

Insurgent Diasporas
Gender JUST, Semillas Autónomas, and the Center for Jewish Nonviolence
18 June 2016

Diaspora refers to a people who are dispersed across national boundaries, but said to be connected through a common place of origin, a “home country.” Gender JUST, Semillas Autónomas, and the Center for Jewish Nonviolence (CJNV) gathered to discuss how this connection is constructed, reproduced, ruptured, experienced and expressed. Presentations by SA and CJNV introduced each group’s work both within their respective nation states (Mexico and Israel) as well as within their diasporas to confront state violence and its effects across borders.

CJNV’s presentation centered on ways that their identities as diasporic Jews to escalate joint struggle with Palestinians resisting evictions, demolitions, land theft, army closures, settler attacks, and occupation in Hebron and the South Hebron Hills. They described how their presence as non-Israeli Jews directly reduced the potential for violence against Palestinians, as well as their action at the World Zionist Conference to incorporate the end of the occupation into the vision of Zionism. Videos of their work and the communities they engage with can be viewed [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

Semillas Autónomas described their efforts to develop cross-border solidarity with indigenous uprisings in Mexico, especially struggles for political self-determination that include armed community self-defense in Olinale Guerrero. They discussed their multi-month campaign to “liberate” the Mexican Consulate in Chicago, experimenting with ways it can become a space of public assembly and contestation. Videos of this campaign can be viewed [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

Significant points:

- Playing with one’s status as a minority culture can be a powerful tool for disrupting state violence, which instates particular markers of normative culture. CJNV’s non-violent work draws specifically on traditions of Jewish masculinity which valued deep knowledge of Jewish culture and identity in opposition to the modern Israeli Jewish identity which embraces majority European notions of masculinity embodied in violence and control of land. SA’s actions at the Mexican Consulate played with the idea that as nationals standing in Mexican territory, they were engaging directly with the Mexican nation state, even as that state was obliged to call the Chicago police to remove the members of the action from the building.
- Those who are marginalized within their own nation do not necessarily escape those structures of oppression by moving across state lines; networks of the social, political, and economic elite of a nation extend into the diaspora and confrontation and resistance to these forces is productive regardless of where this work occurs.
- In our four-hour long presentation and discussion, we made tangible connections between solidarity work in Chicago and elsewhere. We spoke of ways in which other diasporas might resist the formation of global elites and instead create similar acts of

resistance. Attendees drew upon the work of other groups looking at different forms of diaspora, such as the campaign by Black Lives Matter Gary to defeat plans for a new immigration detention center.