

Palestine, Israel, Hamas and National Liberation— A Discussion

May 28

All,

Remember the American SWP? Well, here's a current piece from their newspaper, *The Militant*, that blames Hamas for provoking the recent Israeli army massacres of scores of Palestinians. I am not making this up.

Jack

<https://themilitant.com/2018/05/04/right-of-israel-to-exist-is-at-the-heart-of-mideast-fights/>

May 28

Jack,

Thanks for passing on this article.

Any article that puts Israel's right to exist at the heart of the conflict in the Middle East (the headline) is on the wrong side of history. Israel's occupation of Palestine, and its subsequent colonization, subjugation, and apartheid-like policies toward the Palestinian people are at the heart of the conflict in the Middle East.

That said, calling out the cynical, self-serving, bankrupt policies and outlook of Hamas is not wrong on its own terms.

A fuller discussion of these issues would be good. I will give further thought, and look forward to others' comments.

Rod

May 28
Rod,

I agree that it's more than OK to call out Hamas for its cynical and manipulative policies. But *The Militant* article puts the preponderance of blame on Hamas, not the Israeli state. And it blames Hamas not just for manipulating, misleading and using the Palestinian masses, but for challenging the Israeli state.

This seems pretty straightforward to me: we need to stand with the oppressed against the oppressor, and the main oppressor of the Palestinians is the Israeli state.

Jack

May 29
Jack, and all,

It's even worse. There's this phrasing: "Hamas-led charges on the Israeli border May 14 that led to the killing of over 60 Palestinians." Indirect language that doesn't say who actually does something (in this case, shooting the demonstrators) is a giveaway of political dishonesty.

Moreover, while the SWP's official position is for two independent states (Israel, Palestine), the headline, "Israel's right to exist," uses Zionist language. This is the phrasing Israel's uncritical defenders always use. In this case, it accepts the idea that return of the refugees--the issue behind the confrontations--destroys Israel's right to exist, meaning that the article accepts "right to exist" as including the right to exclude people Israel drove out (or their families, 70 years ago).

"Our position" (meaning, the position of the ex-RSL) has been to accept a two-state arrangement, based mainly on the existence (and power) of Israel as a fact, but also, conditional on a willingness of Israel to accept a Palestinian state and reach a deal with Palestinians. This condition has never been met (pro-Israelis claim this is entirely the Palestinians' fault, and there's blame to go around, but predominantly it is Israel's fault). It may be time to rethink this view (it was based largely on practicality and hasn't proved practical) and put forward something

like a nonsectarian democratic state society with equal rights for everyone, communal rights for religious communities, and no official language (or two official languages). Not very "practical," but the "practical" position isn't either. SWP is right that this would destroy "Israel's right to exist" as an exclusionary state, but we've never accepted that, only (provisionally) accepted its right to exist as a nonexclusionary state.

Chris

May 29
Everybody,

Thanks to everybody for their contributions to this discussion. I agree with what's been said. I especially agree with Chris's last email.

The two-state solution originally required three main issues to be addressed/rectified.

1. Israel was to withdraw to the borders of the original UN partition plan.
2. East Jerusalem was to be the capital of the Palestinian state.
3. Some consideration for the Palestinian refugees (those the Zionist armed forces forcibly ran off their land and whom Israel has never allowed to return) needed to be given. Ideally, this meant the right of return to their land, but it eventually came down to some sort of official recognition (of their existence, their right to return, etc.) while given them some sort of financial compensation ("reparations") in exchange for their actual return.

It is clear, and, in my view, has always been clear, that the Zionists had and have no intention of accepting anything close to these conditions. The more time goes by, the more hardened the Zionist position becomes. So, in my view, the two-state solution is dead. Instead, there is the demand for a democratic secular state in the Palestine, under which all citizens (and languages and religious practices, etc.) have equal rights. I have always favored this

position (which I believe the Trotskyist movement once supported). This would require a struggle both in Palestine/Israel and internationally of the Palestinians and all those interested (including anti-Zionist Jews) for full rights for the Palestinians within Israel (whom the Israelis refuse to call Palestinians but insist on calling "Israeli Arabs") and for the right of return of those in the West Bank and Gaza and in the Palestinian Diaspora. The international facet of the struggle involves treating Israel as the movement treated South Africa under apartheid and waging a struggle in the UN and elsewhere against it. The current Boycott, Divest, and Sanction movement is part of this. It is my understanding that there is a generational split within the Palestinian community, with older Palestinians still supporting the two-state solution while younger Palestinians have given up on that and prefer the struggle for full rights in Israel and all of Palestine. It is also my understanding that an increasing number of American Jews, particularly young Jews but also including older members of the community, have moved or are moving into outright opposition to Israel, resulting in an increasingly acrimonious split in the Jewish community on this issue. This, of course, is all to be welcomed.

