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Democracy, Truthfulness and Internationalism versus the Genocide in Palestine

ABSTRACT

The genocide in Gaza is the culmination of the Zionist project of establishing a settler-colonial Jewish ethnic state in historic Palestine, but world leaders have done nothing to prevent or punish it. One reason is a widespread failure to understand the crucial importance of democracy and support it. Second, the Zionist propaganda network has concealed the truth and spread lies about the genocide, and complicit leaders and media have failed to uphold truthfulness. Third, the West and even leaders of former colonies and sections of the left have allowed international law that could be used to support Palestinians to be undermined. Most working people of the world want to end the genocide in Gaza, and should work for boycotts of, divestment from and sanctions against Israel until a democratic Palestinian state is established, from the river to the sea.

KEYWORDS

Palestine
Israel
Settler-colonialism
Ethno-religious states
Democracy

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On 25 October 2024, Forensic Architecture released an interactive cartographic platform entitled 'A Cartography of Genocide' along with an 827-page text report entitled 'A spatial analysis of the Israeli military's conduct in Gaza since October 2023,' providing conclusive forensic evidence of genocide in Gaza.¹ On 5 December 2024, Amnesty International released a report which concluded that the Israeli state was committing genocide in Gaza in the strict legal sense of the term.² On 19 December 2024, Human Rights Watch released a report on the Israeli state's intentional deprivation of access to water, a necessity of life, from the population of Gaza, and concluded that this amounts to an act of genocide.³ These reports confirm analyses by dozens of Holocaust and genocide scholars, the South African government's testimony before the International Court of Justice, and the court's own rulings.

What we have been seeing in Gaza is the inevitable consequence of the model of European colonialism chosen by the original Zionists; not just occupying a colony and dominating it, not even the apartheid form of settler-colonialism that needed the indigenous people's labor, but the model of settler-colonialism that wanted the land without the people, as in the Americas and Australia.⁴

*Zionist leader and Israel's first president Chaim Weizmann said quite clearly after World War I that it 'allied itself... with the imperial powers', and 'accepted the generic racial concepts of European culture'. As Theodor Herzl, founding father of Zionism, spelled out, 'The mass of poor natives were to be expropriated and, he added, "both the expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out"...by "spirit[ing] the penniless population across the border."*⁵

The Zionist plan to create a Jewish state in a land where less than 8 percent of the population was Jewish in 1914 required the remaining 92 percent of Palestinians to lose their homeland.⁶

Raphael Lemkin, who lost 49 members of his family in the Nazi Holocaust and who coined the term 'genocide,' was keenly interested in colonial genocides. Unlike most Holocaust and genocide studies,

what Lemkin's manuscripts reveal is that early modern and modern colonialism was central to his conception of genocide. Indeed, the very notion is colonial in nature because it entails occupation and settlement. The link is made plain by Lemkin in his description of genocide on the first page of the salient chapter of *Axis Rule*:

"Genocide has two phases: one, destruction of the national pattern of the oppressed group: the other, the imposition of

the national pattern of the oppressor. This imposition, in turn, may be made upon the oppressed population which is allowed to remain, or upon the territory alone, after removal of the population and the colonization of the area by the oppressor's own nationals..."

The proposition that scholars who think that genocide is a synonym for the Holocaust need to entertain is that Lemkin regarded the latter as a consequence of Nazi imperialism and colonialism in Europe. The Holocaust and German imperium between 1939 and 1945 was for him a continuation of the genocidal occupations that have characterized colonialism through the ages – to be sure, in an extremely radicalized, bureaucratic mode. These are his words:

"Methods and techniques of genocide:

- *Physical – massacre and mutilation, deprivation of livelihood (starvation, exposure, etc. often by deportation), slavery – exposure to death.*
- *Biological – separation of families, sterilization, destruction of foetus.*
- *Cultural – desecration and destruction of cultural symbols (books, objects of art, loot, religious relics, etc.), destruction of cultural leadership, destruction of cultural centers (cities, churches, monasteries, schools, libraries)"*⁷

Most of these methods and techniques of genocide have been applied to all parts of Palestine by the Israeli state from the 1947–48 Nakba onwards, although the culmination of the process in Gaza after 7 October 2023 more obviously conforms with the wording of the Genocide Convention. 'As Lemkin was clear to spell out in *Axis Rule*, genocide was not the attempt to kill all of the members of a group; genocide was the attempt to destroy a nation as a social entity.'⁸

