

## Interpretations and Lessons of the Gaza Genocide

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The ongoing genocide in Gaza has taken off many of our blinkers since October 2023 and educated us on the realities of international affairs and the nature of power in the first quarter of the 21st century. Written on the first anniversary of October 7 and updated recently, this essay is an attempt to articulate these learnings as the author like many citizens of the world has been consumed by the barbarity of war through daily news and images, even as other conflicts continue to reign around the world.

### Was October 7 a Strategic Master Stroke in the Palestinian Struggle?

The initial news of Palestinian fighters from Gaza breaking the Israeli security barrier and overwhelming Israeli security establishments around Gaza while taking around 250 hostages came as a surprise to a world which had accepted Israel dominated status quo in Palestine. Initial reaction was that the Hamas' act aimed at sabotaging the Abraham Accords. The normalization of Israeli relations with Arab countries, particularly with Saudi Arabia, would have rendered Palestinian statehood untenable and Palestinian identity effaceable. The killing of hundreds of Israelis' put Hamas' actions on the front pages internationally with Israeli partisans calling out Palestinian intransigence while Palestinian partisans highlighting it as a natural consequence to occupation and apartheid as according to Fanon, "the very same people who had it constantly drummed into them that the only language they understood was that of force, now decide to express themselves by force".

However, news of atrocities, and taking of elderly, children and women as hostages put Israel on a higher moral ground initially. As condemnations poured in from many quarters against Hamas, that governed Gaza and its militant wing, the Qassam Brigades which led the October 7 Operation Al-Aqsa Flood; the narrative of Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas, a designated terrorist organization in the West and its satellites, reached its peak. In the wake of the biggest humiliation it had suffered since its creation, Israel successfully marketed attribution of atrocities such as '40 beheaded babies' and 'mass rapes'

to Hamas, among its supporters, while publicly voicing genocide against the people of Gaza. Fast forward a year of war, Israel has delivered on all acts of genocide that its leaders had publicly avowed. But the more important question is whether the Hamas leadership understood the consequences of their October 7 action? Were they prepared for the Israeli onslaught that has historically killed multiples of ten for every Israeli casualty? and lastly has October 7 advanced Palestinian struggle for freedom, self-determination and the right of return?

### No Surprises in Israeli Actions Post October 7

While the Israeli genocidal acts in Gaza since October 7 have been eye opening for most people, those familiar with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict only see a difference in scale rather than character. The Israelis have a history of deliberately targeting Palestinian children, civilians, doctors, intellectuals, paramedics, journalists, UN staff, and humanitarian organizations even before October 7. Thus, it is important to put the current Gaza conflict in a historical context, as a de-contextualized October 7 acts as a tool for Israeli partisanship.

The Gazans had little choice except to stay in Gaza and face the genocide as Egypt would not let them cross the border and they further showed resilience in their resistance. Zionism, the founding ideology of Israel, is premised on 'a land without a people [Palestinians] for the people [Jews] without a land'. Thus, Israel has aggressively pursued land grab and ethnic cleansing because demography (ratio of Jews to Palestinians) was understood as critically important early on. Evidently, the Nakba (catastrophe) is an ongoing condition for the Palestinians, not just an event (1948), when around 750,000 Palestinians were dispossessed and exiled, of which 250,000 settled in Gaza (which then had a population of 80,000). Today, the children of these refugees make up 70% of the Gazan population. Similarly, in 1967, during the Naksa (setback), 300,000 Palestinians were expelled from inside Israel, while Gaza came under a permanent Israeli occupation.

Thus, the violence being perpetuated on Gazans is nothing new. From 1949-53, an estimated 5,000 Palestinians seeking to go back to their homes inside Israel were killed as suspected 'combatants'. In 1956 when the British and

French invaded Egypt, the Israeli military occupied Gaza for four months killing about a 1,000 Gazans. Similar massacres happened in the 1st intifada particularly in the Jabalia Refugee camp, and in the 2nd intifada, when Gaza was finally closed off from the rest of the world as a concentration camp, under Israeli control. Since the formation of Hamas government in Gaza in 2006, Israel has conducted four “mowing the lawn” operations (Cast Lead 2008-09; Pillar of Defense 2012, Protective Edge 2014, Black Belt 2019), a term coined by Israelis for periodic high-tech massacre. Palestinians have instead used rocket attacks. However, Israel has also used intense violence to Gazan non-violent civil resistance against occupation. For example, the 2018-19 Great March of Return involved civil society groups protesting peacefully and picnicking along the border with Israel. Participants were targeted by Israeli snipers leading to the killing of 223 Palestinians while 122 Palestinians had their legs amputated as Israeli snipers targeted for life changing injuries. Similarly, prior to October 7, Israel had employed various tools of violence, including hunger. In 2005, when Palestinian resistance forced 7,000 Israeli settlers to leave Gaza, the settlers were controlling 25% of Gaza’s territory, 40% of its arable land along with a large share of water resources. The blockade since 2006 is but a penalty for Gazan resistance to push out the settlers. Through these tactics, Gaza has been kept on the brink of an economic catastrophe: 50% of Gazans were unemployed, 60% youth was unemployed, and 80% of the population lived off of government charity on the eve of October 7. Tragically, Gazans were kept on a humanitarian minimum diet while the Israelis even banned chocolates, potato chips, notebooks, musical instruments, children’s toys and spices to try to break the spirit of the people.