Ron

May 30

Hi all,

As far as I am concerned, all of the situations in the Middle East are clear examples of the poison of nationalism and the festering sores that nation states are.

Below is an article critical of the state of Israel relating the atrocities it commits to atrocities committed by other nation-states. If you haven't already read it, I think it is worth reading.

In solidarity,
Sylvie Kashdan

(Editor's note: The article is posted at the end of this discussion.)

May 30
Sylvie,

Thanks for your comments.

I agree that nationalism plays a reactionary role in countless situations. Internationalism—or to put it in more human term, the recognition that we're all humans, with a common humanity (one hopes)—is a central part of my view of and hope for a cooperative, egalitarian, democratic, peaceful and non-hierarchical world.

That said, there are cases where I recognize and support 'national rights' (national liberation) even while recognizing the limitations of nationality -based solutions. People struggling against big power (imperialist) domination have the right to be free of such domination. Think, among many examples, of the Vietnamese people in their 20th century struggles against the French, the Japanese, the French again, and then the US. I don't make an a priori demand on the Vietnamese to be fighting for anarchism or revolutionary democratic socialism before I support their (nationalist) struggle. Similarly, I support (generally speaking) struggles for \$1 more an hour (reform struggles), even when (as is most often the case) revolutionary socialist conscience is absent

I don't know if we have differences in this area, but I'm interested in your views, if you would like to share them.

In solidarity,
Rod

June 1
Hi Rod,

Here is an attempt at a sort of brief response to your question about 'national rights' (national liberation). It definitely is an ongoing important issue that deserves a lot of thought and discussion.

Like you, I am committed to helping to work toward a cooperative, egalitarian, democratic, peaceful and non-hierarchical world.

And in that spirit, I recognize the importance of becoming aware of the complexities of social and political differences in struggles of people fighting against big power imperialist domination and not settling for supporting centralized parties or tendencies claiming to represent all the people anywhere, as all too many did in most of the twentieth century.

In that spirit, I have searched for groups and individuals in parts of the world outside North America committed to anti-authoritarian perspectives as far back as the 1960s, because I believe that such groups and individuals have generally understood the dynamics and debates within their own societies better than any authoritarian groups claiming to represent all the people wherever they might be. It certainly wasn't easy to find such anti-authoritarian groups and individuals in the 1960s. But, I was lucky enough to be open to learning about the Cuban anarchists and the Spanish anarchists through people at the Libertarian Book Club in New York City like Sam Dolgoff and Paul Avrich. I was also able to find out about Chinese anarchists before the Maoist takeover, and about the resurgence of anti-authoritarian activities in that country and in Hong Kong (including people fleeing Communist China and discovering anarchist ideas that resonated with their own aspirations) in the 1970s and beyond. I was able to find them through the CIRA Anarchist Library in Switzerland.

Sadly, after the Russian Revolution and the success in the seizure of power by the centralized organization of Russian Communists, many people all over the world were co-opted by the supposed utopian aspect of Communist takeovers without examining the shortcomings of its realization--authoritarian regimes organizing social and individual life, mechanisms of extreme repression, the construction of a one-dimensional reality, etc. In this context anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists were physically attacked and socially marginalized in most parts of the world, including in North America.

This is one of the reasons that the movements of the 1960s in various parts of the world, from France to Mexico, to eastern Europe, and even in North America, was so inspiring to me and others, proving conclusively that social possibilities for resistance to centralized power was still possible, and anything could and can happen!

In this regard I think that Fredy Perlman's articles: "The Continuing Appeal of Nationalism" and "ANTI-SEMITISM AND THE BEIRUT POGROM" continue to be timely many years after they were written. For those who might not have read them, both are available on the Anarchist Library and in print.