The Israeli state's 'attempt to destroy [the Palestinian] nation as a social entity' is eminently clear to Israeli Jews like Avi Steinberg:

*The Israeli state, from its inception, has relied on the normalization of ethnically determined supremacist laws to bolster a military regime whose clear colonial goal is the elimination of Palestine... Zionist colonization cannot be reformed or liberalised: Its existential identity, as expressed in its citizenship laws and repeated openly by those citizens, amounts to a commitment to genocide.*⁹

What is striking about what is taking place in Gaza is that it conforms so closely to the Nazi playbook in Eastern Europe

1 Forensic Architecture. 'A Cartography of Genocide: Israel's Conduct in Gaza Since October 2023.' 2024. <https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/a-cartography-of-genocide>

2 Amnesty International. 'Amnesty International investigation concludes Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.' 2024. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/12/amnesty-international-concludes-israel-is-committing-genocide-against-palestinians-in-gaza/>

3 Human Rights Watch. 'Extermination and Acts of Genocide: Israel Deliberately Depriving Palestinians in Gaza of Water.' 2024. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/12/19/extermination-and-acts-genocide-israel-deliberately-depriving-palestinians-gaza>

4 Pappé, Ilan. *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, London: Oneworld Publications, 2006.

5 Said, Edward. 'Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims,' in *The Question of Palestine*, New York: Vintage Books, 1980, 56–114; pp.81, 70–71.

6 Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestinian Question. 'Demography and the Palestinian Question (I), 1850s–1948'. <https://www.palquest.org/en/highlight/294/demography-and-palestine-question-i>

7 McDonnell, Michael A. and A. Dirk Moses. 'Raphael Lemkin as historian of genocide in the Americas,' *Journal of Genocide Research* 7(4), 501–529, pp.501–504.

8 Irvin-Erickson, Douglas. 'The Life and Works of Raphael Lemkin: A Political History of Genocide in Theory and Law,' PhD Dissertation submitted to Rutgers University, Newark. p.308. <https://rucore.libraries.rutgers.edu/rutgers-lib/45631/PDF/1/play>

9 Steinberg, Avi. 'Israeli Citizenship has Always Been a Tool of Genocide – So I'm Renouncing Mine,' *Truthout*, 2024. <https://truthout.org/articles/israeli-citizenship-has-always-been-a-tool-of-genocide-so-i-renounced-mine/> 11 Lemkin, Raphael. *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944. Chapter IX, pp.79–95. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015005077436&seq=5>

as described by Lemkin: massacre and mutilation, privation and exposure due to repeated deportation, deprivation of food, water, medicines, fuel and shelter, bombing of hospitals and ambulances, being crammed into small spaces without sanitation, targeting of whole families and reproductive facilities, targeting of healthcare workers and humanitarian aid workers, destruction of cultural symbols like books and objects of art, murder of cultural leadership including writers, teachers, artists, poets and lecturers, destruction of cultural centers (cities, churches, monasteries, mosques, schools, libraries).¹⁰

The ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas that came into force on 19 January 2025, which could have ended the war on Gaza, briefly resulted in decreased military assaults and a withdrawal of Israeli troops from parts of Gaza, but did not halt the genocide. Israeli forces killed more than 130 Palestinians in the first 42-day phase, repeatedly violating the terms of the agreement by blocking aid deliveries and refusing to discuss transition to the second phase. On March 2 Israel imposed a full blockade of food, water, fuel and medicines on the Gaza Strip and on March 18 resumed its military assault, killing more than 400 Palestinians in one night, most of them children and women.¹¹

What is most disturbing is that while the Allied powers fought against the Nazis and helped to liberate the concentration camps, the Western powers are doing nothing to halt the genocide in Palestine, and in many cases, especially the U.S., are actively participating in it. China, Russia, India and the United Arab Emirates have also been collaborating with it; Brazil and even South Africa, which has taken the commendable step of bringing the genocide case against Israel to the ICJ, have continued to supply oil and coal to Israel.¹² Unlike World War II, it wouldn't take a war to stop the genocide; simply imposing comprehensive sanctions on Israel would have halted it in weeks. Why hasn't this happened?

DEMOCRACY OR BLOOD-AND-SOIL NATIONALISM?

