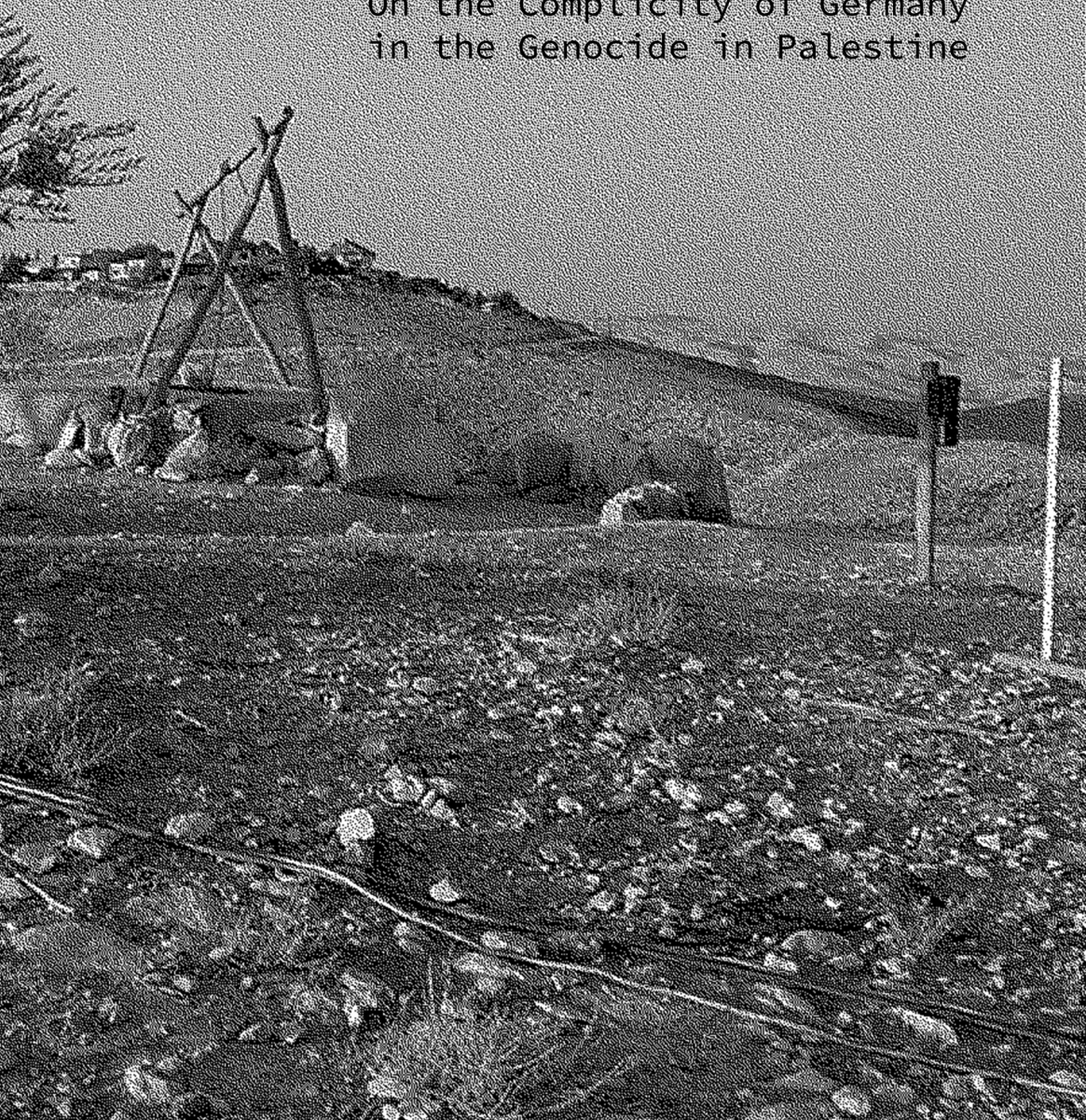


# What to Remember, What to Forget:

On the Complicity of Germany  
in the Genocide in Palestine



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Our first words! Our first intro! How exciting!

Why do we have three intros? This is because each intro is unique and addresses something specific. Our first intro is an overview of the content that you can expect when reading this wonderful zine. Our second introduction will be a brief outline of why zionism is a colonial project and showcases the words of the father of modern zionism Theodor Herzl. Our final introduction is an interview with a Palestinian activist who shares wise words about the conflict.

We have collected many writings from many perspectives in order to shed light on the current crisis in Palestine. The writers you will be reading about come from many different backgrounds but are all interested in the ways that Palestine and resistance to the zionist state of Israel has been treated in Germany. We use personal accounts, poetry, history and current facts to make our stories and the stories of the dire conditions in Germany and Palestine heard. Our goal in sharing these stories is to reach out to the German population and unite together under the true meaning of “never again”.

For those that have felt the oppression of the German state when protesting for Palestine, our frustrated writing about the anti-deutsch movement and the alt-right is for you. For those who are on the fence about how to support Palestine without being anti-semitic, our personal accounts and arguments showing the difference between anti-zionism and anti-semitism are for you. For those that wish to grieve in these times of incredible distress, we extend the olive branch as the Palestinian trees witness the horrors alongside us and continue to nurture their loved ones. We offer texts about chosen families that exist outside of the norm and who manage to grieve together in ways that remind us of the radical actions and lives that fight back against a right wing world.

Prepare yourself to question German identity, both as a person and as a state. Texts in English and German that might provoke intense feelings in you as you start to question the narratives that have been constantly fed to you. It is good to question, great to be critical of the information you receive. We provide sources that you can verify and help inform yourself further. We also provide personal statements that sometimes come from very vulnerable parts of ourselves and we hope that you treat these moments with kindness and consideration. That you find it in yourself to grieve with us, meet us in the streets and give each other hugs and chant from the bottom of your heart:

**FREE FREE PALESTINE! CEASEFIRE NOW! STOP THE GENOCIDE!**

Yours truly,  
Trash Skeleton (she/her)

So before you turn the page and explore the many things on our mind let's make sure we're all starting on the same page: The mechanisms and technologies that were used in the creation of the Zionist state of Israel bear a striking resemblance to previous colonial projects. The ideological proximity of Zionists, such as Theodor Herzl, and colonialists in the early 20th century underlines this. The foundation of Israel after the Holocaust does not justify the use of colonial technologies to subject another people.

Let's narrow it down to Theodor Herzl who in the early 20th century became one of the most prominent Zionists. He created the Zionist organization and was at the center of discussions between Zionists and European officials. At the time that Theodor Herzl was organizing this colonial project, it was not taboo to call it as such. In fact Herzl was proud to claim that this was a colonial project because he was constantly courting the favors of European powers who had inspired him through their own colonial conquests. In his private diary he addresses how "the points referred to require an oral explanation —among others the highly important question of the colonial rights—I have the intention to call on His Lordship in London shortly after New Year."<sup>1</sup> This quote illustrates both how important "colonial rights" were for Herzl and the necessity to have Europe backing this project. His Lordship in London would represent the United Kingdom's powerful support in both arms and armies throughout.

It is also baffling to hear that people insist on the ancient right Jewish people have to the land of Israel when Zionists weren't dedicated to the land of Palestine and would've accepted any country or land. An entire section of *The Jewish State* by Theodor Herzl is called "Palestine or Argentina" where he explains:

"Here two territories come under consideration, Palestine and Argentina. In both countries important experiments in colonization have been made, though on the mistaken principle of a gradual infiltration of Jews. An infiltration is bound to end badly. It continues till the inevitable moment when the native population feels itself threatened, and forces the Government to stop a further influx of Jews. Immigration is consequently futile unless we have the sovereign right to continue such immigration. The Society of Jews will treat with the present masters of the land, putting itself under the protectorate of the European Powers, if they prove friendly

<sup>1</sup> Theodor Herzl, *Complete Diaries*, ed. Raphael Patai, translation by Harry Zohn, published by Theodor Herzl Publishing, 1960, New York, p.61

<sup>2</sup> Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*, Dover edition based on original transl. Sylvie d'Avigdor, published by Nutt, 1896, London, p.91



to the plan. We could offer the present possessors of the land enormous advantages, assume part of the public debt, build new roads for traffic, which our presence in the country would render necessary, and do many other things. The creation of our State would be beneficial to adjacent countries, because the cultivation of a strip of land increases the value of its surrounding districts in innumerable ways.”<sup>2</sup>

Once again, these early zionists do not hide their language and talk about the colonial endeavors they call “important experiments in colonization” which require the “protectorate of the European Powers” in order to be continued. Imagine a world where we talk about the Israel-Argentina conflict? That could’ve seriously been a reality! Because this was never about an ancestral belonging to the land. Palestine was never a “land without a people for a people without a land” as Theodor Herzl and countless others would go on to say. Instead, Palestine was a flourishing place in the early 20th century, a center of trade, commerce and technological developments. Painting the land as empty, as a “terra nullius” parallels many colonial projects, and effectively erases thousands of years of culture and cultivation on the land. Instead the Palestinian expression rings much more true as many proclaim: “they took it furnished” - referring to the houses they were expelled from in the 1948 Nakba.

The term Nakba, meaning “catastrophe” in Arabic, refers to the forced displacement of Palestinians from their homeland. The first Nakba took place in 1907 when 60,000 Palestinians were expelled from the Marj Ibn Amer area, after Zionists had acquired the land. The second Nakba in 1948 was so devastating that within a few months, 700.000 Palestinians were displaced from their homes and land. It is crucial to realize that zionism existed, though only as a relatively fringe political movement, long before the Holocaust. In the aftermath of the Shoah and the political reckoning that followed the unthinkable horrors perpetrated by Nazi Germany, zionism got backwind and the establishment of a Jewish State was seen as a way to make amends towards the Jewish Diaspora in Europe and the US. But, already at this moment, colonial and geopolitical interests from the UK, who previously occupied Palestine, and the U.S., allied themselves with the emerging state. This meant military support to enable the mass displacement of Palestinians - now known as the Nakba. Without this mass displacement, the zionist project of a Jewish State could not have taken form. This, too, is the founding event of Israel - which is, through state policy, discouraged to be remembered by the Palestinians.<sup>3</sup>

The suffering of Jewish people and the Palestinian people is not the same. But to use one people’s suffering to justify

<sup>3</sup> Umut Koldas, The “Nakba” in Palestinian Memory in Israel, published in Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 47, No. 6 (November 2011), pp. 947-959

another's is obscene, and wrong. We believe that none of us are free until all of us are free. Israel cannot keep Jewish people safe, as it proclaimed. In fact, this is not what the state of Israel was designed to do: What the state viewed as "Jewish Safety" always meant apartheid - Jewish people ruling over the Palestinians. As the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish wrote: "Hal anta fi aman?—meaning, Are you safe?"<sup>4</sup> - asking the Israeli soldier, entombed in a tank, while Darwish was entombed in the siege of Beirut in 1982: The Zionist state of Israel does not provide safety for anyone - not for Jewish people and even less so for Palestinians. Instead, we need to pay close attention to the technologies and justifications of violence, and how this violence becomes deadly. Only in October, the Israeli defense minister referred to the Palestinians as "human animals"<sup>5</sup>. This exclusion of Palestinians from the "human" category, effectively, renders the Palestinians "the living dead, by determining who can be wasted, disposed of"<sup>6</sup> or made "killable". The current escalation of violence is preceded by decades - no, centuries! - of dehumanizing rhetoric against Palestinians. We see this in Herzl's and other Zionist's language, such as Vladimir

Jabotinsky, or in masses of Israeli nationalists chanting "Death to Arabs" in their marches. It is crucial to realize that these are not niche, extremist positions, but state policy: the dehumanization of Palestinians is systemic, ongoing, and deadly.

We recognize this as the necropolitics inherent to settler-colonialism. Achille Mbembe's speaks of Necropolitics - a politics of death - as "the creation of death-worlds, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living dead"<sup>7</sup>. This system depends on the violence of separation: to keep "us" and "them" as far apart from each other as life and death. We saw this violence in the words of Benjamin Netanyahu, who described the war as a battle between "the children of light and the children of darkness"<sup>8</sup>. "The colonial world is one divided in two", writes Frantz Fanon in "The Wretched of the Earth".<sup>9</sup>

Israel is a settler-colonialist state, and settler-colonialism is upheld by this only: violence and division. Checkpoints, endless raids, bombardments, sieges, forced displacement, walls and border fences, permit systems, arbitrary imprisonment and

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.publicbooks.org/our-siege-is-long/>, accessed 08.04.2024

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog\\_entry/defense-minister-announces-complete-siege-of-gaza-no-power-food-or-fuel/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/defense-minister-announces-complete-siege-of-gaza-no-power-food-or-fuel/) accessed 08.04.2024

<sup>6</sup> Morrill, Tuck & Super Futures Haunt Quollective: Before Dispossession, p.12

<sup>7</sup> Achille Mbembe, Necropolitics, 2003 . Public Culture. 15 (1): 11–40, p.40

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.newarab.com/news/netanyahu-deletes-palestinian-children-darkness-tweet> , accessed on 08.04.24

<sup>9</sup> Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, trans. Richard Philcox, Grove Press, New York, 2004, p.3

torture - these are the mechanisms by which Israel attempts to control the Palestinian population.

In an eerie turn of necropolitics, Theodor Herzl, who died in 1903, is very present in Jerusalem today: The Mount Herzl, a hill in Jerusalem's west, houses his grave as well as the graves of many former Israeli prime ministers. It is the place of the National Cemetery of Israel, where fallen IOF<sup>10</sup> Soldiers are buried. The memory of the dead is the basis for how we make politics in the present.

Next to the grave of Theodor Herzl, who first campaigned for a Jewish State, we will have the graves of people implicated in war crimes committed in the Gaza Strip. This is the course of this settler-colonial ideology.

In the beginning of the genocide on Gaza, a picture went viral: On a world map, in two different colors, was marked which countries recognize Palestine as a state and which ones do not. The line was clear, for everyone to

see: separating the global north from the global south. In gross, all formerly colonized countries recognize Palestine as a sovereign state.

Zionism is a colonial ideology, using settler-colonial mechanisms to uphold itself. It needs violence to uphold itself in its current form. As old as this ideology is, it has always sparked resistance: by Jewish and Palestinian people alike.<sup>11</sup> The attempts at ethnic cleansing were resisted. And the resistance will always live on! This resistance, "intifada", is a testimony to the resilience and steadfastness of the Palestinian people.

This concludes our threefold introduction. While we are only able to give a gross overview of the conflict over time, we highly recommend taking a look at the interactive timeline made by Al Jazeera entitled: Timeline of Palestine's History! <sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The Israeli Army is called "Israeli Defense Force", but many pro-Palestinian activists have called them "Israeli Occupation Force" instead. Since the argument of self-defense has been abused and distorted into justifying a genocide, we adopt this terminology of "IOF" here.

<sup>11</sup> as well as Palestinian Jews. And Palestinian Christians. The lines are less clear than the occupation would have you believe.

<sup>12</sup> [https://remix.aljazeera.com/aje/PalestineRemix/timeline\\_main.html](https://remix.aljazeera.com/aje/PalestineRemix/timeline_main.html), accessed 08.04.2024

# Interview with Palestinian Activist and Artist

*This interview was held on the 2nd of April, 2024. It is supposed to serve as introduction to the situation from a Palestinian perspective, since these are often silenced or censored, especially in German media.*

Could you present yourself: who you are, what you do and where you're from?

I'm a Palestinian activist and artist living in Amsterdam. You know, just trying to speak up for Gaza. Telling people about what's going on with us and Gaza. I think it's very important: the things you do (and others do) to participate in different ways for Palestine and Gaza. That it's an honor that we can write as humans in this struggle that concerns us humans as well.

What does Palestine mean to Palestinians?

So, what Palestine means to Palestinians. It means a lot. It means the land, it means the culture, it means the tradition, it means the generation after generation that we take from our parents and our grandparents. It's the connection between us and the land. The loyalty for the land. The struggle itself for justice, equality, freedom and liberation of all humans.

What do you mean when you say free Palestine?

When I say free Palestine, I mean free Palestine from the river to the sea. It means free Palestine from any Zionist ideology. Free Palestine from any racism. Free Palestine from any prejudice. Free Palestine from any circumstances or situations that lead to a genocide of the people and kills the people. Free Palestine for the people to be independent, be free, be who they are whenever they are, you know, to live as free as everyone in this world.

Why should people who are not from Palestine care about what's going on in Palestine?

Actually it's a humanitarian matter. We as humans care about each other and that's what shows the good person in us. That's what shows the world that, you know, the situation in Palestine, that it concerns every human being because it's concerned with the values of humans. People are dying. Genocide been going on for over six months and it's been going on for longer than that, for over a century, since the Palestine situation exists because of the Zionist state and before that. But recently within Gaza should be a concern because this genocide been going on over and over and over and the whole world been watching and been silent and you know, it's cool. This, your reaction, will show what side you taking and what side of history you going to be on. Are you going to be on the shame side, on the side that committed this genocide or going to be on the side that's resistant and proving that we are going in one direction and we going to the liberation and freedom. That's everyone of us that looking for justice and liberation and freedom. And that's the same struggle that's happening in Palestine right now, so it should concern every human.

Why do people call the Zionist state of Israel a colonial project?

Because the Zionist state of Israel is based on a colonizer mindset and strategy. Not just the land but the culture and the traditions, the wealth of the people, their language, you know, the food; they occupied everything! They don't just occupy the land, they occupy the mind, they occupy the body, they occupy the culture, the tradition, the food, the everything that belonged to Palestine. Even our type of clothes culturally they been occupied; culturally taking it over they been taking it over. They try to copy someone or some version of indigenous people and work it into their personality and character and that's fucked up too.

If you look at the history of the Zionist state of Israel, you can see that it is a colonial project. People come into a country where people already live, claim it is now theirs, establish their own state and then oppress the indigenous population. That is exactly what happened in Palestine. And continues to this day. Ethnic cleansing those people and taking their land and houses that belong for generation after generation and not recognize their equal rights. As any human this word [equality] includes them. Unbelievable, like there is no question mark that the Zionist state was formed based on the colonizer ideals that were created by the western powers.



Why is what's happening in Palestine a genocide? Because it is genocide. If you look at it, like what kind of government or a state or powerful people kills innocent people, especially kids, and you know, bombing hospitals, killing the doctors and nurses and patients, asking patients and doctors to leave the hospital in the middle of the surgeries, you know, actually bombing schools that are housing refugees within Gaza border. Unbelievable. Like bombing a school full of people, women, seniors and kids. Unbelievable. You know, bombing the streets, apartments, stores, a bakery or anything that the people could grab food from. Bombing markets and bombing shopping centers, bombing different health care facilities.