And, indeed there have been many groups and individuals resisting centralized authoritarian self-appointed representatives of national liberation well beyond Western European contexts. One good book about the anti-Stalinist left movement in Vietnam is now in English: IN THE CROSSFIRE: Adventures of a Vietnamese Revolutionary, by Ngo Van, Translated by Ken Knabb, Hélène Fleury, Naomi Sager & Hilary Horrocks (Published by AK Press) It is also available online, for those who haven't read it and might want to do it that way. There is also: A Vietcong memoir by Truong Nhu Tang with David Chanoff and Doan Van Toai, HARCOURT BRACE JOVANOVIICH, PUBLISHERS.

And currently, struggles for self-determination continue to be multifaceted. I am particularly interested in understanding the various expressions of indigenous struggles, such as among the Mapuche in South America (where there has been a lot of supportive interchange between local groups and anarchists from a variety of countries), and the situations in Syria and in the areas dominated by the Israeli state power.

In terms of gaining a greater understanding of the Syrian situation, I strongly recommend the book, Burning Country: Syrians in Revolution and War by Robin Yassin-Kassab and Leila Al-Shami. Both also have blogs. There is also a lot of information coming out on a regular basis about the Kurds in the region, including in Rojava that deserves more respectful and critical consideration from anarchists and anti-authoritarians. All of this (and especially the perspectives of local people) is important to me in understanding the complexities of what has been called national self-determination.

Thoughts from others are welcome.

In solidarity,
Sylvie

June 1

Sylvie,

Thank you for your thoughtful and informative comments on my email.

In addition to our agreement on the maximal goals we seek, I share your views on two key issues that you raise:

1) We do not want to politically support various authoritarian/centralist tendencies or parties, regardless of what they call themselves or promise, since we recognize that these groups will maintain (in whatever forms) hierarchical, exploitative societies that bear no resemblance to what we seek and advocate for. All too many forces on the left supported such forces politically and often uncritically. Generally speaking, this reflected the Stalinist/state capitalist outlook of most of the left, and the authoritarian ideology held by its overwhelming majority (whether in a 'revolutionary' or reformist social democratic expression). In contrast, I think you and I agree that we would be in revolutionary opposition to these elements and any governments/states that they might create.

2) It is heartening that you have found tendencies in various places and struggles of the past that seem to express revolutionary libertarian socialist/anarchist aspirations, even if they are, as you say, small and few and far between. Some I knew of and some I didn't, and I appreciate your sharing this information. These are certainly the types of forces we would want to orient to, perhaps join, or at least be in a bloc with, were this a practical possibility.

This leaves an important question unanswered for me. In the cases of the overthrow of US puppet dictator Batista in Cuba or the defeat of US imperialism in Vietnam (to name just two prominent national liberation struggles), leadership of the mass struggle was in the hands, overwhelmingly, of nationalists whose ideologies were decidedly pro-capitalist (in whatever variant or guise). I believe that we both agree that we would seek to point out that these forces do not stand for and would not create a just or free society; hierarchy, exploitation and oppression in myriad forms would continue.

That said, would we be indifferent (that is to say 'neutral') to these struggles and their outcomes? Would our view toward the movement, that is to say, its rank and file or 'mass,' be something like, 'until you recognize the values and perspectives of our beliefs, and reject any leadership that has a pro-capitalist ideology, we don't support your struggle' (which might be the Indian people's revolt against British rule, the Hungarian or Czechoslovakian people's revolt against Soviet rule, Native American resistance to US physical/geographical/cultural and national genocide, or even the forces of the US North in its de facto struggle to end chattel slavery)?

I would not be indifferent in any of these struggles. I would support the right to independence/national liberation/existence as a person embedded in each of these struggles against an oppressor. I would fight alongside these peoples for their immediate aims, even while criticizing the leaderships they were (or might be) supporting/following, and even while stating my belief that a deeper/further struggle for true/full human freedom still lay ahead. A way of expressing this is that I would be supporting the struggle 'militarily' (that is, I would be in favor of pointing guns and other weapons in a common direction against a common enemy), even while withholding political support for the leadership of that struggle at a given point in time.

Some people in the anarchist milieu, (broadly speaking) share the view I just outlined, and others have a view that I would characterize as 'indifference' to the outcome of a national liberation struggle if it is not (consciously and explicitly) fighting for worldwide anarchism/revolutionary democratic libertarian socialism. I am interested in your further views on this issue, if you care to share them.

