war and immediate post state era in the United States.

And you have sociopolitical ructions in the U.S. as well, which are also influencing how certain Jewish communities perceive themselves.

And in these geopolitical earthquakes, you have a figure by the name of Meir Kahane come to the fore. He's living in New York in the 1960s. He has very, very extreme ideas about things that Betar were espousing decades ago about the redemptive power of Jewish violence, about the Messianic drive needed to, what he saw as, redeem all of the land of Israel that was promised to Jews by God.

And he found a far right group in New York called the Jewish Defense League. It's mostly sort of advertised as a kind of self-defense outfit that's there to protect vulnerable Jews against other minority communities in New York. There's a lot of tensions throughout the civil rights era.

And then the group gets more involved in terrorism, starts bombing Soviet targets because the oppression of Jews in the Soviet Union.

In order to escape these legal troubles, Kahane immigrates to Israel in the early 1970s and founds his political party, Kach.

Kach is essentially a fascist party. It has a fascist platform. It preaches racial segregation, sexual segregation. It preaches violence. It wants total war against Palestinians across Israel-Palestine and it wants expulsion of Palestinians from across Israel-Palestine. Kach has limited parliamentary success. After multiple attempts, it wins one seat in the Israeli parliament in 1984 that is taken by Kahane.

It's then expelled from Israeli politics or rather, it's banned from running for the Knesset in 1988 ostensibly because of its racist platform, but largely because the rest of the Israeli far right saw it as a threat. They worried that Kach was going to siphon off votes because of polls throughout the eighties showing the party's growing popularity.

And then in 1990, Kahane is murdered in New York by an Egyptian who shoots him at the end of one of his events. And again, the movement fragments a little bit. Again, it becomes a bit rudderless.

But it's still there. The sentiment is still there. There are still atrocities being committed in the name of Jewish supremacism in the name of territorial maximalism, probably most notably the massacre in 1994 and Hebron by one of Kahane's followers.

Then fast forward to the present day, you have a Kahanist party in the Knesset with the largest seat haul the movement has ever drawn by order of magnitude. And now we're in the current conflagration.

Ajantha Subramanian:

I'm wondering whether this vision of Greater Israel, was it initially a fringe perspective or did expansionism define the full spectrum of Zionist thought?

And when I was reading your dissertation, I was struck by what your analysis of the Six-Day War, which you say produced this sharp increase in American Jewish support for Israel even though support for the far right was still pretty low, was still marginal in the U.S. So I'm wondering what this means.

So does this mean that the territorial ambitions of the far right were actually much more widely shared? Would you distinguish? And if so, how would you distinguish these religious and secular variants of territorial maximalism?

Natasha Roth-Rowland:

In terms of the maximalism, I don't want to suggest for a moment that this is something that is entirely unique to the far right. There is the old Zionist maxim of maximum land, minimum Arabs. That is not a slogan that belongs to the Jewish or Israeli far right alone by any means. It's actually fairly widespread as an idea.

But in terms of the kind of ideological divisions right from the start of the Zionist movement and particularly when the Revisionists make their appearance, the maximalism was always at the heart of the Revisionist ideology. It was one of the things that distinguished it because it was a top priority.

For the far right, there was no State of Israel without that maximalist capture of land. And that's still there nestled in party platforms or in party discourse, even for the Likud. It might not be the thing that is front and center, but the ideology is still there.

The logo for the Revisionist movement and Irgun in the background was the outline of a map of "greater" Israel on both sides of the River Jordan.

So it was at the center of the ideology. It was one of the things that distinguished that part of the movement. It wasn't unique to the movement, if that makes sense.

And then in terms of the distinction between the religious and secular modes of that ideology, it's really again about motivation and approach. There's an extent to which Zionism is this anomaly in nationalist ideology where the religious component can never be entirely extracted from it because of the history of, not only the movement, but why it is understood by Zionists that this land belongs to Jews alone. There is an inherently spiritual component to it that just can't be extracted entirely.

But as far as it is secular, on the secular side of things, it's more about security and what is just owed to the nation, if we can say, versus a spiritual need to redeem the land. Because for religious Zionists, the land and the Jewish community are in a way part of a single entity. And so, if you want to be able to redeem the Jewish community, the Jewish people, you have to redeem the land as well.

You will hear religious Zionist leaders talking about dismemberment when they talk about the West Bank, or what they would call Judea and Samaria. When they talk about the fact that the land of Israel is not whole, it's seen as spiritual dismemberment akin to physical dismemberment.

Ajantha Subramanian:

Is there a way in which the far right is able to both be state and non-state? And that ability to straddle that boundary actually helps it in furthering its ambitions?

