

**Anti-Palestinian
Racism:
A Resource**

**By The Anti-Empire
Project**

**Text by Anti-Empire Project
Pamphlet design by E Nelson**

THE CURRENT war throughout Israel and Palestine, focused on Gaza – as Israel’s military campaigns have been since 2006 – is enabled by a powerful force throughout the West, one that is not talked about and rarely named: anti-Palestinian racism.

In very recent years mainstream institutions – universities, school boards, media institutions have created strategies (largely ineffective by design) to combat “anti-Black racism”. As ineffective as these have been, naming the problem as specifically anti-Black racism, without subsuming



ing it into a broader category, has been a step forward, making it possible to look for remedies appropriate to the problem. A similar step needs to be taken with anti-Palestinian racism, which is ubiquitous throughout the US, the UK, Canada, Germany, and France (and other countries considered part of the “West”).

So far anti-Palestinian racism has been empowered by the inability to name it. It is time to name it, to recognize it in its examples and details, and root it out completely from every (admittedly small) area that anti-racists control.

The fact that it cannot be named means that any attempt to overcome it is itself immediately attacked. To the extent that you are sincerely, publicly against anti-Palestinian racism in these Western countries, you will to that exact extent be accused of “anti-Semitism”.

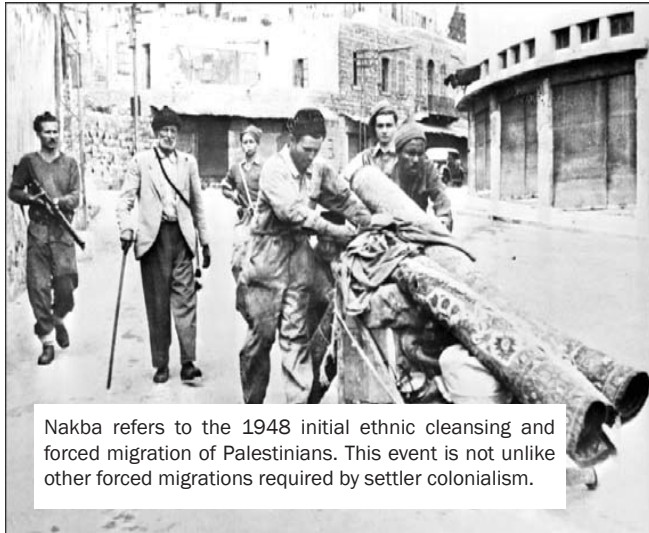
What follows is a guide to help identify anti-Palestinian racism.

THIS RESOURCE does not focus on the overt and violent manifestations. Mass rallies of pro-Israel people chanting “Death to the Arabs”, lighting children like Ali Dawabshe on fire and celebrating their deaths, or lynching Palestinians for entertainment are obviously extreme forms of anti-Palestinian racism but only the most extreme racists (admittedly a large group in the West) defend these acts. Such people are not going to read this resource or be moved by any argument in it.

The subtler patterns of differential treatment and differential thinking and treatment of Palestinians is at issue – the ideological aspects of anti-Palestinian racism.

Anti-Palestinian racism is rooted in the racism of settler-colonists towards so-called “natives”. It is “anti-native” racism nearly all of whose tropes are derived from previous settler-colonial projects like Canada, Australia, the US, Apartheid South Africa, and France in Algeria. Israel is a settler-colonial, apartheid state like these others. In the settler-native dynamic, Palestinian very existence is an obstacle to the settler state’s territorial and genocidal ambitions. Palestinian resistance causes the racism to ratchet up even higher.

As long as these ambitions are there, racism will also be there. And as long as Western countries want to support these ambitions, these Western countries will support anti-Palestinian racism.



Nakba refers to the 1948 initial ethnic cleansing and forced migration of Palestinians. This event is not unlike other forced migrations required by settler colonialism.