Ishay Landa argues that the far-right identified Jews with the Enlightenment and modernity,

*The spirit of restlessness and lack of roots, undermining tradition and fixed national and racial identities, ... revolutionaries, conspirators and rabble-rousers, ... the arch-enemies of imperialism, seeking to establish a realm of universal brotherhood, peace and egalitarianism... Nazism... appears to have been fundamentally a form of what might be designated as 'rootism', a reactionary position that mobilises the idea of a distinct national and/or ethnic origin to stymie the universalist project of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Such a root is presented as immeasurably precious and delicate, endangered by the corrosive march of modernity; it must therefore be shielded from the melting pot of universalism and humanism, cherished, and cultivated.*¹³

Their hatred of modernity was crystallised in the hatred of Jews.

He sees this antagonism as the basis of Nazi antisemitism, and claims it is not contradicted by the fact that many Enlightenment thinkers were in fact deeply antisemitic, not to mention supporters of slavery, colonialism and patriarchy, among other oppressive relationships; as Landa points out, such practices become reprehensible only when measured against the universal human rights upheld by the Enlightenment.¹⁴

This argument makes sense. An oppressed community scattered across the world can certainly benefit immensely from the implementation of a vision of humanist universalism. Indeed, one can think of the Genocide Convention (1948) and Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) as updated and more global versions of Enlightenment values, with women and former colonised countries playing a significant part in their drafting and passage. Freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and murder, freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, the right to participate in decisions to the same degree that one is affected by them and to elect representatives in free and fair elections, and above all the rule of law (equality before the law and equal protection of the law): all these features of democracy are important for everyone, but especially for oppressed groups. Jews like Lemkin and many others have played a significant role in moving towards such a goal.

Zionists claimed that joining the oppressors by creating their own blood-and-soil nationalism on territory stolen from the Palestinians would protect Jews from antisemitism. This agenda was bolstered by certain fundamentalist brands of Christianity and Judaism with their own irrational, anti-democratic and violent ideologies. However, Jake Romm argues that far from breaking with antisemitism, Zionism constituted a continuation and reinforcement of it.

Zionism is an antisemitism. What do we mean by this? The Zionist has no particular disposition towards Jews qua Jews—if they are nationalists, they are embraced; if they are not, they are despised. Or further: if a Jew declares "I am not a Zionist," the Zionist retorts, "then you are not a Jew." Zionists demand absolute devotion to the national project, and... attempt to replace Judaism as a religion, degrading it into yet another vulgar nationalism premised on a constructed racial identity. But even on these terms, "racial belonging" is not sufficient for the Zionist to consider someone a Jew. It is clear that the Zionist considers anti-Zionist Jews to be their enemy... Anti-Zionist Jews are regularly subjected to Zionist vitriol, which targets them specifically as Jews – "Kapo," "self-hating Jew," "Nazi," "race traitor," etc...

*In order to create the Jewish State, the Zionist appropriated and continued the construction of a Jewish racial identity first begun by the Jews' tormentors... The centrality of race and origin in Zionist thinking mirrors, in uncanny resonance, the centrality of race and volk in antisemitic thought.*¹⁵

Blood-and-soil nationalism, with its negation of democracy and

10 Lemkin, Raphael. *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944. Chapter IX, pp.79–95. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=m-dp.39015005077436&seq=5>

11 Al Jazeera, 'Why did Israel break the ceasefire in Gaza?' 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/3/18/why-did-israel-break-the-ceasefire-in-gaza>

12 Akram-Boshar, Shireen. 'China's ties with Israel are Hindering the Palestinian Struggle for Freedom,' Truthout, 2024. <https://truthout.org/articles/chinas-ties-with-israel-are-hindering-the-palestinian-struggle-for-freedom/>

13 Landa, Ishay. 'Rootism, Modernity, and the Jew: Antisemitism and the Reactionary Imaginary 1789–1945,' *Historical Materialism* 32(2), 124–162, 2024. pp.125–127.

14 Landa, 'Rootism, Modernity, and the Jew.' p.130.

15 Romm, Jake. 'Elements of Anti-Semitism: The Limits of Zionism,' *Parapraxis*, 2024. <https://www.parapraxismagazine.com/articles/elements-of-anti-semitism>

hatred of immigrants and refugees, characterises the far-right everywhere, and this accounts for why it has embraced Zionism while targeting anti-Zionist Jews. Lena Obermaier noted,

Last year, Yair Netanyahu, son of former Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, became the literal poster boy for the German right-wing party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)... Far-right support for Israel is not unique to Germany but is developing across Europe... far-right leaders like Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, Marine Le Pen in France, Nigel Farage in the UK, and Viktor Orbán in Hungary have all openly sided with Israel...

