

When Will Ayanna Pressley Realize that “the Pain” She Feels Is the Identical Pain Palestinians Feel?

By [Rima Najjar](#)

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When Michelle Alexander, a distinguished African-American scholar, wrote her now famous [column](#) in The New York Times, ‘Time to Break the Silence on Palestine’, her sympathetic words toward Palestinians received huge attention. Her article became a “watershed moment ... with arguably even more impact on mainstream U.S. opinion than Israel’s onslaught last spring against Gaza’s Great March of Return, which left more than 150 Palestinians dead and another 5800 wounded by live ammunition.”

In commenting about the astonishing impact of Alexander’s column, James North expressed puzzlement. After all, it wasn’t the first time that The New York Times had published a piece favorable to Palestinians. At the top of a list of tentative [explanations](#) for the furor generated by Alexander’s column, North listed the following:

First, Alexander reveals an open secret — that many mainstream American progressives have been afraid to speak out against Israel because they fear losing funding for their other important causes, or they fear being smeared by the pro-Israel forces.

I believe North’s explanation above, the “open secret” he refers to, is behind so-called progressive African-American Rep. Ayanna Pressley’s (D-Mass.) discordant vote on HRes246 — i.e., her vote in favor of the anti-BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions movement against Israel) House resolution that was passed overwhelmingly.

Her motivation is an “open secret”. Some are saying she caved in to pressure from pro-Israel groups such as J-Street. Others speculate that Pressley was set up by such groups, from the very beginning, in order to unseat a progressive democrat in Massachusetts who had been willing to be approached by his constituents on the issue of Palestine.

All the indications for the rumors above are there. Until she was prevented from doing so by an injury, Pressley was scheduled to be the keynote speaker at a fundraiser dinner celebrating immigrants organized by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), a Zionist, anti-Palestinian organization. Unlike her predecessor longtime Rep. Michael Capuano, who was approachable on Palestine, she has reportedly consistently stonewalled all attempts to reach her by Palestinian solidarity activists in her state and surrounded herself by advisers associated with Zionist groups.

That Ayanna Pressley is a supposedly progressive, young rising black politician makes her vote on HRes246 and her positioning on the issue of Palestine especially shocking and

disconcerting.

In an interview on “CBS This Morning” regarding Trump’s attacks against Pressley and the three other freshmen lawmakers targeted by racist Trump tweets (Rashida Tlaib, Ilhan Omar and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez), Pressley [described](#) the so-called “Squad” as coming together on the issue of immigration. She made the point that,

Each of us represent very different districts and each of us bring our unique and our authentic voice to this body. We govern in our own way. What we are four women who have an alignment of values, shared policy priorities. There is no insurgency here. ...What we are four lawmakers who happened to land in the same place on the same issue [immigration] time and time again.

I am compelled to ask, though, just how “authentic” is Ayanna Pressley’s voice both as a black woman and as a progressive? Her policy adviser Lynese Wallace describes Pressley’s “guiding principle” as the belief that “the people closest to the pain should be closest to the power driving and informing policymaking.”

Why then do her values, principles and pain land in a dark place on the issue of the Palestinian struggle for freedom — land far apart from her three other colleagues and in sync with “Conservative Democrat” Dan Lipinski (a white male), who represents Illinois’ 3rd Congressional District, and who also voted yes to condemning the BDS movement in the House, despite the fact that his district has the highest concentration of Palestinians in the state? Such a “landing” doesn’t “just happen”.

Commenting on Pressley’s vote against BDS, Eoin Higgins (Common Dreams) [says](#):

If Pressley doesn’t get Palestine on this most basic and limited point she’s made her position clear. This is an Israel lobby resolution targeting a nonviolent resistance movement.

When will Pressley realize that “the pain” she is feeling is the identical pain Palestinians feel?

I invite her to read Hamid Dabashi’s article in AL Jazeera [Black Lives Matter and Palestine: A historic alliance](#): A new generation of civil rights uprising has now picked up where the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s left off.

In the Al Jazeera article, Dabashi writes:

Progressive forces now gathered around this noble movement for the dignity of black lives and beyond are in fact late in joining the rest of the civilised world denouncing the systemic violence at the core of the Israeli settler colony.

Ayanna Pressley is better advised not to tarry any longer in joining the civilized world and her truly progressive colleagues in the “Squad” on the issue of Palestinian liberation.

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Rima Najjar is a Palestinian whose father's side of the family comes from the forcibly depopulated village of Lifta on the western outskirts of Jerusalem. She is an activist, researcher and retired professor of English literature, Al-Quds University, occupied West Bank. She is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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