Thus, based on the above background and the humiliation suffered by Israel on October 7, an overwhelming response should have been expected. The current Gaza Genocide qualitatively fits the evolution of Zionist/Israeli actions going back almost a century which makes it important to understand Israeli culture & society with the Defense Minister, Yoav Gallant calling Palestinians sub-humans, publicly stating that there will be “no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed” for Gazans, or the Prime Minister, Netanyahu who labeled Palestinians with the biblical term Amalek, who deserved to be killed inclu-

sive of their children. This led Israel to use Habsora, an AI system to identify targets in Gaza and drop 85,000 tons of explosives on the tiny enclave.

### Zionism & Israeli Society

The above statement of Yoav Gallant can be understood as that of an ultra-nationalist as he was named after the October 1948 Operation Yoav, in which his father participated leading to the expulsion of 130,000 Palestinians to Gaza. Further, he is a military man who commanded the Southern Command of Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). Still, how can one explain a love and peace festival taking place within a couple of miles of the world’s largest concentration camp, or that Israel had 150,000 foreign workers while the unemployment rate among the two million Gazans was 47%. Even further, during this Genocide, only 1.5% of Israelis think that Israel is using too much fire power in Gaza, or that 47% Israelis even agree that incarcerated Palestinians can be raped.

The usual explanation points to the foundation of Israel on ethnic cleaning, based on Zionism, a secular Jewish Nationalist ideology born of mid-late 19th century whose aim was to create a Jewish homeland and state, to safeguard Jews from a millennium of European persecution, pogroms and antisemitism. Zionism comes out of the European context in the age of colonization, is practically implemented in Palestine with an existing population, and takes a peculiar form of (European) settler colonialism, with Ashkenazi (of European descent) Jews as masters and native non-Jews lowest in hierarchy. Further, Zionism is deeply linked with Western antisemitism as both advocated the separation of European Jews from the gentiles of the West, practically manifested through the military support of European states such as Poland to the Zionists in Palestine in the early 20th century or the British support to Jewish immigration into Palestine as a colonial power while at the same time legally limiting Jewish immigration into Britain. Thus, the Zionist movement was able to get preferential treatment in Palestine as against the treatment of Jews in Europe, because as Europeans Jews, they were higher than the Arabs in European colonial hierarchy.

It deserves attention that the Palestinians comprising mostly of simple village communities were of no match to

the European Zionists, as they had already been weakened after an unsuccessful revolt against British colonialism in the 1930s. However, as the native population that occupied prized land was much larger than the Jewish population, the Zionist movement became militant to take over land and political power through paramilitary groups like Irgun and Haganah, to the extent that associated terrorist group Lehi even assassinated a UN emissary (Folke Bernadotte) tasked with peace building in Palestine in 1948. Given this context, Israel is a product of a fascist ideology that uses terrorism for ethnic cleansing to fulfill its settler colonial objective.

Further, the 1948 Arab-Israeli war created insecurity among the Arab Jews, and Zionists exploited this to the point of sabotaging well integrated Mizrahi (Arab/Eastern Jewish) communities, to immigrate to Israel. Today, the Mizrahim make up almost half of the Jewish Israeli population. But, the integration of these communities into lower rungs of Israeli society was not guaranteed as their assimilation into an Israeli society dominated by Europeans had to counter class, culture and race differences; aspects that they actually shared with the dispossessed Palestinians. Winning the 1967 war helped as the Mizrahim benefited from the new land grab, got housing in new settlements, and used opportunities in the military and police for class mobility. Thus, their class interests got increasingly linked to an uncompromising Israeli control of occupied territories, moving them closer to the rightwing Likud or the religious Shas party, as peace with the Palestinians would mean a demotion in socio-economic status through possible competition in jobs and resources.

The 1967 war also transformed the outlook of Jewish orthodoxy. The orthodox tradition had earlier believed that God would bring about a messianic age - the coming of the Messiah in the land of Israel. However, with Israel taking control of the West Bank and Gaza, many orthodox Rabbis now felt that they (the humans) could expedite the coming of the Messiah leading to the flourishing of an extremist movement in Brooklyn, New York, led by Rabbi Meir Kahane. The Kahanist Movement was anti-left, anti-black, anti-diaspora (wanting all Jews to move to Israel), anti-love and anti-gentile. After inspiring Jewish nationalist activism and terrorism in the US, Kahane migrated to Israel and initiated a new far right political party which

publicly advocated for the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians as his 1981 book titled 'They Must Go' made abundantly clear, supplemented by public statements like "I was to remove Arabs from Israel because I do not want to kill them every week". After winning a seat in the Israeli Knesset, he brought legislation focusing on the non-Jews by advocating inter-marriage ban, no social security for non-Jews, demolishing Al-Aqsa to build a Jewish temple and removing all non-Jews from Jerusalem. Still, this was too extreme even for the rightwing Likud at the time and after Kahane's 1990 assassination, his inspired political parties, Kach and Kahane Chai were banned in 1994.