In the wake of the European refugee crisis, right-wing parties have deliberately used political uncertainty and economic anxiety at home to fire up their Islamophobic rhetoric. Just like Israel, they claim, Europe has been on the brink of being absorbed by an invading Muslim force... This new framing of antisemitism as an inherently Muslim problem has become core to pro-Israeli rhetoric in Germany... But... there is no polling that indicates a prevalence of antisemitism among Muslim populations.¹⁶

The convergence of Zionist and far-right nationalism explains why right-wing political leaders have gravitated towards Israel, not only in the West but even in former colonies like India which have developed their own blood-and-soil nationalism. Liberal leaders have followed suit as they drifted to the right. The slogan that 'Israel has a right to defend itself' was used across the political spectrum in the West to justify Israel's genocidal assault on Gaza. The failure of Western leaders who claim to support an 'international rules-based order' to impose comprehensive sanctions on Israel for its blatant violations of international law stems from their misidentification of Nazism as particular crimes committed by Germans rather than the outcome of ethnic supremacism and colonialism, the political foundations their own nations shared with the Nazis.¹⁷

Revolutionary socialist parties in most countries support Palestine, but this is more a consequence of their opposition to anyone perceived as an ally of the United States of America than a principled opposition to colonisation and support for democracy. Among neo-Stalinists, the claim that the USSR was 'socialist' combined with the failure to condemn Stalin's murderous authoritarianism and imperialist policies in the USSR and Eastern Europe has left a legacy of utter confusion about what is meant by 'socialism'. Even Trotskyists are ambivalent on these issues. The Socialist Party argues that a secular, democratic Palestinian state is unrealistic and denies Israeli Jews the 'right to self-determination'; instead, they say, Jewish and Palestinian workers should have the perspective of forming two socialist states, a socialist Israel and a socialist Palestine.¹⁸ This is analogous to the perspective of forming a white socialist South Africa and Black socialist bantustans instead of fighting for a non-racial democratic state in South Africa. The Socialist Party's perspective is echoed by Workers' Liberty, with the added twist that white South

Africans couldn't have self-determination because they allowed Black workers to survive and employed them, whereas Israeli Jews should have self-determination, presumably because they expelled and exterminated Palestinian workers.¹⁹

By 2024, the overwhelming majority of 'workers' who were supposed to form an ethno-religious Jewish 'socialist' state consisted of reservists who were wiping out Palestinian families and starving to death, burning alive and blowing to bits Palestinian children; only a small minority refused to participate in these crimes. Arguing for Israeli 'self-determination' amounts to endorsing a racist settler-colonial state.

By contrast, the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) in the United Kingdom acknowledges 'the grip of Zionism's racist settler ideology over the consciousness of Jewish workers in Israel' and supports the demand for one democratic secular state in Palestine. However, it continues,

As revolutionary socialists, we understand that the battle for "one state" in Palestine is unlikely to be won without the revolutionary transformation of the region. We want to see the struggle for national liberation grow into a struggle for socialism – not merely for the overthrow of dictatorship and colonial occupation but for the dismantling of the capitalist system on which these oppressions rest.²⁰

Going straight from 'national liberation' to 'the dismantling of the capitalist system on which these oppressions rest' ignores the wholesale destruction of and necessity to rebuild the working class in much of the region (e.g. Palestine, Syria and Lebanon), and the crucial importance of democratic revolutions that would create conditions in which the working class can develop strategies to fight against capitalism. As in the other cases, it assumes a substitutionism model, where a socialist revolution is made by the party rather than the working class as a whole, contrary to the perspective of Marx and Engels.²¹ If the socialist revolution is made by the working class, it becomes clear why without democracy, even of the limited kind possible under capitalism, it cannot take place.