Natasha Roth-Rowland:

You're right. There is this tension between state and non-state actors within the far right movement. And I alluded to that a little bit when I talked about how the far right seemed to disappear a little bit in the first couple of decades of the state.

What you've had since then, and this has really been something that's happened throughout the history of the State of Israel is that you have far right actors bubbling up in response to some event, whether it's an exchange of land for peace with one neighboring country or another, or a perceived deterioration in security for settlers and settlements in the West Bank.

A far right movement bubbles up, protests against the government, and then the government shifts and co-opts that movement. And then you have representatives of that movement or their ideological descendants emerging somewhere mostly within the mainstream of the government. And we continue to be able to say that they're within the mainstream of the government because what is mainstream shifts to the right every generation: [those constitute] the peers of the settler elite from the 1970s and eighties who were carrying out terrorist attacks against Palestinians and plotting to blow up the Dome of the Rock in the Knesset, either as party members, elected party members or aides, or people who just have the ear of powerful ministers.

The Kahane movement in the Knesset. Now you have members of the so-called Hilltop Youth, who are the latest vanguard of the extreme right, who are actually quite... Well, certainly at their inception were very anti-government because they were almost anarchist. And you have now one who is in the Knesset as a member of Knesset. You've had a couple of others who have been aides to Knesset members. So you see this just continual making space within the Israeli government for the most extreme aspects of the far right movements that are protesting against it.

And then of course, it takes the pressure off it from within Israeli society.

Lori Allen:

This is part of the story of your dissertation, isn't it, Natasha, of the slow but steady creep ever rightwards of what was already at its base, one could say, a fascistic or at least ultra nationalist movement, right?

Natasha Roth-Rowland:

Correct.

Lori Allen:

And I think one of the questions we wanted to get to was about the role of violence in that move rightwards. And there's always been a link between violence and militarism as being part of the Zionist ideology and at the heart of Israeli nationalism, in some sense. And so can you see any change in the significance of these values in Zionist ideology?

Natasha Roth-Rowland:

I don't see that they've shifted at all. They've just been borne out. I think a lot of the... You can call it the promise or the threat of the place that violence and militarism would hold within Zionist ideology and then its application as a means of capturing the state, capturing the territory, and then maintaining military rule over Palestinians, whether that's inside the Green Line until 1966 or within the occupied territories after 1967. Violence and militarism sit at the heart of that.

This is a country that has had conscription since its inception. It's a country that has had prime ministers who are former members of terrorist organizations. It's a country that sees militarism as the only way to ensure its perpetuation and to secure its own ethnonationalist group within its undefined borders.

So I don't think the place of violence and militarism has changed. It's just become more deeply entrenched. And as we very horrifically see around us today, I think there are very, very few people who can imagine a future that doesn't rest on that.

Ajantha Subramanian:

One of the things that I found striking was--and this has to do with the transnational dimensions of this movement--is the convenience of the diaspora.

You talk about how there were these moments, for instance, Baruch Goldstein, his act of terrorism, that, right after that happened, you say that it

was deemed American, right? So there was a way that violence... There's this kind of way that violence can be exceptionalized or externalized to the United States and that...

So I'm wondering about whether that's still even necessary to do, right? If there was a prior moment when the U.S. served as an alibi and extreme violence or Jewish terrorism was put on the settler, the American settler, is the use of that alibi even necessary anymore? Or is vigilantism now considered totally legit?

Natasha Roth-Rowland:

The alibi is still in use. It's just restricted to the other side of the political spectrum. So when foreign presence or involvement in Israeli politics is criticized or demonized, it's only when it is coming through progressive organizations or progressive funding from overseas.

And yes, absolutely. Back in the seventies and eighties and even nineties when you had Kahanists attacking Palestinians and damaging, vandalizing mosques, and when you had the Baruch Goldstein massacre in Hebron in '94, Goldstein was also an American, a New Yorker. Yes, the comments that you would get from Shin Bet officers and whoever in the Israeli press was, "Well, it's just those out-of-control Americans. As soon as we saw that they were attacking a mosque, we knew that it was foreigners."

And anybody who opens a newspaper and sees pictures of mosques in absolute devastation in Gaza, in the West Bank after airstrikes I think will make of that what they will.

So yeah, that alibi just isn't necessary anymore. And yes, partly, it is because vigilantism has just become less and less... Well, there's been less of a political need to dispel vigilante violence by far right Jews, especially Jewish settlers, as something that is foreign to the Israeli political body.

The bad apples argument that you were still hearing even in 2014, in 2015 after some of the horrendous abuses and murders of Palestinian civilians in the West Bank that were carried out by settlers, that just isn't really heard anymore.