However, the Kahanist Movement got a boost from Kahane's assassination and has since become mainstream both in Israel as well as among the American Jewry. For example, the annual 'Salute to Israel Parade' in New York City that started in 1964 was initially funded by the World Zionist Organization with a secular outlook but is now organized by the Kahanists. The parade is now followed by a gala in the Central Park in support of the settler movement. More importantly, other than independent Kahanist political parties, the Kahanists are also the largest independent bloc within the mainstream Likud, which was initially infiltrated through the youth wing and over time, was taken over based on a publicly articulated plan. This transformation of Israeli society can be grasped from the fact that the Kahanist movement got only 1.2% of votes in 1984, while today, two Kahanist leaders from the settler movement are government ministers (Ben-Gvir & Bezalel Smotrich). Further, the Rabbi of army religious school, most education ministers, and for instance, Colonel Golan Vach who created the October 7, '40 beheaded babies' story, all come from the Kahanist stream. Kahanism today is the most vibrant social movement, which has penetrated all important sections of society, moving the overall Israeli polity to the right.

Resultantly, the present Israeli society thinks of itself as European in the sea of hostile natives who refuse to become 'civilized', is militarized, groomed in a fascist Jewish supremacist ideology, and perceives itself as the victim of history. This has taken away the society's will of self-reflection. Add to it, decades of de-humanization of Palestinians which most Israelis are a party to, owing to the predominant narrative and compulsory military ser-

vice, leading to the whole of society losing its humanity. The only difference that the rise of Kahanists has made is that while the liberal-left Zionists hid and concealed Palestinian dispossession, the Kahanists do it proudly in plain public view. Most Israelis just don't care about the Palestinians, except that they want them to disappear. This raises an important question; why has Israel been provided impunity by world powers for its actions against the Palestinians and their supporters?

### Zionism in the West

Israel's support by Western powers particularly US, Germany and England who are the largest suppliers of weapons or intelligence support to Israel, makes them equally complicit in the Gaza Genocide. While the actions of Germany or other continental European countries can be understood as continued compensation for the guilt of the Holocaust where millions of Jews were killed, the continued support of 2nd World War Allies particularly the US and UK requires further exploration.

An important element of this support is White supremacy and colonialism which are an integral part of Zionism. While discussing colonized Algeria, Sartre had already defined the colonized as 'subhuman' in the eyes of the colonizer long before the Israelis publicly used it for the Palestinians. Most of the Western elite has yet to shed their colonial mindset especially the settler colonial states (US, Canada, Australia) or even the former colonial powers (UK, France, Germany). This is also in line with both the longstanding tradition of Christian Zionism, politically articulated through the powerful Christian Evangelical movement in the US, which believes in the need for a Jewish State in the Holy Land (Jerusalem) for the second coming of Christ. Christian Zionism predates Jewish Zionism and was quite prevalent among the early 20th century Anglo-Saxons, both the British and American elites who considered it as an article of faith. It was intertwined with conservative Christian antisemitism, which would have liked European Jews to have a separate state rather than being in their midst. This made it easier for Zionist leaders to lobby for a Jewish homeland in Palestine to the British, as aligned with British imperialist interests: one, it supported persecuted Jews of eastern Europe without Jewish immigration to antisemitic Britain which also risked importing Marxist Leninist ideas from the east;

two, it played into the idea of Evangelical Christianity at the base of British imperialism; and lastly, it could extend the British Empire to territories of a defunct Ottoman Empire through the support of European Jews. Still, the Jews of Britain were split on Zionism. Edwin Montagu, the only Jewish member of the British cabinet voted against the 1917 Balfour Declaration which declared Palestine as "a National Home for the Jewish people" arguing that the declaration was "anti-Semitic [and] in result will prove a rallying ground for anti-Semites in every country in the world" allowing them to dispense with their Jewish populations.

Here it is important to differentiate between Zionism, a political movement, and Judaism, a religion; as many ultraorthodox Jews are anti-Zionists, so were many Jewish revolutionaries like Rosa Luxemburg and Trotsky who preferred Jewish integration within European nations, while many intellectuals like Albert Einstein or Hannah Arendt kept their distance from Israel. However, the capturing of the Jewish mind for Zionism gradually started with early 20th century European pogroms concluding with the Holocaust that shattered European Jewry. It was then Zionism, which provided a sustainable, dignified self-image beyond victimhood through the creation of Israel. The 1950s Hollywood best exemplifies the capturing of the Western mind for Zionism seen through the 1960 film Exodus, which cherished the formation of the Zionist state while portraying the indigenous Arabs as villains. That it came at the heels of religious dramas like Ten Commandments and Benhur, it linked the Judeo-Christian religious tradition with contemporary politics. Additionally, the triumph of Israel in the 1967 war further made it into a symbol of pride for Jews, liberal or conservative, around the world. Religious schools in the US now rearranged their curricula not around religion but Israel, and thus Israel became inseparably linked to the Jewish identity even for the liberal and progressive Jews, completing the zionization of American Jewry.