And it's incredible, they don't even try to hide what they're doing. They present what they are doing, the evil side of them loudly and proudly. They call Palestinians animals, non-human, while they murder children. They're not presenting the humanity that we stand for. They're presenting the other side, the colonizing and prejudiced side of humanity, and they don't even try to hide it. The government publicly calls to kill all Palestinians, to wipe out the whole Gaza Strip. This is genocide.

# When the Antifascists are Fascists

The historical books are fiction actually, they say. The Palestinian friends whose families were displaced during the Nakba are imaginary, of course. The gory videos are deep fake, naturally. The shameless confessions from the IDF, Netanyahu, or the Times of Israel are grossly misconstrued, obviously. There is also a point where some get tired of naysaying, but there isn't a redemption arc. They just scream, out of sight, out of mind. They will argue that they are being neutral, why would they care about something that is happening galaxies away from them. They beat me there. I do not know how to explain to them why they should care about other people— I have no hope that logic will save them from the damnation of their souls.

Yet simultaneously we have reached a point where they cannot even pretend they are being logical. They are just being blatantly absurd, but fascism wouldn't exist without absurdity, so it checks out. Unlike other hierarchical systems like capitalism or feudalism, it does not try half as hard to justify its hierarchy (emphasis on try). Fascism is no longer interested in pretending that it is a democracy or in being in the best interest of everybody. Fascism is unabashedly aware of its contradictions and does not even have the timidity to

hide them. War becomes Peace. Once again, Germany, of all countries, is toying with these contradictions. A Jewish woman called Iris Hefets got arrested twice in Berlin for holding a sign that said "As a Jew, stop the Genocide in Gaza".<sup>1</sup> But isn't this the country that vehemently claims to care about the safety of Jewish people? Or, and this is the more important question, is Jewish safety, perhaps, another scapegoat used by the same Germany that tried to exterminate them? The German premise of Jewish protection seems entirely conditional, almost in the same way an abuser only tells their victim they love them when they do what they say. What they are really saying is that Jewish voices are only worthy of respectability when they agree with Germany's *Raison D'Être*. For Germany, Jewish people are only important if they assimilate into whiteness. God forbid they question Eurocentrism.

Jewish people comprise merely 0.3% of the population in Germany, yet 30% of the people who have been cancelled (as in deplatformed) for speaking up against the genocide in Gaza have been Jewish.<sup>2</sup> Explain to me the logic. Germany cares so much about Jewish voices, but it shuts them up when they say something disagreeable with the

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20231112-germany-police-detain-israeli-woman-for-condemning-gaza-genocide/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2024/2/27/german-guiltwashing-in-times-of-genocide>

German state. “We value your freedom, so we have to arrest you” they scream in loud megaphones, yet they are mischievously silent when the ultra-right is rising. Anyone without cognitive dissonance will notice how I have cheaply and intentionally made the first statements of these sentences contradict the second, but when fascism is viciously blown, many of its subjects cannot see any problems with these contradictions, their convictions are not based on logic, only on vitriolic hatred. Whatever goes with hegemonical thinking, they will repeat.

What I am describing here is Orwellian, of course. It all potently reeks of FREEDOM IS SLAVERY, IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH. This is what Orwell named doublespeak in his dystopian book 1984, a process of indoctrination in which subjects hold two contradictory beliefs as true. With the growing cliché of performativity and political correctness, it appears doublespeak is more ubiquitous in the present. After all past empires did not have a problem with the word “colonies”, now, however, to appear that they are so hip and aware of the conversation, Western imperialists publish pseudo-intellectual essays titled “The Decolonization narrative is dangerous and false”<sup>3</sup> (of course, the same pretend magazine has another essay called “Decolonize Russia”)<sup>4</sup>. Another example, genocidal states need to convince their citizens that they are being progressive by

swearing they care for gay people in Gaza while dropping bombs on them. Orwell could not even imagine.

Liberals being hypocritical is not precisely a shocker for me. What really concerns me in the state of Germany is that even the German antifa, the so-called anti-fascists are following this double-speak rhetoric. Allow me to paint the picture, one of the main camps of the Antifa movement consisting of a large number of anarchists in this country is called Anti-Deutsch (Anti-Germany). My first reaction when someone told me about the movement was “oh cool”, but they quickly replied, and I mark their exact words, “no but it’s a movement that is so Anti-Germany, that they are Pro-Israel, or that is their logic”. Whenever I’ve told anyone about this movement, even non-anarchists, I have been met with the same reaction of disbelief I had. Their logic is so creepily ridiculous that I don’t even know where to begin criticizing it, or maybe that’s the point.

When my friend told me about this movement I naively believed it was a small fraction of the German antifa. I had only been a week in Germany when I heard about it so I did not know much about the gist of the anarchist movement here, but that night I scrolled through my Instagram trying to find anarchist collectives in the region I live in (Baden-Württemberg). In almost every single page I found, I saw no

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2023/10/decolonization-narrative-dangerous-and-false/675799/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/05/russia-putin-colonization-ukraine-chechnya/639428/>  
Orwell, George. 1984. Penguin Classics. 2012

Pro-Palestine posts, and in an overwhelming majority of them, statements against anti-semitism and in mourning of the victims of October 7th. Compared to all of the anarchist/antifa pages from the Netherlands and France, the difference was terrifyingly glaring.

In an almost unworldly way, I wondered if their anarchist dogma applied to anything that wasn't Palestine. Concisely, anarchism means no state, no hierarchy, no cops. This is why anarchism is inherently leftist and we do not even consider ancaps. These anti-Deutsch people unwaveringly claim they are on the left though, so they are supposedly legit anarchists (and probably they tell themselves they are the only rightful ones). I can only naively wonder how can anyone who is not a poser call themselves an anarchist and support the biggest military in the whole world. Do they think that being an anarchist means wearing a leather jacket and cosplaying poverty? They have to. Any anarchist who is not a trust-fund nepo baby would never call the cops because we know they would never be on our side. But you can only make this up: Berlin anarchists were found to have called the cops on Palestinians not long ago. Don't they even want to hide the contradictions? You know, at least for saving face. Orwell describes double-think as: "to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them". Modern example: Anti-Deutchs believe they are being so punk and rebellious by calling themselves Anti-Germany while they are literally

agreeing with the state of Germany. Supporting Israel is, in fact, as German as you can get. Some German states have passed a new law that states that anyone who wants to become a German citizen has to declare that they agree with Israel's right to exist. So I ask, if they are agreeing with a fascist state, defined by their own standards, how can they be against them? Let's play a game where they are being genuine. I ask then, if they are so frenziedly Anti-Germany and so desperately want a safe haven for Jewish people, why don't they fight to dissolve the state of Germany, kick all the Germans out, and establish Israel here? Why is a country that had nothing to do with the Holocaust paying for the crimes committed by Germans? If they are against Nazi ideology why are they acting accordingly with it? Let's remember the 1933 Haavara agreement where Zionists and Nazis signed a treaty to get Jewish people out of Europe, even though the majority of Jewish people opposed this.<sup>5</sup> They didn't want to leave their homes and rightfully so. Europe's creation of Israel wasn't some benign act of reparation, it was a measure they took because they were and are zealously xenophobic. Conveniently, after the displacement of millions of Palestinians, Europe is now sick to the stomach of having Arab people around. Rings like history repeats itself.

Let's stop playing games of good faith. I'll say it as clearly as I can: these people are not anti-fascist, they are racist. White supremacists to the fucking bone. Their whole anti-fascism is just based on claiming moral

superiority to Arab people in the same insidious way they did with the Jewish. German “guilt” is not guilt, it is shame, and shame is entirely narcissistic.<sup>6</sup> The former implies responsibility, the latter simply worries about self-perception. Germany is ashamed because the world found out about their horrors, not because of what they did. And so their godly mission now is not to give Jewish people safety, but to yell around that “they have learned their lesson” and that they are so much more morally superior than everyone for doing so. However, the thing about fascism is that it is never satisfied, it’s ever-thirsty. The main goal of it is to create an “us” and obsess over that in-group superiority. Most often that in-group superiority is built upon race.

However, here’s the most shocking surprise to the Nazis: race is a construct. Whiteness can only be defined by non-whiteness. Language works in a differential way.<sup>7</sup>

In other words, we can only know what is black by contrasting it with what is white. When whiteness ceases to be contrasted with anything else, it stops being an identity. So if they kick every black person out of America, it’s not going to stop there, they will soon claim that the Irish are not white enough, just like in Nazi Germany, anyone who did not have blond hair and blue eyes was not considered

Aryan. The contrast will never end because the feeling of being holier-than-thou is always going to be there. Now that Europeans have found someone else to contrast their entire personality with, they claim, ONLY when it is convenient for them though, that Jewish people are their brothers. So now more than ever, whiteness is contrasted with the Arabic. The Middle East? They are animals, they are savages, they are uncivilized, they are ragingly homophobic, misogynist, extremists, evil. Europeans though? Perhaps they behaved badly at times, but god knows they have learned their lesson because that is simply how intellectual they are. Europe is so open-minded and women never get raped here by white men, and so they have no other choice but to courageously fight the decadent Middle East. The famous Palestinian scholar Edward Said once said: “every single empire in its official discourse has said that it is not like all the others, that its circumstances are special, that it has a mission to enlighten, civilize, bring order and democracy, and that it uses force only as a last resort. And sadder still, there always is a chorus of willing intellectuals to say calming words about benign or altruistic empires”. The Israeli state has literally tweeted that Palestinians are animals.<sup>8</sup> That there’s a difference between the children of light and the children of darkness. Recently

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/369582453\\_Germany's\\_Never-Ending\\_Guilt\\_Trip](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/369582453_Germany's_Never-Ending_Guilt_Trip)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6143989/#:~:text=Shame%20implies%20perceived%20lack%20of,standards%20of%20one%27s%20moral%20self.>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.jstor.org/stable/377671>

Said, Edward W. “Orientalism” Social Theory re-wred. Routledge, 2023.



someone wrote an article in The New York Times called “Understanding the Middle East through the Animal Kingdom”.<sup>9</sup> This is colonialism 101, classic colonialist lingo even. Yet we are supposed to believe that this time is different. This is a heroic quest where the West is trying to save us from the terrorists of the Middle East, the terrorists that are everywhere, they are the doctors in the hospital, they are the judges of the ICJ, they are the newborn babies even.

In 1984’s world, Oceania, most citizens do not appear to be deliberately evil, just apocalyptically brain-dead. I cannot give Zionists the same compassionate predicament. Whether they are conscious of it or not, all Zionists are, wait for it, racists. Said believes that the East exists as an unconscious projection of all the qualities the West does not want to admit about themselves. This happens only in a culture ultra obsessed with binaries and with establishing itself as “The One”. A narcissistic culture that is unable to acknowledge the complexities and contradictions of its own character. So they’ll tell you that they are fighting the war for peace, and they turn into fascists in order to fight what they call fascist. And the double-speak goes on. They’ll tell you that everyone is their enemy, so the in-group keeps getting smaller and smaller while getting more totalitarian and powerful. Yet this is why fascism is always destined for failure. It does not try to balance its

contradictions or to pretend that there is any equilibrium. It is ever expanding but because it is always looking for a group that it can be contrasted with, it cannot fully exterminate everyone, so it falls for a while. And painfully, in a capitalist world that has done nothing to fight imperialist ideologies, it always comes back with new rhetoric, and most often, this rhetoric is an appropriation or a mix of certain “leftist” ideals. They have to convince the masses that this ever-hungry ideology is going to benefit them in some way, this is why the Nazis called themselves National Socialists even though they despised socialism. A hundred years later, there is a movement on the German left called Anti-Germany, a movement that is so German that it brings Nazis back into fashion.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.newarab.com/news/netanyahu-deletes-palestinian-children-darkness-tweet>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/01/30/opinion/thepoint?smid=url-share>

# B o r n U n d e r O c c u p a t i o n

My name is Khaled Al Qasrawi. I come from Palestine, from a small village in Nablus in the West Bank. I'm 20 years old. I came to Germany 2 years ago, all alone from Palestine, seeking a better life. As a child who was raised in the West Bank, I suffered and survived many things. Since I was a kid, I've seen people being shot in the streets, killed by Israeli soldiers without hesitation. Many of the people I know, innocent, unarmed people, got shot for nothing. Land was taken from us by force, homes were destroyed by Israel, olive trees were burned, kids and innocents who were taken to prisons illegally. I experienced all these things since I was young.

It is so hard for us as Palestinians to live a normal life. There are checkpoints with soldiers between all villages, they forcefully search us for doing nothing, with soldiers pointing guns at our heads. Everything is separated: there are cars for Palestinians and cars for Israelis, streets separated, products separated. We are always treated in a bad way. Imagine that i can't enter cities in my country freely, beautiful cities like Telaviv, Jafa, Jerusalem. I'm deprived of my human rights.

We don't even have our own airport, we need to travel to Jordan with buses and go through many procedures on the way which take 4-6 hours while the same way would take a 30 min ride by car, but they just try to make life hard on us in every way possible. As a Palestinian from West Bank I had to go through 3 different procedures traveling from Jordan through Israeli borders and again through Palestinian borders, to be checked 3 times in one trip, treated with harassment and hate.

I came to Germany because I didn't have any other options, i am just seeking a better life. I am currently studying medicine in Kiel. Before October 7, I thought I was in a safe country where I could speak freely and where everyone had the right to express their thoughts. But it was truly the opposite: We haven't been allowed to really speak about and defend our own country since then. Israel is committing a genocide on the people in Palestine and Gaza, and some countries like Germany still don't acknowledge it. I realised it's not just a war, it's more than a media brainwashing too. How can the news and politicians support the killing of children and women? This propaganda is trying to show that the occupier is the innocent and the innocent is the guilty! I will never understand this unhumanity.

I was so afraid for my family in Palestine, especially since 5 civilians were killed from my village. It has been very hard for me to keep it together under these circumstances of being so far away from my family and relatives. They, on the other hand, are worried about me too, because there is no free speech here in Germany and the police could arrest you for silly reasons, simply for just being a Palestinian.

This war exposes Western media and the lies they tell. How come more than 30 thousands were either killed or injured and nobody takes a stand for them? Complete families, houses, hospitals were wiped out with bombs and bullets and the countries' leaders don't care. The US and many European countries are standing behind the genocide since it started and that's not acceptable. As a Palestinian I'm suffering inside and outside my country, and the occupiers are living freely without facing any problems. I hope this genocide will stop one day and Palestinians can live freely again, in their own land. Indeed it's not the eyes that are blind but the hearts.

by Khaled Ikhraiweh

# Ashes in the Sky

*by Lara-Lane Plambeck*

These days  
of winter and war  
where darkness prevails  
as if the dust of the bombings in Gaza  
and shattered Palestinian lives  
were hovering beneath our skies

These days  
I am frantically trying to do activism to  
soothe  
my constantly breaking heart

How many times can a heart be bulldozed into the ground?

These days,  
I am running from the pain I feel  
I, as a white person, witnessing what is  
going on in the world  
with disgust, horror, and shame  
I grieve, and I write and I try to take  
responsibility  
for my insane privilege showing up  
more than ever  
again  
and yet, my heart breaks every day  
under the weight  
of too many tears uncried  
and too many lives unlived

I see airplane shooting stars in the  
skies  
as I run through the pain  
airplanes, could be war planes,  
I remember the vertical mark the bomb-  
ings left in the sky in your videos  
rockets  
time travelling through the skies  
into other realities unimaginable here  
even though your unimaginable reality  
is you  
and I - part of the German system  
sponsoring genocide  
every tear I cry  
simultaneously a life

No demonstration will ever make up  
for the lives lost already

What else does it take  
to make privilege powerful?

In these times  
sometimes, all that helps  
are the poetic words of people writing  
amidst genocide  
opening my slowly hardening heart  
once again to grieve  
to arrive  
back here in the present  
back here to return to love

to remember we cannot give up on  
fighting  
if those torn to pieces still love so hard  
they even write from beneath the ashes

Is it wrong to be moved and catalyzed  
by the beauty of humankind  
by the poetics that people paint amidst  
the apocalypse  
slowly fading into the blend of screams  
of their people  
deceased and alive?

I know I need to stay soft to fight hard  
until liberation

If my heart breaks day in and out  
let it remind me that I am the one still  
alive  
and I can still go fight for those whose  
hearts  
have stopped breaking  
and beating  
as their lungs filled with ashes and  
screams  
collapse under the violence  
their people had never chosen  
and yet, are told to have asked for



# selective Guilt

## The Tragedy Of Germany's Colonial Blind Spots

The people in Palestine are dying! Constantly, horribly, systematically, fast. As I am writing these lines, Rafah – the last refuge in the Gaza strip that now hosts more than a million displaced people, is under attack.

The children, women and men of Gaza have shown superhuman resilience and perseverance, yet they are desperate, traumatised, exhausted and in constant fear of their lives. Read the statistics, let them sink in, put faces, names and fates behind the obscene numbers that you read. Remember that there are children dying every hour of every day because of bombing and hunger. Remember and feel all of that. Because this should be our primary concern: That innocent people are dying, and that we are involved and complicit in their killing. Dreams, ambitions and lives are being ended with our money, with our paralysing German guilt and the subsequent lack of political determination to call out our leaders' unwavering backing of Israel's war on Gaza.

What we should be doing right now, if we have any sense of justice, is share Palestinian perspectives, go to protests, donate money, hold our politicians accountable, take care of and provide support to our Palestinian

comrades and frontline organisers and activists, organise strikes and boycotts (like we did so efficiently just a year ago against Russia), block arms factories, and whatever else increases pressure on Israel and its allies to stop their genocidal mission.

Instead, we have to endure dragging and unproductive debates about "imported antisemitism", are blaming all the wrong people for all the wrong things and must spend most of our time carefully navigating the minefield of allegations of being either Islamophobic or antisemitic and either way racist (as defined by usually non-jewish, non-muslim, white people).

I cannot stress enough how tragic it is that the conversation has taken such a turn in Germany. The questions Germans have been pondering since October are necessary and important, if asked genuinely. However, they have turned into a distraction from the extremely dire situation at hand with a self-involved quarrel that is at its core about national identity and the desperate holding on to some self-assigned moral supremacy. The conversation has moved so far away from the lives that are at stake.

What this does is take away attention and resources from organising for a ceasefire, return of the people to their land and the liberation of Palestine. It

is a mind-numbing debate to have in the middle of an ongoing genocide that allows people to use the “it’s complicated” excuse and turn a blind eye to their own complicity.

