



Cynthia Kent, chair person, Native American International Caucus, reads the statement of solidarity with Palestine, May 16, 2016, at UMC General Conference in Portland, OR.

ties are terrorizing the neighborhoods and making everyday activities like harvesting crops and attending school impossible and dangerous for Palestinians.

The Israeli human rights group B'tselem has documented settler violence against the Palestinians for decades. Visit <https://bit.ly/settlerviolence> to learn more.

I lived in the Old City of Hebron-Al Khalil. The shop that housed the Hebron Woman' Cooperative was established during the Second Intifada and was just around the corner from our Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT) apartment.

Militant right-wing Israeli settlers formed enclaves around and inside the Old City, and terrorized the Palestinian residents. I personally saw settlers shooting up the roof top water tanks of

Palestinians during a severe water shortage. My teammate witnessed settlers setting fire to Palestinian shops, while the shopkeepers and their families were under curfew in their apartments above the shops.

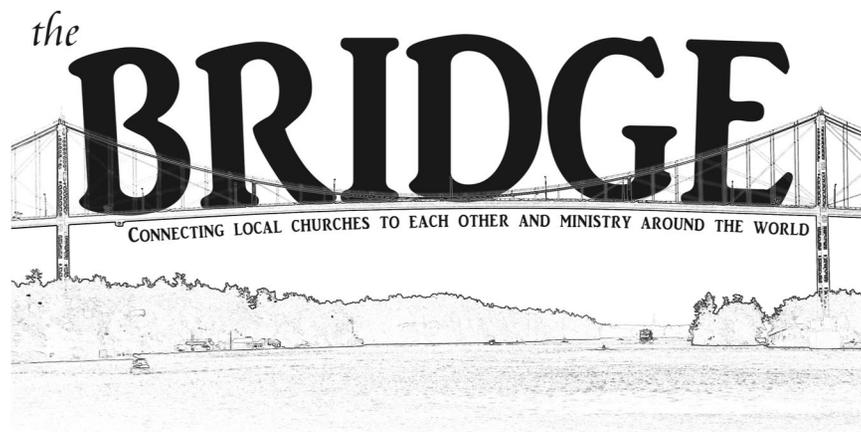
I wanted to say to Laila that our settlers were not like that. But I could not say that because about 10 miles away from where Laila and I were walking down Market Street, there is a historic marker noting that Runonvea, a Native American village was destroyed in 1779.

Visit <https://bit.ly/solidaritywithPalestine> to read the full story of how "settlers" in New York State (destroying Native American villages) were very similar to the "settlers" in Palenstine.

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The Upper New York Conference's vision is to live the gospel of Jesus Christ and to be God's love with our neighbors in all places.

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“Because we care” engaging in study and discussion

The “Because we Care” resolution at the 2021 Upper New York (UNY) Annual Conference called for every church in the UNY Conference to find a way to: engage in study and discussion of “Cry for Hope” (available cryforhope.org) and oppose the equating of criticism of Israel’s unjust actions with anti-Semitism.

For more than 30 years United Methodists from UNY (and the WNY and NCNY Annual Conferences that preceded it) have been “Getting off the Bus” to meet Palestinian families when they have been on Holy Land tours. This is the work of the Upper New York (UNY) Conference Task Force on Peace with Justice in Palestine/Israel. Sharing meals and hearing stories built relationships that have continued and grown over the years and now we want to share “Our Family in Palestine” with churches in UNY, so you can hear their “Cry for Hope” and we can help you carry out the “Because We Care” resolution passed at the UNY Annual Conference in 2021.

Included in this issue are two moving articles written by Taskforce member, Dianne Roe, about the frightening life experiences of our Palestinian brothers and sisters.

Our Family in Palestine-Beit Ummar

By Dianne Roe

I looked at the photo in the B’Tselem (Israeli non-governmental Human Rights Organization) report of the July 28, 2021 killing of an 11-year-old boy in the West Bank village of Beit Ummar and I wondered if I knew his family when I lived in the village 19 years ago.

Muhammad alAlami was killed by Israeli forces as he traveled with his father and two siblings in their hometown of Beit Ummar.

I sketched his portrait and noticed that he looked so much like the other children we met as we were preparing to move into one of the apartments that Abu Nabel AlQam had built for his sons in a three-story building near Beit Ummar Junction. The first and second story apartments were already occupied by the older sons and their families. There was one apartment on the top floor that was vacant because the youngest son was still single and living next door with his parents.

The year was 2002. I had already been with CPT (Christian Peacemaker Teams) in Hebron-Al-Khalil for seven years and had met many families in neighboring villages. The municipality of Beit Ummar asked if we could have a presence in the village. Mary Lawrence, JoAnne Lingle, and I moved into the AlQam apartment. We were three women in our 60s, sent by supporting churches to be a non-violent presence in places of conflict. JoAnne was supported by Mennonites. Mary and I were both supported by our respective United



Methodist Annual Conferences and by GBGM (General Board of Global Ministries).

That is how I happened to be living in the wonderful farming village of Beit Ummar - seven or eight years before Muhammad alAlami was born. He lived just behind the cemetery above the junction- a very dangerous place to live if the forces (Israeli) that are occupying and confiscating your land are planning on “cleansing” the lands bordering the road of Palestinian families. Unfortunately for the alAlami family, their family property bordered the road and was close to the junction. Israeli forces who guard the junction, either from a high tower or on foot, are on the lookout for “suspicious” activity. The soldier who killed 11-year-old Muhammad thought that his father backing up his car was “suspicious” so he fired live ammunition at the car, killing Muhammad.

Nineteen years earlier, about a week before JoAnne, Mary, and I were moving into our flat in Beit Ummar, the Israeli military shot and killed Muhammad’s uncle, Amjad alAlami because picking mint in the garden next to the house was “suspicious.” In the days that followed as the family gathered to grieve Amjad, Israeli military shot and killed his cousin Nidal. We moved to our apartment a few days later and happened to be walking behind members of the alAlami family on their way to the cemetery. That is how I met Um Nidal, and why I added a portrait of her to a mural I was painting in The Galilee. But that’s another story. I’ll tell you about it next time along with Beit Ummar involvement in Bereaved Families.

Black and Indigenous Solidarity with Palestine

By Dianne Roe

The first “Journey toward Understand-

ing” taken by members of the New York West Area (former Western NY and North Central NY Annual Conferences) was led by our African American Bishop Forrest Stith in January 1989. Our first full day in Jerusalem was on the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday. For our evening prayer-communion service at the hotel, Bishop Stith reflected on the experiences of the day, comparing it with his experiences as a Black man, and comparing the intifada with the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. Many of us in the room were moved to tears.

In the months and years that followed, these similarities became increasingly evident, leading to solidarity acts among Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples, including the Palestinians. For me the intersection of these issues was highlighted in a simple conversation I had with Laila Hasan, my friend from Hebron-Al Khalil when she visited me in Corning.

Laila was in our Upper New York Area while visiting her brother in Saratoga Springs. When she came to my home in Corning, we walked over to First UMC where she was presenting a program, cooking maktouba for us, and selling embroidery from the Women’s Cooperative in Hebron.

As we were walking down Market Street, she looked up at facades of what we call “historic Market Street” and she asked me how old the city was.

I answered, “well, the settlers came two or three hundred years ago.”

“Settlers?” she asked, with a look of alarm on her face.

I knew the reason for the expression on her face. The Israeli settlers who have invaded Palestinian villages and municipali-

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