Still, till the 1950s, the American state had yet to become partisan in the Israel-Palestinian affair, as it had taken a position against the Israeli, British and French invasion of Egypt in the 1956 Suez Canal conflict. Taking the cue, the Zionist lobby was reorganized and institutionalized through the creation of American Israeli Political Ac-

tion Committee (AIPAC) in the US, and Labor Friends of Israel (LFI) in the UK. Further, winning the 1967 war established the usefulness of Israel as a country which could serve US Imperialism as a high paid security guard in the Middle East, as it destroyed the main US Cold War regional foe, Arab Nationalism. This relationship further got a boost after the defection of Iran as a US satellite post the Islamic Revolution. However, both in the context of the 2003 US invasion of Iraq as well as the unconditional support for Israel in the current genocide, realist scholars have argued that US policy goes against its own interests, as these negatively impact its moral standing as well as the ruled based world order that it had created for its own benefit. Contemporarily, this can be explained by the convergence of two dominant lobbies – AIPAC & the Military Industrial Complex, in the US democratic system that is often termed as ‘one dollar one vote’ or a plutocracy where both political parties serve similar corporate interests.

The Zionist lobby as represented by AIPAC influences politicians from both political parties with Israel as the single point agenda. For example, Haim Saban, a media mogul, who has established the Saban Centre for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institute (a Democratic Party aligned thinktank), is a major donor to the Democratic Party. Similarly, late Sheldon Adelson, a casino billionaire and wife, are a major donor to the Republican party, and has established supporting institutions, with intellectuals on his foundation’s payroll. Additionally, the Kahanists have long dominated the politics of New York primarily because the orthodox Jewish community represents a critical voting bloc, with (orthodox) Rabbis greatly influencing the community’s political preferences. For instance, the Yeshiva University’s premier orthodox rabbinical seminary is ideologically aligned with Kahanism, allowing Kahanists to make deep inroads in the larger Jewish community and in the Democratic Party that dominates New York City. As both the orthodox Jewish voting bloc is critical to win in New York, and the funders of Kahanists and Democratic Party officials are the same, it explains the deep penetration of Kahanists in the Democratic party.

Additionally, donations from different Jewish billionaires who make up half of the ten richest men in the US,

to each party or candidate including Obama, Biden or Trump is contingent upon accepting AIPAC’s policy directives. But, the influence of Zionism in the American policy landscape is not limited to AIPAC or Jewish billionaires, but also includes material or ideological interests of policy operators. For example, the current Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken is co-founder of WestExec Advisors, a consultancy & lobbying firm which has had Israeli spy tech companies as its client. Additionally, both Jared Kushner’s (Trump’s son-in-law) father and Blinken’s grandfather have been Zionist donors themselves. The above stated dominance of Zionist influence explains how Trump could appoint an ambassador to Israel (David Friedman), who advocated against the two-state solution, a subscribed US position, and who headed a foundation (American Friends of Bet El Institutions), that supports illegal ultranationalist settlements in the occupied West Bank. It also explains why Biden removed Kach and Kahane Chai from the US list of terrorist organizations in 2022, allowing Netanyahu to include Kahanist leaders in his cabinet.

A somewhat similar situation exists in the UK with ‘Conservative Friends of Israel’ boasting 80% of Tory members of the 2023 parliament as members, while ‘Labour Friends of Israel’ were instrumental in taking down Jeremy Corbyn, a supporter of Palestinian rights, as leader of the Labour Party.

#### Asymmetry of Power & the Axis of Resistance

The axis of resistance to Israel before October 7 was limited to the Palestinians, Hezbollah and Iran. The Arab Muslim dictatorships including Egypt, Morocco; Gulf monarchies except Qatar; had been supportive of Israel while most Muslim countries who had no relations with Israel were too weak to challenge Israel beyond rhetoric lest they annoy the US, and risk becoming Iraq, Syria or Libya.

It was this asymmetry of power that had coaxed the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to give up resistance by accepting the Oslo Accords in 1994 which put 18% of West Bank under Palestinian control, 22% on joint control and 60% under Israeli control. This changed nothing on ground except increasing Zionist settlements in the West Bank, while turning the Palestinian Authority into a securi-

rietary arm of Israel. Still, the lack of progress on a two-state solution, the breakdown of negotiations or non-implementation of accords, has been blamed on the Palestinian leadership, owing both to US partisanship as well as the dominance of Western media in narrative formulation. It is primarily because of this differential of power that apartheid Israel has been termed as the only democracy in the Middle East while apartheid South Africa had been considered a pariah state in the West.

It is within this frame that one needs to assess the Hamas' October 7 actions leading to the ongoing onslaught, which has resulted in 46,000+ documented deaths, half of whom are children, while scholars in Lancet, an academic journal, have estimated that the actual number of deaths till June 19, 2024 could be 186,000, almost 8% of the population. Additionally, Israeli attacks have left over 22,000 with life-changing injuries according to WHO. Still, the Gazans who have been continuously displaced, have buried their children or parents, have been taken hostage and severely tortured, and are experiencing extreme levels of hunger, but have not lost their humanity, dignity and continue to be steadfast in their struggle. In short, even in the face of genocide, the spirit of the Palestinian people has not been broken. On the contrary, the dedication of the Palestinian diaspora such as doctors who went to Gaza during the genocide, and Gazans within Gaza such as journalists who continue to cover the genocide, or doctors who continue to serve their community, at the risk of being targeted by Israel, have become a symbol of steadfastness for the oppressed nations (by external or internal forces) around the world.