Leftists use slogans: we are against racism, anti-semitism, Islamophobia, anti-Arab racism and all other forms of discrimination. Leftists use anti-oppression frameworks and intersectional analysis.

colonialism (anti-Palestinian racism) than we would have wished. In any case, having failed to fulfill our end of the bargain through our failure Western solidarity activists have left Palestinians alone to liberate themselves (with some regional help, for example from the equally demonized Iran and Hizbollah).

As Frantz Fanon taught, it is always the case that the burden of liberation is on the natives themselves. We have seen first hand the limitations of what we are able to do in the West. But the least we can do is refuse to participate in the discourse that accords unequal rights, that uses unequal language, and that demands impossible standards of the resistance while giving a green light to massive violence by the oppressor.

The language we use influences our thinking.

The use of a separate category for anti-Jewish racism, anti-Semitism, is a necessity for understanding the complexity of a social phenomenon with a unique history and its own current forms.

Update your anti-racist training manuals, your anti-discrimination policies, and your slogans: we are against discrimination in all its forms, including anti-Palestinian racism.



Representative statements of this kind include:



“Anchored in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the BDS movement, led by the Palestinian BDS National Committee, is inclusive and categorically opposes as a matter of principle all forms of racism, including Islamophobia and anti-semitism.”

<https://bdsmovement.net/faqs>

“NSJP stands against homophobia, sexism, racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, classism, colonialism, and bigotry and discrimination in any form.”



<http://www.nationalsjp.org/about.html>

These lists are good lists and it could be argued they include anti-Palestinian racism. But anti-Palestinian racism deserves its own categorization. It should be a separate item on the list of oppressions. It has its own unique dynamics and its pervasiveness is the very reason it has been impossible to name. It is a racism that cloaks itself in anti-racism. It is a racism that bullies and intimidates.

It is a racism that pervades the structures of power in the West and runs so deep that it cannot be coherently opposed until its name can be spoken out loud.

THE FIRST step is recognizing what Anti-Palestinian racism is and what it is not.

Although these racisms are also inflicted upon Palestinians as well, anti-Palestinian racism is not Islamophobia and it is not anti-Arab racism. Indeed conflation of Palestinians and their struggle with either of these (admittedly important and overlapping) problems is itself a form of erasure of the Palestinian and therefore a form of anti-Palestinian racism.

Analytical problems arise when we don't understand anti-Palestinian racism for what it is. Among them:

- The false idea that any Muslim or Arab can speak for the Palestinians or negotiate Palestinian rights away on their behalf.
- The celebration of Muslim-Jewish unity when there is no Muslim-Jewish conflict.

Jews aren't racist towards Muslims, nor Muslims towards Jews. There is a settler-native dynamic between Israel and the Palestinians, in which Israel is the settler and Palestinians the natives. This dynamic comes with specific racist ideology – it is not anti-Arab racism. And it is not Islamophobia. It is anti-Palestinian racism.

1. Forms of anti-Palestinian racism: Asymmetric rights

ALL FORMS of racism deny universal rights and equality. With that rule in mind, it is simple to identify anti-Palestinian racism. Every time Israel/Palestine is mentioned in terms of rights, check for an asymmetry in the rights. If the two sides are not being discussed in terms of universality and equality, you are almost certainly looking at anti-Palestinian racism. Here are some examples.

1a. Israeli “security” vs Palestinian “freedom”

IN 2013, former US President Barack Obama said: “just as Israelis built a state in their homeland, Palestinians have a right to be a free people in their own land.” He continued that Palestinians must “recognize that Israel will be a Jewish state, and that Israelis have the right to insist upon their security.” The formulation looks parallel but it is not. Obama contrasts the Palestinian right to “be a free

anti-Palestinian racism is not Islamophobia

In fact Israel has many alliances with anti-Semites. As Suzanne Schneider wrote in 2017 (next page):

“Jewish life flourishes in pluralistic societies within which difference is not a “problem” to be resolved, but a fact to be celebrated. The alliance of right-wing Zionists and the “alt-right” should not be viewed as an abnormality, but as the meeting of quite compatible outlooks that assert — each in its own way — that the world will be secure only once we all retreat to our various plots of ancestral land. Nationalist thinking of this sort wrought more than its fair share of damage during the 20th century. Let’s not enact a repeat performance in the 21st.”