Thanks again for the dialogue,

Rod

June 1

All,

haven't people (rank and file) in the developed world been fed the myth that the only way to a prosperous society (and its partner myth: a rising tide lifts all boats) is free market capitalism? so much so that people in the US accept low taxes for the rich because they think that when they win the lottery... etc.

so i think part of a long-term solution is two fold: the example of a sane socialist democracy, and a persistent effort to disabuse people of their illusions about free market capitalism.

many American people seem to me to be so attached to the instant-riches idea that they will tolerate inequities on the daydream that they will be rich one day.

and is that somehow tied in to the broader belief in American exceptionalism?

Robin

June 1

Robin,

I think that all those things (beliefs you cite) exist, sometimes just as you state them, and sometimes in contradictory ways.

I think that all societies (and most situations) give rise to a set of beliefs that justify and perpetuate their continued existence. This doesn't require a conscious plot, in my view, but flows 'naturally' out of the social reality. To be sure, there are forces whose self-interest leads to the conscious and deliberate perpetuation of reinforcing views, but I think the material 'reality' is the chief driver. When abundant consumer products became available in the US, a 'consumer society' took shape—attitudes, advertisements, buying on credit, lay-aways, catalogues and an endless of similarly reinforcing views and mechanisms that perpetuated and reinforces the 'goodness' such a society. When slavery existed, people—the slave-owning plantation aristocracy certainly, but many people more broadly—needed to justify owning other human beings as property. Surprise of surprises, such human beings were judged inferior, not quite human after all, more like, well, property.

Fortunately, not everyone sees consumerism as the highest state of being, and everyone didn't think slavery was the 'just and natural order' of things. So, there are always oppositional voices. More significantly perhaps the stated values and the justifying ideological overlay does not necessarily meet people's real needs and aspirations. Often, very often, it actually crushes them. Somewhere in the mix of these two 'rebellions,' one an outlook of dissent, the other a deep conflict between real experience and fairytale overlay, lies the possibility for deep change, which actually takes place from time to time.

Rod

June 3

Hi Rod, Sylvie, and All,

You-all may be interested in a study of how French anarchists (of varying tendencies and organizations) reacted to the French-Algerian war. Of course they all opposed the French imperialist aggression, but were quite varied in how they related to the Algerian forces. The book is David Porter, *Eyes to the South; French Anarchism and Algeria*. I wrote a review of it:

https://www.anarkismo.net/article/24619?search_text=Wayne+Price

Solidarity,
Wayne

June 5

Hi Rod and all,

Rod, You asked:

"Would we be indifferent (that is to say 'neutral') to these struggles and their outcomes? Would our view toward the movement, that is to say, its rank and file or 'mass,' be something like, 'until you recognize the values and perspectives of our beliefs, and reject any leadership that has a pro-capitalist ideology, we don't support your struggle'..."

I think it is fair to say that the positions that leftists and anarchists take with respect to the struggles of people in other places

generally is most relevant to others where we live or where our printed material is read by others who use the same language. In our case, that is in the English-speaking world.

That said, I believe there are more choices than simply supporting any struggle with all its negative aspects or refusing to support it. I am convinced that it is possible to positively oppose the repressive actions of governments and authoritarian aspirants to power without endorsing bad alternatives. In the 1960s there were some people who expressed support for the self-determination of Vietnamese people and worked against the U.S. government's War on Vietnam and to help draft resisters and G.I.s in various ways, but did not endorse the Stalinist North Vietnamese regime. We were definitely in the minority, and our ideas didn't have any significance for any of the governments or major political parties involved. But, maybe we helped contribute to the resistance that developed in the military just a little. And the positions of the leftist parties that proclaimed their admiration for the Stalinist North Vietnamese regime didn't actually influence the main course of the war either. Those of us who offered criticism to the U.S. supporters of the North Vietnamese government did not hurt the struggle of the Vietnamese people at all, but every once in a while we were able to encourage some North Americans to think more deeply about the differences between authoritarian and anti-authoritarian approaches to social change, and about respecting the Vietnamese people enough to hope they would be able to go beyond that regime.

I could say the same about the small number of anarchists who refused to support the Castro regime or the U.S. government's actions against it in the 1960s. Etc.

With respect to the situation that started this discussion, I can honestly say I strongly condemn the Israeli government and the Israeli right that are repressing and brutalizing Palestinian people. But, that doesn't mean that I support the established organizations that claim to represent them. Many Palestinian people don't support any of those organizations either. They haven't really chosen those organizations to represent them any more than you or I have chosen the Republican Party or the Democratic Party, or for that matter, the Green Party to represent us. My refusal to support any of the Palestinian organizations doesn't hurt their struggle for self-determination either. Maybe my joining with others who are anti-

zionist to support boycotts of products from the West Bank or to educate others about the injustices of the Israeli state can help more people in North America to become critical of the state of Israel. I certainly hope so. But, I don't think that such activities require supporting authoritarian Palestinian organizations or governments. And I don't think that supporting such organizations or governments has been shown to lead to any better outcomes than not supporting them.