Similarly, Hamas has not just survived the Israeli onslaught but Al-Qassam, Al-Quds and other militant groups have dealt a blow to the IDF in terms of soldier casualties as well as equipment. In support of the Palestinians, Hezbollah kept Israel engaged in the North through a low intensity war with regular casualties on both sides, eventually transforming into a full scale Israeli onslaught on Southern Beirut and opening up of a new front into Southern Lebanon. Further, the Axis of Resistance has widened and now includes Iraqi resistance forces, and the Houthis of Yemen who have closed the Red Sea to ships journeying to or from Israel as well as supporters of Israel, while even a Western naval fleet in the Red Sea has

not been able to undo the blockade.

On the media front, the genocide in Gaza has persistently kept the Palestinian question in the limelight with every large Israeli massacre making international headlines. More importantly, the monopoly of Western media to frame the narrative has been broken as another well-resourced and established media network, Al-Jazeera has covered it 24x7, while the democratization of public sphere through social media has completely transformed both information provision and consumption. With Palestinian and resistance voices being easily accessible to everyone, the media landscape has become a part of the axis of resistance with the majority against a dominant Zionist minority.

#### October 7 has Changed the World Beyond Palestine

The era of Israeli military dominance of the Middle East is now limited to the skies. Israel may have considerably debilitated Hamas but not defeated it. Hezbollah's (& Houthis) improved arsenal of missiles has been able to bypass and target the Iron Dome, the Israeli missile defense system earlier considered impenetrable. However, Hezbollah's sharing of Israeli strategic sites publicly to call into question the Dahiya doctrine (use of overwhelming force against civilians to pressurize political leadership into obeyance) and its strategic restraint (Hezbollah attacks were 1/5 of Israel & it took great care to target only military assets) to limit the war to border areas, did not work as in September 2024, Israel executed a mass terrorist attack by blowing up 3,000 pagers and walkie talkies to create disarray among Hezbollah, followed by a de-capitation strategy assassinating long time leader, Hassan Nasrullah and top military leadership suggesting Israel's deep intelligence penetration in Hezbollah's organizational structure. Still, Israel's boots on the ground in South Lebanon was met by fierce resistance as Hezbollah just like Hamas has a decentralized military structure. Similarly, Iran's public display of its military capacity as a reaction to Israel's targeting of Iranian consulate in Damascus, in which five out of seven ballistic missiles hit their intended target, was meant to lay waste Israeli deterrence based on escalation dominance (we will hit you much harder than how you hit us). Still, it did not limit Israel to assassinate Ismail Haniyeh, head of Hamas Political Bureau, in Tehran on the night of Iran's presidential

inauguration. Iran has since followed with a barrage of ballistic missiles targeting military sites while stating that ‘the phase of unilateral self-restraint has ended’. Additionally, Iraqi militant groups as well as the Houthis have also targeted Israel, with Houthis receiving an overwhelming response against their civilian infrastructure.

This suggests the following: one, Israel’s stated objectives of getting rid of Hamas and more recently of Hezbollah can’t be achieved because it has not and cannot win a ground war against these groups. Even with a blockade, Al-Qassam in Gaza can continue a war of attrition as it can still produce weapons based on an ample supply of ammunition from unexploded bombs in Gaza along with new recruits; two, Israel can use its air superiority to deal a crushing blow to civilians much like the genocide in Gaza and more recently Lebanon as it has an unlimited supply of weapons from Western countries along with political support but this has little impact on the resistance on ground; three, Israel risks a mutual destruction of civilian infrastructure if it expands the war with Iran with the caveat that Iran has a much larger land mass with greater possibility of survival; and lastly, the war on most fronts (Hezbollah, Houthi, Iraqi) is expected to drag out till a Gaza ceasefire is agreed to. In short, Israel’s former Defence Minister Moshe Dayan’s statement articulating deterrence that “Israel must be like a mad dog, too dangerous to bother” no longer holds sway as the mad dog has already been unleashed for the world to see, but it could not achieve a victory on any front.

It has become abundantly clear that Israel cannot defend itself militarily unless it is fully supported by the US and other Western allies. However, this support now comes at an exorbitant cost because of technological change as cheap drones can be used to overwhelm multibillion dollar military hardware such as the Iron Dome or an Aircraft Carrier. While the West still holds technological superiority, it can no longer match production capacity with the rest of the world including China and Russia. These limitations of US military have been made clearer as it has failed to open the Red Sea shipping route while restraining Israel from an all-out war with Iran in which the US would need to participate offensively.