“The Disturbing Alliance Between Zionists And Anti-Semites,” Suzanne Schneider: <https://forward.com/opinion/363545/the-disturbing-alliance-between-zionists-and-anti-semites/>

Conclusion: Palestine’s national struggle is the alternative to anti-Palestinian racism

THE EXPECTATION that the oppressed should keep to nonviolent resistance has been around at least since William Lloyd Garrison, the famous white abolitionist, clarified that he would never advocate for slaves to revolt. Western solidarity with nonviolent struggle has a long history and is based on a series of premises: that it will be easier for solidarity activists to win more followers to the cause if the oppressed refrain from using violence; that nonviolent ‘soul force’ has more power than actual material force (per Gandhi); that with a ‘free press’ the images and stories of nonviolent resistance cannot but move Western publics to stop supporting colonial abuses (per Orwell). In the Palestinian case it is the Western solidarity activists who have failed. Perhaps Western democracies aren't as democratic as we think they are, perhaps the Western press isn't as free as we think, or perhaps the Western public is more supportive of settler

of Jerusalem. Anti-Palestinian racists are willing to revise the history of the Holocaust to try to provide new pretexts for violence against Palestinians.

An additional thought: The rise of the right and global anti-Palestinian racism

SOME FINAL thoughts. In 2016 a NYT article made a very interesting point about white nationalism and Zionism that is worth quoting at length:

“Whereas liberalism depends on the idea that states must remain neutral on matters of religion and race, Zionism consists in the idea that the State of Israel is not Israeli, but Jewish. As such, the country belongs first and foremost not to its citizens, but to the Jewish people — a group that’s defined by ethnic affiliation or religious conversion.”

“Richard Spencer, one of the ideological leaders of the alt-right’s white nationalist agenda — which he has called “a sort of white Zionism” — was publicly challenged by the university’s Hillel Rabbi Matt Rosenberg, to study with him the Jewish religion’s “radical inclusion” and love. “Do you really want radical inclusion into the state of Israel?” Spencer replied. “Maybe all of the Middle East can go move into Tel Aviv or Jerusalem. Would you really want that?” ... The rabbi could not find words to answer, and his silence reverberates still.”

“Liberal Zionism in the Age of Trump”, Omri Boehm for NYT, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/20/opinion/liberal-zionism-in-the-age-of-trump.html>

people in their own land” with the Israeli right to “insist upon their security.” Obama’s speech has a subtle implication: these are both aspirations that are in the far distance. Israelis don’t have (total) security now (they have freedom). Palestinians don’t have freedom now (they have nothing). In this asymmetry lies anti-Palestinian racism.



The checkpoints dissecting Palestine lay bare the contention between Israeli “security” and Palestinian “freedom.”

1b. Israel’s unique right to “self-defence” compared to the need to renounce “violence”.

IN THE 2021 round of Israeli violence, settlers and police tried to ethnically cleanse Jerusalem of Palestinians and attacked Palestinians while they were praying at one of Islam’s holiest sites, the al-Aqsa mosque. After many days of Israeli ethnic cleansing and violence at the mosque site, Palestinian resistance organizations in Gaza fired rockets at Israel (more on Gaza below). At that point, many public figures in the west who had assiduously ignored the ethnic cleansing suddenly discovered the Violence in the Middle



“The people of NYC will always stand with our brothers and sisters in Israel who face down terrorism and persevere.”

East and lined up to declare their solidarity with... Israel, citing Israel’s right of self-defence when Israel began bombing civilian targets in Gaza and killing children and families. New York mayoral candidate Andrew Yang was one such example. The asymmetry here is that no Palestinian right to self-defence is acknowledged. Democratic Con-

**and it is not
anti-Arab racism**

gresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, too, gave a speech where she contrasted Israel's right to self-defence with Palestinians' right to survive.