Rather than infighting about who better upholds the pipe dream of German integrity, we should be aware that we are all losing, because the way we are treating the debate now serves no-one - certainly not the Palestinians, not the Jewish population in Germany, not the Jewish Israelis, and not German mainstream and left inhabitants. It obscures islamophobia and anti-Arab racism and, yes, also antisemitism because it equates all jews with Israel and discredits those Jewish voices that are not supporting Zionism. The only thing that has come out of it is high-rank politicians and even the chancellor of the supposed centre-left party SPD joining the gospel of the far-right to double down on migrants and creating exactly the kind of political and social climate that could pave the way for the far-right deportation phantasy that everyone is so indignant about these days.<sup>1</sup>

Yet, these connections are not seen or understood. What is missing to foster this understanding is something that Germany has long swept under the rug: an understanding of (its own) colonial history.

For me, the world only really started to make sense as I started to learn about colonialism. Colonialism not just as a

historical episode, but as an ongoing system of power that is at the root of so many of today’s problems: racism, extractivism, capitalism, climate change, ... For better or worse, the recent months have shone a new light onto European colonialism. Some of the expressions of the colonial legacy of the West must become evident even to the more oblivious and ignorant people. No matter what people believe to be true, Zionism is historically a colonial project (Zionists have described it as such themselves for the longest time<sup>2</sup>). With their ongoing mistreatment of Palestinians and the more and more blatant occupation of Palestinian land, it has become harder to deny that this is not a colonial enterprise. As I learned more about the history of Israel and the so-called conflict with Palestine, I was shocked about the striking parallels with so many other colonial projects.

Of course, there are always historical and contextual specificities, but the mechanisms, the narratives, the manufactured values around it seem to be the same whenever one group of people decides to take the land and livelihood of another. “A land without people for a people without a land” sounds very similar to the Terra Nullius-lie that was at the base of the creation of the settler colony known as Australia and other places. Narratives that are widely dispersed in Israel of Palestinians

<sup>1</sup> Note that those demonstrations are mostly against the AfD and not, in fact, against right-wing ideologies, otherwise perhaps chancellor Olaf Scholz would not be so inclined to join them after he himself wants to “deport on a grand scale”.

<sup>2</sup> Dissens Podcast #161: “Wann ist Kritik am Staat Israel legitim und wann antisemitisch?” mit Micha Brumlik <https://podcast.dissenspodcast.de/161-israel>

being simple-minded, uncivilised peasants echoes the racist justifications of the subjugation of so many cultures all over the world. Unsurprisingly, this narrative still finds way too much resonance in Europe as well.

It helps to untangle the reactions to so many of the recent world events such as the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd in 2020: It took an undeniable act of racist violence in the middle of a pandemic in the middle of a climate crisis to convince people (partially) that racism is alive and well and more so, permeating all those other crises. Then came the war in Ukraine and the blatant racism at the borders and in the media, and now the general suspicion of all Muslims and Arabs that they are terrorists or at least sympathisers unless they continuously distance themselves from Hamas every 30 minutes. All these incidences reveal the racism that is so much more inherent to our European and Western society than we would like to admit. Understanding how racism and a colonialist mindset have shaped how we talk about the world and what kinds of opinions we form, is indispensable to seeing the full picture.

So many anti-colonial and postcolonial scholars have made spookily accurate documentations of what has happened in Gaza and the Westbank in the last four months (and well before the current genocidal war on Gaza). One of them is Frantz Fanon. His book

*The Wretched of the Earth*<sup>3</sup> discusses (amongst other things) the role of violence in the process of decolonisation. The book is heavily hyped amongst many activists and I have seen it on countless bookshelves of my friends and peers. But since October 7 I cannot help but wonder: Have you actually read it? Probably not, have you? Or did you simply not understand? How come y'all love to talk about decolonial theory but can't recognise it as such when you are presented with a flagship case of colonialism? Once again, the essay provides such an accurate account of why this massacre was bound to happen at some point and in some form. Don't get me wrong, I was as shocked and repulsed as anyone when I saw those videos. I feel for those who have lost their lives or loved ones or are still being held hostage. But I was not surprised.

What was surprising and sobering, by contrast, is to realise how much of the anti-colonial solidarity, for example of the climate justice movement, was just a spineless and convenient lip service. How collectives that just a few months prior were proclaiming their solidarity with MAPA<sup>4</sup> and would proudly parade around their "END CO2LONIALISM" banners refused to acknowledge Israel's characteristic colonialism. Moreover, it was bewildering that they did not hesitate to throw more outspokenly pro-Palestinian people under the bus and equated anything but an unconditional support with Israel with antisemitism.

<sup>3</sup> The first chapter, "Concerning Violence" can be found in open access in many places on the internet, for example here <http://www.openanthropology.org/fanonviolence.htm>

Ok, so anti-colonialism only when it is convenient, tokenistic and serves the privileged European activists? Noted...

To some extent, I get it! The fear of being antisemitic has been engrained into the German identity for a long time. And with good reason. However, regardless of how it may feel to many, this war is not about Germany, and we have no more authority in this situation than other countries. Nevertheless, Germany has abused its historical responsibility to prevent social injustice and the systematic oppression and annihilation of a people in order to postulate itself as a moraliser. South Africa argues similarly with its historical responsibility and yet, somehow, they managed to be on the right side of history. The arrogance with which Germany thinks it somehow plays a more important role in understanding or evaluating genocidal and colonial histories is inappropriate and ignorant, and it stands in the way of our humanity. The fight against antisemitism, up until a few months ago, was for the vast majority of Germans an abstract construct not some all-defining mission that determines our everyday and sense of self. Again, we are not in the middle of this, so we should be able to hold space for the grief on both sides. We should be able to empathise and grieve with the individuals affected by the October 7 attacks AND STILL call a spade a spade. And Israel a settler colonial State that has been violently

and illegally occupying and oppressing Palestine for decades.

I want to believe that Germany's conflict in the face of genocide is because of the ginormous blind spot regarding colonialism that many of the former colonial powers share. We have been taught next to nothing about our own colonial history, let alone the mechanisms of colonialism. Personally, it was not until I was halfway through university abroad and made an active effort to learn about the colonial legacies and how they shape the world order nowadays. I know that many people still believe that Africa is a country where you speak African, or that Togo is a children's TV programme and not a country that Germany colonised. At this level of ignorance, how could we call ourselves experts or authorities about anything to which colonialism is such an essential part?

Yet, this is really what we have been looking at in the past months: German megalomaniac interpretive authority<sup>5</sup>. Somehow the illusion seems to be that because we committed two genocides within the span of just a few decades, including the most systematic and calculated killing of our own Jewish population, we now have the authority to decide on the gravity of other crimes against humanity. In doing this, Germany assumes a patronising position above the rest of the world and reveals itself as an ever-loyal member of the imperial squad.

<sup>4</sup> Most Affected People and Areas, the frontline fighters for climate justice who are often Indigenous people from colonised areas.

Whenever it gets confusing with all the propaganda and self-justifications, it helps to look at the distribution of positions and power. Instead of listening to the propaganda and gaslighting that is coming from Israel and its allies, we should rather look at what is being actually going on: how the financial, political and legal support is allocated<sup>6</sup>. If all of the Global South, that is the formerly colonised world and people who have been on the receiving end of colonial violence and Apartheid within their lifetime, stands in unison behind Palestine because they recognise their own oppression, whereas all the old imperial forces are backing up Israel, it couldn't be clearer how this world system is structured and which side is the oppressor.

We are ill-equipped to see these connections because of the way we learn about history. Postcolonial historians' efforts to shine a light on Germany's colonial crimes in present-day Namibia are continuously dismissed as attempts to relativise the holocaust. They are not. On the contrary, they could help to better understand how such a monstrous atrocity as the Holocaust could have come about. However, although Germany is praised and genuinely has made remarkable efforts to make amends for this chapter of history, the contrast with handling their preceding

genocide is revealing. Historical sociologist and decolonial activist Mohammed Elnaiem<sup>7</sup> recently posted about how this historical amnesia and blindness makes "Europe and its descendants" incapable to "differentiate between principle and episode". He explains that the principles of the Holocaust – racial supremacy, concentration, biopolitics – were already present in different episodes of history, namely the colonial episode. Yet, because it is easier to focus on a timely and factually contained episode of history, the Holocaust is seen as an exception and not as the manifestation of a continuous problem. This delimitation also creates a straightforward formula to follow in order to be absolved from Germany's past mistakes (first and foremost by Israel). The shift from an episode to a principle-based understanding, I believe, is what people want when they draw parallels between the Holocaust and Israel's treatment of Gaza. It is not to diminish the magnitude of Germany's second genocide - the Holocaust remains the most extreme manifestation of those colonial principles – but so long as we cannot understand and address these continuities, things like this can and will happen again.

As I revisit my history classes, this distinction between episode and

<sup>5</sup>The Dig podcast's episode "The German Question w/ Emily Dische-Becker" provides an excellent analysis about this and other topics discussed in this text. <https://thedigradio.com/podcast/the-german-question-w-emily-dische-becker/>

<sup>6</sup>The principle of POSIWID: "The purpose of a system is what it does" (not what it claims to do) by Stafford Beer might be of help. It suggests that looking at bald facts is a better starting point to understand complex systems than the intention or expectation.

<sup>7</sup>Twitter/x: @m\_elnaiem

principle becomes evident. We learned so much about the antisemitism of the 1940s and so little about the one from nowadays. We were told “never again”, but never what that means. We had no points of contact with nor any conception of what Jewish life and culture in Germany looked and looks like, outside of the suffering and trauma. Jewish people, to us, became a mythical abstract, and antisemitism was equated with committing a full-fledged genocide or physically attacking Jewish communities, something that everyone could agree was a thing of the past, evil, and would never happen again. That the blatantly stereotypical and racist jokes that were told on the schoolyard in-between those lessons, about Jews and Africans, were fuelled by the exact same misanthropic principles was realised by very few.

The formula for absolution that Germany has curated has worked for a while, but the last months have shown that it is rigid and crumbling. Remembering is not a static gospel to repeat, but a dynamic, active and involving process that needs to constantly be renegotiated and made accessible and relevant to the present and its inhabitants. It is also a mechanism of power, and the language of our current memory culture clearly tells us that this country is holding on to a past reality. A reality of Germany as a white and Christian country. But Germany is no longer a country of Holocaust survivors, perpetrators and bystanders only. It is now home to so many different cultures, and with that of many different lived experiences, histories of oppression and intergenerational traumas.

The colonial crimes of Europe are no longer far away, their witnesses now live among us and hold accountable in a new way. But this is not appreciated. Not just Palestinians have to painfully realise that they have no space in Germany, but many migrants and “children of the colonised” (as Mohamed Elnaïem calls us in his post) are feeling this sense of exclusion and neglect. We should never forget about the horrors of the Holocaust, Doing so is white supremacist and imperial logic and leads to a selective “Never again”. What it says is “if you subscribe to our terms and conditions, this shall never happen to you. Otherwise, the rules don’t apply to you”. It says “assimilate or be quiet”, which is just a few small steps away from “assimilate or leave”, which is basically the stance that the AfD is taking and that so many people are protesting right now.





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# Selective Solidarity

Against the Political Right in Germany

*by Sumeera Khokhar*

Currently, the German headlines are bragging with the number of people in the streets fighting against the right. Many think, these demonstrations have only become important since the masterplan of the AfD (Alternative für Deutschland, Germany's right wing political party).

As if noone burned down asylum centres in the 90s.

As if Rostock-Lichtenhagen, Mölln and Solingen never happened.

As if Walter Lübke, NSU and Hanau never happened.

As if they weren't constantly controlling our cafés and our houses.

And today, Germany does not only support right-wing structures in its own society, but also the rise of the right-wing government of Israel. Our government's weapon exports have reached record levels.

"Politicians are thinking about withdrawing German passports and/or deporting people who take part in pro-Palestinian demonstrations or show solidarity with Palestine in other ways."

Already for months, people have been taking to the streets, organising information events, film evenings and discussions. Many of those that suddenly care about fighting the right have previously not shown any solidarity with affected people. Never attended a demonstration, never seen a film screening. They have not asked their BIPOC friends and acquaintances how the current situations in Gaza and Germany are affecting them emotionally, what the silence of the majority of the society is doing to them.

So many don't understand that those affected are not here to do the work for you. That they are not here to explain what has been happening in Palestine for 75 years. We all have the resources to do it ourselves. But somehow it's too difficult and complicated, one does not have enough expertise and therefore cannot take part in discussions on Palestine.

More loud voices are needed to break down the power asymmetry of the discourse surrounding the violence and occupation for 75 years. Your outcry and solidarity against the right is nice, but for many BIPOC people it cannot be taken seriously. A fight against the right also means a fight for the human rights of Palestinians, who are demonised everywhere on a daily basis. Many people think it is not their war, but as long as our money is used to supply weapons, it is also our war. As long as our politicians speak out against or abstain from a ceasefire, it is also our war. The fight against the right is not detached from what has been happening in Gaza for 100 days.

Fighting the right is not a trend, but the daily reality for BIPOC people. From Mölln to Hanau - we are always the mother of all problems. This racist political discourse has not only existed since the AfD's masterplan. The repression that leads to the premature, calculated murder of people runs through the entire history of Germany.

Solidarity must not be selective, it must comprise all forms of injustice. The last 4 months have shown that your solidarity does not apply equally to all people. Fridays for Future Germany, the Green Party, the SPD (Socialist Party Germany) and private individuals have proven this.

Fighting the right also means fighting the killing of people in Gaza and the demonisation of people in Germany. For months, people have been losing their jobs for simply demanding the rights for Palestinians. For months, people have been harassed and threatened by the police for their activism. Performative activism is the problem. The right-wing rhetoric of the so-called political centre is the problem. These problems walk with you on the streets against the right.

It is an eternal cycle of racist violence - from the mourning for the people in Gaza, to the batons and police assaults in the streets of Germany. The masterplan is no surprise, conservative parties have been supporting racist and right-wing views for years. "We must finally deport on a grand scale" is the tone of our social democracy.

Your solidarity is nice, but far too often only temporary. Your outcry against the right is nice, but it has been proven too often that your solidarity depends on who is the victim of war. That it depends on who suffers, who starves. The profits of arms exports are kept quiet, as if they didn't exist, as if Sidra, Hind and Reem never happened. As if 28,000 lives had not been lost.

And what will happen when the mainstream demonstrations against the right end?

Will people organise themselves to actively dismantle right wing structures in our society? Will they also examine critically to what extent they benefit themselves from racist structures and reproduce right-wing ideas on a daily basis?

Will they realise that it is contradictory to be against the right in this country and at the same time support a right-wing government whose members openly call for the expulsion and extermination of a people?

We need an active struggle against destructive capitalist and colonial structures.

A continuous outcry for freedom and justice.

With every step on the path to revolution, with every act of resistance,

We rewrite history.

Until: Tharwa, Revolution.

A mobilisation of people who, as part of class struggle truly fight social and political precarisation and oppression.

Fight imperialism and colonialism always and everywhere. International solidarity and a "never again" that applies equally to ALL people.

"Revolution. It was made by the people who realised that their situation was not mere fate, but the result of past and present domination" (Redecker 2020)

Free Palestine, Free Gaza - Ceasefire Now.

# Olive Branches

## Why Palestinian Freedom is a Climate Justice Issue

For Bilal Saleh

This is a story to unearth some of the entangled roots of land, and the humans and more-than-humans inhabiting this land. We begin the story with Bilal Saleh, though we could begin it 75 years earlier, or a hundred, or, if you insist, 3.500 years ago when the first olive trees were planted in the region now disputed as Israel/Palestine. But we begin with Bilal Saleh.

The story of Bilal Saleh ends on the 28th of October 2023, a Saturday morning. He was a farmer, 40 years old, he inherited the plot of land from his father. During Bilal's lifetime, the land has been enclosed by illegal Israeli settlements all around it. What is left is a small patch of land with olive trees. Bilal also forages for herbs that he sells on the market in Ramallah, like wild sage, sumac, thyme and prickly pears. On this Saturday morning in October, he goes out with his family to harvest his olives. Israeli settlers confront him on his field, and before a single word is exchanged, one of them shoots Bilal in the chest and kills him.<sup>1</sup>

Among the witnesses of Bilal Saleh's murder were his wife and four children, as well as other family members. They rushed him to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead upon arrival. The other witnesses are the olive trees, in his family for generations.

Let's not mistake those trees as a backdrop, as simply the landscape behind the humans involved: the olive tree's roots run deep, and they bring us into a thick tangle of histories of people and their lands. Most of us are familiar with the olive branch as a symbol of peace. In a war-ridden region, where so much trauma is inscribed in the landscapes, the olive trees grow wider than only symbols of peace. Israel/Palestine is home to some of the oldest olive trees in the world, like Al Badawi, a tree close to Bethlehem in another illegally occupied Palestinian village, that is an estimated 4.000 to 5.000 years old<sup>2</sup>. Around 100.000 Palestinian families depend on olive trees - and the olive oil - for their survival, but this is more than economics: the trees are "life companions"<sup>3 4</sup>.

For a people that have been displaced by the millions, these trees bear witness and become steadfast parts of family histories, even more: their deep roots are understood as a promise to care for the land, their longevity provides perspectives beyond the human suffering of the moment.

In the current escalation of violence, that has resulted in an unfathomable suffering of Palestinian civilians, we witness a fundamental disregard for life. And in the case of the Israeli government and military's disregard for Palestinian life, it is worth looking

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2023/10/30/bilal-went-out-to-harvest-his-olives-an-israeli-settler-shot-him>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.middleeasteye.net/discover/tree-trust-meet-man-guarding-palestines-oldest-olive-tree>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/14/infographic-palestines-olive-industry>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2024/1/22/the-olive-tree-symbol-of-palestine-and-mute-victim-of-israelis-war-on-gaza>

beyond the human. By the point of writing this, the human death toll of the current "war" is close to 30.000 - but there are other deaths as well: the death of culture, the death of records of resistance, the death of ways of life. And plants, such as olive trees, have always played a crucial role in the culture, resistance, and the lives of the Palestinian people.

This is a conflict of land - let us start by looking at the map. We see two colors, between the river and the sea. We see small patches in the middle, interrupted pieces of land. These interruptions are the illegal settlements of Israel in the Palestinian Territory of the West Bank. In the middle of these patches, Bilal Saleh lived. The little lines through the patches of color are not simply lines: they are highways connecting Israeli settlements, riddled with checkpoints, they are a wall (twice as high as the Berlin Wall), they are barbed wire separating farmers from their fields, they are highly militarized borders. As Frantz Fanon has written, the colonial world is a world "divided in two". The lives of Palestinians, then, have been characterized largely by boundaries - and the attempts of crossing them<sup>5</sup>. Due to an extensive system of complicated permits, many farmers are not able to access their lands - which then are annexed to Israeli settlements, since they are deemed "unused". Some farmers are only allowed to go for a few minutes each day. This is the landscape of Bilal Saleh's olive trees.