As of now it appears that not just Israel but the larger West

has lost its monopoly of narrative construction. From early on in the genocide, the increasing reach of alternative media along with 24x7 coverage of Al-Jazeera, were able to debunk the West’s formulation of war as the ‘Israel-Hamas War’ by terming it the ‘War on Gaza’. Similarly, state and private Western media’s (eg. CNN, BBC, New York Times & Washington Post etc.) sponsored promotion of ‘40 Beheaded Babies’ and ‘Mass Rapes’ concocted stories of October 7 meant for forming public opinion for the Gaza Genocide, were challenged early on by alternative media restricting greater dehumanization of Palestinians. The intentional and extent of killing of civilians by Hamas militants numbering 1,240 was called into question by investigative journalists and eventually corroborated by Israeli newspaper Haaretz, that Israel ordered the Hannibal Directive as early as 7am on October 7, obliging Israeli military to kill its own citizens so as not to allow hostage taking by Hamas. Further, about 40% of those killed were combatants while 200 Hamas fighters were unidentified. Thus, the credibility of Western legacy media lies shattered, and given its wholesale protection to state sponsored genocide, it will no longer be associated with terms like ‘independent’, ‘international’, ‘impartial’ or ‘objective’.

There has been an additional impact of social media as it has provided an insight into Israeli society. This has further horrified the world as it sees Israeli soldiers taking pleasure at killing and destroying cultural & educational heritage; Israeli citizens blocking and destroying food aid to starving Palestinians in Gaza; and Israeli media and Rabbis justifying the rape of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. Thus, Smotrich’s (Israeli Finance Minister and a Kahanist) words that Israel should act “in a way that conveys that the master of the house has gone crazy” has meant that while the Germans hid their genocide, Israel is conducting it for the whole world to see. Such is an outcome of decades of impunity but it now means that IDF as ‘the most moral army’ or ‘a defense force’, Israel as a ‘democracy practicing self-defense’, Jews as ‘victims of history’, and ‘anti-Zionism as antisemitism’ are no longer tenable in the eyes of the wider world.

Since October 7, the US has spent \$22.76bn in support of Israel’s war on Gaza, of which \$17.9bn have been in military aid to Israel, providing weapons, intelligence,

and planning & logistics support for conducting the Gaza Genocide. It has vetoed multiple UN resolutions for Gaza ceasefire; restricted funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugee (UNRWA) which is responsible for feeding Gaza; the US Congress invited and lionized Netanyahu during his speech in the Congress and introduced a bill to extend US military benefits to 20,000 Americans serving in Israeli occupation forces - IDF, while the US presidential candidates sparred on who supports Israel more. Thus, the support for genocide among the American establishment and the political elites is iron clad. However, as the US, Germany, UK, Italy and other Western states provide unqualified support to Israel to conduct the Gaza Genocide, this has led to the shedding of the Western veil through a **loss of moral credibility**, thereby creating an impetus for multi-polarity around the world along with domestic resistance.

Although the Iraq invasion at the dawn of the 21st century had clearly highlighted American imperialism, still a shortened memory had allowed the US to cloak itself in the promotion of democracy, human rights and a rule-based order. This has now been utterly exposed among the lay public because hypocrisy of the West has been on full display time after time during the last year as it has justified and supported Israel's breaking of centuries old established rules of war: conducting a genocide; targeting (Iranian) diplomatic consulate in Damascus; assassinating a chief negotiator, Ismail Haniya of Hamas; assassinating the leader of a political party, Hassan Nasrallah of Hezbollah; conducting mass terrorism through the use of technology – pagers & walkie-talkies; and conducting rapes, torture and killing of illegally incarcerated Palestinians since October 7, who number around 10,000 from the West Bank while the number of Gazans prisoners is unknown, though Israeli trucks bring decomposed bodies of Gazan prisoners from time to time.

The US state has also shown a double standard in the treatment of its own citizens (Palestinian & Turkish Americans killed by Israel vs Israeli Americans taken hostage by Hamas) in the war zone, highlighting built-in White racism that the US shares with other settler colonial states. Even citizen freedoms in the US and Europe have been quashed. The coveted freedom of expression and association has been dealt a major blow as journalists

have been targeted in the UK, conferences with Palestinian speakers have been banned in Germany, and university students and professors demanding ceasefire, boycott and divestments from Israel have been assaulted by the police on US university campuses, while the US Congress has passed a bill linking Zionism (a political ideology) with antisemitism.

However, impact of the genocide being televised on people's mobile screens for months has pushed beyond public protests into the **institutional domain**. It led South Africa to take Israel to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which accepted the argument for the presumption of genocide, ordering Israel to both prevent genocide as well as incitement to genocide. ICJ has since termed Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza as illegal. Similarly, the International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister and Defense Minister (along with Hamas military commander) for crimes against humanity, suggesting that Israel's longstanding impunity may at last be over. Further, in May 2024, the UN General Assembly gave State of Palestine more rights & privileges by granting it a general seat while recommending its case for full membership to the UN Security Council where the US had already vetoed such a move. Consequently, in September, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution introduced by the State of Palestine to end the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories by 124-14 with 43 abstaining. Europe has also not been immune to these changing dynamics as Norway, Ireland and Spain are now among the 8 out of 27 EU members who have recognized the State of Palestine, while Ireland has formally joined South Africa's genocide case against Israel at the ICJ.