There are two reasons why Israel is not, never was, and can never be a democracy. Firstly, it is a settler-colonial state, and like all colonial states, makes decisions that affect its colonised subjects without their consent or participation. Secondly, an ethno-religious state, and like all religious or ethnic states – whether Islamic, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, White, Aryan or other – treats groups other than the dominant one as less than equal to the dominant group. Superficially, there are political differences among Zionists, who can be seen as ranging from far-right to left, but they all endorse these two features. Even peace activists, so long as they believe in the necessity of the Israeli state, only give back with their left hand a small portion of what they rob Palestinians of with their right hand. At best, their efforts may force Israel to pause its genocide in Palestine, only to resume it at a later date. This has happened repeatedly over the past 77 years, with the Oslo Accords and advocacy of the 'two-

16 Obermaier, Lena. 'Far-Right Parties in Europe Have Become Zionism's Greatest Backers,' Jacobin, 2021. <https://jacobin.com/2021/09/germany-afd-zionism-antisemitism-israel-nationalism>

17 Alameddine, Alain and Nira Iny. 'Germany was never denazified. That's why it's siding with Israel today,' Mondoweiss, 2024. <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/08/germany-was-never-denazified-thats-why-its-siding-with-israel-today/>

18 Socialist Party. 'The SWP and the Israel-Palestine Conflict,' 2024. https://www.socialistparty.org.uk/articles/120529/02-02-2024/the-swp-and-the-israel-palestine-conflict/#_edn17

19 Workers' Liberty. 'Gaza war: what we say,' 2024. <https://www.workersliberty.org/story/2024-09-09/gaza-war-what-we-say>

20 Socialist Workers' Party. Palestine: Resistance, Revolution and the Struggle for Freedom, 2023. <https://socialistworker.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2023-palestine-pamphlet-for-web.pdf>

21 Hensman, Rohini. 'How the Abandonment of Democracy and Internationalism Has Decimated the Socialist Movement,' International Labor and Working-Class History, Vol. 106, 2024. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-labor-and-working-class-history/article/how-the-abandonment-of-democracy-and-internationalism-has-decimated-the-socialist-movement/87A18690515CB-F550E137ADFDEC20726>

state solution' being the most high-profile example. Continuing to argue for a two-state solution today, when apartheid reigns in the entire territory controlled by Israel, the vast majority (68:9) of MKs (Members of Knesset) in Israel's parliament have rejected any possibility of a Palestinian state, almost three-quarters of Israelis support their state's military operation in Gaza, and ever-more aggressive settlers are ethnically cleansing the West Bank and East Jerusalem with the support of the Israeli state, is to give up on democracy in the whole of historic Palestine.

This is all the more perverse because a democratic alternative has always existed. Historically, the liberation movement in Palestine made it clear that their aim was to substitute for the Israeli state not a blood-and-soil ethnic state but a Palestinian democratic state in which Jews, Christians, Muslims and others would have equal rights: Israeli Jews would be accepted as Palestinian citizens provided they rejected 'Zionist racist chauvinism' and were prepared to live as equals with other Palestinians.²² Omar Barghouti – one of the founding members of the anti-racist, non-violent Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement – reiterated this position in 2009.²³ The One Democratic State Initiative, Palestinian National Initiative and other political parties still abide by it and promote it.²⁴ Hamas would have to abandon its Islamist perspective and the Palestinian Authority its authoritarianism and collusion with Israel, if they are to be part of a democratic Palestinian state.

There are thus only two options 'from the river to the sea': a genocidal, apartheid, settler-colonial Israeli state, or a democratic, inclusive Palestinian state. While Palestinians, like all colonised peoples, have the right to use armed struggle to fight for liberation, the huge disproportion in military power between nuclear-armed Israel and poorly-armed Palestinians makes it impossible to obtain liberation by armed struggle alone. Implementation of BDS around the world would be necessary, but that would require a principled commitment to democracy from actors who have so far failed to demonstrate any such commitment.

CONCEALING THE TRUTH, PROPAGATING LIES

With such a clear path to democracy and peace in Palestine by non-violent means, how has Israel succeeded in pursuing its anti-democratic, violent agenda for over 77 years with impunity? A major factor has been the vast network suppressing the truth and disseminating the lies manufactured by Zionist propaganda. This has been in overdrive after the 7 October 2023 attack by Hamas, and in most cases, politicians, the mainstream media and influencers in social media collude by spreading the message. There are countless examples, but here is a small sample:

1. The Hamas attack was described as the start of a war against Israel, rather than being put in the context of a liberation struggle against a brutal colonial occupation that had been going on for 75 years. Allegations that Hamas beheaded dozens of babies were made without any evidence to support them.