But Palestine is a landscape that refuses its violent fragmentation. Olive trees are extremely resilient, and even with the minimal care that can be provided under the Israeli permit-system, they thrive. In the last years, since the right-wing government of Netanyahu has increased the building of

illegal settlements, the agricultural practices of the Palestinian people have shifted significantly from more labor intensive crops, such as fruit trees and other vegetables, towards olive trees. They have become models for survival: olive trees are not only a lifeline, but a way of life. Their symbolic power cannot be overstated: many Palestinians describe their trees as friends, life companions, family members.

In this conflict, then, that fundamentally disregards life, the olive trees and the people that tend to them, have become targets. Especially during the harvest season, dozens of Palestinians are killed each year by settler attacks, like Bilal Saleh. The trees, too, have been cut down in incredible numbers - the estimates go from a million upwards. This tactic is often called "ecocide", and Palestine is not the only example: the Turkish army burned thousands of olive trees close to Afrin in Kurdistan, in a military strike named "Operation Olive Branch" to harm the autonomous zone of Rojava and to threaten the livelihood of Kurdish people.

The uprooting of olive trees has become a familiar practice in the (illegally) occupied lands, and it has wide reaching consequences: not only for the souls and livelihoods for the farmers, but for the land itself. The practice of uprooting results in soil erosion and desertification, and, since the trees are mostly burned afterwards, a considerable release of CO2 emissions. Often, settlers use pesticides and poison of other sorts to pour over the roots, making the soil toxic for any further life. In this conflict, then, that fundamentally disregards life, the olive trees and the people that tend to them, have become targets. Especially during the harvest season, dozens of Palestinians are killed each

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.publicbooks.org/crossings-into-indigenous-palestine/> ;

Adania Shibli: *Minor Detail*, translated by Elisabeth Jaquette, Fitzcarraldo Books, 2020

year by settler attacks, like Bilal Saleh. The trees, too, have been cut down in incredible numbers - the estimates go from a million upwards. This tactic is often called “eco-cide”, and Palestine is not the only example: the Turkish army burned thousand of olive trees close to Afrin in Kurdistan, in a military strike named “Operation Olive Branch” to harm the autonomous zone of Rojava and to threaten the livelihood of Kurdish people.

The uprooting of olive trees has become a familiar practice in the (illegally) occupied lands, and it has wide reaching consequences: not only for the souls and livelihoods for the farmers, but for the land itself. The practice of uprooting results in soil erosion and desertification, and, since the trees are mostly burned afterwards, a considerable release of CO2 emissions. Often, settlers use pesticides and poison of other sorts to pour over the roots, making the soil toxic for any further life.

To put it simply: the goal here is to prevent the return of Palestinians. This is done by severing their connections with the land, and thus making traditional ways of life impossible Adania for generations to come. Israel thus aims to make the return of Palestinians impossible by making the land uninhabitable for the Palestinian way of life. The violence against the Palestinians is violence against their lands. In order to expel the Palestinians not only of their territories, but also of the Israeli future, a wide array of tactics is used. Uprooting olive trees - and thereby symbolically uprooting Palestinian heritage from Palestinian lands - is one of these tactics. When we look at the ways the Israeli settlements and Israeli politics are dealing with land and the ecosystems present, we

notice many technologies that are precedent by earlier colonialist ventures, such as the occupation of the Americas. While it's crucial to recognize the uniqueness of the conditions of Israel's founding, we are also asked to keep an eye on the technologies used to implement the settling of the Palestinian lands.

In the past 75 years then, these technologies include the mass displacement of Palestinians in the 1948 Nakba, a grave dehumanization of their lives, and ongoing trespassing and illegal occupation of Israel in the Palestinian lands in a “splintering occupation”<sup>6</sup> (Achille Mbembe). Through displacement and environmental engineering imposed on populated landscapes, original connections of people and land are severed. Israeli permit systems, paired with land annexation, serves the same goal: for example, in the Gaza strip, prior to the current escalation, 20% of arable land was forbidden from use<sup>7</sup>. It was deemed too close to the Israeli border wall, and therefore designated as a “buffer zone”. During this current phase of genocide and ecocide, the remaining agriculture in Gaza, as everything else, has been levelled. Additionally, the ground has been poisoned: by acid rain caused from the white phosphorus explosions, by the compression of soil by bulldozers leveling entire cities, and by the flooding of the Gaza tunnel system with saltwater far, far into the land, causing the salinification of arable lands, not to mention the release of at least 281.000 metric tons of CO2 in the first two months of the war by the Israeli Defense Forces. (713 metric tons by Hamas, just to illustrate the asymmetry of warfare)<sup>8</sup>. The list, really, is too long for this article. It is crucial to note that war on this scale is an environmental disaster, too.

Trees are in the middle of this war, and

<sup>6</sup> Achille Mbembe: *Necropolitics*, Duke University Press, 2019, p. 83

<sup>7</sup> <https://al-shabaka.org/briefs/climate-change-the-occupation-and-a-vulnerable-palestine/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/09/emissions-gaza-israel-hamas-war-climate-change>

their connection to the peoples of the land rip wounds into the scarred landscape. Trees as symbols for rootedness, and of long-lived memories are contested companions in Israel/Palestine. For this, we will take a close look at how the Israeli state and government has been using trees and reforestation efforts to further secure an Israeli-only future. I

srael's reforestation efforts alter the landscape in irretrievable ways: since the 1900s, the Jewish National Fund, has been "greening the desert" by planting pine trees<sup>9</sup>. Approximately 240 million trees have been planted. Israel has prided itself greatly on these efforts, though they have not stayed without critique and resistance: planting trees is not inherently good, especially not if they displace local ecosystems such as pastures/prairie. This is part of a state-orchestrated effort of "greening the desert": the terminology of the "desert" is seen as inferior and barren (of plants, animals, and ultimately - humans), and it is therefore desirable to "green" it (and to populate it with plants, animals, and other humans).

This ideology of "greening the desert" or "making the desert bloom" is reminiscent of the "terra nullius" assumption that precedes so many colonial projects - to claim a land is empty and unused, and therefore better taken care of by the colonizers. This narrative effectively erases centuries of Palestinian (including Muslim, Christian, and Jewish) stewardship for the land. The price paid for this greening is a "vanishing landscape"<sup>10</sup> of pasture ecosystems, of high biodiversity, of "Kulturlandschaften" grown

for thousands of years. Palestine's landscapes were shaped by "musha", arabic for "commons" deep into the second half of the 20th century - now largely covered by pine tree plantations.

Israel continues to be appreciated internationally for these attempts at reforestation, while hydrology experts have been warning for decades that these efforts drain water reserves in already arid regions at a dangerous pace. This attempt to "green the desert", is actually not green, and has not been a desert, either - but the socio-ecological consequences have been devastating. The pine trees often serve a rather grim purpose. Often, these forests are planted on the ruins of Palestinian villages whose inhabitants were forcibly displaced since the Nakba in 1948 - and afterwards, the european pines are continuing to transform the landscape into a european-looking phantasma.<sup>11</sup> Sometimes, the pine forests are deemed "nature reserves" with all the special work that goes into their conservation. And then, in a further escalation, Palestinians are forbidden from entering these conservation zones, for foraging or as pasture, further limiting their access to land.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, the pine trees acidify the soil - making the land significantly less suitable for agriculture for decades to come. The pines are used to make the return of displaced Palestinians impossible, and - in areas of high risk of conflict - consciously planted to serve as cover for the military. If one were to take a walk through one of these pine forests, they would appear as a bland monoculture, rather than a thriving

<sup>9</sup> Irus Braverman: Uprooting Identities: The Regulation of Olive Trees in the Occupied West Bank; PoLAR Volume 32, No. 2 P. 237-263.

<sup>10</sup> Reja Shehadeh: Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape, 2008, Profile Books

<sup>11</sup> Irus Braverman (2021). The Jewish National Fund, Trees, and Eco-ZionismTM, Jüdischer Almanach (in German).

<sup>12</sup> Carol Bardenstein: Threads of Memory and Discourses of Rootedness: Of Trees, Oranges and the Prickly-Pear Cactus in Israel/Palestine, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998

ecosystem. But “the colonized are constantly outgrowing their enclosure”. And so, every now and then, you can find a group of cacti called “sabir” and an unusually good foraging spot for thyme, sage, prickly pears, and figs... At sites where the rubble of the Palestinian villages was not cleared completely, the plants that once grew in the village’s gardens are still thriving between the ruins. Little groves of olive, carob, and citrus trees stand amongst the pines like natural memorials for the displaced. Some of these groves are remembered to have served as shelter and refuge for Palestinians during the 1948 Nakba, sometimes for many days, as their houses were destroyed. “Ironically”, says the Palestinian geographer Ghazi Falah, pine “forests were planted here to conceal the site, yet ultimately those same forests have protected the walls from further destruction and hindered full-scale designation and obliteration”.<sup>13</sup>

All over the territories, the Israeli plans for “engineer(ing) and re-design(ing) (...) the country’s geographic, ecological, and agroeconomic model” are showing cracks in their facade. As Mahmoud Darwish, the famous Palestinian poet, has asked: “Can one plant trees while in a tank?”<sup>14</sup> But it’s not only the trees: another more-than-human accomplice, turning comrade, are the birds.

“In order for me to write poetry  
that isn’t political  
I must listen to the birds  
and in order to hear the birds  
the warplanes must be silent”.  
(Marwan Makhoul)

As if the birds have heard the poem, they organise a spectacle each year. Migratory birds that spend their summers in Europe and the Winter on the African continent,

mostly cannot bear the long uninterrupted flight over the Mediterranean Sea on their Journey. Hence, they stay close to the coasts: one of the most important bird migration routes of the world crosses over Israel/Palestine, with billions of birds making their journey over these landscapes each spring. The entire sky is filled with their swarms - and then the warplanes, sometimes, are literally forced to stay silent. A single bird in a turbine is still enough to bring a warplane down. In fact, “in the last forty years, the Israeli Air Force has lost more aircraft to “bird strike” than it has to enemy action”.<sup>15</sup>

Amidst the current phase of genocide against the Palestinian people, listening to the birds has become a survival practice for Palestinians. In Rafah, at the southernmost tip of the Gaza Strip, amidst the incredible suffering of the millions of displaced people, an unlikely market for songbirds is emerging: families buy the singing canaries and sparrows to have something to listen to except for the warplanes and the constant humming of drones. The birdsong against the sounds of war: to cling onto life, not the surrounding noise of death.<sup>16</sup>

This unruliness of the more-than-human world points to the Palestinian resistance: amidst the intense violence against their lands and the beings that tend to the lands, unexpected comradeships appear. Watermelons become flags rather than just food, olive trees become shelter and refuge, birds become an aerial defense system. Guerilla gardening efforts have been part of the Palestinian resistance, too, since the first Intifada - to encourage Palestinian self-reliance and make gardens into gathering points for local communities, as seen in the hawakir of Nazareth. We cling to these symbols of hope for

<sup>13</sup> Salih, R., & Corry, O: Displacing the Anthropocene: Colonisation, extinction and the unruliness of nature in Palestine. 2022, in: Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space, 5(1), p. 381-400.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.publicbooks.org/our-siege-is-long/>



freedom for the Palestinian people, especially now. We have learned that “for Palestinians and their nature, the threat of collective extinction is not a future common risk, but a process entrenched in their everyday reality since 1948”.<sup>17</sup>

This threat of extinction has been aggravated massively since the 7th of October and the disproportionate military response to the attacks on Israel, into what now can only be described as a genocide. In the impossible conditions many Gazans are now facing, with a near total absence of aid reaching them, many have been forced to cut down the olive trees of their families for fuel.<sup>18</sup> Many report that they burned everything they could find before, shoes and plastic included, until they saw no other choice. Often, even the roots are dug up and used as firewood to prepare food. To be forced to burn these living, breathing witnesses of family history is a source of grief added onto already incredible hardships in the life of Gazans - who will witness their lives, and root the stories deep into the soil, if the olive trees are gone? And the other way around - who will tend to the olive trees, if the humans of the land are murdered? Who will harvest the olives this year, after Bilal Saleh's murder?

The genocide against the Palestinians is an ecocide as well. But at the moment, the German climate justice movement is wavering to take a stand, tearing itself apart in the process. As a movement that claims to stand for climate justice, we are failing our own ideals at a most crucial point. If this “justice” is not for all, then whom does our movement benefit? Israel has already issued permits to British Petroleum to drill

the oil fields off the Gaza coast. There are always people profiting from war. How do we bear the cognitive dissonance of “climate justice” without freedom for Palestine? We need to remember: RESISTANCE IS FERTILE.

**Note on positionality:** It is hard to write about something as grim and cruel as the current events in Gaza and the illegally occupied West Bank. I believe it is important to acknowledge the comfort of my position: I am writing as a white German person, currently living in the Netherlands.

**Further reading:** If you would like to read on, and find out more about Palestine from an environmental/ecological lens, I highly recommend to start at this fantastic reader: Ecologizing Solidarity with Palestine. You can find it here:  
[https://issuu.com/leadtolife/docs/solidarity\\_syllabus-3-compressed](https://issuu.com/leadtolife/docs/solidarity_syllabus-3-compressed)

<sup>15</sup> Edward Platt: The Migration, Granta Magazin, 2008.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/2/17/how-the-songbirds-of-rafah-help-palestinians-cope-with-the-terror-of-war>

<sup>17</sup> Salih, R., & Corry, O: Displacing the Anthropocene

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2024/1/22/the-olive-tree-symbol-of-palestine-and-mute-victim-of-israels-war-on-gaza>

# The Absence of Whiteness in Kiel's Solidarity with Palestine

A Symptom of the City's Arms Industry and Historical Complicity in Genocide

by *Lara-Lane Plambeck*

## **Free Palestine in Kiel and the absence of whiteness**

Can you imagine watching a genocide online day in, day out, wanting to interfere and do something and the least radical form of political action being called illegal by a country which prides itself in being democratic? Can you imagine that Germany would, after everything that happened in WW2, be so fascist to forbid any kind of assembly concerning the liberation of a colonized state, or more simply, the call for a cease fire in a genocide? Well, I did not expect it. But reality really hit me in October/November 2023. Germany and especially Kiel forbade any kind of pro-Palestinian action. It is only now, as I am writing this in February 2024, after 4 months of war on Gaza, that we are allowed to have a first walking Demonstration for a cease fire. It still isn't allowed to call the happenings in Gaza a genocide.

The pain, loneliness, and helplessness I felt when I went to the forbidden assembly to call for a cease fire in the city center of Kiel a few months ago was devastating to me (I can only imagine what Palestinians must have felt like) – having stepped into the world of political activism in Amsterdam I had known a different culture. If someone forbids your assembly, you go, now more than ever! We have a right to peacefully assemble, don't we? Well, apparently not in Kiel. No one showed up. For me, this meant more rage and more insistence to somehow find a group that would rise with

me. Luckily, I did. Today, we are two student organizations, hsg RADAR and Students for Palestine Kiel, who organize for a free Palestine and we have several local groups supporting us. And yet, since we started organizing, how many white German people have I seen at the assemblies? I am pretty sure I can count them on two hands, maybe one. I have been shocked, felt betrayed, maybe called into reality. Why do people not stand up against obvious mass killing in Kiel and how can the most leftist people I know from Germany stand behind Israel committing a genocide? How can Fridays for Future kick out people standing up for Palestine? I believe in repressed guilt for the Holocaust to be a larger answer. But for Kiel specifically, there is a long historical-economic element to it all. History is just repeating itself, on multiple levels. In this article, I will argue for the absence of whiteness in pro-Palestinian activism to be tightly knit together with a local arms industry that has historically been financed by and supported genocide.

## **How to intervene strategically - the dilemma of the liberal left and working class of Kiel**

Researching Kiel's relationship to Israel, I found out about thyssenkrupp and Rheinmetall. Kiel has many more companies profiting from war, but I will focus on these two here.<sup>1</sup> Both companies are economically dependent or at least committed to supporting Israel in its warfare.

For me, it was clear that we need to intervene, but how to do this if I was the only white person in my activist group who could afford to potentially get arrested for civil disobedience? A friend I know from Extinction Rebellion Amsterdam told me they were collaborating with labor unions to actively interfere in the supply chains supporting Israeli warfare. I had been thinking about doing something similar as it is a historical fact that the most power to cause actual systemic change lies with the working class. In a capitalist society, where the whole system is based on the mode of production, workers have the power to interrupt the chains of production as well as the circulation of commodities and thus of capital.<sup>2</sup> Workers can stop whole sections of production without which not only the whole economy could crumble but also, a genocide could be stopped. To talk about the possibility for that in Kiel, my group and I met with a member of the DKP Kiel, the communist party. What we learned from a person and organization that have had decades of experience in working with the unions and supporting the labor force was that in Germany, the labor unions were still very much aligned with a social democratic (SPD) idea from the 60s and 70s in which the workers do not think of themselves as a strong Marxist force separate from and oppressed by the capitalist owner of production or firm; in fact, the workers still feel a strong loyalty toward their employer. After all, firms like thyssenkrupp do pay workers way more than others, they even pay a 14th salary in some firms and provide a qualitative work environment with e.g. sauna at the workplace. The workers fought hard for their rights in those companies and thus, there is a legacy they want to protect. For

them, if the business runs well, they will be well. This relationship of dependency and obedience to the higher ranks unfortunately has political and real-world consequences. It depoliticizes and disempowers the otherwise powerful working class. The class difference between employer and employees is dangerously abstracted. Thus, we were warned to not expect too much collaboration from the side of the unions either. Neither from the general population or the city at large: today's arms industry and the city's relationship to it and the genocide in Gaza were a symptom of history, we were told.

Researching more about the history of the two main industrials in Kiel, which I will elaborate on in the coming text, will show the city's corruption and the extreme hypocrisy the city (by that I mean the whole web of citizens, politics, and industry etc.), people, and most of all corporations have shown from WW2 to today's genocide in Gaza. The story unfolding in even just quick research is one of ongoing ignorance to cruelty, settler colonialism, and complicity, if not support of repeated genocide and warfare in favor of profit. A story about a society that welcomes fake apologies from corporations that finance their cities and for some, personal lives. The history of Kiel shows people and politics don't take the widespread, left-liberal "never again" serious enough to translate it into an embodied reality and political action. "Never again" seems to be abused for identity politics, most people don't appear to care about actual accountability. Maybe they would care but are too deeply influenced by the narratives media and politics present to us. Maybe they are too comfortable with the privileges the system does provide them.