And not only that, but as I've been reporting on in *+972 Magazine* and other outlets, sometimes, Israeli soldiers have not just stood by and tacitly abetted these crimes but have actually joined in. And I think at that point, the pretense that this is somehow a thing that has been imported into Israel-Palestine, it just rings so hollow that nobody really bothers with it anymore.



Lori Allen:

And this is a good segue to a more sociological question that we had about the nature of violence and anti-Palestinian vigilantism and rampages against Palestinian communities. Is there a particular sector of society that is more involved? Is there a class element, right?

We know from the history of Kahanism, for example, that there was an attraction by Mizrahim to this movement, being the traditionally more marginalized communities of Jews in Israel. Is this a politics of resentment? Is that part of what's going on?

Natasha Roth-Rowland:

I think like with any far right populist nationalist movement there is always grievance politics and a politics of resentment at play. And there's also a politics of marginalization and I don't...

That's also a dynamic that has been exploited by various leaders and politicians in Israeli history to dismiss how widespread this far right sentiment is, and what the sources of far right violence are, and how distributed the ideology is across ethnic and economic and geographic lines in Israel-Palestine.

And so the role of Mizrahim in that movement has served as a way for politicians using racist tropes to say, "Well, actually, this doesn't reflect who Israelis really are."

At the same time, Kahane was very astute about how he appealed to different communities to build his movement. And just like he did in New York, he sought out people who felt left behind, who felt excluded.

This will probably bring what Trump did in the U.S. to mind for some listeners maybe.

And who felt like they weren't understood as people who were given a role to play in their society, who were just dismissed, counted out, scorned, discriminated against, all of those things apply to Jews of Middle East and North African origin in Israel. And he appealed to that sense.

And he didn't just appeal to it and say, "You have a role, too," but he articulated it in such a way as to say, "Actually, you are the true inheritors of this state. Western Jews from Europe and the United States over-assimilated. They became weak. They left their traditions behind. They abandoned and betrayed Judaism. You, who were living in the Middle East all this time, you stayed true to your traditions. So that actually puts you spiritually in the top

spot here. And I'm seeing that in you, and that's what's going to be realized if you become part of my movement."

Ajantha Subramanian:

You talk about the place of Mizrahi women within far right gender ideology and for Kahane in particular, that for him, they both epitomized racial and religious purity, but that they were also in some ways a weak link because they were uniquely susceptible to Palestinian men. And that seems to, again, be this way of both foregrounding their Middle Easternness, but also seeing it as a threat because it blurs the distinctions between the Jew and non-Jew.

So anyway, that struck me as super interesting, but I wonder if you could also speak more generally about the role of "traditional" family values within this far right ideology and where women fit. So not just as tropes, but as actual people within these movements. Are they members of these movements? If so, why do they join them?

Natasha Roth-Rowland:

They are members of these movements. And what that looks like depends on what wing of the movement it is.

I want to reference some really incredible work that's been done on this by a couple of different scholars. One of them is Lihi Ben Shitrit. Another one is Tamar El-Or and also Tamara Neuman. These are people who've really investigated the role that women play, particularly within the religious far right.

Because I think when we bring to mind what you mentioned as you just said, Ajantha, about traditional family values and how that may or may not come into conflict with the very active political role that people are expected to take when they're in these movements, these scholars have really delved into that and have delved into this complementarity that exists in terms of women's role on the religious far right and particularly within the settlement movement.

Now, the settler movement is kind of just about home building in some ways, which sounds like a gross underplaying of its violence, but actually it is so centered around creating homes, creating communities.

The act of creating those homes and communities is inherently violent, endless state violence, it enlists interpersonal violence. But it's about building

homes. And that is how the people in the movement understand it. They are putting down roots there.

And within these traditional family setups, who is responsible for maintaining the home? It's women. They have domain over the private sphere.

And yes, there are moments... It's what Lihi Ben Shitrit I think calls *frames of exception* where women step outside of those roles and actually do go into the public domain in moments of extreme threat to the settler movement, or what they perceive as extreme threat to the settler movement, and do go out and do stand in front of the bulldozers and do protest.

But by and large, traditionally, the role has been one of homemaking, and that becomes inherently political because of the situation in the occupied territories.

And where the conflict comes up, and this is what I believe Tamar El-Or explores in her work, is that there's a contradiction between the imperative to build these homes as an act of territorial expansion, contributing to the Zionist political projects, and the spiritual command to recreate the nation.

Because when you recreate the nation in such a dangerous environment, which the West Bank is or can be, which imperative takes precedence? Is it recreating the family and safeguarding the family, or is it expanding the political project?

