

The West's Liberal "Left" and the "Rationalizing" of Genocide in Historic Palestine

By [Phil Greaves](#)

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The latest Israeli massacres in Gaza have once again laid bare the genocidal policies of the Zionist regime and its imperial backers in the United States-led NATO alliance.

Since its violent colonial inception in 1948, known as the Nakba, נאקבא catastrophe – the historical event which thoroughly debunks the false perception of a peace-seeking Israeli state surrounded by “inhospitable Arabs” – the Zionist leadership has in fact had no intention of a “durable peace” with the Palestinians or their Arab neighbours. As over 66 years of ethnic cleansing, periodic mass murder, endless kidnappings and incarceration, land theft and wars of aggression have clearly shown — “peace”, let alone the possibility of genuine Palestinian autonomy within the Bantustans and ghettos the Israeli’s have created in historic Palestine, has never been on the Zionist or imperialist agenda.

Only a crude revisionist or devout partisan of the highest order is able to analyse the historical and present policies of Israel and its imperial backers and come to any other conclusion that the full expulsion and expropriation of the Palestinian people and their land is the desired end-goal. Indeed, over the years many an Israeli politician, militarist or policy planner have openly revealed as much, and such zealous policy is reflected in the views and ideology of the occupying Israeli population – evidenced once more in recent polls showing the overwhelming majority of Israelis support the massacres and wish for them to continue (1). This is to say nothing of the blatant xenophobia so pervasive within Israeli society and the widespread scenes of racist Israeli mobs cheering on the massacres from grandstands with popcorn or freely chanting “Death to the Arabs” and worse throughout the streets of Tel Aviv. Yet a common perspective still held in the west toward the latest slaughter in Gaza – even within so-called “Left” circles – is largely one of shock and disbelief, as if this most recent bout of imperial-sanctioned fascist brutality is the exception, and not the longstanding rule.

As Greg Shupak points out:

“describing such violence as aimless misses the underlying logic of Israel’s conduct throughout Operation Protective Edge and, indeed, for much of its history.

Driven by both its own settler-colonial agenda and by its function as an American partner in the geopolitical system, Israel strives to balance its desire to maximize the territory it controls against the imperative of minimizing the number of Palestinians living in the territories it seeks to use for its own purposes.

The result is that Palestinians are not merely subject to extreme violence.

Rather, their capacity to live autonomously in historic Palestine is being attacked. ... Not only does the current Israeli onslaught end the physical existence of specific Palestinian individuals, it aims to obliterate Palestinians as a people with the capacity to live independently in their homeland.” (2)

Yet despite this, the western liberal “Left” commentariat is by no means averse to the aforementioned reductionist strain of analysis. As an example, leading propagandist of the UK Labour Party Owen Jones has once again been kind enough to provide the Guardian’s white-western liberal readership with a typically opportunist variation on dissent. (3) Using his platform to build false equivalence and portray racist Israeli occupiers as victims, Jones informs that Israel’s premeditated mass murder is merely an “offensive” with a “rationale” that “must be understood”.

According to Jones, the “rationale” behind Israel’s colonial aggression must also be immediately understood not from the point of view of the oppressed Palestinians, but from the point of view of the oppressor. And what is this “rationale” one might ask? Well, of course it is the historical persecution of the Jews; the Holocaust, the pogroms of tsarist Russia etc, and more importantly the appropriated victimhood that follows. Apparently, “the moral corruption that comes with any occupation has fused with the collective trauma of the Jewish people”, says Jones, and there are indeed several liberal Zionists that back him up on this matter (evidently, there are never any Palestinians in Jones’ articles on the subject). But once again this is purely an attempt to mitigate and make excuses for Zionist colonialism by conflating the racist occupiers of today with the Jewish victims of yesterday. Jones crassly attempts to conflate the history of Jewish persecution with the Zionist regime and its zealous subjects in order to afford the latter with false moral legitimacy.

This false perception has proven to be a fundamental one in legitimizing the Zionist project since its very beginnings; promoted by the Zionist leadership and their cohorts to furnish what would otherwise be considered colonial genocidaires with a moral smokescreen to continue their murderous policies unabated. What Jones demands is that the Israeli regime, the violent racist settlers, and the twisted ideology they hold be afforded “understanding” due to the “collective trauma” inflicted upon Jews throughout history – it is to make Jews and Zionists one and the same. Not only does Jones attempt to propagate this revolting conflation of persecuted Jews with racist Zionists but he does it under the guise of feigned “Left” condemnation – purporting to be on a quest to understand it, he merely repeats the Israeli-line without offering an ounce of criticism.

Simply put, the desired effect of regurgitating the supremacist ideological basis for the “Jewish State” and asking for “understanding” is to depict racist settlers as Jewish victims, to whitewash and sanitize, to excuse, to empathise with the Zionists imperial-sanctioned systematic brutality and oppression in Palestine and validate their warped rationalizations. In reality, of course, the history of Jewish persecution has absolutely no relevance to Zionism other than when it is used to legitimise the fascistic policies and ideology of the latter.