I also think it is important for each of us to share our anti-authoritarian ideas with other people to help cultivate present and future anti-authoritarian tendencies and possibilities in the world around us. If we don't speak up for them, who will?

In solidarity,
Sylvie

June 5
Hi Sylvie,

Thanks for your email. I believe we are in agreement on the issue under discussion.

I would summarize my view on national liberation struggles as follows: 1) We support for the struggle of the *people* against a common enemy (the colonizing/imperialist/oppressor power); 2) We do not give any political support to the *pro-capitalist/Stalinist leadership* of that struggle; rather, we are openly critical of that leadership in terms of the ways it will be inconsistent in the struggle and/or sell it out and in terms of the nature of a government/society it would create; 3) This support could be termed *military support* in the sense that the 'guns' (literally or figuratively) are directed at the common enemy, even while we oppose the current leadership of the struggle and seek to build a revolutionary libertarian anarchist/socialist alternative.

I see these points as in line with the views you express when you write: "*I think there are more choices than simply supporting any struggle with all its negative aspects or refusing to support it...in the 1960s there were some people who expressed support for the self-determination of Vietnamese people and worked against the*

U.S. government's War on Vietnam and to help draft resisters and G.I.s in various ways, but did not endorse the Stalinist North Vietnamese regime.

Am I seeing our agreement on these points correctly?

I do take some issue with part of your following statement: "*We were definitely in the minority, and our ideas didn't have any significance for any of the governments or major political parties involved.*" I think the anti-war movement in the US (and worldwide) influenced the course of events in the sense that, by its height (post-Tet offensive to 1972), it was able to limit the options of the US ruling class to some meaningful degree. We (people with our outlook) were an active part of that movement, and contributed to it in various ways in various locales and situations. That said, I think you are quite right to emphasize that the forces of libertarian socialism/anarchism were very small in comparison to liberal/social democratic/Stalinist forces; for the most part, we influenced individuals rather than the mass struggle as a whole.

Sadly, we are even smaller and more isolated today. We do not influence mass struggles at all (or hardly at all, to avoid being absolute), and we have difficulty being heard in those movements that do exist. In my view, that makes it all the more important that we keep our core ideas (our maximal vision and program, if you will) alive among whatever group or groups of people we possibly can. I sense that we agree on this as well.

Thanks very much for your time and thoughts in pursuing this discussion. Hopefully, others have found it helpful in some small way.

Rod

June 5
Hi Rod,

I agree that we are in basic agreement.

However, when I wrote: "*We were definitely in the minority, and our ideas didn't have any significance for any of the governments or*

major political parties involved," I was talking about the anti-authoritarians/anarchists in the anti-war movement of the 1960s, not the movement as a whole. I have no disagreement with your general characterization of the movement as a whole.

I am a little more optimistic than you, since I do think that there are more anarchists around nowadays in many countries, and they/we have more influence than in the 1960s. Which doesn't mean that I always agree with all of them, but we can more easily have real discussions than with authoritarian socialists.

I appreciate you sharing your thoughts on the subject and welcome the thoughts of others too.

In solidarity,
Sylvie

June 5
Hi all,

In reading over the response I wrote last night, I realized that I didn't respond to an important aspect of the question Rod posed, namely the part about whether I would favor fighting alongside non-anarchists, supporting their right to independence/national liberation struggles, directed against a common enemy, even while withholding political support for the leadership of that struggle at a given point in time.

I certainly would never recommend indifference.

However, in thinking about this question, I realize that I need to consider contexts for specific cases as well as remembering that not all of us want to or can easily be fighters as such.

I know that in the Spanish Revolution of the 1930s, many Spanish anarchists urged comrades abroad to stay where they were and work to support the revolution by telling the truth about what was going on in Spain, to possibly send aid, and to work to help the Spanish anarchists get arms to fight. They said that they had a lot of people willing and able to fight, but not enough arms, while the Franco forces were getting the most up-to-date military equipment from the German Nazis and The Italian Fascist states. Some anarchists in the U.S. and elsewhere attempted to get arms for them, but were not very

successful either in smuggling enough or in getting support from the self-identified democratic states. And, of course, the Soviet Union directed the arms for the use of the International Brigades and the policing units to control anarchists and Trotskyists in the cities of the Republic.