And they exist along this fault line with the tension that just hasn't been resolved yet.

Ajantha Subramanian:

I'm wondering about the natalism and is it just religious conservative settlers who subscribe to the natalist imperative to reproduce, or is that more widely shared? And how does that fit with LGBTQ politics, queer rights? What's the connection between these things?

Natasha Roth-Rowland:

The natalist framework is wall to wall. That is not owned by any political or social segment of Israeli society. And as you mentioned, in terms of India, it's the same thing in Israel-Palestine. There is just constant fearmongering about the "Palestinian birth rate" and the supposed threat that poses to the Jewish state. It's understood as demographic warfare essentially, with all of the racist connotations that brings. So yes, the natalism is inherent across social and political sectors.

In terms of LGBTQ rights, I have seen liberal/left wing queer activists propose that the reason that same sex Jewish couples in the country are allowed to adopt, even though they're not allowed to marry, is in service of this demographic fight.

And although there are by no means comprehensive laws enshrining the right to surrogacy and the right to adopt, and it's still very much a battle for queer couples there. The fact that it exists at all in such a conservative country I think speaks to that commitment to just increasing the Jewish proportion of the population of the country by any means necessary.

Lori Allen:

We just wondered if you wanted to reflect at all on terms like fascism or radical right and what these terms offer us or what you think they might obscure.

Ajantha Subramanian:

Yeah. And populism too. Again, to reference the India case, there's a lot of hesitation on the part of even scholars who are openly critical of the Hindu right to use the term fascism. So there are other terms that are used like authoritarian populism and I'm always curious about that.

Natasha Roth-Rowland:

Speaking as a Jew, I can understand why people are uncomfortable with applying that ideology or ascribing, I should say, the ideology to a population that has suffered the most grievous effects of fascism. It is uncomfortable to refer to a community as belonging to the same political tree as a separate political community that tried to destroy it less than a century ago.

So I think there's just a real discomfort with how those two things sit together that I'm very sympathetic to. At the same time, I think it's important to be realistic about the connective tissue between these ideologies.

And it's not that I believe the term fascism should be liberally applied to describe the whole spectrum of the Jewish far right. I try to be judicious in my use of the term because I think it is supposed to describe something very extreme. And I think you run the risk if everything is fascism, then nothing is. But I do believe it serves a purpose.

And certainly, when you're looking at a movement like Betar, which just fairly openly took some of its inspiration from fascist movements that surrounded it during the interwar period. When you look at the Kahanist

movement and aspects of its political platform, I don't think with any kind of fairly standard working definition of fascism, you can look at those materials and say, "No, this isn't that."

And I think there is a way that you can stay attuned to some of the complications of referring to a Jewish movement as fascist, while also acknowledging its place on the political spectrum and its historical lineages.

So that's what I'll say about fascism.

In terms of populism and the radical right, I think populism is a fairly useful term if we are thinking about this resurgent far right nationalism that's been bubbling up over the last, I would say, 20, 25 years at this point, particularly in Eastern and Central Europe.

In the Israeli context, I think it's helpful to add it to that constellation because there are ideological overlaps there in terms of conversations about securitized borders and ethnic nationalism and "gender ideology" and family values and Islamophobia, there's a lot of overlap there. So I find that useful in a kind of contemporary context.

And then as far as the radical right goes, it's a term that has been used a lot in the literature on the Israeli far right. I try to avoid it just because in my own internal framework for understanding these movements and how they relate to the government, I understand the radical part of it to be something that is extra-governmental or is signaling some kind of distance from the authorities and distance from the government.

And for me, that distance has just never been sufficiently established in the context of Israeli politics to earn the term radical. So I tend to avoid it. I find it more straightforward and a little more accurate to just call it the far right.

Ajantha Subramanian:

I was struck by the contrast that you draw between the aesthetics and rhetoric of Kahane versus Netanyahu. And one way that one could think about that is that he made fascism palatable. Right?

You talk about the 1980s as this really pivotal moment. What it is about the 1980s and the Reagan Revolution and this increasing embrace of neoliberal policies? How does that fit into the picture?

Natasha Roth-Rowland:

In the U.S. as you mentioned, you have just this vast accumulation of wealth that happens and the birth of what we now call megadonors who are far right billionaires, who are very emotionally invested in the right wing Israeli projects and in settlement project.

And that accumulation of wealth is pumped into the settlement project in the West Bank and back then in Gaza from the 1980s onwards. There are just vast, vast sums of money being transferred to NGOs, to nonprofit organizations, activist organizations that are working on settling different parts of the West Bank, of East Jerusalem. So that's really how that operates in the transnational context going from the U.S. into Israel.