The duplicity is taken a step further as Jones forwards the idea that Israeli colonialism can be compared with the British empire’s oppression and colonialism in Ireland. While there is indeed a correlation between the two forms of colonialism this anachronistic comparison detached from any wider context is nothing but an attempt to portray Israel as a legitimate state; as if the Israeli state existed *before* it usurped Palestine and may return to a post-colonial incarnation once the occupation has quietly ended – presumably to the borders of 1967. This point of view is further evidenced by Jones’ explicit wording regarding “an end to

the occupation and the dismantling of every settlement” — how very two-state solution. But Israel the state, its culture and ideology, born in 1948, are entirely a product of colonial occupation and would not exist in any form if that occupation and ongoing policy of colonisation were to be ended *in full*. Jones wants to portray Israel as merely a legitimate state occupying another, not an *entirely illegitimate state* built from the wholesale theft of another, and the oppression murder and expulsion of its people.

Such opportunism is further exposed by Jones’ positions toward Palestinian resistance group Hamas. Jones’ liberal Zionist source tells us that to Israelis “Gaza residents are homogenised as Hamas supporters – even though most were not of voting age when the group was elected in 2006 – justifying collective punishment.” But Jones fails to offer any clarification that this is a fundamentally wrongheaded way to think, he just leaves it floating for the reader to assume the justification is valid, in that collective punishment for the “crime” of supporting Hamas is a somewhat “understandable” position to take and should be empathized with, because after all Hamas are “terrorists” and Israelis are just poor victims.

This is of course not a position to be merely “understood”, or to be at all empathized with; it is a position intrinsic to an underlying racist ideology that is to be vehemently opposed. But Jones and Co. simply lack the backbone. In a revealing quote from an earlier piece Jones also tells us that “there is no defence for Hamas firing rockets into civilian areas”(4), thereby not only bolstering the Israeli regime’s lies that Hamas targets Israeli civilians – in fact they have gone to great lengths to target occupation forces while the occupation forces have mercilessly slaughtered women and children from planes and tanks – but also negating the Palestinians right, by International Law no less, to engage in armed resistance to occupation. What self-respecting “Leftist” denies Palestinians the right to resist a fascist military occupation? A social-chauvinist, social-imperialist “Leftist”, that’s who.

Citing Netanyahu’s use of the Holocaust to depict Israelis as threatened victims, Jones almost appears to “understand the rationale” but he is avoiding calling it by its real name: ideology. It is not simply a metaphysical “rationale” that engenders Israeli massacres in Gaza, it is a pervasive racist colonial ideology called Zionism, but Jones doesn’t want to name it because his interest is in hiding the full consequences of confronting that depraved ideology – moreover its specific material causes – behind liberal platitudes and empty condemnations.

There is of course no attempt whatsoever from the social imperialists at “understanding” the economic material causes that engender Zionist barbarity, and this is largely due to the fact that exposing such causes would make a mockery of the imperial-extricating bourgeois propaganda they sell. Zionism is, and has always been used in a strictly colonial sense, in that it forms the culture, ideology and state structure for the entire imperialist-sponsored Israeli project. Zionism is fascism, and to call-out the Israeli state as a fascist colonial manifestation that is reliant on western imperialism is simply too far a stretch for Oxford-educated Labour Party propagandists.

By no means the only western “Left” pundit to employ this conflation of Jewish persecution and Zionism, Jones’ liberal-imperialist propagandist-in-arms Laurie Penny decided to take up the baton in much the same way, but with far less subtlety. Employing the same perfidious conflation of Jews and Zionists under the guise of “Left” condemnation, Penny concocts a call for Jewish guilt, informing us that “Jews are better placed than anyone else to articulate a powerful call for ceasefire” (5). Thus, Penny bolsters the Zionist regimes’ propaganda and supremacist ideology by validating the perception that Israel represents Jews, and then

demands that they take responsibility for Zionism. By associating Zionists with historically persecuted Jews Penny attempts to surreptitiously justify Zionist aggression and colonialism, and in turn bolster Israel's false moral justification: its use of the "fear" of Jewish annihilation to obscure and mitigate its aggressive policies.

In what can only be seen as a massive oversight, Penny invokes the same false moralism as Jones in crudely positing that the "The moral basis for Israel's persecution of the Palestinian people is eroding fast." As if such a "moral basis" for Israeli persecution of Palestinians *has ever existed* outside the depraved mindset of Zionists and white supremacist imperialists, or two-state-solution enthusiasts, also known as liberal Zionists.