Indeed, "self-defence" is only used for Israel, though the exact same actions are called "violence" when practiced by Palestinians. And Palestinians are denounced for not "renouncing violence". Adam Johnson in *Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting* (FAIR) surveyed

10 years of media coverage and found that 95% requests to "renounce violence" were made to Muslims and none to the US, Israel, or any other white-

Opinion

Why Won't Mandela Renounce Violence?

By David G. Sanders

June 21, 1990

majority country.

If Israel has a right to self-defence that includes killing civilians, we are already in the realm of racism. But giving this right exclusively to Israel and denying it to Palestinians is worse. All armed resistance by Palestinians is delegitimized by Western media who defend Israel's killing of civilians in Gaza by the thousands as "self-defence". Anyone who believes Israel has the right to use its many weapons against the Palestinians to defend Israelis must also accept the same rights for Palestinians. To do otherwise is anti-Palestinian racism.

1c. Israel's "right to exist" (as a Jewish state) compared to no right at all

ISRAEL'S "RIGHT to exist" is often mentioned by anti-Palestinian racists when discussing Palestinians as a "demographic threat" or when discussing the Palestinian right of return as an "existential threat to Israel", or "the destruction of Israel". All of these phrases sometimes have attached to them the clause "as a Jewish state". So, Israel's "right to exist" is actually "Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state", the "destruction of Israel" is actually "the destruction of Israel as a Jewish state", etc.

Since at least the French Revolution beginning in 1789, there has

WWI according to these racist ideologies. The treatment of Palestinians and other people from the Arab and Muslim world is part of this colonialism that afflicted the rest of Asia and Africa in the 19th century in virulent racist form. It was then that the "settler"- "native" di-



chotomy was created and an entire science of controlling and subjugating natives through violence and terror was developed. Paradigmatic was Winston Churchill talking about the use of poison gases against certain tribes; but the racism was pervasive in British, German, French, American, and Canadian cultures (among other Western countries).

This attitude was adopted by the Israeli settlers who took over the British colony in 1948 and have continued the colonial process towards the Palestinians with full help from the other colonial powers, especially the US. In a sense you will find in 19th century colonialism all of the tropes that are familiar to you when you witness the way Palestinian "natives" are discussed in the West, and all of the practices of colonialism are also being practiced on the Palestinians.

The re-writing of history for purposes of anti-Palestinian racism is on-going.

One of the worst claims made by anti-Palestinian racists is to claim that the reason Israeli bombings kill so many children in Gaza is because resistance organizations use children as human shields. In fact Gaza is majority children, and Israel bombs civilian homes and infrastructure freely, killing many children in every attack. That is contemporary history that is being written; but Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu rewrote history when he made the absurd racist claim that Hitler enacted the Holocaust based on advice from the Mufti

(Eric Alterman) (all are quoted on Salaita 2015, pg. 65). Salaita continues: “Palestinian students hear such things all the time inside and beyond the college classroom”. (pg. 66)

“The fact,” Salaita concludes, “that nobody ever asks about the comfort of the Arab or Muslim student in the first place illuminates the presence of Zionist violence in the mythologies of civility. It’s always the marginal, the undesirable, the wretched, who must justify their humanity to the majority.” (pg. 67)

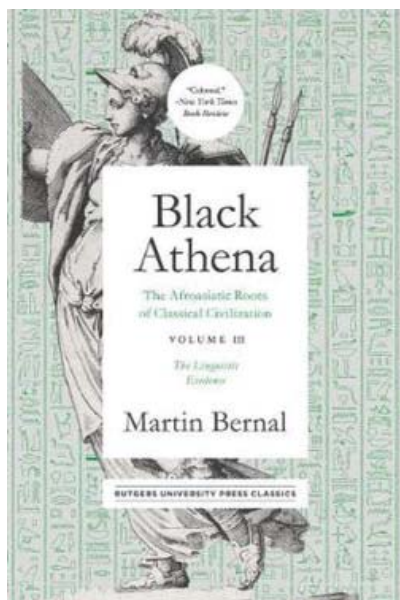
4. Forms of anti-Palestinian racism – Electronic control and muting Palestine