When lies such as babies being beheaded are internalised, it becomes easier to justify actions like dropping 6000 bombs on Gaza, cutting off essential resources and believing that Hamas uses civilians as human shields. It becomes easier to convince gullible people that Israel knows exactly where Hamas is hiding... However, no one questions why the IOF suddenly knows the precise locations of Hamas members (in schools, universities, mosques, churches, hospitals, newsrooms, ambulances, homes) after failing to detect them breaching fences just a week ago.²⁵

It is certainly justifiable to criticise Hamas, but, as Dr Gabor Maté, a Holocaust survivor who was once a Zionist, puts it,

The disproportion of power and responsibility and oppression is so markedly on one side that if you take the worst thing you can say about Hamas, multiply it by a thousand times, it still will not meet the Israeli repression and killing and dispossession of Palestinians.²⁶

In this case, lies about Hamas are used to distract from the fact that Israel is a settler-colonial state conducting an assault on democracy and the rule of law.

2. As the slaughter in Gaza continued and experts produced mountains of evidence to prove that it was a genocide, the Zionist propaganda network denied what was going on in front of people's eyes. The Gaza Health Ministry was accused of exaggerating the death toll, whereas more accurate estimates came up with exponentially higher numbers; for example a *Lancet* study published in July 2024 estimated a death toll of 186,000.²⁷ To their eternal shame, most political leaders and much of the media refused to name it as genocide; worse, many political leaders *participated* in it by supplying military and other assistance to Israel and withdrawing support from UNWRA, the UN agency supplying life-saving aid to Palestinian refugees. Almost every politician and news reporter echoes Israel's claim that its war is 'on Hamas,' when it would be more accurate to call it a 'war on the truth,' systematically targeting journalists and others who risk their lives to bring the truth about the genocide to the world.

3. Israel has denied targeting humanitarian workers, and apart from *Al Jazeera*, news media hardly ever reported on the hundreds of humanitarian workers killed – until the murder of seven World Central Kitchen aid workers in April 2024 sparked international outrage because most of them were from the West. The fact that the vehicles were clearly marked with the WCK logo, the organisation had coordinated their movements with the Israeli Defense Forces and the assault was by highly accurate drone-fired missiles rules out the possibility that it was a mistake, as the Israelis claimed, and confirms the truth of the allegation by WCF founder Jose Andres that the IDF targeted the aid workers 'systematically, car by car'. In January 2024, five-year-old Hind Rajab and six members of her family were targeted by the Israeli military as they tried to follow evacuation

22 Palestinian Research Center in collaboration with the Fifth of June Society. 'Aims of the Palestinian Resistance Movement with Regard to the Jews. Quotations from resistance leaders and documents.' <https://archive.org/details/aims-of-the-palestinian-resistance-movement-with-regard-to-the-jews/mode/2up>

23 Barghouti, Omar. 'Re-imagining Palestine,' Znet, 2009. <https://znetwork.org/znetarticle/re-imagining-palestine-by-omar-barghouti/>

24 One Democratic State Initiative. 'One Democratic Palestine, From the River to the Sea'. <https://mobadara.ps/en/>; Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question. 'The Palestinian National Initiative Movement – Al-Mubadara.' <https://www.palquest.org/en/highlight/31163/palestinian-national-initiative-movement-al-mubadara>

25 Sooliman, Quraysha Ismail. 'UP Expert Opinion: Media lies and the choice between ethnic cleansing or genocide,' University of Pretoria, 2023. https://www.up.ac.za/news/post_3189759-up-expert-opinion-media-lies-and-the-choice-between-ethnic-cleansing-or-genocide

26 Ibid.

27 Quigley, John. 'The Lancet and Genocide by "Slow Death" in Gaza,' Arab Center Washington DC, 2024. <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-lancet-and-genocide-by-slow-death-in-gaza/>

orders. Hind, the last to die, was shot after she managed to contact Palestinian Red Crescent workers, who were also killed when they tried to rescue her. Israeli forces denied the murders, but a forensic investigation proved that they were responsible. When the Israeli military shot 15 paramedics and rescue workers responding to an emergency and buried them in a mass grave, they at first lied that the vehicles were proceeding without headlights or emergency lights. When a video emerged showing that headlights and emergency lights were on, they lied again that there were militants among those killed, but according to the head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Jonathan Whittall, 'These are paramedic crews that I personally have met before... They were ready to save lives.' A litany of lies to cover up Israel's barbaric cruelty towards Palestinian civilians including children, its targeted killings of hundreds of humanitarian and medical workers, its war on humanity itself.