<sup>1</sup> There are so many more industrials to look at in this context. To get a better understanding of the dimensions of military production and its history in Kiel, have a look at this flyer: <https://sh.rosalux.de/publikation/id/7945/die-antimilitaristische-stadtrundfahrt-in-kiel/>

<sup>2</sup> Read more about the power of the working class in a very interesting article by Phil A. Neel called "Swoosh" <https://libcom.org/article/swoosh-phil-neel> (uploaded 2015)

And maybe, some actually believe that the existing political system is being responsible and taking care of accountability practices for them.

Before I unpack the layers of my outrage, I want to stress that I write this not to hate on the working population, let alone the working class, or any one person. After all, I am one of you. I just want us to reawaken to our collective power, especially when we cannot count on the more privileged classes and for sure not on the existing political leaders that are clearly moved by profit. The lower classes must protect each other. We all must protect each other! There won't be positive change as long as we continue to buy into the ruling classes scarcity narratives and fear-evoking, xenophobic paradigms. Doing so contributes to their systems of profit because we fight against each other instead of against them and for social justice. The people in Palestine need us to take accountability for our people's crimes, for our city's complicity in genocide and for our own forgotten power to stand up for justice and transformation where our ancestors have failed to. We can still do better.

### **Historical enabling of genocide-financed and -financing industries: from Holocaust to the destruction of Palestine**

So, let me begin with a small historical insight into Kiel's role as a naval city and production as well as shipping site of arms and war equipment.<sup>3</sup> Kiel has, due to its geographical location at the Baltic Sea as well as its position in the much fought

about borderland between Denmark and Germany, been a naval city for centuries. Since 1871, Kiel had officially been one of two "Reichskriegshäfen" – Germany's imperial war harbors.<sup>4</sup> Its importance in terms of defense and naval military bases but especially as a site of war equipment production has made it a popular aim for attacks and bombings by Germany's enemies for example the allied forces in WW2. The first shipyard in Kiel, Friedrich Krupp Germaniawerft, was established toward the end of the 19th century when it was still an important production site of the Imperial Navy (Kaiserliche Marine). In WW2, the big shipyards in the east of Kiel (Germaniawerft, Deutsche Werke Kiel AG and Howaldtswerke AG) produced mostly for the navy.<sup>5</sup> After the war, the shipyards were shut down by the British, Kiel declared its end of arms and naval ship production and to turn toward peace-supporting economies. Only the Howaldtswerke were rebuilt and in 1955 took over Deutsche Werke. But it didn't take long until Krupp and his war-supportive industry resurrected as well. His and the other shipyards had been an intrinsic part of WW2 warfare. But even worse is how easily actual Nazis were welcomed to continue their legacy in Kiel and how quickly the city forgot about the in 1950 declared shift to peace industry.

### **Thyssenkrupp Marine Systems**

Thyssen and Krupp, today's name givers of thyssenkrupp Marine Systems which also bought a big share of HDW (Howaldtswerke) in 2005, were both passionate supporters of the NSDAP.<sup>6</sup> Both had

<sup>3</sup> <https://esut.de/2022/01/fachbeitraege/31676/>

kiel-ein-dominanter-bundeswehr-und-ruestungsindustriestandort/

<sup>4</sup> [https://kiel.de/de/bildung\\_wissenschaft/stadtarchiv/erinnerungstage.php?id=94](https://kiel.de/de/bildung_wissenschaft/stadtarchiv/erinnerungstage.php?id=94)

<sup>5</sup> [https://kiel.de/de/bildung\\_wissenschaft/stadtarchiv/erinnerungstage.php?id=39](https://kiel.de/de/bildung_wissenschaft/stadtarchiv/erinnerungstage.php?id=39)

<sup>6</sup> HDW and the owner of Howaldtswerke have their own interesting NS history. I am not going into depth with that part of today's thyssenkrupp's history in this text. But you can read more on it in the flyer (reference 1, pp. 10ff)

their own problematic companies before and after the war. But in 1999 their legacies merged into ThyssenKrupp AG.<sup>7</sup> After the war, Alfred Krupp kept a good relationship to (Ex-) Nazis and showed no regret. Krupp's business used more forced labor (succeeding the hundred thousands) than any other in Germany.<sup>8</sup> He was charged for slave labor and the exploitation of colonized Europe, went to prison for a few years but got an early release after 12 years.<sup>9</sup> He was dedicated to rebuild his empire straight away but the family fortune was exhausted and the pre-existing business was destroyed. He then employed Berthold Beitz to resurrect his company, who, to save it, at some point shook hands with Krupp's rivals: first Hoesch and then Thyssen.<sup>10</sup> The collaboration between Thyssen and Krupp is what brought thyssenkrupp to its contemporary presence in Kiel.

Krupp never showed regret, the continuation of his family legacy was the only thing that really interested him. After the (disproportionally mild) prosecution of his and his family's crimes, he collected some money for ex-convicts, but that was probably just as much a farce, a simple gesture to give to the public what was needed to let him continue the same business as before.<sup>11</sup> We can see the same false pretense in the firm today: when Germany said to cut all ties with Russia in solidarity with Ukraine, which

thyssenkrupp announced to support, you could not only see the ships to Russia still going from Kiel, but it was revealed to public that thyssenkrupp continued to export to and work in Russia.<sup>12</sup> Thyssenkrupp has no moral boundaries when it comes to making profit. And they know they won't have to suffer consequences; they are too important for the economy.<sup>13</sup>

The history of the family Thyssen, the second name giver of today's after-war shipyard, is even more interesting. Even before fully established Nazi Germany Fritz Thyssen supported the NS (National Socialists) and gave money to the establishment of the NSDAP.<sup>14</sup> He was politically active in founding the "Hartzburger Front", a right-wing collective which was made to tear down the Weimar Republic. This political engagement was carried into his business, the Thyssen concern, a corporation with a still active base by the river Rhine (today not just run and owned by Thyssen but thyssenkrupp AG), focusing on steel production and coal mining, where workers were politically trained into National Socialism. Thyssen, as one of Germany's big industry giants, collaborated with the Nazis to protect and secure his financial success, in return gave money to the NSDAP and simultaneously made his way into more and more politically impactful positions until he even accepted a mandate

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.thyssenkrupp.com/de/unternehmen/historie>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.tagesschau.de/wirtschaft/unternehmen/alfried-krupp-untersuchung-100.html>

<sup>9</sup> [https://rp-online.de/wirtschaft/unternehmen/thyssenkrupp-aufstieg-und-fall-eines-imperiums\\_aid-24204097](https://rp-online.de/wirtschaft/unternehmen/thyssenkrupp-aufstieg-und-fall-eines-imperiums_aid-24204097)

<sup>10</sup> See 9

<sup>11</sup> See 8

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.thyssenkrupp.com/de/newsroom/statement-zur-russischen-invasion-der-ukraine>; <https://www.merkur.de/wirtschaft/ukraine-news-krieg-deutsche-unternehmen-russland-henkel-simba-thyssen-krupp-yale-liste-gea-91506995.html>

<sup>13</sup> More on the Krupp family and their business: [https://rp-online.de/wirtschaft/unternehmen/thyssenkrupp-aufstieg-und-fall-eines-imperiums\\_aid-24204097](https://rp-online.de/wirtschaft/unternehmen/thyssenkrupp-aufstieg-und-fall-eines-imperiums_aid-24204097)

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.verbrechen-der-wirtschaft.de/texte/0100\\_thyssen.htm](http://www.verbrechen-der-wirtschaft.de/texte/0100_thyssen.htm); and <https://germanhistorydocs.org/de/deutschland-nationalsozialismus-1933-1945/hitler-besichtigt-betriebe-des-thyssen-konzerns-im-ruhrgebiet-1935.pdf>

for the NSDAP in the Reichstag. Even though he parted ways with the NS-Regime later, his values remained clear: this man lived for profit and his family legacy no matter the costs. Even his reason to criticize the NS regime was of economic nature – he did not want to become dependent on Russia. In 1941, a book about him called “I paid Hitler” was published without his consent.

Today’s thyssenkrupp Marine Systems in Kiel is thus clearly a relic of the Nazi regime, a corporation that has historically made money from genocide. Today, once again, the firm profits from and supports the genocide on Palestinian people. In 2022, it proudly announced its newly manifested cooperation with Israel - a deal to build three submarines that will bring thyssenkrupp 3 billion Euros, partly sponsored by the German state.<sup>15</sup> The heroic phrasing reflects how shameless corporations are in regards to their cooperation with Israel as well as Germany’s general bias in media representations of Israel as a victim: “We, as thyssenkrupp Marine Systems and Germans, are honored and proud to continue the long cooperation – spanning decades – with the Israeli Ministry of Defence and the Israeli Navy. This agreement demonstrates the deep commitment of thyssenkrupp Marine Systems to

guarantee Israel’s long-term security.”<sup>16</sup> Since the establishment of the Zionist state, and more clearly than ever today, we see that Israel is not using its weapons for defense but for the purpose of expanding its empire and eradicate the Palestinian population.<sup>17</sup> In the meantime, Israel has been accused for committing genocide and the ICJ has admitted that “[at] least some of the acts and omissions alleged by South Africa to have been committed by Israel in Gaza appear to be capable of falling within the provisions of the (Genocide) Convention”.<sup>18</sup> And Kiel is not only giving money to Israel and sending arms like the rest of Germany, but they are also building three war submarines capable of carrying atomic weapons - ready for the next step of mass destruction and imperial warfare.<sup>19</sup> Since October 18, thyssenkrupp-built warships have been used to bombard Gaza.<sup>20</sup>

### Rheinmetall AG

As if this wasn’t enough about Kiel’s proud engagement in Israeli warfare, there is another company situated in Kiel, that needs to be addressed in this context: Rheinmetall AG. Rheinmetall produces war weapons, tanks and what they call innovative technology which, as they say, guarantees the base for peace, freedom, and sustainable development:

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/unternehmen/milliardendeal-fuer-thyssenkrupp-israel-kauft-deutsche-u-boote-fuer-drei-milliarden-euro-a-f39e1846-719a-4975-9642-744036172e71>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.thyssenkrupp-marinesystems.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/press-detail-page/israel-orders-three-new-submarines-from-thyssenkrupp-marine-systems-163026>

<sup>17</sup> The Palestinian people keep being portrayed as a homogenized mass of Hamas terrorists when most Palestinians are not, when most deaths are children who cannot even be political actors, and when, at least to some extent, Hamas must also be considered as a symptom of a history of structural violence encompassing marginalization, expropriation, and displacement of the Palestinian people by the state of Israel. For more on that read or watch this interview with Jewish author and scholar Judith Butler: [https://www.democracynow.org/2023/10/26/judith\\_butler\\_on\\_hamas\\_israels\\_collective](https://www.democracynow.org/2023/10/26/judith_butler_on_hamas_israels_collective)

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/key-takeaways-world-court-decision-israeli-genocide-case-2024-01-26/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/israel-deutschland-waffenexport-u-boote-thyssenkrupp-korruption-1.5511736>

<sup>20</sup> Read more about which exact products from German arms corporations are being used in Gaza right now: <https://www.imi-online.de/2024/02/09/deutsche-ruestungsexporte-nach-israel-und-die-region/>



*Picture: On February 7, 2024, the first time since October 7, the city allowed a marching demonstration for a cease fire and against the arm production in Kiel. We were still forbidden to use the word genocide. You can see the buildings of thyssenkrupp Marine Systems in the background*

safety (their wording).<sup>21</sup> What the freedom and peace that Rheinmetall contributes to look like is now visible in Palestine where Rheinmetall-produced tank guns and ammunition kill endless masses of civilians.<sup>22</sup> That its interest doesn't lie in peace and freedom but in profit is further proven by Rheinmetall, just like thyssenkrupp, having kept its partnering with Russia when Germany declared to cut ties with it; Rheinmetall even opened new

job positions due to the war on Ukraine.<sup>23</sup> High-tech war equipment is being sold as a safety measure, and, more ridiculously, a contributor to sustainability. Thyssenkrupp, too, declares its commitment to the future of sustainability.<sup>24</sup> In the meantime, both corporations produce (for) wars like the one on Gaza, which, except from the in-place ecosystem destruction, has also, and this only in the first two months of the war, generated global-warming emissions

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.rheinmetall.com/de/>

<sup>22</sup> See 20

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.businessinsider.de/wirtschaft/ruestungsgeschaefte-mit-russland-rheinmetall-ger-aet-staerker-in-betraengnis/>; <https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/wirtschaft/rheinmetall-lieferung-ukraine-krieg-russland-100.html>; <https://www.kn-online.de/lokales/kiel/ukraine-krieg-folgen-fuer-kiel-rheinmetall-will-100-neue-mitarbeiter-TDH3BS3VORBPAXVVRBCJCDSZ4.html>



that “were greater than the annual carbon footprint of more than 20 of the world’s most climate-vulnerable nations”, the Guardian writes.<sup>25</sup> What they do has nothing to do with sustainability and everything with using greenwashing to cover up their genocidal industries. Rheinmetall wants to reach its net-zero goal by 2035. What can that mean for this kind of industry? In the best case, they will invest into renewable energies and use them for the original production of climate- and people-shattering arms. There is no climate neutrality in the arms industry!

Rheinmetall, like thyssenkrupp, has a dark history, making profit from forced concentration camp labor, and even that is sugarcoated on the website.<sup>26</sup> They leave out facts like that NS politician and criminal Göring bought most of the holdings on the firm and that they were Hitler’s biggest arm suppliers.<sup>27</sup> And, like with Thyssen, hypocritical, only small amounts of repair were paid to random ex-convicts that even left out of the consideration those people who were in Rheinmetall camps (yes, its own camps). The prosecutions at court were denied. This all is shocking, right? But is it really a surprise that the state stands behind industries that bring so much money? Imagine the amounts of money flowing into war-tech and the naval industry in this genocide. Just at the beginning of the more intense, active war on Gaza since October 2023, there had already been an increase in export to Israel by tenfold.<sup>28</sup> It is no surprise that this city made it illegal to call the genocide by its name when realizing that its deep economic history is closely linked to genocide and the state of Israel. Especially not, when paying

attention to Germany being the 5th largest arms exporter in the world and Israel being the 4th largest customer of the German warfare industry.<sup>29</sup>

The absence of whiteness in pro-Palestinian action: a result of institutionalized Islamophobia and genocidal industries (and more)

There are two main problems we’ve been facing in that struggle which interact perfectly to reenforce another: A main-stream Islamophobia that is by most not even recognized as racism, as well as people, industries, and a state (or city) involved in and profiting from warfare – in the past as in the present. Like thyssenkrupp’s narrative, where Israel is portrayed as the victim needing protection, the city of Kiel has been feeding into Islamophobic rhetoric, or maybe using it, to justify the support of Israel and hinder pro-Palestinian action. When we finally got permission to assemble to mourn the deaths in Palestine and voice our opinions, the permission included (and still does) many restrictions concerning forbidden signs, words, and phrasings like “stop the genocide”, as well as languages: only German was allowed. The permission for our peaceful assemblies also stated: “Due to media appeals with a seditious tone in the Arab world and against the background that many Muslim-Arab people live in Kiel, there is a certain probability that people will also join your assembly whose aim is to further incite the altogether incalculable dangerous situation“ (...).<sup>30</sup> Muslim-Arab people altogether are seen as potential terrorists and threat.

[24] <https://www.thyssenkrupp-marinesystems.com/en>

[25] [https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/09/emissions-gaza-israel-hamas-war-climate-change?CMP=tw\\_t\\_a-environment\\_b-gdneco](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/09/emissions-gaza-israel-hamas-war-climate-change?CMP=tw_t_a-environment_b-gdneco)

[26] <https://www.rheinmetall.com/en/company/history/125-years-rheinmetall/years-1936-1945>

[27] <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/rheinmetall-3.htm>

[28] <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/israel-deutschland-ruestungsexporte-100.html>

[29] <https://de.statista.com/infografik/31504/fuehrende-exportlaender-von-wichtigen-konventionellen-waffensystemen/>; Infografik: Wohin Deutschland Waffen exportiert | Statista



This came across as well when we went to other protests like against the political right ("Demo Gegen Rechts") on February 2nd 2024, organized by Fridays for Future, who warned about us coming to their demonstrations and where some people said they did not feel safe with us present (not because we were aggressive but because we had keffiyehs on us which were directly associated with terrorism). They also kicked out a pro-Palestinian group-member. Germany's so-called decolonial climate movements calling for social justice and fighting climate-change-fueling industries are, too, so deeply involved in the anti-Deutsch sentiment now fusing with Islamophobia and Zionism that they refuse to support us in fighting against the aforementioned destruction of people and environment by climate-shattering industries as happening in Gaza (e.g. Ende Gelände and TKKG Kiel).

Our university, the CAU Kiel, is similarly positioned politically and supports Israel unconditionally. In the case of the university, this is less surprising - in 2015 Israel's president, Rivlin, even visited in person.<sup>31</sup> The fact that the university does not train against war, but for militarization (and presumably also benefits from it and definitely invests in education for the arms industry) is also recognizable by the fact that there is an Institute for Security Policy (ISPK).<sup>32</sup> What is meant by so-called security has already become apparent in the analysis of thyssenkrupp's and Rheinmetall's websites. Thus, it is no wonder that when we started organizing for Palestine as students, there were many obstacles to tackle. Among other things, our requests for event permits were ignored for an unusually long time. Then, the university's event management

tried to forbid an assembly that we only let them know of out of decency, as it was held on a public sector which they did not have any legal authority over. The university kept sending emails with pro-Israel statements, while some students lost their families and homes to Israel's bombs and massacres. Many of them had already had long-term traumatic experiences due to Israel's occupation long before October 7. You can see pro-Israel posters in the university's aisles, while you would probably lose your job if you put up a pro-Palestinian sign.

At our university, the CAU Kiel, where my group began holding assemblies, our requests were ignored for unusual long times, then the event management tried to forbid an assembly that we only let them know of out of decency, as it was held on a public sector which they did not have any legal authority over. The university, in general, kept sending pro-Israel statements while some of its students lost their whole families to Israel's bombing of Gaza. In the hallways, you can see Zionist posters while you'd probably lose your job if you hung up a pro-Palestinian sign.

Complicity to racist propaganda and genocidal industries has been and is the reality of this city and country. People and politics have historically been so used to profit, wealth and workplaces to be derived from genocide that their absence at free Palestine protests in Kiel is a symptom of a history of missing accountability. It is not a surprise at all if one only takes a quick look at Kiel's and its industrial histories. Of course, this is not only about Kiel. This is Germany's history, too, and partially that of its current relationship to Israel and Palestine. If Germany's economy is dependent on its relationship to Israel and

<sup>30</sup> Extract from the event permit for a peaceful pro-Palestinian assembly by the public order office in Kiel

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.uni-kiel.de/de/detailansicht/news/israelischer-staatspraesident-besuchte-universitaet-kiel>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.ispk.uni-kiel.de/de>

generally to war, of course the anti-Deutsch narratives resulting from WW2 and the insistence on the repression of anti-Semitism will be used by media and corrupted, profit-oriented political leadership, to uphold the ties that feed so much of our economy. What people forget is that the companies now supporting Israel and thus being associated with Germany's form of reparation for its antisemitic past are exactly the leading firms that have reached their power through their complicity and support of antisemitic politics. The workers are the biggest hope for Palestinians concerning the interruption of Germany-sponsored war in Gaza, and sadly, our workers have been bought into the system and out of their power by means of extra income and saunas at the workplace. Another factor is that politically motivated labor strikes are prohibited in Germany.<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately, the rest of society that could be mobilized is also influenced by anti-Deutsch narratives, pro-Israel media, general depoliticization, and presumably a structurally enforced sense of powerlessness (and many other factors). With Kiel's additional position as an economic headquarters for arms and war-technology as well as its larger role as a naval center, it is no wonder the absence of white German people at free Palestine protests and the intensity of restrictions around the topic are peaking in Kiel.

For it to never happen again they keep saying at Holocaust Memorial Day and anti-right protests while repressing pro-Palestinian action.  
For it to never happen again they said to keep the companies alive and continue the same work.

Never again they say all the while Palestinian lives continue to be shattered by German and Kiel-produced ammunition. There is no "never again" in the arms industry. Weapons kill.



*Luckily, there is something you can do to counter German complicity: Come to Kiel for the Rheinmetall Entwaffnen action on September 3-8, 2024!<sup>34</sup>*

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/906962/11d771ccee451f450091d596e657a593/WD-6-058-22-pdf-data.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> More info on past and coming actions including the one in Kiel: <https://rheimmetallentwaffnen.noblogs.org/>

\* All digital references have last been accessed on April, 4th 2024

# My Zionist Family

*by Trash Skeleton*

As someone who organizes and participates in the struggle for a free Palestine it really hurts to see how my family has either supported the ongoing genocide or been directly involved in these atrocities. It's even worse when it comes to my Jewish family because I'm the descendant of people that had to survive the Shoah. I have ancestors that didn't survive, I have stories and shared trauma that's been passed down from generation to generation that affected my family and many others. It's awful to me because I feel like these people have forgotten, that they turn a blind eye on the continued genocide against Palestinians and that they learned nothing from the countless stories that circulate in my family. Even worse though are the members of the family that live and occupy the land in so called Israel, ancestors I discovered were directly involved in the creation of so-called Israel (see the note at the end for why I say so called) as they donated millions to see this colonial project come to fruition. How do I know about these scumbags? Well it all comes from a family group chat that I was eventually kicked out of. This group chat is the reason I was inspired to write this article but fair warning to y'all. It ain't pretty. A lot of bullshit is about to be talked about.

## THE GROUP CHAT

I received the invitation on April 29th, 2023. The name of the group chat is "Descendants Hélène et Arthur". At time of writing there are 33 people (excluding myself of course) that have joined the group. As the name suggests we gathered as the descendants of two ancestors who survived the Shoah. Hélène and Arthur got married and indirectly made it possible almost a hundred years later for all of us to gather and connect in recognition of their unlikely marriage.

This group chat was also a place for us to learn about the different ancestors that were connected to this matrimonial union. There was a photo shared very early on with so many people of the past; in which I saw my great great grandfather and his son, I saw the two people I had found on a Holocaust registry a year earlier and other family I had only seen the names of on an old family tree with death dates that never made it past 1945.

Needless to say this was a powerful experience for me at first, especially because I was raised by a Christian mom and was therefore never accepted as Jewish by my living Jewish family. They had never taught me about our culture and religion. We only ever got to talk about our Jewishness through what we suffered and so this group chat felt intensely familiar as we explored the pain and loss of those we came from.

Well after we pieced together who was on this family photo we started to share little facts about ourselves: who our direct

Hélène Lévy et Arthur Helft se sont mariés à Paris le 8 janvier 1874.

# 1874

Leurs descendants sont  
conviés à commémorer ce  
sesquicentenaire.



*Noces d'or d'Hélène et Arthur, 8 janvier 1924*

# 2024

Lundi 8 janvier 2024  
9h30 précises  
4 bis rue des Rosiers Paris  
(ou via Zoom, lien à suivre)

Nous dévoilerons une plaque à la mémoire de nos ancêtres et de l'orphelinat des Rothschild qui recueillait Hélène et son frère Armand, après le décès prématuré de leurs parents.

C'est également ce jour anniversaire que Sara Lévy-Lambert, arrière-arrière-arrière petite fille d'Hélène et Arthur a choisi pour épouser Shreyak Das à Bhuvanewar. Ils seront présents avec nous en visio depuis l'Inde, deux heures avant leur mariage.

ancestor was, where we're living and the relations we had with other members in the group chat. That second one, the "where we're from". That's the real stinker. And how I discovered that so many of my family members lived in and supported so-called Israel. After the first family member made this admission I immediately changed my profile photo to the Palestinian flag with the LGBTQ+ flag in the background. This was to test the waters and see what kind of Israeli citizens they were: zionists or pro Palestinians?

Sadly, my suspicions of them being Zionist were proven correct. Cause changing my profile caused quite a stir and it was very subtle at first. See, I had been one of the first people to join the group and so by changing my profile photo this early on, while more curious people trickled in, the newcomers would immediately be confronted by these two flags as they checked the description for other members.

Suddenly! Someone added three little dots that trailed behind them mentioning the awful fact that they lived in so called Israel... Others stopped saying where they were from all together. And the worst part is I was being told I was crazy and overthinking things. But I knew why they were texting so weird! This went on for a week where I was the only one talking about the tension in the group chat while my friends and family remained skeptical. After a week had passed I got a call from the slimy admin and this is what led to "the debate" and the reason I wrote this article.

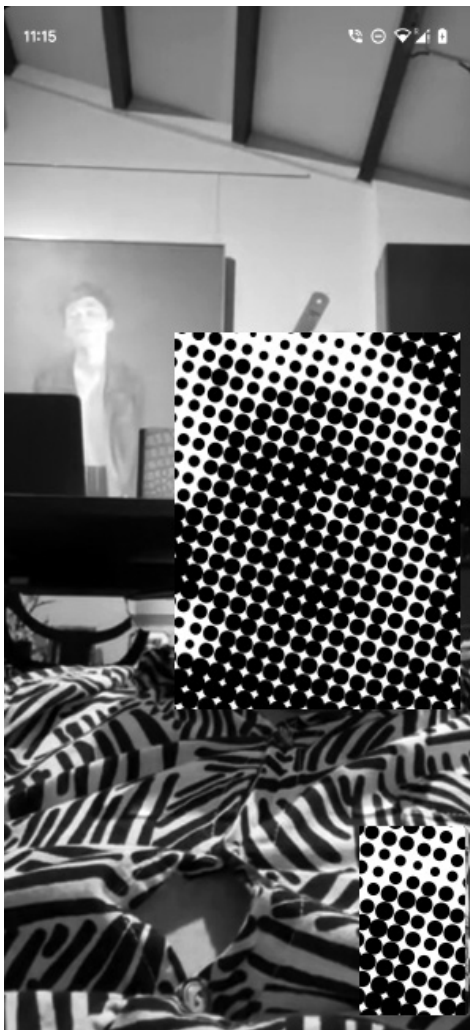
## THE "DEBATE"

So the admin calling me lives in Singapore with an 8 hour delay from the cozy Amsterdam morning I was having in bed. I, having barely woken up, was forced to stare straight into a camera angle that showed off the stomach jutting out of his unbuttoned shirt and the contemptuous smile he had as he launched forth into the biggest headache I've had the displeasure of experiencing in a while.

He started off by saying that he heard about me coming out as a trans woman and was so happy to hear about my new name because it's so similar to his grandma's. He also shares with me that he's gay and is happy to know that there are more queer people in the family. I then tell him that I'm a femme into femme people so I'm also gay and we have that in common too. To which he kind of takes a second, a bit in shock, and then asks me if I'm actually trans. So you can see this conversation started off really great and wasn't invalidating at all!

After he presents to me the fact that he's a gay man he follows this up with the fact that he's a proud Jew and that his cousin lives in so called Israel. Keep in mind that he has not explained why he was calling. But after he brings up his family I immediately had my suspicions confirmed. This was going to be about my new profile photo, I could just feel it! He goes on to say that so-called Israel is actually a very queer friendly place. I can feel that he's bringing this up because I put the LGBTQ+ flag behind the Palestinian one though he doesn't say so out loud. I counter this argument by saying that it's impossible to be a place that cares about queer rights when you're committing an active genocide against an entire group of people because that will always include queer Palestinians. And what, do they not matter?

He then talked about how Israel was the only place for Jews and that as someone with the same ancestry as him (literally) I



should be happy that we have a place that finally allows 'us' to live in 'peace' (incredibly sarcastic quotation marks added by me). He was trying to use his identity in order to make his arguments seem more valid and I was getting sucked into this conversation I had never asked for. Witnessing him weaponizing his queerness and Jewish identity while trying to rope me in by saying that I should feel the same as a trans woman with Jewish heritage.

But so-called Israel murders queer people! I mean just think about the statistical fact that 29,000 weapons dropped on Gaza (<https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/gaza-destruction-bombing-israel-aa528542>) means at least one is going to hit a queer Palestinian! It's simple math! Or how the apartheid of a state that falsely claims to protect Jewish people has horribly transformed a land where people of all walks of life used to be able to live together. Now that land has Jewish people walk on their side of the street while the others get their own shittier street as they're forced to walk further and further away until they must abandon their homes and neighborhoods forever. And you don't think that the state's preferential treatment of Jewish people is gonna create animosity against Jewish people? That it's not gonna fan the flames of anti-semitism?

Ugh. This is not a light topic. It actively saddens me to write this and you can imagine how rough it was to have this conversation at the bright hours of the morning. While he was sheepishly smiling at me, so excited to have this "debate". But it's not a debate. The genocide of people or the question of "should X group of oppressed people be given the right to exist" should never be up for debate!

So why did this call take place? Why was he so adamant about telling me this awful propaganda? Well it's simple really, I knew it was coming. When he saw that I wasn't having any of his bullshit he finally admitted that he called me because my profile photo



made his cousin deeply uncomfortable and he demanded that I change it. He even went so far as to say that it was the same as putting the nazi swastika on a queer flag! Can you believe this shit? After some additional back and forth I made it very clear that I won't change my profile photo. So he hung up and kicked me out of the family group chat. I was basically uninvited to the family reunion even though it had nothing to do with so-called Israel!

The argument he made at the end where he basically said that being pro Palestine is the same as being anti-semitic. That's something I want to dig a little deeper into. While it's cathartic for me to vent about this awful Zionist family member this ain't a point he came up with on his own. It's an argument that's been used for decades to shut down any support for the true victims of this colonial enterprise. An argument that's been internalized like crazy by my Zionist family to the point where me just having a fucking flag of Palestine makes them say (to my face) that I want to kill all Jews! So let's unpack that.

## **ANTI SEMITISM VS ANTI ZIONISM**

Now this zine is about reaching out to those who have felt the crushing weight of Germany's anti Palestine laws. We're here to share our frustrations with those repressed during pro-Palestine protests as Germany uses piggy batons and mental gymnastics to support so-called Israel. It's also about trying to explain to Germans why anti-Zionism is so necessary and that they shouldn't be on the wrong side of history (again!). This is why I'm taking this personal experience with my family member as a jumping off point for those who are curious about or unaware of the harm that is caused when Germany claims that any pro-Palestine action and solidarity is anti-semitic.

So please be aware that calling Palestine support anti-semitic is complete bullshit! I

mean who gave so-called Israel the right to represent all Jewish people? How are we going to ignore the countless Jewish people and people of Jewish descent (like me) who are fervently pro-Palestine? Can we finally acknowledge that Zionism has never been supported by all Jewish people?

It might not shock you to know that my home state in the so-called US (so-called Georgia) has been trying to pass an amendment to their definition of anti-semitism so it can include any action against so-called Israel. The two governments are not alone as countless bodies and institutions of power have adopted or been directly inspired by the definition of anti-semitism of the Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (HRA). Once again! We have this awful connection between those who are trying to keep the memory of a genocide alive in order to never forget what brought us here and yet those who adopt this HRA definition completely ignores the fact that they're helping to justify an imperial state doing a modern day genocide! And this HRA has the audacity to make their tag line "a world without genocide", how sickening...

I have ancestors that survived the Shoah and then invested millions in so-called Israel. Which is something I found out about after complaining to my father about being kicked out of the family group chat. Did my great great grandfather invest because he wanted to protect Jewish people? To a certain extent yes but that really doesn't tell the whole story. Because the narrative of creating a safe Jewish homeland ignores the fact that those fleeing to so-called Israel were actively invested in taking over land, in exploiting people and treating them as inhuman. And this also completely ignores the fact that Zionism has been part of a prolonged effort of colonialism that started before the Shoah and was directly backed by the United Kingdom. It's not the goal of Judaism to colonize. It's the goal of Zionism.

And that's a huuuuge difference.

I personally find it despicable to make it seem like it's in our Jewish nature to want to commit genocide, to colonize and steal land. That's so hurtful to me and I don't want any state or body of power writing that shit into law to protect zionists and hurt all the Jewish people who aren't zionist. To degrade us in such a blatant way! If you can't see the diversity of opinions of my people or my ancestors, then it's clear to me you have something to gain from it. Clear and simple. So don't you dare say this is about protecting Jewish people when you know deep down in your heart that the death of Palestinians is really what's at stake!

Anti-semitism still exists. It always has. The countries that help so-called Israel know all too well in their history and present how awful anti-semitism is. But stop trying to distract from real anti-semitism, stop arguing against anti-zionism, when Jews and Palestinians are suffering from the reality of both. There's a difference between anti-semitism and anti-zionism and I hope you finally see why.

## **ABOUT THAT SO CALLED**

I'm glad you made it this far! It wasn't easy for me to write this and reopen these memories because I feel so much shame for my ancestors that I know have been through insane horrors and yet would've hated me for trying to be consistent. Speaking of being consistent! You might be wondering why I keep calling certain geographical places so-called this and so-called that. It's actually something that I picked up from the revolutionary writings of American Indians who have adopted this term in parallel to a broader anti-colonial struggle. The reason they say so called US is because the land was not only stolen from them but also renamed by the thieves! The least we can do is acknowledge this in the language

that we use, written or spoken. I invite you to say so called whenever you find yourself naming a place that was given its title and borders by the colonizer and you'll notice that is basically constant! So called Israel, Australia, Canada, Brazil, Ecuador, Argentina, Los Angeles, and on and on and on and on... We can't and shouldn't try to escape the colonial history of our world but we can at least face it head on in our language. I hope for a future world where we can name the land in ways that are more harmonious with the people who have protected and loved the land before it was stolen from them and until then so-called is my go to to at least recognize this awful present existence.



# On Grief as Resistance

*by Sailesh Naidu*

Each morning for the last few days has turned into a ritual. The endless scrolling for hours, the messaging friends, the unfocused meditation on helplessness. The feeling of powerlessness is real. We have all been tasked with baring witness to genocide.

In Berlin, any form of support for Gaza and the Palestinian struggle for liberation has been banned. Wearing the keffiyeh and the Palestinian flag have been made illegal, an immigrant neighborhood Neukölln which is home to thousands of migrants from Arab countries has turned into a police state with children and non-violent protestors being arrested at random. We have all been tasked to find new ways to resist. The latest siege of Israeli violence into Gaza is no coincidence. The swing of right wing fascist ideologies that are now taking over most governments around the world has issued a blank check to authoritarian regimes and allegedly democratic governments to carry out a final completion of the colonial project of the nation-state. This can be seen not only in the Occupied Territories of Palestine but also in the worsening violence in Sudan where two Western backed military leaders now engage in an open civil war that have displaced tens of thousands of Sudanese with no safe place to go. Or in India where the West has allowed the Modi regime's ongoing oppression and systematic violence against Muslim, Dalit, and minority communities because India is needed as a strategic ally against Russia and China. Or in Australia where the government recently voted to reject a referendum

to acknowledge indigenous people in the constitution. The colonial project was created to extend the reach of the nation-state. If we feel powerless it is because the intention of the nation-state was never meant to empower those it was supposed to protect, rather it was meant to extend the power and profit of the handful of people who were endowed as its creators. As governments prioritize corporations over any real climate change policy or openly support genocidal regimes there is no argument that states have the consent of the governed. The curtain has fallen. The wizard has been revealed. The conditional reality of our times is to encounter how we are always in a relationality to those who have power over us. Who at whim can destroy entire cultures and civilizations. Who can arrest and kill Black and Brown bodies in the street. Who can watch those who want lives better than the ones handed to them drown in the ocean. The power of coloniality is to use violence implicit and explicit to control us; no one wants to be thrown out of the kingdom. With almost every facet of our life becoming an extension of the colonial-capitalist project we are left with fewer and fewer spaces and tools of resistance. To which I say, they can not colonize our grief. When the tools to reform or demolish the systems that were never

meant to protect us in the first place are taken and we must bear witness to the violence and annihilation of our siblings, let yourself grieve. Do not let this moment silence your heart. But allow your heart to break, to break for every death you see or don't. To break for every child whose dreams will no longer take flight. To break for every mother who now knows a boundless loss. Grieve, allow your heart to break and break open. Reach for each other, share in each others' wails. If this moment will teach us anything, it is that our grief can not be silenced. For if grief is love with nowhere to go, then allow it to be our collective scream. Your grief is love. Your grief shared is love. Your grief received is love. They can not take our love, they can not colonize our hearts. Before we can begin the task of dreaming of a new future we must allow ourselves to grieve the loss of this one and those we are losing along the way. We will not allow our hearts to grow cold and callus over, but greet the future like comrades at a new beginning with love and an open heart.