The Spanish anarchists did appreciate the refugees from places like Italy and Germany who came to fight alongside them because resistance in their countries of origin had become very difficult.

Then there are situations like Cuba, where many anarchists participated in the fight for liberation from the Batista dictatorship in the guerrilla force led by Fidel Castro. What happened to the majority of them after the Castro takeover is documented in the book, Cuban Anarchism: the History of a Movement by Frank Fernandez

<http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/frank-fernandez-cuban-anarchism-the-history-of-a-movement>

There is also some information in the article, "Authoritarian Demonization of Anarchists: Cuba and the Gaona Manifesto" by Rafael Uzcategui

<https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/rafael-uzcategui-authoritarian-demonization-of-anarchists>

[and some info in:](#)

["Anarchists in Castro's Prisons"](#)

December 2016

<https://www.facebook.com/anarchosyndicalistfederation/posts/10154838540791953>

While what happened in Cuba shouldn't necessarily lead to the conclusion that fighting along side non-anarchists should always be ruled out, that experience should not be dismissed lightly.

And the question is once again relevant today in the East Mediterranean, with respect to the struggles in Syria, including both among the Kurds of Rojava and people resisting repression in other parts of the Syrian state.

Some anarchists have been volunteering to go to Rojava to fight alongside Kurdish fighters, using a lot of the romantic analogy

between this fight and the fight in the Spanish Revolution. While this is definitely admirable, the situations are not exactly the same for several reasons that deserve more critical examination and thought than is usually given to the issues involved. And, very little attention has been paid to the anti-authoritarian resistance to the Assad regime in other parts of the country, and they have sometimes even been lumped together with right-wing religious by anarchists and leftists, using the same characterizations that the Assad regime has used to divide and conquer. To counter this narrative and fill this gap in knowledge, I recommended the book, *Burning Country: Syrians in Revolution and War* by Robin Yassin-Kassab and Leila Al-Shami, as well as both their blogs.

Even though rebels in the Kurdish region and the rest of the country are being fairly decisively crushed right now, their situations need to be understood better.

I think that the various situations where anarchists and other people have been invited to join native peoples in resistance to state and/or corporate brutality and domination also deserve serious consideration as part of committing to support struggles, even though they may not involve direct military struggles.

Although it is not definitive, I hope this answers Rod's question a little more fully.

In solidarity,
Sylvie

June 5
Sylvie,

Thanks for these further thoughts. I think I was clumsy in speaking of 'fighting' in terms that conveyed to you that I narrowly meant militarily. My main meaning was 'allies in struggle' against a common enemy. My use of the term 'military support' was to make clear that we would not politically support pro-capitalist, authoritarian, state-oriented leaderships; quite the contrary, we would see as one of our most important tasks the need to patiently explaining to others in struggle why we see the need for a qualitatively different approach if real freedom and justice is to be gained, and a truly democratic, cooperative, bottom-up society created. This struggle might in certain circumstances have an

armed (military in this sense) character, but the types of struggles that most create the forms we wish to see in the future are strikes, mass protests, occupations, etc. These bring people together in cooperative and democratic relationship to one and another, or at least potentially so.

I continue to think that the core of our agreement is: 1) We stand for local, grassroots, democratic movements that are democratic and libertarian in their current practice and their vision for a future society; 2) We support people in struggle against capitalist bosses, imperialist dominators, and other oppressive forces, *even where they do not agree with us (at least at whatever moment in time) about revolutionary anarchism more broadly. Thus, we support a strike for better pay and working conditions even if: a) it is being led by union leadership that is non-revolutionary and undemocratic to one degree or another; b) the struggle itself is over 'reform demands' that fall well short of what is truly needed; and, c) the people involved in the strike have illusions in both their leadership and the system. We seek to expose people to our point of view, and believe that people are most open to making connections when they are in struggle. Conversely, we don't sit on the sidelines and say, 'nice struggle, but we're not really with you on this until you come around to our point of view on the future of the world.*

I think the continued exploration of this is valuable and, like you, hope that others will join in our discussion.

Rod

(Editor: Below is the article Sylvie referenced in her May 30 post.)