4. These obfuscations and lies by Zionist networks are repeated in a modified form by most political leaders as a means of escaping the legal obligation to prevent and punish the genocide in Palestine. As three doctors testify:

As physicians who have worked in Gaza during Israel's occupation, blockade, repeated military assaults, and now genocide, we hold complicit every state that continues to actively and passively support Israel. The Israeli regime has resolutely exposed the "logic of elimination" inherent to its settler-colonial ambitions. Only immediate and concerted action will protect the Palestinian people from this latest stage in Israel's campaign of genocidal eradication. Evidence of scorched-earth strategies, famine warnings, and declarations of plausible genocide were all designed to provoke action. Despite their grave implications, these terms have been repeatedly manipulated and misinterpreted for political gain. Rather than invoking concerted action, "risk of famine" warnings have been distorted to imply that the situation isn't as dire as experts have claimed. Similarly, declarations of "plausible" genocide have been manipulated to obscure the immediate obligations of the international community with drawn-out judicial processes and the seemingly endless pursuit of ever-more irrefutable evidence.²⁸

Not only states but also media which engage in these practices are guilty of 'Complicity in genocide,' a crime under the Genocide Convention.

1. Finally, lies and obfuscations have been used to attack academic freedom and freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly outside Palestine. Activists demonstrating or speaking out in support of Palestine have been subjected to beatings, arrest, loss of university places, jobs and visas, abduction, deportation and illegal incarceration. All this is justified by the charge that their actions are 'antisemitic'. The usual reaction by pro-Palestine activists is to challenge the conflation of Judaism and Zionism, arguing that legitimate political criticism of the state of Israel is very different from racism against Jews, which is, indeed, wrong. Joseph Levine argues that the response to charges of antisemitism from what

he calls the 'Establishment Jewish Community' (EJC), should instead be:

How can you possibly be centering your fears and concerns for "Jewish safety," when your people in Israel, who you identify with so strongly that an attack on them is felt as an attack on yourself, are committing such morally depraved, indeed "Nazi-like" crimes? Aren't you in the least bit ashamed?' ... It is typical for protestors against Israel's genocide to be met with 'But before we go any further, do you condemn Hamas?' It's time we turned that around and demanded of those expressing concerns about antisemitism in the pro-Palestine movement, 'Before you say another word, do you condemn Israel?' ... It's not just that members of the EJC are exhibiting a perverse moral compass when they challenge the protests against Israel by calling them out as antisemitic. Rather... it makes them active agents, collaborators with the Israeli government, in implementing Israel's genocide, ethnic cleansing, and general repression of Palestinian national and human rights.²⁹

Being Jewish himself, Levine can tackle these arguments within the Jewish community, but people outside the community put forward the same arguments and should be tackled in the same way: providing support for the repression of pro-Palestine activists makes them collaborators with the Israeli government in implementing genocide.

These are just a few of thousands of examples. The war on the truth is an essential element of the genocide in Palestine.

WHEN INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY FAILS

The 'rules-based order' of international law set up after World War II depended on the rule of law being respected between and within countries, and on friendship between peoples as a counterweight to hostilities that could result in war. Imperialist countries, especially the superpowers, often breached these principles, trying to crush independence movements in their colonies and establish control over other countries by installing proxy regimes in them. While the United States and Soviet Union each objected to such actions when carried out by the other and even supplied military assistance to the countries resisting such infractions, they used their veto power to block any meaningful action by the UN against the aggressor. Palestine has repeatedly fallen victim to this deadlock.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) of post-colonial nations, born in the mid-1950s, refused military alliances with either bloc, sided with colonies against colonisers, and worked for peace. In their 19th summit held in Uganda in January 2024, they condemned Israel's genocidal assault on Gaza, calling for an immediate and durable ceasefire and establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state within its pre-1967 borders.³⁰ But this is unjust, because it allows a settler-colony to retain land it stole in 1948 while making no allowance for refugees or their descendants to return to their homeland. It is also unfeasible, since Israel has encouraged settlers to colonise most of the land in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and is now planning to take over Gaza, having ruled out a Palestinian state. The 'two-state solution' is seen by some as a step towards peace