And then in terms of the situation inside Israel itself, what happens in the 1980s is that Israel formally adopts neoliberalism, and it begins slashing public funding, public personnel, public resources.

And as happens anywhere where you have this neoliberal model that creates a lot of space for private actors to step in: who are the private actors stepping in the occupied territories? There are these nonprofit organizations that are receiving huge sums of money from the United States to buy up buildings in East Jerusalem, to evict Palestinians from buildings in East Jerusalem, to hire private security to ensure that those evictions remain complete and so on.

And not only that, but this is something that a scholar, Arie Krampf argues in his book, the fact that Israel adopts this neoliberal model actually insulates it in some way from global pressure because it makes its own economy more sustainable. It is less reliant on outside funding to prop up its own functions because so many of those functions have been slashed and because of globalization, it becomes more integrated into the global economy.

So therefore, there are fewer means of economic pressure that other countries can levy on Israel to get it to change course in terms of the occupation, in terms of its discriminatory policies against Palestinians, and so on and so forth.

So it's really this multistranded phenomenon that we're still seeing the effects of today, that, as you said, it has its originary point in the 1980s, but it really, really starts to snowball in the 1990s.

Ajantha Subramanian:

I am wondering about the early years of Labor rule and the characterization of Israel as a socialist state. How does one reconcile that characterization with a settler colonial occupation?

Natasha Roth-Rowland:

Well, it was socialist for Jews. Outside the purely economic dimensions of that and you know what we imagine as the more ideal version of what a socialist society looks like?

When that socialism is only intended for one ethnic group, it then doesn't become a safeguard against other more discriminatory or violent or exclusionary policies, ideologies, modes of government taking hold.

So when you understand actually what was at the heart of that socialism, which was that it was ethnically defined-

Ajantha Subramanian:

Circumscribed.

Natasha Roth-Rowland:

Yeah, circumscribed, exactly. It's less of a contradiction to see how that unfolds in line with a settler colonial policy. In fact, they work together because that settler colonial project is being upheld by this restricted socialist model.

Lori Allen:

You're saying it was socialism for the Jews. And similarly, it's been a democracy for the Jews, right? And I wonder if part of what we're seeing in, well, until October 7th, the objection to the current Israeli government has been an objection of people who are feeling the fascism of the state. That has been part of what Palestinians have been feeling since the Nakba of 1948.

So the term fascism becomes relevant when certain rights and certain forms of violence are taken away from and felt by a white population, for example.

Natasha Roth-Rowland:

There has been talk of fascism and authoritarianism, but it hasn't related to how Israel treats Palestinians. It's just related to the rights and trappings of democracy that Israeli Jews have become accustomed to for themselves.

So I think that there has been some element of people who've started to draw the connections between that and the occupation, but it's not as if there's been this mass understanding that yes, actually the root causes of this are also the root causes of violence against Palestinians. The analysis just hasn't got there yet. And I fear that what has happened in the last two weeks has taken us more than two steps back.

Lori Allen:

Folks in Israel and supporters abroad are only noticing the fascism that has been a through line of Zionism now because Jews are feeling it.

Natasha Roth-Rowland:

Yeah, exactly. I hope that eventually it will move more people to understand the contradictions inherent in the idea of a Jewish democracy, but we have to see what transpires in the wake of everything that's going on now.

Lori Allen:

Well, and in the wake of everything that's going on now, it's just all the more critical that we get this right, that we understand this history and that we help people understand this history. And I think, Natasha, your work, your journalism, your scholarship has been and will continue to be a real serious contribution to that, frankly, noble and important work. Not to get too woo woo-

Natasha Roth-Rowland:

Thank you.

Lori Allen:

... but I do think it's really important.

Ajantha Subramanian:

Absolutely. Absolutely.

Natasha Roth-Rowland:

Thank you so much.

Lori Allen:



So thank you, Natasha. And thanks to our listeners. We hope you'll join us for the third episode when I and Ajantha will join John Plotz in talking about the Israeli and Indian cases in relation to each other.

Ajantha Subramanian:

Thank you so much. Thanks, Natasha.

Natasha Roth-Rowland:

Thank you very much.

Lori Allen:

Thank you.

Natasha Roth-Rowland:

Thank you very much.

Ajantha Subramanian:

Wonderful.

Lori Allen:

We really appreciate it.

Ajantha Subramanian:

Yeah.

John Plotz:

Recall This Book is the creation of John Plotz and Elizabeth Ferry. Sound editing is by Khimaya Bagla and music comes from a song by Eric Chasalow and Barbara Cassidy.

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