Jones and Co. seek "understanding" for this ideology and leave it at that, there is no real analysis of what this ideology is, where it stems from and why it has been employed by Zionist ruling classes and their imperial counterparts to produce the massacres and incremental genocide of the last 66 years. Zionism's inherent racism and the effect it has on the occupying population is largely ignored; there is no understanding, just feeble pleas to the reader. Jones wants to whitewash it, furnish it with Jewish victimhood and then sweep it under the carpet. But not only does Jones the social chauvinist attempt to whitewash the true extent of this ideology and its vital relationship with western imperialism, but he totally ignores the material causes that bring it about.

Contrary to Jones' apolitical non-materialist approach to Israeli "rationales", there is a fundamental economic material cause that buttresses and sustains Israeli fascism, and that is western imperialism. The Israeli state has provided western capital with its most crucial foothold in the resource-rich Middle East since its inception. Initially used by the British as a bulwark against the rising tide of Arab nationalism and national liberation movements, and to uphold a position of military/strategic dominance over the region's massive resources, then taken fully into the fold of American imperialism with the decline of the British empire to meet the same ends — the Zionist leadership have provided the west with a reliable client willing to go to great lengths in aiding western imperial hegemony in return for maintaining its sponsorship and support for its colonial agenda.

As Bashir Abu-Manneh explains of "imperialism-colonialism":

"The United States has been determining major economic and political outcomes in the Middle East since at least 1967, with Israel continuing to play a crucial role in their realization. In Israel-Palestine, this has meant that force and colonial peace have alternated as main instruments of policy, with the main objective being a constant: Jewish supremacy in Palestine—as much land as possible, as few Palestinians as possible. The United States has exploited this Zionist imperative for its own interests in the region, and has fostered a militarized and fundamentalist Israel in the process."

The dynamic of American Empire/Israeli colonialism is, therefore, circular: U.S. support reinforces Israeli colonialism and occupation, which bolsters Israeli militarization of state and society, which generates new ideological and political justifications and breeds new religious fanaticisms, leading to further indigenous resistance and to more U.S. interventions in the region. A cycle of violence if ever there was one, ultimately determined by U.S. imperialism. The United States thus becomes both a necessary and sufficient condition for Israel's colonial expansionism. Without it, Israel would be a pariah state. Without it, conditions of peaceful coexistence in the region are much more likely. Without it, Israeli militarism and Jewish fundamentalism in Israel would be on the defensive; and the mobilization of internal domestic forces calling for

the abandonment of the “national security” ethic and the rejection of living by the sword would have a real chance of gaining political ascendancy in Israel.”(6)

The results of such policies and the co-dependent “circular” relationship between US imperialism and Zionist colonialism are clear for all to see: an ever-diminishing Palestine and a constant Israeli attack on the Palestinians’ very means of existence. The latest bombardment yet again provides explicit evidence of this genocidal policy; from the intentional bombing of civilian infrastructure, the wholesale destruction of urban zones, cultural and educational facilities, to the deliberate targeting of children – even when under the supposed safety of UN protection – are all colonial policies designed to prevent the survival of, or permanently expel the Palestinian population. The dependency on US imperialism is also as clear as day; without the US’ Orwellian diplomatic and media cover public outcry would be far greater within the west; the now largely defunct and thoroughly subordinated UN – which has always primarily provided the “Great Powers”, now mainly the US and its NATO lackeys, with a dominant position over the “lesser” nations – could have perhaps been more effective in countering Israeli colonialism if it weren’t for American security council vetoes. More importantly still, without US military and economic support Israel would certainly be far less able to sustain its dominant military posture, thereby its aggression and meddling toward its Arab neighbours, let alone pursue a genocidal policy of expansionism.

On the other side of the bargain, and providing the most crucial return in supporting Zionism for the western imperial class, is the furthering of regional chaos, antagonism, and conflict, thereby weakened subordinated Arab states and peoples that western capital seeks to repress – to force down the road of political reaction and to exploit. In one form or another Israel has provided western imperialism with its most reliable asset in the repression and exploitation of the Middle East. Until this colonial manifestation of western imperialism is abolished in full, and its racist ideological structure along with it, thereby freeing the Palestinians and Arabs from western imperialism *and* Zionist oppression, there will be no “durable peace”.

The western “Left” liberals and social chauvinists seeking mere “understanding” of the oppressor and affording it false equivalence aim to mitigate and obscure both the inherently fascist character of Zionism and the Israeli State, and its critical role in buttressing western imperial domination of the Middle East.

Notes

- 1.) [Over 90% of Israelis say Gaza Op justified](#). – Times of Israel.
- 2.) [The Logic of Israeli Violence](#). – Greg Shupak
- 3.) [How the occupation of Gaza corrupts the occupier](#). – Owen Jones.
- 4.) [Israel is under renewed Hamas attack, says the BBC, more balance is needed](#). – Owen Jones.
- 5.) [As Israel’s assault on Gaza intensifies, its not anti-semitic to say not in my name](#). – Laurie Penny.
- 6.) [Israel in the US Empire](#). – Bashir Abu-Manneh

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