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## *Naples, Italy Stands With Gaza*



Image by il\_corvo.

The seaside metropolis of Naples (Napoli), Italy has been known as a city of resistance and rebellion throughout its storied history. In their book *The Many Headed Hydra: the hidden history of the revolutionary Atlantic*, historians Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker dedicated a chapter to the 1647 insurrection that took place in Napoli led by fish monger Tommaso Aniello who was known as Masaniello. During Masaniello's revolt the people of Naples rose up, wrested power from their Spanish rulers and created a free and democratic republic. This temporary revolution inspired revolts and insurgencies throughout the world as the word was spread on shipping routes. The people of Naples are anarchic and spontaneous

with a character that matches the dramatic beauty of their volcanic seaside landscape considered by anyone that has been here to be one of the most beautiful places on Earth.

Napoli is a metropolis that lives and breathes resistance when it comes to Palestine, as well. The idea and the expressions of Palestinian solidarity have been woven into the fabric of the city for decades, long before the horrendous intensification of the genocide on the Palestinian people that we have witnessed since October 7<sup>th</sup>. Thanks to the heartfelt work of the local Palestinian community and civil society, Naples has forged a lasting twin cities program with the Palestinian city of Nablus, that both share a name originating in ancient Rome. Over the past months there have been countless demonstrations, art shows, film screenings, speaking engagements, theatre performances, concerts — events and expressions of solidarity of all kinds with some, like the large concert event *Life for Gaza* written up in the pages of Counterpunch.

The people of Naples exemplify a bottom-up sense of human solidarity and direct democracy that make it a natural place for a united cry against the racist, colonialist, nationalist and supremacist ideology of Zionism to cry out. It is no surprise to those who know Naples that there exists a slow food restaurant called the *Taverna di Santa Chiara* that supports the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions movement on the apartheid and genocidal state of Israel and considers itself a safe space from the Israeli apartheid regime and its hate filled rhetoric. However, the reality of Naples may have caught a couple of Zionist provocateurs and Israeli tourists by surprise. Here is Nives Monda who is the owner of the Taverna Santa Chiara in her own words:

“On Saturday 3 May we were the victims of an intimidating episode by a patron who, after having lunch in our restaurant, started talking loudly, clearly implying that she was a supporter of the Israeli government’s international crimes against the Palestinian people. At that point, being the conscientious citizens that we are, we pointed out that we condemn the ongoing Palestinian genocide as a crime against humanity. The tourist immediately started accusing us of anti-Semitism, of supporting the Palestinian people whom, in her words, she identified as terrorists and, therefore, accusing us of supporting terrorists and repeatedly yelling that we were terrorist supporters. The tourist, meanwhile, started filming us and our workers, as well as other customers without the consent of those being filmed (including minors from another customer’s family), and then spreading the video on the net (a crime), defaming us as supporters of terrorism and anti-Semites (another crime), and unleashing a campaign of hatred that has since resulted in anonymous messages with threats of 1) punitive

acts 2) destruction of the premises, 3) physical violence against the owner and staff, and 4) wishing to rape the owner – all criminal acts.

Our only responsibility is that we have taken a stand as part of the Israeli Apartheid Free Spaces campaign, and against the ongoing Palestinian genocide.

In light of the campaign of hatred that has been unleashed on social media and the threats we have received, which are also aimed at undermining our personal safety as well as the running of our business, we will file a formal complaint.

Our lawyers have also instructed us to report all the defamations on social media and in the press accusing us, falsely, of having kicked anyone out of our establishment, as demonstrated by the same video circulated by the couple.

In our restaurant, which has always welcomed people of all nationalities, faiths and ethnicities, we cannot and will continue not to tolerate any form of racism, be it inspired by anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, or, as in this case, anti-Palestinian racism.

The couple of Israeli Zionist tourists seemed well connected in Naples and immediately contacted the leadership of the local Jewish Community who then immediately launched a campaign of defamation in the local media and contacted members of the local government. The local councillor of tourism for the city of Naples met with the Israeli tourists for coffee and offered them apologetic support on behalf of the local administration. Meanwhile the video which clearly shows the aggression perpetrated by these Zionists against Nives and the restaurant workers went viral on social media and was reported far and wide making local, national and international media in the pages of the Jerusalem Post and Times of Israel. It then surfaced that these same Zionist tourists had verbally assaulted a Palestinian solidarity demonstration organized by the international *Women In Black* movement in the southern seaside town of Bari further south in Italy prior to coming to Naples. Now this couple, Geula and Reuven Moses, have been exposed as serial provocateurs.

The Israeli hasbara propaganda machine is hard at work around the world through local Jewish Community organizations and through Israeli embassies and consulates to mystify any criticism of Israel or Zionism by twisting, contorting and labelling any of these criticisms as anti-Semitic. This hasbara is the Zionist method of normalizing the genocidal policies of the Zionist state and the racist nature of the Zionist ideology. It has been widely reported and documented that Israel has budgeted over 157 million dollars a year to spread its hasbara and Zionist propaganda the world over and does so with a paid staff of thousands whose sole mission is to normalize genocide, ethnic cleansing and the further implementation of the Zionist project of creating God's promised "greater Israel", which these religious zealots call

Judea and Samaria. Up until now this campaign has been working very well for Israel as we witness international law cast aside by western governments as Israel proceeds to starve over 2 million people in Gaza while pursuing their ethnic cleansing campaign in all occupied Palestine, expanding further into Lebanon and Syria.

But in Naples the people aren't having it! By the evening of Tuesday May 6<sup>th</sup> just a day after this story had broken, there was a mass demonstration organized in front of the Naples City Hall attended by thousands of people and demanding solidarity for the restaurant owners and a clear position from the local government condemning Israel's crimes against humanity and Genocide. A citywide campaign has been launched stating clearly and forcefully that Zionists are not Welcome in Naples and the people of Naples stand in solidarity with the people of Palestine. On social media 9 out of 10 of the thousands and thousands of comments have voiced and demonstrated a massive outpouring of support for the Taverna di Santa Chiara and for an end to the genocide on the Palestinian people.

The local administration, mayor and tourist councillor met with representatives of the Palestinian community and the restaurant owner on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May. Now the administration has put out a statement that voices solidarity for the Taverna di Santa Chiara and expresses their horror at what is happening to the civilian population in Gaza but this statement has not satisfied or met the expectations of the community. As Omar Suleiman, one of the original founders of the Palestinian community stated: "They talk about the genocide in Gaza as if it is a natural disaster without even mentioning the word Israel and with no condemnation of the crimes against humanity that the Zionist entity has been committing on our people".

Meanwhile, the message from the people of Napoli is clear and it is resounding throughout Italy and the world. After the Maldives announced that they would no longer allow Israeli passport holders to enter their country in a powerful showing of solidarity and in a stance for justice and the upholding of International Law, a grassroots campaign to make it clear that Zionists are not welcome in Naples was already in the works. Now over 5,000 stickers have been printed with a small portion of the proceeds that were made in a recent campaign called 100 percent for Gaza that raised over 100,000 euros in 100 hours for non-governmental organizations that have been working on the ground, under the bombs and in the rubble fields. This was a national campaign with over a dozen events happening across the Naples metropolitan area. In Naples we are of the firm and determined belief that it is far past time to unmask the horrific and genocidal ideology of Zionism and make Zionists unwelcome everywhere they are in the world and to stop this genocide any way that we can. Naples stands 100 percent with Gaza #ZionistsNotWelcome.

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