

# Review

Margo Okazawa-Rey

*"If I Were Given the Choice": Palestinian Women's Stories of Daily Life during the Years 2000-2003 of the Second Intifada.* Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling and Faiha' Abdul-Hadi, 2008.

This year, 2008, marks the 60th anniversary of *nakba*, “catastrophe,” for Palestinian people, and of the creation of the state of Israel for Jews. During the six decades, Israel has been found guilty of violating countless international human rights and humanitarian laws related to its maltreatment of Palestinian people, and has done so with impunity and near deafening silence from the vast majority of the international community. During much of this time, the voices of Palestinian women that tell of both their suffering and resistance have remained unheard in the wider world. This compilation of 29 Palestinian women’s oral histories chronicles their daily experiences of living under Israeli occupation and its material and emotional impacts. Women describe, in harrowing detail, the road and checkpoint closures that disrupt their daily routines, including preventing them and their family from securing necessary medical treatment, the unjust arrest and imprisonment of their husbands, sons, and daughters, and the routine, wanton destruction of their people, homes, property and land by the Israeli military. The women also speak about the negative effects of patriarchal cultural values and practices in their lives, even as the community collectively faces the harsh realities of military occupation, the proverbial “double jeopardy.” Among the narrators are women from all segments of Palestine: from rural and urban areas; housewives, professionals, students, activists, and former political prisoners; women of means and poor; grandmothers, mothers, and daughters. They have real names and tell real stories. Photographs and maps showing the people and the places supplement the stories. This book confirms that no group of Palestinian women is exempt from the suffering but also showcases the power of individual and community resistance to repression and violence, and the hopes and aspirations of women living in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.