Taking the State Out of the Body
A Guidebook on Embodied Jewish Resistance to Nationalism

Eliana Rubin

Taking the State Out of the Body is a guidebook in deconstructing nationalism through trauma informed praxis.

These politicized practices invite an embodied sense of collective safety while making militarized borders, policing, and nation states obsolete. We need the resources offered in this book; from understanding geopolitical impacts of intergenerational trauma, to self-regulation in conflict, to cultivating long-haul relationships.

The book uses the case study of Jewish embodied experience by interrogating how Zionism weaponizes Jewish trauma while antisemitism drives a wedge between Jews and other oppressed people. These tactics of white nationalism, imperialism, and fascism are addressed through an anti-Zionist orientation to historical events alongside practical somatic tools to move through internalized trauma and oppression and interrupt cycles of intimate and systemic violence.

This framework is situated in a lineage of politicized healing and somatics that is rooted in resistance to authoritarianism—including many antifascist Ashkenazi Jewish practitioners in 1930s Europe. As the terms “somatics” and “trauma” have been mainstreamed, this book is a timely offer to move from individual awareness to collective action. Weaving political theory and embodied practice, each chapter opens with a connection to a plant or body part and closes with list of embodied practices to fuel resistance and resilience. At a time where colonial imperialism in the US and Palestine are rearing their heads and right-wing authoritarianism is on the rise globally, this book will equip you with the theory and action to move from rugged individualist models of self-help/preservation to liberatory frameworks of collective care and solidarity.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Eliana Rubin builds transgressive relationships with bodies, land, and lineage through their work as a somatic practitioner, anti-Zionist organizer, full spectrum doula, land steward, and facilitator of Theater of the Oppressed. Their practice is focused around queer embodiment, Jewish intergenerational trauma, and developing embodied leadership in movements for justice. They love their people, their gardens, and the dance floor.

ACCOLADES

“What an incredible resource Eliana has given us with Taking the State Out of the Body. While it takes us intimately through the experience of a Jewish embodied experience of moving beyond Zionism, it is also so clear how this text can help everyone with a body think beyond the boundaries of the state and into deep relationship with the earth”

—adrienne maree brown, Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds