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‘Watering Down’ Genocide: No More Moral Compromises on Palestine, Please

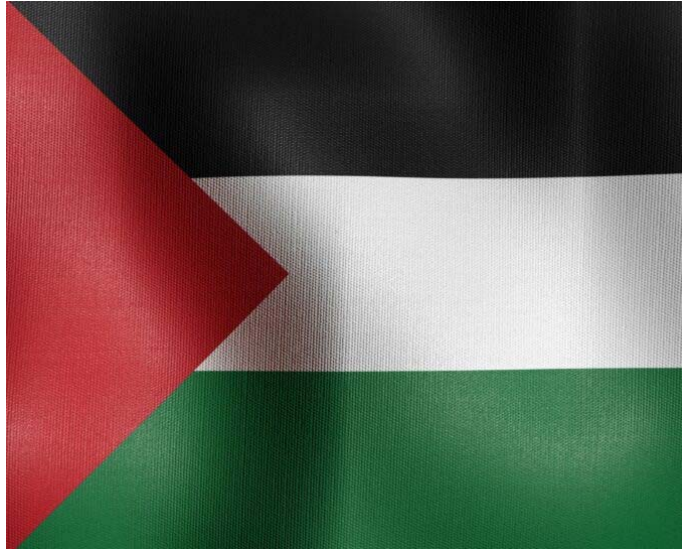


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Why are many amongst us still tiptoeing around language when it comes to the horrific Israeli genocide in Gaza?

Layers of censorship imposed on Palestinian and pro-Palestinian voices in corporate and social media seem to have blurred the judgment of some. They continue to speak of a ‘conflict’, calling on ‘both sides’ to use ‘restraint’ and, partly, blaming the Palestinian Resistance for the ongoing Israeli massacres.

Though such language is expected from the ‘sensible’ few of mainstream media, there are those who are counted as ‘pro-Palestine’ intellectuals, journalists and activists who often use similar language.

Throughout the years, the common wisdom is that, for a pro-Palestine voice to be published in mainstream US-western newspapers, he or she would have to adhere to a certain set of rules and avoid certain adjectives to describe Israel – even if such vocabulary is consistent with good sense, international law or the judgment of leading human rights organizations.

By ‘watering down the language’, one supposedly gains greater credibility, thus space to be heard or published.

Equally true, it is also practically forbidden to defend the Palestinian people’s internationally recognized rights to use all forms of resistance, or to support their democratic choices, because the outcomes of which are, maybe, not consistent with mainstream western thinking. Some are even afraid to use the term ‘resistance’ altogether. But if Palestinians are denied their most basic right to resist, they become deprived of any human agency, let alone relevance as political actors. The notion would then suggest that Palestinians can only serve the role of victims, and nothing else. Not only is this untrue, and condescending, it is outright bigoted, as well.

All this tiptoeing around what should have been a clear language on Palestine, comes at a price. When the truth is masked or hidden, the space becomes open for lies, deceptions and quasi-truths.

In this alternative space, Israel is, at best, equally culpable for the ‘war’ in Palestine as the Palestinians themselves; and, at worst, the Israeli army is merely engaging in a state of self-defense.

Additionally, by tightly controlling the discourse on Palestine, the West has harmed its own interests. Indeed, by marginalizing authentic Palestinian voices, the West has lost its ability to understand the context behind the current Israeli war on Gaza, to accept or navigate its share of responsibility in the genocide and to play any meaningful role in bringing the atrocities to an end.

The outcome is an unavoidable cognitive dissonance – where western governments are violating the very rules they had created, opposing the laws they enshrined and investing in an Israeli genocide in Gaza, while criticizing war elsewhere.

I doubt that the West will ever succeed in claiming any moral authority, retrieve its lost credibility or build lasting trust with Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims or the Global South. The extermination of one’s people entitles a person to some degree of cynicism.

To further expose western duplicity in Gaza, however, we must learn to speak with no reservations, no matter the restrictions on the pro-Palestine voice or the censorship on social media.

Naturally, not all Palestinians and pro-Palestinian voices agree on everything. There are those willing to risk everything, and those who want to tell some kind of truth without risking the loss of their privileges, careers or standing in society.

It is those in the former group who deserve platforms and must be celebrated for their courage.

One of the most inspiring examples are young students in US and western universities who have risked their own futures – as in being expelled from universities or denied their degrees – for raising awareness about the Israeli genocide in Gaza.

Those students are the true leaders of justice-based solidarity movements, now and in the future.

They have understood that, due to the unprecedented censorship of authentic Palestinian voices in all media platforms, their actions on campuses, in the streets and every available venue are critical.

The risks they have taken by speaking out for Gaza's genocide victims will serve as a new threshold of courage that will inspire the youth of this and future generations.

Equally important is that these students have refused to compromise on their language, their demands and their priorities to simply fit in, to get published or use a genocide as an opportunity to build careers.

As for those who exploited the Palestinian suffering for their own benefit, neither history nor the rest of us will forgive their opportunism and intellectual timidity.

Those who are well-intentioned, but 'water down' their language to circumvent censorship, ultimately make little difference, because there are certain truths that cannot be softened or diluted.

Indeed, there is no other honest way of phrasing what is taking place in Gaza but as a genocide, one for which only Israel – a military occupier and apartheid state – can be blamed.

The only Palestinians who deserve blame or condemnation are those who are collaborating with Israel to ensure the outcome of the war remains consistent with their interests, financial status and false titles. No amount of money or prestige will ever redeem the credibility or honor of such people.

“In a time of deceit telling the truth is a revolutionary act,” said George Orwell. Sadly, we live in these times. It is equally true that, in a time of genocide, not telling the truth is the most contemptible of all acts.

Please continue to speak out; be radical; be revolutionary and never equate between those carrying out the genocide.

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