The puncturing of the moral standing of the West is only hastening the movement towards a **multi-polar world** (BRICS, SCO, ASEAN etc.) along with the rise of Asian & African civilizations as a beacon of hope for humanity to tackle challenges like Climate Change rather than furthering unending wars. BRICS membership has increased to 9 countries while another 10 have applied to this Russia-China led block, which is working towards developing an alternative to US dollar as a trading currency as a beginning to eventually end US dollar hegemony. Understanding that the US has been using the ceasefire mantra

to release international pressure, while supporting Israeli game play, just like it had used the ‘peace process’ as a way for Israel to consolidate control over Palestinian territories, China has initiated diplomatic efforts to bring together Palestinian factions so as to improve their negotiating power, after it had made a diplomatic breakthrough between Iran and Saudi Arabia previously. Similarly, Russia has both advised as well as materially supported Iran through the provision of defensive equipment (surface to air missile system) against a possible Israeli attack on its strategic infrastructure. This suggests a shifting of alliances around the world, where the Axis of Resistance led by Iran is no longer condemned to marginality in a US led unipolar world, while at the same time, the fall of Syria to Turkish-US supported Islamists both reflects an over extended Axis of Resistance as well as a strategic loss of interconnectedness.

#### **Israel’s Shaky Future & the Rise of Palestine**

As the Hamas, Hezbollah and Houthi resistance stays intact, the Israeli military has publicly accepted that Hamas as an ideology cannot be beaten, while initiating a ceasefire with Hezbollah in November 2024 and Hamas in January 2025, without fulfilling its objective of destroying them. This means that: one, 120,000 displaced Israelis from the North or the Gaza envelope, who have been a burden on state exchequer, may eventually go back home but only after a sustained ceasefire; two, the reservists who have been called into service are an additional burden rather than being productive actors in the economy; three, the transshipment scope of Israeli ports has been impacted by about 70% with Eilat port closing completely, adversely impacting the economy and raising inflation; four, tourism which was one of the largest income generating industries of Israel has come to a screeching halt. Lastly, Turkey has banned exports particularly impacting cement & steel, needed for infrastructure; and additionally, Columbia, the biggest exporter of coal to Israel has stopped trading, impacting the energy sector. Thus, a long drawn-out war has had a major impact on the Israeli economy.

But, more than the \$67.6 billion in direct costs of war, downgrades in credit rating and other impacts to the economy, the war has generated a crisis of confidence among the Israelis. Many investment funds have stopped investing domestically and have instead shifted invest-

ments abroad. More importantly though, Israelis have left the country in droves, estimated to be in the hundreds of thousands (some suggest close to 500,000) thus far as many have dual passports or the highly skilled can get employment overseas with relative ease.

Thus, the important question for the long term is whether Israel will be able to build bridges with the rest of the world that has now been exposed to the reality of apartheid and a genocidal Israel, while restoring domestic confidence? The horrors of Gaza will continue to make news for years: after international correspondents and citizens from around the world are able to visit and hear directly from the Palestinians; unexploded bombs go off; skeletons are found under the rubble and death toll is constantly raised; films are made; and the hanging sword of legal liabilities from the ICJ, ICC and national legal systems make their way for justice against a well-documented genocide. While the US state may be able to shelter Israel against some of the international measures in the immediate future, there is also a change in public opinion in the West with long term consequences. There have already been cracks in the hold of Zionism on the public mind in both the US and UK, represented by: one, student protests on college campuses who are demanding that their university boycott and divest from all institutions involved in the genocide including Israeli academia and firms as well as US arm manufacturers; two, public protests by Jewish groups, who are clearly separating Jewish values from Zionism by stating ‘Not in Our Name’ instead referencing the Jewish Holocaust as ‘Never Again Means Never Again for All’, while arguing that their (national & religious) identity is separate from the State of Israel; three, popular protests have had an impact on the US public imagination such that even a popular White rap artist, Macklemore with 34 million followers on Spotify has sung a resistance anthem for Gaza. Thus, while Zionist plutocracy will continue to rule the US in the near future, its loss of moral credibility and the change in public opinion among younger generations will greatly weaken political support for Zionism in the future, making apartheid Israel untenable.

The opposite has been true for the Palestinian struggle. From wanting to efface the Palestinian identity to dehumanization by terming their struggle against dispos-

session and oppression as terrorism and antisemitic, the Palestinian struggle now stands coupled with the global struggles against racism, climate crises, capitalism and empire. Though unfortunate, but the Gaza Genocide has re-humanized Palestinians in the eyes of the wider world while de-humanizing Zionist perpetrators both in Israel and the West. Similarly, the Axis of Resistance stands acknowledged as resistance, with higher moral standards in war, taking greater care to safeguard civilian loss of life rather than targeting civilians as a weapon of war. Lastly, Palestinian steadfastness in the face of genocide suggests that their resistance will continue, as epitomized by the last images of Yahya Sinwar, the head of Hamas and the mastermind of Oct 7.