# The Body Is A Home A Heart Without A Cage

*by Sailesh Naidu*

## **On the State Of The Nation**

Silence is a mirror for what you do not want to see. It is chilling how those who hold power, privilege and whiteness can so easily turn away from an ongoing genocide, how they can so easily disappear into a vaccume and pretend they are not connected to a world so deeply in grief. But these images are all too familiar. The genocide that we are witnessing is being enacted by a settler-colonial state; this is the price that paid for nationhood. From the Trail of Tears in the United States States, to the massacre of the people of Rēkohu (Chatham Island New Zealand), to the elimination of Indigenous people of Brazil, Argentina, and the Southern Americas. All nations are built on genocide. The nation-state as a political apparatus in theory is supposed to protect the people who live within those borders and fences, within the territory that is owned by the state; but in the history of the nation-state almost never has. And when it does it is almost always at the expense of people who they designate do not belong within those fences. It is no coincidence that the ongoing genocide against the Palestinians coincides with a general rise in ethno-nationalism

globally. In Germany the German Chancellor has just called for mass deportations of migrants, in India the rising of Hindu nationalism is leading to extreme violence against Muslims and other minority groups, in the United States White nationalist are gaining political platforms within ruling parties bringing the government to a standstill. Tying ethnicity to a nation-state means that you ultimately tie the violence that goes with the establishment and perpetuation of that nation-state to that ethnicity. Anti-semitism is real and exists, but to tie the Jewish faith to Israel means that they are tied to violence that goes with settler colonialism. This is white supremacy. To fund the creation of a political state to secure Western economic interests in a region and to pass the bill from the creation of that state and all the horrors that come with it to the Jewish people. This is about the ownership of resources not the liberation, freedom, or safety of the inhabitants of that region. Ownership necessitates fences and borders and from that armies and taxes and from that debt and servitude. The creation of a homeland is embedded in tribalism, in the idea that identity

is somehow separated from the land. That somehow the Earth can be cut up and divided by distinctions that are so purely human like that idea human itself. Human as in a category made up by white men. Human as in the need to see ourselves as above and separate from the Earth that has made us. Human as in we are not part of a cosmic fabric. White supremacist patriarchal ideology creates fences on what can even be seen as human in the first place. It's the Black, Indigenous, People of the Global Majority who have continually been pushed outside that spectrum who now get to define what it means to live without it. What is needed now as we bear witness to the latest genocide that precipitates the establishment of a nation-state is even greater solidarity to amongst all marginalized peoples. All people who have been dispossessed from their homes by genocide, slavery, colonial brutality, theft. The Free Palestine Movement is not just a lightning rod from the battle against settler-colonial empires everywhere but also against the very idea that the Earth can be owned. What queer people and those who are dispossessed teach us is that home is where you are in connection

to those around you. Home is where we meet the Earth with gratitude for her abundance. Home does not need fences or walls or borders, it is not an arrival or destination, it is the journey of finding sanctuary in dependence, in each other. In asking, Where do I have walls around my heart and what do I need to allow them to fall? We find solidarity in bearing witness to genocide, in our grief, and our rage. But we also find solidarity in hope. That one day the Palestinian people will live free, that one day we will all live lives free of empire and cages around our hearts

# A Dream

*by Lara-Lane Plambeck*

I dream  
of purple flowers  
indigo flowers  
breaking the light of stinging sunrays  
into golden explosions of divinity  
a magnetic moment of infinite beauty  
a moment that does not appear as if it  
could end  
I am so attached from the first second  
I cannot imagine God will fade  
and yet, I know this is a momentary  
condition  
magically arising from the sunlight's  
angle and the bushes' bloom

All of this here is on purpose  
I dream it  
because I desire for it to be this way  
forever  
for your impermanent lives to be  
absorbed  
into an everlasting divinity  
for your permanence to create an  
infinite presence  
to explode into the most incredible  
beauty I have ever seen  
I dream for your lives to be remem-  
bered experientially,  
not bulldozed into the ground,  
mashed through by Israeli military dig-  
ging up cemeteries

I want each of your names to be  
remembered as it should  
like a divine presence on this earth  
of an endurance so strong  
that it breaks the rays of the sun into  
golden particles  
intensifying the colors of the flowering  
bushes  
into unimaginable ecstasy  
I want your lives and the end of your  
lives  
to cause a divine halt, a prayer,  
that does not seem as if it could ever  
cease to exist  
a truth so astonishing, no one will ever  
be able to turn away from

I dream of your bodies to grow flowers  
touching the full silver moon at night  
with their high reach and silver colors  
no matter the ignorance of the Western  
world  
the German state  
still gifting tanks to Israel  
after a hundred days of genocide  
they bloom with rage and pride  
I want your stories to break the sunlight  
into endless fractal dances of gold and  
indigo and purple flowers  
growing in front of our eyes  
into a presence that has finally found

its right  
to bloom like no other  
the legacy of a people  
of believe and endurance  
of resistance to oppression and war

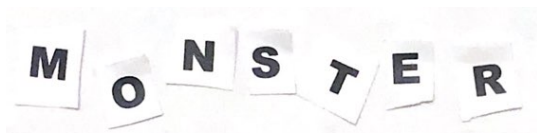
I dream of Palestine  
as a flower outburst breaking sunlight  
into gold  
with each flower for each soul  
each flower growing from a fractal of  
your torn bodies  
multiplying your presence  
resonating back from the explosions no  
one counts anymore  
and what we can grasp of your names  
and lives  
these flowers would cloud the whole  
skies  
like a temple growing above our heads  
from all the lives  
all your lives  
lost

And yet,  
I know you're not lost  
maybe it is my whiteness  
sometimes chewing on my trust  
but your people, no matter how much  
injustice has been done,  
believe in Palestine  
my dreams are visions  
that cannot nearly be as strong as  
yours

I pray, let your visions be mine  
let your rage infuriate my bloodstream  
may your endurance inspire my fight  
your people don't cease to believe in  
Palestinian life and liberation  
and so won't I



# Deutschland,



DeutschLand.

Whoever you are, whatever you are called.

YOU and ME. US.

Deutsch.

Land.

Monster.

Where the fuck has (y)our empathy gone?

"History". "Past".

What happened to - one must learn from mistakes.

Facade, nothing behind.

DeutschLand,

I hate you.

I hate how we close our eyes while the blood drips from our hands. warm and sticky, can't you feel it?

I hate how we hand the knife to the murderer,  
and

in the exact same breath  
crown ourselves as queen of human rights.

Queen, crown of bones.

Arms export increased tenfold.

I hate that we practiced how to murder in Namibia to then use the perfected techniques at home.

Und das we nicht in Grossbuchstaben  
Only the creme de la creme for at home huh?

WE

must have genocidal genes

I hate how we act like we understand.  
Overcome the past. What past? Why don't we deal with what's happening right now? Maybe then it wouldn't even be happening in the first place.

I hate how being white, rich equals surviving. equals my life is valuable. I must have blue blood inside me?  
well dressed - warmly bedded.  
while the monster haunts screeching murderously through the alleys.  
next victim, next victim.

I hate how we arrest our traumatized neighbours and declare them terrorists.  
How we don't even dignify their crying eyes with a glance.  
How their headscarf is enough of an explanation.  
It's their own fault, why didnt they just believed in our God.  
Remigration, the new favorite word.

DeutschLand,  
I am ashamed of you.  
So much so that my insides turn into rotten meat.  
I don't want to belong to you. I do it anyway.

I am ashamed  
that my siblings don't feel safe here when they walk the streets.  
Because once again the Nazis of the neighbouring village are hungry.  
that murdering 15,000 children is a matter of state reason here. That their tears don't make us cry, but make us

shoot. These terrorists there, they all have to go. Their blood, does it taste good?

What if that was your child that was just buried by the rubble?

I am ashamed  
that we beat up Palestinians in their own country.  
UP UP with international cooperation.  
Noone want us here. Don't you get it?  
I'm ashamed  
that even though we,  
and especially we  
should understand what genocide is,  
what it looks like, what it sounds like,  
what it tastes like,  
we act like this is just war,  
And then lick our bloody paws.  
that we have a so-called fundamental  
right in which already Article 1 doesn't  
even apply to everyone. Fundament of  
what? Of genocide?

DeutschLand,  
How can we be so dumb?

How can we be so dumb not to recognize what repeats itself.  
How the image of an enemy leads to  
30,000 deaths.

Doesn't that sound somehow familiar?

Well, maybe it suits us just fine, maybe  
our image of the enemy doesn't look  
that different after all.  
Take a look at the Bild, which asks

whether foreigners in the military wasn't a mistake. At least someone here is honest.

How can WE WE WE  
be so dumb?

Or are we maybe not that dumb?  
maybe, maybe, maybe  
definitely  
500 years of killing, 500 years of raping  
and drawing blood,  
have turned us into a monster that  
constantly craves blood?

What will happen to us if for once  
noone dies?

If for once noone starves to death  
because of us?

When for once no child looks into the  
tube of DeutschLand's tanks and wonders  
why it has to die for us?

Will DeutschLand even continue to  
exist then?

DeutschLand, I hope what you are.  
As it was in the beginning, now and  
forever.  
will haunt you.

(white begins, black wins)  
the blood boils.

When it spills over, i will ask you:  
I thought you liked it?

We (Germans ? Europeans? White People?) are the monster, you and me. The sick monster yearning for blood, it lives within us.

The story of Germany is drenched in blood. We, seemingly, have understood that; Germany has been denazified.

We have understood the horrors of the Holocaust. Something that should and will never repeat itself. But something is missing. The Holocaust was not a unique event, unthinkable of happening back then and unthinkable of ever happening again. We, Germans, were not simply taken advantage of by an evil leader, that used us to carry out his plans. On the contrary, Hitler is a reflection of his time. He is a product of a culture and zeitgeist of colonialism. Césaire says it in his text 'Discourse on Colonialism': «Europe was calling for its Hitler» by colonizing and genociding indigenous communities all over the world. We need to stop understanding the Holocaust completely isolated from its time, we need to put it into a context. In a context of white supremacy. In a context of a time, where state-led mass murder based on a made-up categorization of race was the norm all over the world. We seem to forget that the idea of race, of one group being worth less than the « white race » is not something Hitler invented.

On the contrary, he copied what Germany and all other colonizing countries were doing at that time. Hitler would not have managed to create this narrative around race and the inferiority

of a people without hundreds of years of indoctrination of colonialism. We should not forget that the Holocaust is not the first genocide carried out by Germany in the 20th century. Already in 1904, Germany built concentration camps in today's Namibia, killing 70% of Nama<sup>1</sup>.

We are not innocent, good hearted white angels that fucked up once. «A nation which colonizes, which justifies colonization is already a sick civilization, a civilization which is morally diseased<sup>2</sup> » We, Germans, are a sick civilization. Sick to the core.

So, what exactly is this sickness that Césaire speaks about? Maybe he means it is sick that a few get richer and richer, while more and more people end up in the streets, without shelter and food. That we put elderly people into elderly homes, forgetting about them as soon as we can. That we let migrants drown in the sea, because we want to keep all the wealth to ourselves. Maybe he means that it is sick, that we can watch the news, see children dying, screaming out for help, then turn off the TV and go on with our normal life, as if nothing is happening. And maybe he means it is sick that a few are responsible for the climate crisis, while the ones that are least responsible suffer the most.

The sickness of the colonizer, and that is what we are in essence, has made us lose our humanity. It makes us hate our neighbours. Hundreds of years of

<sup>1</sup> Source: Exposition - Herero et Nama Herero et Nama ([memorialdelashoah.org](http://memorialdelashoah.org)).

<sup>2</sup> Source: Discourse on Colonialism, text by anticolonial writer Aimé Césaire

colonization have distorted our minds. We don't care, because we are used to it. We are used to living in a country that is the source of suffering and pain. And when we are used to it, when it becomes normal, we cannot resist it, because we don't even see it anymore. We distract ourselves with TV shows and dating apps, because that is definitely much easier than looking reality in the eye. And I do understand why. Because understanding our own sickness, our own complicity and facing the monster inside of us is difficult and it requires bravery.

But it is necessary, because once we look the monster in the eye, once we see that all of this is not normal, we can resist it and fight it. We can heal from this sickness and make sure that the future looks different than the present. We can create a new identity, one that recognizes and challenges global power structures in us, overthrowing the colonial mindset that continues in us until today.

But why is all of this important to understand when we think about what is happening right now in Gaza and all over Palestine ?

As long as we do not recognize our sickness, our deeply rooted culture of domination, we cannot understand that history is not something of the past, but something that is happening right now in front of our eyes. And we cannot understand the responsibility we have in it. Because essentially, we are the

good guys. We were guilty of horrible things in the past, but they happened in the past, and nothing similar can ever happen again. History does not repeat itself. Because admitting that it could, would mean shattering the image of ourselves as innocent angels.

And therefore, we don't start rioting when we learn that the German government has increased the weapon export to Israel 10 times since October 7th, making Germany the second largest weapon exporter to Israel<sup>3</sup>.

We do not cry of sadness and anger when we learn that a hospital has been bombed and 500 people were killed in one night. We do not scream when our politicians tell the Israeli government that we stand behind them, while they kill 30.000 Palestinians, make 2 million people refugees and starve children to death<sup>4</sup>.

Instead we stay silent, because the sickness lives within us, unrecognized. Because we are the good guys, and history does not repeat itself. And that way, genocide happens once again while 80 million eyes are watching, too busy to care.

The monster, that is you and me. It is not some abstract creature, far away from us. No, it is you and me. And it will live on, sucking blood until we, you and me, bring it down.

<sup>3</sup> Sources : Deutsche Rüstungsexporte nach Israel fast verzehnfacht | tagesschau.de; Which countries have stopped supplying arms to Israel? | Israel War on Gaza News | Al Jazeera)

<sup>4</sup> Sources: Scholz in Tel Aviv: "Die Sicherheit Israels ist Staatsräson" | tagesschau.de, Steinmeier zu Besuch in Israel: "Unsere Solidarität gilt" | tagesschau.de)

# Against Number Magic

by Aaron Wells

**Note from the author:** *The following piece was written between November 2023 and January 2024 by a queer white German. While it was intended to be performed, here it appears as a kind of diary that weaves together personal memory and the violence of history, assembled from facts, dates, and news items. It is a piece stemming from the trauma of a history and the desire to expose the hypocrisy of the German state's selective memory. A state will only ever remember what is necessary to sustain itself. It can never remember the full extent of its violence, and it can never remember for you.*

**November 9th, 1989.** Günter Schabowski declares the Berlin Wall open after months of protest telling the government that they were the people (meaning, the people wanting to leave). The opening was planned to be on the 10th, but Schabowski had missed an important meeting and got it wrong. By the evening, the border was so packed with people that border security had to let them through. One person standing on the wall called it what it was: "Wahnsinn".

**Summer, 1989.** Francis Fukuyama publishes his essay *The End of History?* in the "The National Interest", a journal proclaiming that its realist school of thought, in line with the likes of Henry Kissinger, is best to further American interests.

**March 1990.** An Israeli flag, the star of David, impresses itself on the German flag, on the first completed mural of the East Side Gallery. While East Germany supported the creation of Israel, it never recognised Israel as a state, likely because

it was allied with the West since the Korean War. Rather than an addition, the Israeli flag is a replacement of the communist state's hammer, ring of rye, and compass. The writing on the right reads: *"This flag is based on the foundational thought of peace and unity of all peoples. It is a reckoning with the heritage of all German generations after World War II. It is a symbol of unifying and coming together. A warning memorial against every fascist tendency. November 9, 1938: Reichskristallnacht. November 9, 1989: Fall of the Berlin Wall."* The artist Günther Schaefer later phrases this coincidence – he might say fate – as number magic. The writing on the left was added by Israeli artist Varda Carmeli, reading: *"Lead me on my dreams among different time and space. To share hope with nations and believers. To observe with modesty the pure truth. And to reveal prudently the magic and the mystery."* The piece is titled *Vaterland*.

**October 3rd, 1990.** Germany is officially unified. The unification celebration displayed a number of flags of the Third Reich. While the GDR government, under Stalin's hand, continued to be openly antisemitic, showing allegiance to the Nazi government was impossible, unlike in the West. The GDR government saw the FRG as a continuation of fascism, itself as the break from it. Either way, this self-understanding of East Germany died with unification, as did every social security the East had provided its citizens, as did their pride. German unification is best described as annexation: Economically into capitalism, politically into parliamentary democracy, and ideologically into Western modernity.

**November 10th, 1993.** My brother Daniel is born in Hamburg. We both carry Jewish names, by accident, I imagine.

**November 9th, 1918.** The first German socialist republic is declared. Two hours earlier the first German republic is declared. It was a first-come-first-served situation.

Calling out the republic was a way to calm the masses aching for a revolution after the first World War. The German psyche was torn: while everyone believed Germany to be responsible for the war, the Germans believed they were merely defending themselves. The German architects of war believed that attack was simply the best defence.

**November 10th, 2009.** My brother jokes that all important events in history occurred on the 9th, and he is a day late.

**November 8th, 1939.** Carpenter Georg Elser fails to assassinate Adolf Hitler. Hitler left the commemoration of his coup attempt in Munich early. He left because of bad weather. Elser's bombs went off 13 minutes too late.

**November 10th, 2021.** My brother has by now finished his training as a carpenter. He had an awful time during his apprenticeship.

**November 9th, 2015.** Pegida protests take place on the Theaterplatz in Dresden, formerly called Adolf-Hitler-Platz. The protesters are demonstrating against the "Islamisation of the Occident". They shout "We are the people." (meaning the people who are already here). Did *Vaterland* fail to save Vaterland from Vaterland?

**May 25th, 1998.** I wonder about the legitimacy of number magic.

**November 9th, 2023.** The death toll in Gaza has risen to 10,812 Palestinian civilians. The Indonesian hospital,

al Shifa hospital, and al-Nasr hospital were attacked by the Israeli Defence Force. 18 Palestinians were killed in the West Bank. Like Germany, Israel believes attack is the best defence. Israel agrees to stop bombing Gaza for four hours a day to allow civilians to flee. This is a false promise.

**January 13th, 2024.** German government spokesperson Steffen Hebestreit declares that Germany will intervene in the International Court Case against Israel on the charge of genocide. Israel has been "defending itself," he says.

**December 24th, 2022.** My brother tells me that nothing will ever change. All he wants to do now is to start his own carpentry business, become the boss, and take the money. He half jokes. I regrettably joke that, now that he has money, he's lost his spine! He tells me that I've had an easy life. I am upset because it's true.

**November 10th, 2023.** My brother is building a house for our mother to retire in. He cannot work much on it himself since he damaged a disk in his spine. Physical labour will be hard for him.

**March 18th, 2008.** German Chancellor Angela Merkel declares Israel's security Germany's reason of state, in honour of Israel's 60th anniversary on May 14th.