IN THE 2021 round, Israel attacked media houses and the satellite and Internet infrastructure of Gaza, rendering Palestinians unable to communicate about what Israel was doing to them. These acts are repressed – ignored – rather than defended by Israel’s advocates. But also in the 2021 round, Israeli generals met with Facebook and Tiktok and warned them to censor Palestinian users on their platforms. The fact that the monopoly social media companies censor Palestinian users and advocates on behalf of Israel is symptomatic of anti-Palestinian racism. During the 2021 round, this particular form of anti-Palestinian racism was criticized under the hashtag:

#UnmutePalestine

5. History of anti-Palestinian racism: Rewriting history for anti-Palestinian racism

RACISM IN the West has a long history with many twists and turns but in the 19th century so-called “scientific” racism emerged and with it a rewriting of history to disclude Jews from ancient history and to disclude African people in a particularly conspiratorial way from ancient history, as Martin Bernal wrote about in Black Athena. Asia, of which Palestine was a part, was dismembered by colonialism after



been an important idea of universal rights. In the French Revolution it was enshrined in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. From “man” it was by the early 20th century finally extended to women. In the United Nations Charter, there is a Universal Declaration of Human Rights which enshrines rights for people. States do not have any rights, much less rights to specific demographic composition, much less to conduct demographic engineering to create a Jewish majority. Acts of demographic engineering (forcible transfer, massacre, sterilization) overlap considerably with activities that are called “genocide”. Asserting these supposed “rights” of Israel is symptomatic of anti-Palestinian racism.

States do not have any rights, much less rights to specific demographic composition, much less to conduct demographic engineering to create a Jewish majority.

1d. The most egregious Israeli crimes and acts are simply ignored

THE 2021 round of violence featured Israeli actions that were impossible to defend even by its most ardent Western defenders. Israeli settlers, with police backup, broke into Palestinian homes to shoot and stab the inhabitants. Israeli lynch mobs stomped people to death in front of singing, dancing, chanting mobs. Israeli masses marched through the streets chanting “Death to the Arabs!” In previous rounds, Israelis burned families in their homes and celebrated the death of Palestinian children by stabbing photos of the child at parties, and taunted Palestinians with the chant “Why is there no studying in Gaza? Because there are no children left!” Rather than being defended as part of any right to “self-defense”, these acts are simply ignored – repressed – in the Western media. Any violence committed by Palestinians is carefully scrutinized and all Palestinians in Western media are asked if they condone violent resistance. No pro-Israel advocate is ever asked if they defend firebombing toddlers or chanting “Death to the Arabs!” This asymmetry is another example of anti-Palestinian racism.

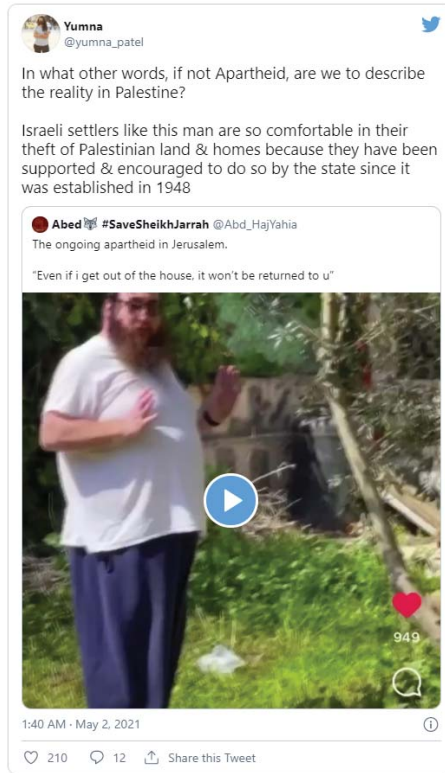
1e. No right to boycott, no right to speech, no right to organize, no right to be offended

WHEN ISRAEL'S crimes mount and the asymmetry becomes especially monstrous, pro-Israel organizations attempt to stifle all discussion of them.