From: <a-infos-en@ainfos.ca>

To: "en" <a-infos-en@ainfos.ca>

Subject: (en) Harbingers of a Palestinian Shoah? by Amitai Ben-Abba (Anarchists Against the Wall),

Posted on May 23, 2018 by Clownmonkey

Date: Monday, May 28, 2018 3:17 AM

"It really makes no odds to us if we kill someone." Heinrich Himmler.

As a Jewish Israeli descendant of Holocaust survivors, I believe the comparison of the conditions in Palestine to those preceding the Shoah is not only justified, but necessary. Israel is ideologically prepared to enact a genocide on Palestinians right now. If we do not act, it will march into its new decisive stage-up to the 6th million Palestinian and over.

I study and write speculative fiction. A lot of my writing contemplates Israeli future, envisioning brutally grotesque scenarios as a kind of warning for my culture. But these days, whenever I nail another period at the end of a new chapter, my sense of accomplishment is cut short, as reality towers over my imagination. No author could foretell insanities such as the split screen on live Israeli television on May 14th: the Netanyahu and Trumps smiling whitely on one side, the Palestinian protesters carrying their dead on the other, and that night-the Gazans weeping over corpses as tens of thousands of Israelis dance in Rabin Square, singing "I'm not your toy."

In the novel I am currently working on, I contemplate what a full-fledged Israeli genocide (and resistance to it) would look like from the eyes of a perpetrator and a victim. But while I started this project inventing the conditions in which such an event would take place, they have, to my horror, already ripened in Israeli society. I have woken up to the situation in which a dystopian future has accelerated into existence, and I can't hit pause and write ahead of the storm. The world is stuck on play, the news feed refreshes itself, and inexorably, the blood flows. I'm experiencing a peculiar, unnamed anxiety, witnessing a future which is too much like the past, crawling on the present.

The bleeding edge among Israeli politicians-MK Smotrich, Minister of Education Bennet, Jerusalem Mayor Barkat and their ilk-are nowadays advocating the move into the so-called "decisive stage" of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. To transgress from the status quo into a durable peace (incidentally, the title of PM Netanyahu's one and only book): a Final Solution for the Palestinian Question. That vision, a la Smotrich, is taken from the Book of Joshua, where the invading Israelites enact genocide on the native Canaanites, until not a single soul is left to breathe, to paraphrase Rabbi Maimonides. According to the Midrash, there were three stages to that operation. First, Joshua sent the Canaanites a letter advising them to run

away. Then, those who stayed could accept inferior citizenship and slavery. Finally, if they resisted, they would be annihilated. Smotrich has presented this plan publicly as the shift to the decisive stage of the conflict. If the Palestinians do not run away and refuse to accept inferior citizenship, as any dignified people would, "The IDF will know what to do," he says.

Yes, like in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, Israeli politicians are now suggesting policies on the basis of "scriptural precedence." In their reactionary theology they ignore commandments such as *tikkun olam* ("repairing of the world," the instruction to struggle for justice and equality), *ve'ahavta* ("love your neighbor as yourself," the idea with which Rabbi Hillel has taught the entire Torah), and Talmudic concepts such as *shiv'im panim la'tora* ("seventy faces for the Torah," meaning that dozens of stipulations can be derived of every verse).

As with Turks and Armenians, Hutu and Tutsi, Germans and Jews, genocide is justified on the grounds that there is a zero-sum game in which only one side can triumph. The Palestinians want to throw us into the sea, the Zionists claim, and *haba le-horgecha, hashkem le-horgo* ("he who comes to kill you, rise early and kill him first"). In his book, which, his assistants state, he sometimes uses in order to write his speeches, PM Netanyahu sees the "Palestinians" (he makes sure to mark them with quotes) as a "phantom nation," (p. 56) and denies their existence as a people with a unique culture and history. He sees them as a tool in the zero-sum game between Islam and the West. Prominent Israeli historian Benny Morris, who has thoroughly chronicled Zionist crimes of rape, murder, and ethnic cleansing in 1948, sees the displacement of only 750,000 Palestinians in that war as the greatest mistake of Ben Gurion. In his view, Ben Gurion should have finished the job, and that's precisely what leading Israeli statesmen are aiming for today.