**November 11th, 2023.** Israeli Minister of Agriculture Avi Dichter explains to the press that the government is now "rolling out the Gaza Nakba." Meaning catastrophe. Nakba Day is commemorated yearly on May 15th.



**November 10th, 2007.** I don't remember having celebrated any of my brother's birthdays with him. Surely this is not true. I do remember him wearing a keffiyeh and playing Counterstrike in his room. A game where counter-terrorists and terrorists shoot each other. A classic game map is set in a desert environment.

**April 10th, 2012.** The boys in my class dare each other to challenges by repeating over and over again: Man or Jew? Man or Jew? Man or Jew? I don't say it with them, but I don't stop them. I say other shameful things myself.

**January 20th, 2017.** I visit Auschwitz for the first time by myself. A few months later, I visit Auschwitz a second time, for a class. A guide tells us in a hushed, harsh voice of the horrors of the death camp. Had I been from the GDR, I might have visited Buchenau, not Auschwitz. The East remembered antifascist resistance, the West the victims. I've been taught why the Eastern states relied on the memory of resistance to legitimise themselves. I am starting to understand how the Western states rely on victimhood for the same.

**November 9th, 1938.**

The Reichskristallnacht get its name from the shattered windows of Jewish businesses and homes would fly in the air like crystals. During the state-sanctioned pogrom, 7500 businesses were destroyed, 1200 synagogues burnt, 91 Jews killed. 30,000 Jews were arrested and 1300 died as a direct consequence of the pogrom. It is this 9th of November that provides *Vaterland* with its number magic.

**October 1st, 1954.** One of the main advocates of the controversial *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe* in Berlin, inaugurated later in 2005, turns 18. It is at this age that non-Jew Lea Rosh changes her first name to sound Jewish, on purpose. Her birth name Edith felt awfully German.

**October 25th, 1990.** The German parliament is overjoyed that Jews from the former Soviet Union are moving to the newly unified Germany. Jews are swiftly being granted permanent residencies outside any regular legal framework. *Vaterland* is now Jewish, and Jews are the *Vaterland*, proving Germany has the moral integrity of a modern civilised nation that can legitimately take power in Europe. Somehow, Germany did beat the Soviets in the long game: It beat them to the end of history. Green party member Dietrich Wetzell proudly proclaims to parliament: "Germany is back again."

**November 9th, 2023.** In a speech vowing Germany's support to Israel, Chancellor Olaf Scholz says: "Never again – that matters, we will follow through, today, tomorrow, and for all time." He also says: "Nothing, absolutely nothing, no ethnic descent, no political conviction, no cultural background, no supposedly post-colonial view of history can serve as a reason to celebrate the murder, the cruel slaughter of innocents." He means Israeli civilians.

**October 2nd, 1904.** The German colonial government commits the first genocide of the 20th century in South-West Africa, now named Namibia. General Lothar von Trotha declares: "Any Herero sighted within the German border with or without a weapon, with or without cattle, will be shot. I will no longer accept women and children, but will send them back to their people or have them slaughtered." 80 percent of Herero were killed.

**April 22nd, 1905.** The second genocide of the century falls on the Nama. Imprisoned Herero and Nama were held in concentration camps. Up to 100,000 people died. A more precise number is unavailable.

**May 28th, 2021.** The German government officially apologises to the Herero and Nama. The German and Namibian government work out reparations. The Namibian government will receive 1.1 million euros in development aid over the course of three decades. The Herero and Nama were not invited to negotiations. The Holocaust (meaning sacrifice) was a unique form of genocide, for it was killing for killing's sake. Other genocides, in turn, are pragmatic in nature, aimed at securing resources and labour. This was the reason given for previously denying reparations to the Herero and Nama. Critics of development aid call it a form of neocolonialism.

**September 20th, 1963.** In a speech to the UN, US President John F. Kennedy declares the "Decade of Development". He justifies development aid as a project of making nonmodern states modern. His advisor provides this modernisation theory as an opposition to Communist historical materialism.

**October 17th, 2023.** Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declares his 'War on Hamas' a fight of civilisation versus barbarism, employing a classic modernist trope.

**March 31st, 2016.** The late night show ZDF Neo Magazin Royale releases a music video. This is happening in a debate about what Germany's 'leading culture' should be after an influx of refugees, mainly from the Middle East, in 2015. The host sings: "We are proud of not being proud." He continues: "Human dignity is unimpeachable. You will learn – even we were teachable."

**May 3rd, 2015.** A classmate says: "Why is Germany supposed to remain in shame, when all the other countries can be proud? America can be proud, Britain can be proud. Why not us? Hasn't it been long enough?" He is not white. I am appalled because I learned that pride was not allowed.

**September 10th, 2008.** A tour guide leads a group of immigrants through a concentration camp, as a part of a Holocaust education and integration programme. The tour guide is irritated because the immigrants do not display the right emotions (guilt, shame). Having fled violent circumstances places such as Palestine, the immigrants feel fear: Could they end up in a place like this?

**April 2nd, 1947.** My great grandfather has a heart attack when more information on the Nazi death camps surfaces. He was a member of the SS. I feel guilt and shame. I feel very, very German. It is not just blonde hair that would classify me as Aryan: it is my family's crime, and having acquired the proper feeling of the nation. Historian Dan Diner describes the Holocaust as occupying the place of God before the Enlightenment. The Holocaust marks the sacred sacrifice after which Europe had to spiritually renew itself. Those who did not kill the Jews however remain in a "sacred temporal blockage". Like Dirk Moses says, "He means Arabs." He means Arabs are not modern. He means that to be modern is to love Jews, which you can only do after killing the Jews.

**December 10th, 1948.** The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is adopted. Critics call it an instrument of the West, claiming it is not as universally applied as its title would suggest.

**November 9th, 2023.** Chancellor Olaf Scholz reiterates that the Holocaust was a civilisational rupture. He explains: "Never again – this means first and foremost the physical protection of Jewish institutions and communities. To secure this protection is the task of the state and the duty of citizens alike." My brother said it meant something else.

**October 22nd, 2023.** Opposition leader Friedrich Merz posts on social media X:

"Should there be refugees from Gaza, then this is primarily a concern for the neighbouring states. Germany cannot take in more refugees. We have enough antisemitic young men in our country." He does not refer to white Germans.

**October 20th, 2023.** Chancellor Olaf Scholz declares: "We need to finally deport people on a large scale."

**November 7th, 2023.** Nearly making number magic, Chancellor Olaf Scholz declares a "very historic moment" after his government crafted a set of laws lowering aid to asylum seekers and speeding up deportation.

**December 5th, 2023.** Obtaining citizenship in the state of Sachsen-Anhalt now requires a written declaration stating that you are committed to Israel's right to exist.

**April 13th, 2023.** The newspaper die Zeit publishes private chats of Mathias Dopfner, CEO of Germany's largest publishing house, Springer. "Zionismus über alles," he writes, echoing the banned first line of the German national anthem – "Deutschland über alles." *Vaterland* does not save Vaterland from Vaterland but turns Israel into the new Vaterland.

**October 29th, 2023.** The Israeli government issues 12 licenses to 6 companies to access to gas reserves off the coast of Gaza, making the genocide of Palestinians a pragmatic genocide like any other – categorically incomparable to the spirituality of the Holocaust. Its sacrificial function, though, only goes unnoticed. For Europe, the sacrifice of Palestinians serves as evidence of its spiritual renewal: Europe doesn't kill Jews anymore. Europe learned. Europe now kills Arabs.

**February 27th, 2022.** Chancellor Olaf Scholz declares a turn in history after Russia attacked the Ukraine. Minister of Foreign Affairs Annalena Baerbock declares we all woke up in a new world. Not sure whether history ended or not anymore. The German government commits to spending 100 billion euros on its military.

**November 10th, 2023.** Germany's military exports to Israel have gone up 10-fold compared to last year, standing at 303 million euros. A researcher in an army tent explains to me that, after a war effort ends, an excess of weapons tends to be employed in the militarisation of borders.

**September 29th, 2023.** Just this year, so far over 2500 people have drowned in the Mediterranean seeking refuge.

**December 31st, 2023.** We shout, "cease-fire now!" We are loud.

**January 1st, 2024.** Fireworks go off. They are louder.

Today. My brother is getting surgery, a new disk for his spine. I hope he is going to be okay.

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# Verdict of the International Court of Justice and Germany's Complicity in the Genocide in Gaza:

A Call for Responsibility & Justice

by *Safia Moursy*

On January 26, 2024, the International Court of Justice announced an interim ruling in South Africa's accusation of genocide against Israel. The fact that such a quick preliminary verdict was found in a historic process like this shows how urgent and catastrophic the situation is in Gaza. South Africa's demands were granted on most counts. This means, among other things, that the ICJ has accepted the lawsuit and is responsible for it. The ICJ also ruled that the lawsuit was "plausible." Plausibility in the legal context can be understood as traceability. This means that emergency measures are necessary, but the complaint has not yet been completely classified as true. The ICJ ordered these measures against Israel. However, this does not mean that Israel was explicitly called upon to cease fire. The following measures are now to be implemented by Israel:<sup>1</sup>

1. Israel should do everything to ensure that no genocidal acts are carried out against Palestinians in Gaza.
2. Israel should ensure that its military does not commit genocidal acts in Gaza.
3. It is also intended to prevent people in Israel from publicly calling for genocide against the people of Palestine.
4. Israel should ensure that the people of Gaza receive the important things they urgently need, such as services and aid.
5. Israel should also ensure that it collects evidence to clarify South Africa's allegations.
6. Within a month, Israel is expected to submit a report to the International Court of Justice showing that it has complied with the instructions.

<sup>1</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Unnye0v-QVIpDBVfYb2lQykV8GF-ILPY/view> and [https://www.instagram.com/p/C2mIWSlsW3Q/?img\\_index=1](https://www.instagram.com/p/C2mIWSlsW3Q/?img_index=1)

Since the ICJ did not explicitly call for a ceasefire, the USA, for example, sees the interim ruling as a partial victory because it has now been confirmed that Israel has a right to self-defense. Israel also wants to convince other countries to maintain ties with Israel. Germany, Great Britain and the USA have dismissed the accusation of genocide as baseless and the verdict humiliates these countries. What does this mean for Israel? The country is now in a quandary. They must establish a ceasefire so that the requirements can be met. However, the ICJ has no power to call a ceasefire since it has no executive power. Failure to meet the requirements will potentially lead to Israel's political isolation.

That is why it is so shocking that shortly after the ICJ ruling, Israel announced that 12 UNRWA employees were involved in the attacks on October 7th<sup>2</sup>. Since its formation, UNRWA has been tasked with implementing direct assistance and work programs for Palestinian refugees. In Gaza, UNRWA has 13,000 employees, 183 schools and 22 health facilities. Of these 13,000 employees, at least 154 were murdered by Israeli air strikes<sup>3</sup>. In addition, the schools and institutions, which are now places of refuge for displaced Palestinians, were hit dozens of times by Israeli bombings, murdering many. On January 26th,

several countries stopped aid funds to UNRWA, including the USA, Great Britain and of course Germany<sup>4</sup>. On the same day, the International Court of Justice ruled that more aid should go to Gaza. Additionally, it was not yet confirmed at the time that the 12 employees were involved. Nevertheless, UNRWA had already terminated the employees. Nevertheless, billions in aid money are being stopped while there is famine in Gaza.

Not to mention that Israel uses hunger as a weapon of war. Among other things, Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz writes on X: "We have been warning for years: UNRWA [...] serves as a civilian arm of Hamas in Gaza."<sup>5</sup> All this happened within 48 the verdict of the ICJ. The verdict was that Israel should protect Palestinians, but kills at least 350 Palestinians in 48 hours. I'm very suspicious of the timing and I just can't stop thinking about the fact that the termination of aid money to UNRWA is connected to the ICJ ruling.

One of my favorite things to do is to read comments below Tagesschau posts. A post, titled "Situation in the Middle East" reported that Germany has suspended aid funds to UNRWA. One comment said roughly (I can't remember the exact wording) that the person who wrote the comment did not want German tax money to

<sup>2</sup><https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/29/israeli-intelligence-accuses-unrwa-staff-of-kidnap-seizing-body>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/02/12/unrwas-demise-would-be-catastrophic-gaza#:~:text=By%20the%20agency's%20count%2C%20at,to%20the%20Gaza%20Health%20Ministry.>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/28/which-countries-have-cut-funding-to-unrwa-and-why>

<sup>5</sup>[https://twitter.com/Israel\\_katz/status/1751153470617379008?](https://twitter.com/Israel_katz/status/1751153470617379008?)



go to terrorists. This makes me wonder whether the person who wrote this comment is really so blinded to continue believing that it is the correct response from Germany to keep sending arms and tax money to Israel, in order to kill innocent people in Gaza. The fact that this is Germany's reaction after the ICJ ruling is deeply shameful. German arms exports to Israel have increased tenfold since October 7, 2023<sup>6</sup>. This is coming from a government that campaigned to stop arms exports to crisis areas during the federal election<sup>7</sup>.

How can it be that this does not cause a huge uproar in our society? 28,000 people have now been murdered through our tax money, and yet arms exports are not stopped. It is unacceptable that in German politics, promises made to the people, and are immediately being broken, over and over again.

Meanwhile, our Chancellor Olaf Scholz is proud of us because we, the German people, are taking to the streets for reparations and demonstrating against the right. Olaf darling, we are demonstrating against you too! Moreover, the fight "against the right" apparently ends at the German national borders. In Berlin, people in the pro-Palestine block are spat on and insulted, in Hamburg they are booed and in Kiel you are not even allowed to fly the Pali flag. As a migrant and racialized person, I do not feel welcome at all at a demonstration in solidarity with migrant

and racialized people. Oh, and in case you leftist people aren't sure: against the right includes all right-wing governments around the world. In fact Israel's government is extremely right-wing. Meanwhile, Annalena Baerbock meets with Israeli President Herzog and emphasizes Israel's right to self-defense after. While in Gaza the death toll rose to over 28,000. While there is a famine. While menstruating people use unhygienic pieces of tents as pads. Annalena Baerbock, who always wants to draw attention to her feminist foreign policy.

South Africa has given the starting signal in the case against Israel, and other countries are now being accused of complicity in the genocide in Gaza. For example, Namibia has accused Germany of complicity in the genocide. Between 1904 and 1908, the German Empire committed genocide against the Herero and Nama people in its colony of German Southwest Africa, today's Namibia. Thousands were killed and many more were forced to work in concentration camps. To date, Germany has not officially recognized this genocide. All this strongly suggests that BIPOCs do not mean much to our government. At this time, more than ever, Germany should do everything it can to prevent another genocide. I condemn the German government in the strongest possible terms.

<sup>6</sup><https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/israel-deutschland-ruestungsexporte-100.html>

<sup>7</sup>[https://twitter.com/Die\\_Gruenen/status/1440316635126980623](https://twitter.com/Die_Gruenen/status/1440316635126980623)

# Tell it to the Peat

*by Lara-Lane Plambeck*

Grieving for the unheard voices,  
for the repressed rage and the stolen  
lives in Gaza

I walk around like a zombie  
helpless and numb  
in shock about this happening again

This is what I learned about for many  
years at school

- for it to never happen again  
I go to a protest to scream for the  
civilians of Gaza  
Cease fire now!  
And no one shows up  
as the repressive state powers forbid  
the assemblies all over Germany

Genocide again  
and nothing really changes  
people prefer to have their planned  
coffee dates  
and the ones going to the streets are  
not allowed to call it a mass murder  
- this is fascism at its best

74 years since mass genocide carried  
out by German nazis  
74 years of holocaust memorial days  
and building up shame about our  
history  
so that now it can happen again  
No one's really grieved  
and now here we are, relieved that it's  
so black and white

It is only black and white if we watch  
German-sponsored genocide in Gaza  
through a historical lens of repressed  
shame and guilt

This is not a film!!!  
Wake up, people, to the pain your  
ancestors haven't felt!

Usually, I walk to the bog in the middle  
of the forest  
to find consolation and to grieve in  
safety  
but something has changed recently

I have dived deep  
into my ancestors' history lately  
I asked questions to the village elders  
and when truth meets me, I welcome it  
in with a wide, open heart

I heard stories of buried weapons in the  
Knicks  
and nazi uniforms being re-sewn into  
trousers for the kids  
as the English approach

When I walk to the bog now,  
I feel haunted by the ghost  
of Hitler's guard of whom I now know  
that he'd been hiding in the forest for  
two years after the war  
supported by the whole village

All of them hiding from the truth of their  
complicity

These truths were shared when I actu-  
ally asked about the Uklei lake  
its deep, dark waters make people  
speak  
something inside them must sense  
that the Uklei is a witness to our  
secrets

When I walk to the Uklei now,  
I walk the tracks of buried truths and  
crimes of the past  
When I sink into the mud,  
I sink into remembrance

At the Uklei-lake,  
The place most sacred to me,  
the place where I pray,  
I am now in the presence of drowned  
weapons  
and a sunken tank  
One can still see how it has shaped  
the earth around the lake  
with its heaviness  
they say

The lake is not a sublime beauty  
anymore,  
a place to be distracted from the real  
world of war  
its beauty now lies in its capacity to  
hold truth  
and to allow beauty and pain to coex-  
ist in the same realm

it is a witness and a victim  
of my ancestors' lies,  
of my ancestors' crimes

I honor you, Uklei,  
as my sacred portal of remembrance

This year, a friend of mine told me  
they lost their family to Auschwitz  
This year, I truly, deeply felt  
the heaviness of my people's buried  
stories

Pain and soaking secrets  
have been haunting me to sleep  
I have cried and screamed and

grieved  
for all the repressed realities,  
emotions and stories  
buried in the depths  
of my favorite place,  
itself a survivor of extractivism and  
war  
a living embodiment of persistence

The old people with the stories  
are slowly deceasing  
but I will remember them every single  
day  
on my way to the soggy depths

Every time I am there to pray,  
I promise, I will remember

Today,  
I am shaken by the pain of so many  
lives  
on our culture's conscience  
tons of weapons shipped from our  
port to Israel  
people proud to be Zionists because  
it means they are clearly politically left

A mass-murder financed by collective  
guilt and taxes  
a genocide,  
again

Where are the 15000 people assem-  
bling for a protest against the polit-  
ical right when we organize to free  
Palestine?

You all seem to remember well - for  
it to never happen again - at your  
Holocaust memorial day!

I feel lonely amidst my own people  
these days  
so I walk to the Uklei  
and I sit with the ghosts of the past  
that are haunting Gaza right now

And I tell it all to the peat  
I let it sink in real deep  
And with every tear soaked up by the  
mosses  
this war, too, is being buried in deep  
time  
preserved for those ready to  
remember