The principal method is to claim that any criticism of Israel is anti-Semitic, and if not anti-Semitic, then at least insensitive of Jewish feelings, which itself is presented a form of anti-Semitism. The accusation of insensitivity to Jewish (pro-Israel) feelings was a primary accusation against UK prime ministerial candidate Jeremy Corbyn and played a role in his political demise. Could you imagine a western political party having a massive crisis over its leaders being insensitive of Palestinians' feelings? The fact that this is unimaginable is a measure of anti-Palestinian racism.

Palestinian presence is portrayed as a "mental health" problem

One of the arguments was that by being an advocate for Palestinian rights, Jeremy Corbyn made Jewish Britons feel unsafe. Note that it is racist (anti-Semitic) to assume that Jews do not have the full range of human feelings and human opinions about political events, and that "Jewish feelings" are automatically supportive of Israel. The creation of a zero-sum situation – either Palestinians are absent or Jewish Westerners are unsafe – has segregation as its only conclusion. A safe space is a Palestinian-free space. Any other



Source: twitter.com/yumna_patel

classic Elements of Style by Strunk and White guidelines is:

use the active voice!

White apparently repeated it with increasing passion several times. But when it comes to Palestine, the media are militant about using passive voice. The difference in active and passive voice is symptomatic of anti-Palestinian racism.

2c. No right to self-representation

THE 2021 round began with the attempted eviction of Palestinians in Shaikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. These Palestinians are referred to in Western media as "Arab citizens of Israel" instead of "Palestinians."

3. Forms of anti-Palestinian racism: No right to a parallel or to parity with anti-Semitism

THE MOST intellectually challenging aspect of anti-Palestinian racism is that it is a type of racism that is presented as a type of anti-racism. Anti-Palestinian racism pretends to be the fight against the new anti-semitism. Anyone who is genuinely anti-racist and opposed to anti-semitism should also be against anti-Palestinian racism.

Steven Salaita has addressed exactly this question. "Criticism of Israel," he writes, "cannot fundamentally be anti-Semitic unless we concede that the state's existence only affects Jews. Arabs are central to Israel's composition in every possible way. If people feel attacked on a cultural level when somebody condemns a nation-state, then that's a problem of ethnonationalism, not of political critique." (Salaita 2015, pg. 64) Salaita cites the public, racist statements of a number of pro-Israel scholars, who write of Palestinians' "mass pathology" (Paul Berman), of Palestinians who "want Palestinian babies to be killed" (Alan Dershowitz), of a Hamas leader's family being killed as "tough luck, fella"

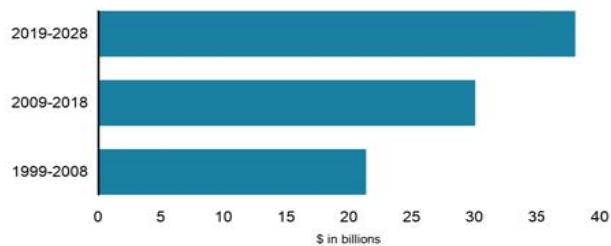
Anti-Palestinian racism pretends to be the fight against the new anti-semitism. Anyone who is genuinely anti-racist and opposed to anti-semitism should also be against anti-Palestinian racism.

anti-Palestinian racism.

2b. The use of active voice and passive voice

US aid commitments to Israel have increased

Total amount of military aid pledged



Missile defence funds not included. Figures not adjusted for inflation.

