

What's going on? talking about the violence in Gaza



Check it out!
Scan the QR code for
more resources:

UNFOLD this zine for more info

History of the Israel-Palestine conflict

With the end of World War I, the British had claimed control over Palestine. In a letter written by General Arthur James Balfour in 1917, the British government expressed sympathy towards Jewish persons pursuit for an independent state. The letter said, "His Majesty's Government views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object." This was known as the Balfour Declaration. Tensions increased as more Jewish people emigrated to Palestine, and the British inflamed this by simultaneously promising a "pan-Arab state" to reward Arabs for their participation in World War I. The Holocaust shifted this landscape dramatically, with hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees fleeing genocide in the Nazi-occupied portions of Europe. Because Britain sought out oil deals with Arab countries, they wouldn't allow these refugees to enter Palestine. Because of these tensions, the newly formed United Nations passed a resolution 181, which took Palestine out of British control.

Antagonization of Palestinians

Particularly in America, xenophobia affects people's image of any and all Muslim people. This has been especially prevalent after the attacks on 9/11, which were carried out by the terrorist group al Qaeda, headed by Osama Bin Laden. Since then, there has been a harmful, damaging stereotype of Muslim people that they are dangerous and a threat to democracy.

People have drawn a parallel between Hamas, which is an acronym for "Islamic Resistance Movement" (in Arabic), and al Qaeda. The Palestinian Legislative Council was overthrown by Hamas in 2006. Democracy has been lost in Palestine. Furthermore, Israel has ramped up their attacks. UN official Francesca Albanese says Israel's attacks on the Gaza Strip have violated 3 out of 5 acts listed under the Geneva Genocide Convention. This gives the UN grounds to accuse Israel of genocide.

History continued...

The UN proposed a two state system, which was quickly rejected by Palestine, because it lacked the sovereignty Palestinians needed in order to run their nation. In 1948, Palestine broke out into an internal conflict between Palestinians and Zionist groups, which were backed by the British and several Jewish terrorist groups like the Stern Gang. The Zionists had the upper hand with British weapons and more people ready to go to war. 750,000 Palestinians were forcibly removed to neighboring countries Syria and Jordan, fearing violence and persecution by Israeli forces. They are still barred from their home many generations later. Israel ended this conflict with 3/4ths of the territory which the Palestinians once held. The Palestinians were stuck in either the West Bank or the Gaza Strip.

"To demonstrate the opposing perspectives of this war and its outcome, Israelis call it the 'War of Independence' and Arabs call it Nakba or 'The Catastrophe,'" (Roos).

Anti-Semitism

Prejudice toward Jewish people, their religious beliefs, and practices. In the context of the Israel-Hamas conflict, it has to do with blaming all Israelis for the action of their state against Gaza.

The criticism of the Israeli government is not related to their being Jewish. The Israeli government is colonialist, and they are committing international crimes. They are ignoring UN resolutions telling them to stop.

Anti-Zionism

Because of the highly contested definition of anti-Zionism, this zine will be using a lengthy quote directly taken from the Jewish Voices for Peace website.

“Anti-Zionism” is a loose term referring to criticism of Israeli state policies, and/or moral, ethical, or religious criticism of the idea of a Jewish nation-state. There has been debate, criticism, and opposition to Zionism within Jewish thought for as long as it has existed. Jewish anti-Zionists span a political and religious spectrum, from religious and secular progressives who view opposition to Zionism as an anti-racist praxis, to ultra-Orthodox Jews who oppose Jewish dominion until the time of the Messiah, to anarchist Jews who oppose the very concept of nation-states, Jewish or otherwise. There are also many non-Jewish anti-Zionists whose perspectives may be informed by moral criticism of the policies of the Israeli government, problems with the impact of Zionist thinking in Israel on non-Jewish residents, and/or a criticism of ethno-nationalism more broadly.”

Certainly, within the academic realm, anti-Zionism does not necessarily conflate with antisemitism. Anti-Zionism can emerge from those who believe in the potential for Israelis and Palestinians to live together in the same state, or from well-intentioned concerns for Palestinian suffering, among other reasons.

However, when the real-life impact of anti-Zionism results in cries advocating for the killing of Jews, then it can only be understood as antisemitism. As is any criticism of Zionism or Israel that crosses the line into blatant racism or discrimination, demands to de-platform or exclude Zionists, the resurfacing of tropes and conspiracy theories about Jewish people, or the questioning of Israel’s right to exist as a state.

We stand with Palestinians, who have been caught in the crossfire between Hamas and Israel.

The United States’ ties with Israel

Within the Congress, there is one lobbying PAC (public affairs committee) American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), which has been described as “a hawkish, warmongering, and bullying force in US politics,”. They have backed Israel even as the government has swung further right than ever before (Harb).

Since before the war, America has supported Israel monetarily more than any other country in the world. Even now, we send them billions of dollars each year which goes towards arming their suspected genocide of Palestinians.

Zionism: what is it?

In the late 19th century, many empires and kingdoms were disbanded or declining (specifically the Ottoman Empire), and the pieces left over were influenced by nationalist movements. Countries now were fairly homogeneous, speaking the same language and having similar cultural identities. Jewish Europeans were mainly scattered to the winds all across Europe, but some Jewish people sought out these similar privileges to have their own state.

At this time, Jewish people were facing a lot of anti-Semitism. A particularly aggravating event was the case of a secular Jewish person, Henry Dreyfus. He was wrongly accused of treason in a public trial in France, which led to openly anti-Semitic attacks. A journalist and fellow secular Jewish person covering Henry Dreyfus, Theodor Herzl, was worried about the fate of all Jewish people. If a secular and assimilated person was facing violence, who could be kept safe?

His idea to protect all Jewish people was written in a piece entitled “Der Judenstaat” , “The Jewish State”. This was the first piece of Zionist literature, seeking out an independent state for Jewish people to live. However, it was a bit more complicated than that. Herzl also promoted ideas of colonialism, settling the land of Palestine, ruling over Muslims, and taking over the land now called Israel, as we see and hear today. In the words of famous Zionist singer Arik Einstein, “We came to this land to build it and to be rebuilt in it”. The idea of Zionism quickly became popular among some Jewish intellectuals, and Herzl was deemed the father of Political Zionism. A secondary idea of Cultural Zionism (that called for a rebirth of Judaism in The Holy Land) was created by Ahad Ha-Am.

Where to get good information on the Israel-Palestine conflict:

The current situation in Gaza is always changing, therefore this zine will not be reporting on it. Here are some useful sources for updated information:

Al Jazeera- The first global English news source established with headquarters in the Middle East. Known for in-depth and accurate information about conflicts, with an audience of over 430 million people.

The Associated Press- A non-profit news and media organization which has been known for its neutrality in reporting. Additionally, check out the *Electronic Intifada*, *The Intercept*, and *The Guardian*.