The few forces in Israeli society that are trying to stop the ascent of this tendency are being marginalized and repressed. Israeli soldiers, as demonstrated to the world by the cheering snipers in Gaza, are instructed to see all Palestinians as death-worthy security threats. Israeli masses celebrate the early release of convicted murderers, as long as the victims are Arabs. Israeli crowds chant, "burn them, shoot them, kill them" as the US embassy opens in Jerusalem. From

the foot soldiers to the big brass, from the flag-waving street folk to the height of academia, Israel is ideologically prepared to enact a Palestinian Shoah.

Some Jews will cringe while reading these words. *Asur le-hashvot* ("to compare is forbidden") is now a Hebrew proverb. It is forbidden to compare Jewish suffering to that of others, and I have made several comparisons. However, as a Jewish Israeli descendant of Holocaust survivors, I think these comparisons are not only justified, but vital. Israeli society is ideologically prepared to enact genocide on Palestinians right now, and if we do not make the comparison and act accordingly, Israel will march into the decisive stage, up to the 6th million Palestinian and over.

In his own comparison, Israeli Minister Gil'ad Erdan likened the killed Palestinians to Nazis, saying: "The number of killed (sic) doesn't indicate anything—just as the number of Nazis who died in the world war doesn't make Nazism something you can explain or understand." Evidently, counting the dead will not help awaken the Israelis to the grisliness of their actions. Only after the fall of their system—like the white South Africans on their regretted Apartheid—will they recognize it in horror. To stop the pending genocide, world leaders must cease talking and start acting. Arms embargo, economic sanctions, and arrests of traveling war criminals will be a long-overdue start. Anything short of that is compliance.

As an Israeli, I am aware of the consequences these measures could have on my life and on the lives of my loved ones. These are all dwarfed by the consequences of the assault on Palestinian rights. Those will be felt the world over, especially by marginalized people, as Ann Coulter threatens, when she looks at the shooting of protesters and says, "Can we do that?" With 75% of the Israeli military industry slated for export, expect Israeli teargas drones to whir over the next Standing Rock or Parisian revolt. Expect snipers to gun down Mexican migrants. Expect the storm to arrive before you begin to pay attention.

Written from a dark place after last week's Monday Massacre, the piece above trended on CounterPunch the day before.

Some more harbingers for the skeptical:

In response to that slaughter of defenseless peaceful protesters on the Gaza side of the fence that keeps them imprisoned, a senior member of the Israeli parliament Avi Dichter, reassured Israelis on live television on Monday that they need not be unduly concerned. "The Israeli army," he told them, "has enough bullets for everyone. If every man, woman and child in Gaza gathers at the gate, there is a bullet for every one of them. They can all be killed, no problem." Back in 2004 the Israeli demographer Arnon Soffer of Haifa University advised the government of Ariel Sharon to withdraw Israeli forces from within Gaza, seal the territory off from the outside world, and simply shoot anyone who tries to break out. "When 2.5 million people live in a closed-off Gaza," he said, "it's going to be a human catastrophe," He told an interviewer in the Jerusalem Post (11 November 2004); "The pressure at the border will be awful. It's going to be a terrible war. So, if we want to remain alive, we will have to kill and kill and kill. All day, every day, the only thing that concerns me is how to ensure that the boys and men who are going to have to do the killing will be able to return home to their families and be normal human beings." (- Source.)

<https://www.facebook.com/notes/roger-waters/a-message-from-roger-may-18-2018/2120732107941228/>

In one of the dark ironies of history, Sofer's care for the souls of massacring boys and men harkens close to Heinrich Himmler's care for the souls of Germans:

"It is absolutely wrong to project your own harmless soul with its deep feelings, our kind-heartedness, our idealism, upon alien peoples.[...]They themselves were incapable of it, but we invented it for them.[...]We Germans, who are the only people in the world who have a decent attitude to animals, will also adopt a decent attitude to these human animals, but it is a crime against our own blood to worry about them and to bring them ideals.[...]I shall speak to you here with frankness of a very serious subject. We shall now discuss it absolutely openly among ourselves, nevertheless we shall never speak of it in public. I mean the evacuation of the Jews, the extermination of the Jewish people. It is one of those things that it is easy to say. 'The Jewish people is to be exterminated,' says every party member. 'That's clear, it's part of our program, elimination of the Jews, extermination, right, we'll do it.'[...] Most of you know what it means to see a hundred corpses

lying together, five hundred, or a thousand. To have gone through this and yet apart from a few exceptions, examples of human weakness to have remained decent, this has made us hard." (- Source.)

<https://www.ourcivilisation.com/smartboard/shop/festjc/chap9.htm>

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