For the Palestinians, while the Palestinian Authority's formal position may be a 2-State solution and Hamas had also come around to accepting the reality of Israel according to the 1967 borders in its 2017 charter, still the Palestinian aspirations are clearly for a unitary democratic state 'From the River to the Sea', where Palestinians and Jews are equal citizens. The 'Right of Return' for refugees as sanctioned by the UN Resolution 194 is deeply embedded in the Palestinian struggle, and would go a long way in acknowledging the wrongs of the past 100 years while return of the land taken away from them, can act as reparations, for peace with the Zionists. The Return Plan by Salman Abu Sitta, who has spent his life documenting Palestine, suggests that it is doable. He argues that 87% of all Israeli Jews currently live on just 12% of Palestine, while the land of ~500 (destroyed) Palestinian villages is still empty. Thus, Palestinian refugees from Gaza, West Bank, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria can easily return to their villages, which can be planned and reconstructed based on the increase in population.

In contrast, there are four options for Israel according to Mearsheimer. One, a 1-State solution which a Zionist Israel can't comprehend because it is the very negation of a Jewish State upholding the principle of Jewish supremacy. Two, a 2-State solution that Israel has worked against since the Oslo Accords and would require the removal of 750,000 settlers from the West Bank while giving up sovereignty over East Jerusalem. This runs the risk of starting a civil war because the settlers are both heavily armed as well as a great believer in their cause. Three, an Apartheid State which is the current reality on ground but would no

longer be acceptable to the larger world community. Lastly, the Ethnic Cleansing of Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank which is being tried in this war but is no longer tenable as the eyes of the world are now fixed on the situation in Palestine even if little is actually being done.

### Lessons from the Gaza Genocide

The Gaza Genocide cannot alone be pinned down on Zionist hegemony but should instead be seen as a collective war by the US Empire and its satellites in support of the last European colonial project, that is critical for the West's hegemony over West Asia and North Africa. It is a hangover from the heyday of European colonialization which seamlessly meta morphed into the American Empire without coming to terms with: one, the genocide of indigenous populations in the 'new' (Americas & Australia) and the old world (Africa & Asia); and two, the institutionalization of slavery at an industrial scale meant for commodity production to serve White elite's capitalist interests, with subordinated non-Whites making up the underlying social hierarchy. As Martin Luther King Jr. stated, this has led to a civilization based on "the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism and militarism".

While the hegemony of the West with US as its pinnacle is premised on violence and social hierarchy, it is maintained through the global rules-based order (UN, WTO, IFIs, ICJ, ICC etc.). The Empire may put aside these institutions if it does not serve its interests, but others are not provided such luxury, and those who resist this formalized subordination run the risk of being termed terrorists, de-stabilized, sanctioned economically or even worse, bombed into subservience. Thus, colonialism may have formally come to an end, but most post-colonial states still function according to various levels of subordination to the West in which the local elite either extracts rents to do the Empire's bidding or ensure their own survival by not coming in its crosshairs. For example, the provision of land bridge between UAE, Saudi Arabia and Jordan to Israel to bypass the Houthi blockage; the use of post-colonial, or colonial era military bases such as the British Akrotiri base in Cyprus used for reconnaissance and intelligence gathering over Gaza and Lebanon; or the constraints on protests for Palestine in Pakistan as the country tries to avoid debt default through an IMF program.

In contrast, only in countries of the Global South which

are democracies and where de-colonization became an aspirational goal, Palestine gets deeply linked up with their own struggle. It's no surprise then that Mandela called Palestine the "most important moral issue of our time" and South Africa, rather than an Arab or a Muslim country, took concrete steps by taking a genocide case against Israel to the ICJ. Still, international affairs are mostly an outcome of comparative state interests rather than morals, ideology or ideals, and support to Palestine by the Axis of Resistance is at the expense of their own material interests which runs the risk of alienating domestic constituencies. Similarly, the lack of concrete action against the genocide by other world powers such as Russia or China could be seen as also supporting their self-interest through a diminishing American credibility. Additionally, the concentration of power even in mature democracies suggests that states are immune to demands even by large scale citizen mobilizations. Thus, the current 'democratic' order, the nation state system as well as international multilateral institutional structure, particularly the UN do not provide the confidence of restricting future genocides especially if it is perpetuated with the support of a world power.

In conclusion, the century old Palestinian struggle should be understood as the last great anti-colonial, and an anti-imperialist struggle which cannot be won without violence and sacrifice. The most recent Oct 7 flareup of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict leading to the Gaza Genocide has been instrumental in establishing Palestinian steadfastness in the face of genocide while giving the struggle a sense of righteousness through the personalized association of citizens from across the world on social media. With Israel unable to: defeat Palestinian militants in besieged Gaza or bomb Palestinian civil society into submission, the Gaza ceasefire opens a new and a much more assertive chapter in the Palestinian struggle. Although the Palestinians in Gaza as well as the West Bank will continue to live under a more belligerent Israeli occupation in the near future, still their struggle is now qualitatively different owing to a supportive global public opinion and voice, bringing Palestine closer to its aspirations for freedom and self-determination.



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