²⁸ Gilbert, Mads, James Smith and Ghassan Abu-Sittah. 'Israel is starving Gaza to death and still the world does nothing,' Middle East Eye, 2025. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/israel-starving-gaza-death-and-still-world-does-nothing>

²⁹ Levine, Joseph. 'The Jewish community cannot center fears about "Jewish safety" while supporting genocide in Gaza,' Mondoweiss, 2025. <https://mondoweiss.net/2025/04/the-jewish-community-cannot-center-fears-about-jewish-safety-while-supporting-genocide-in-gaza/>

³⁰ The New Arab. "'Cruel genocidal act': Non-Aligned Movement condemns Israel's assault on Gaza", 2024. <https://www.newarab.com/news/non-aligned-movement-condemns-israels-onslaught-gaza>

and therefore worth supporting, but the same people who argue this have never called for global sanctions against Israel until it and its settlers withdraw completely from the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, allow humanitarian supplies to get through freely, and support the establishment of a Palestinian state. If proponents of a two-state solution have the honesty to impose sanctions on Israel until they get what they are calling for, they would realise that there will be no Palestinian state and no peace while the Israeli state exists and continues violating international law.

Israel has made a mockery of international law, and one reason why it could do this is that some supporters of the Palestinian cause and victims of colonialism have weakened the law by not applying it consistently. A few examples:

1. When the Syrian revolution erupted in 2011, protestors against the Assad regime were very clear that they supported Palestine, but reciprocal solidarity was not so unequivocal. Many Palestinians supported the Syrian revolution against the horrific violence used by the regime and its allies against it, but some factions allied themselves with Assad, as did some pro-Palestinian activists from other countries. The Assad regime's impunity, despite the gruesome crimes against humanity it committed on a massive scale in Syria, resulted in undermining the rule of law when it was sought to be applied in Palestine.
2. When Volodymyr Zelenskyy stressed the importance of maintaining close ties with Israel, which he hailed as a model for Ukraine, he and other Ukrainian Zionists betrayed their own struggle by undermining the same international laws that would have prevented and punished war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide in Palestine and Ukraine.
3. The South African government has rightly been praised for bringing the genocide case against Israel before the ICJ, meticulously supporting it with evidence. Yet it had earlier failed to arrest Omar al-Bashir, accused by the ICC of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide against the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa peoples of Sudan, when Bashir visited South Africa. This extension of impunity to Bashir undermined the very laws they were using in their case against South Africa.

The principle of internationalism dictates solidarity with struggles of oppressed people wherever they occur, and upholding the rule of law is one way of supporting their struggles. But if the rule of law has been weakened internationally by allowing perpetrators of core crimes to get away scot-free, it becomes that much harder to insist on implementing it in particular cases.

IF NOT NOW, WHEN?

A crime comparable to the Holocaust is taking place, and each day countless precious lives are being destroyed. This is an opportune moment to end the slaughter, when even conservatives who have supported Israel for decades are backing away from it,³¹ Israeli military forces are demoralised, and many reservists are refusing to serve. Intelligent and humane Israeli Jews have joined the dots linking the existence of Israel to the ongoing genocide while debunking the notion that a state which shares the 'rootist' logic of antisemitism can protect Jews from antisemitism. Indeed, if Palestinians have kept the dream of freedom alive with their courage,

steadfastness and humanity in the face of unimaginable suffering, progressive Jews have taken the lead in dismantling the ideology of Zionism; together, they constitute a vanguard that the rest of the world can follow.

Unlike their political leaders, most working people in the world have opposed the genocide in Palestine, but they need a strategy to end it for good rather than pausing it so that the Israeli state can resume it later. Such a strategy would include advocating the complete isolation of Israel by a global boycott, disinvestment in Israeli companies or companies which have joint ventures with Israeli companies, and sanctions against Israel by their own countries until a Palestinian state has been established in the whole of historic Palestine. Simultaneously, they should work tirelessly for equality before the law and equal protection of the law within and between countries, which offers the best chance of safety for Jewish and other minorities as well as protection from wars of aggression for weaker nations ■

31 Johnstone, Caitlin. 'Multiple Western Press Outlets Have Suddenly Pivoted Hard Against Israel,' Brave New Europe, 2025. <https://braveneweuropa.com/caitlin-johnstone-multiple-western-press-outlets-have-suddenly-pivoted-hard-against-israel>