Words of Hanan Debawania - Palestinian Activist

“Steve Sabella’s *The Parachute Paradox* illustrates the injustice of colonial power. Sabella’s journey of struggle for freedom decolonized his soul and detoxed his body from identity and nationalism. He learned that to end occupation, the occupied must see and understand the myth in which he has been placed. Sabella is more than a voice for Palestinians; he is a spokesman for humanity, for his struggle of growing up in Jerusalem under occupation was a struggle not only for civil rights, but for human rights.

The Parachute Paradox takes us on a journey high in the sky where you become aware of occupation, acknowledging the injustice from a distance. The further we fly, the more we are able to observe the oppression. Sabella allows us to understand the psychological disorder caused by occupation, and to realize that this virus (Occupation) needs to be removed not only from the land, but also from the minds and bodies of the occupied.

According to Sabella, occupation is more than land loss but also identity loss, and the struggle to feel any sense of belonging. The struggle became more than the name Palestine, more than liberating the city of Jerusalem, more than shouting aloud the word ‘freedom,' it became a struggle of liberating the occupied mind and body. When the oppressed were taught to believe only the worst of themselves, the struggle takes place not over geography but dignity.

Sabella’s national identity was denied and replaced with another. He became a stranger to his own land and language. This process did not mean he belonged to the new nation, but that the colonial power dominated his religion, culture, and land. It meant that he became a refugee in his own country. He felt he was an exile within his city. I always say if someone wants to feel occupation, he or she must visit the ghost city of Hebron. Now I would say that if anyone wants to feel what it means for a human to be occupied, they must read *The Parachute Paradox*.

Steve, I cannot wait until I read the next fifteen chapters of your life. I am already in the process of liberating Palestine through my imagination. You proved that love transcends nationalism, identity, religion, culture, language, and more. You proved that the imagination is a revolt against the ugliness of reality. We all need to choose Francesca and turn our back on exile. As Mahmoud Darwish said, 'All the hearts of the people are my identity – So take away my passport!’”