Source: Congressional Research Service

Benjamin Netanyahu, Ehud Barak, Ariel Sharon and Ehud Olmert. Since 1996, a period of more than 20 years, every Israeli prime minister has been subject to a police investigation, mostly about their connections with tycoons but sometimes about bribery. Not only prime ministers, but members of the Knesset and cabinet ministers have passed many hours in police interrogation rooms and jailhouses.

Source for image: <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/how-much-military-aid-does-us-give-to-israel/ar-AAkKGTv>

Source for quote: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/business/.premium-four-prime-ministers-20-years-of-corruption-why-1.5850409>

THIS ONE is remarkable for its consistency over decades. On May 14, 2021, after Israel had killed 30 children, and 70 adults; after lynchings and with ongoing pogroms; the following headline was trending on Twitter:

“Fighting intensifies between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants as violence enters fifth day”

“The Israel-Gaza conflict has resulted in the deaths of over 100 people in Gaza, nine in Israel and hundreds of more injuries, according to The Washington Post. The exchange of artillery strikes and rockets has not let up, with the possibility of a ground invasion by Israeli troops.”

kind of space, in which Palestinian identity or advocacy is present, is depicted as anti-Semitic, even “triggering” in mental health terms. The logic is based on a number of assumptions:

Could you imagine a western political party having a massive crisis over its leaders being insensitive of Palestinians’ feelings?

1. Jewish people identify with Israel.

2. Advocacy for Palestinian rights constitutes violence against Israel and therefore against Jewish people themselves.

What if, instead of Palestine advocates

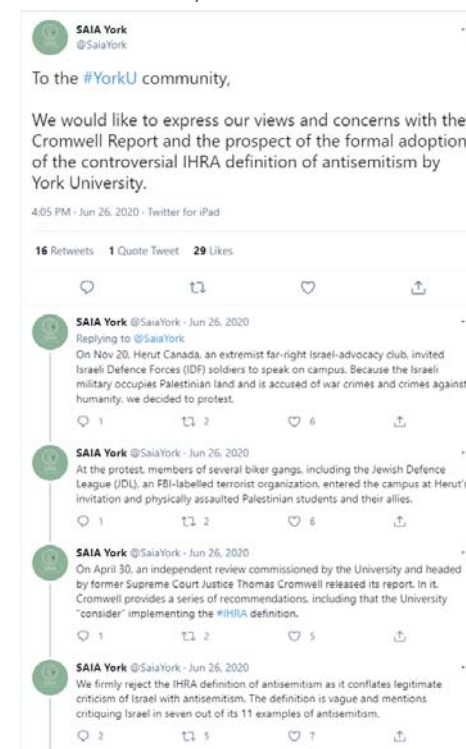
having to prove they were not anti-Semites, Israel advocates had to prove they were not anti-Palestinian racists? Why is this not the case? Because of anti-Palestinian racism.

1e.1 Revoking freedom of assembly

FRANCE, HAS arrested people for wearing pro-BDS T-shirts and let paramilitaries run amok during Palestine demonstrations: In the 2021 round, France forbade public demonstrations in solidarity with Palestinians (the protesters marched anyway, and were tear-gassed).

1e.2 Curtailing academic freedom

UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATIONS across the US and Canada have taken action to prevent public discussion and student organization in solidarity with Palestinians



Students Against Israeli Apartheid at York University protested an event featuring the IDF and now faces repercussions, in part due to Supreme Court Justice Thomas Cromwell's recommendation that the IHRA's pro-Israel definition of anti-semitism be upheld in universities. This would majorly stifle anti-apartheid activism across Canadian campuses. Source: <https://twitter.com/SaiaYork>

– curtailing free speech rights. Other campuses have required pro-Israel oaths to be taken before allowing invited speakers to speak on campus (journalist Abby Martin is suing one such campus). The same institutions take no action to protect Palestinian or pro-Palestinian feelings from being offended. They do not require pro-Palestine oaths. The asymmetry is symptomatic of anti-Palestinian racism.

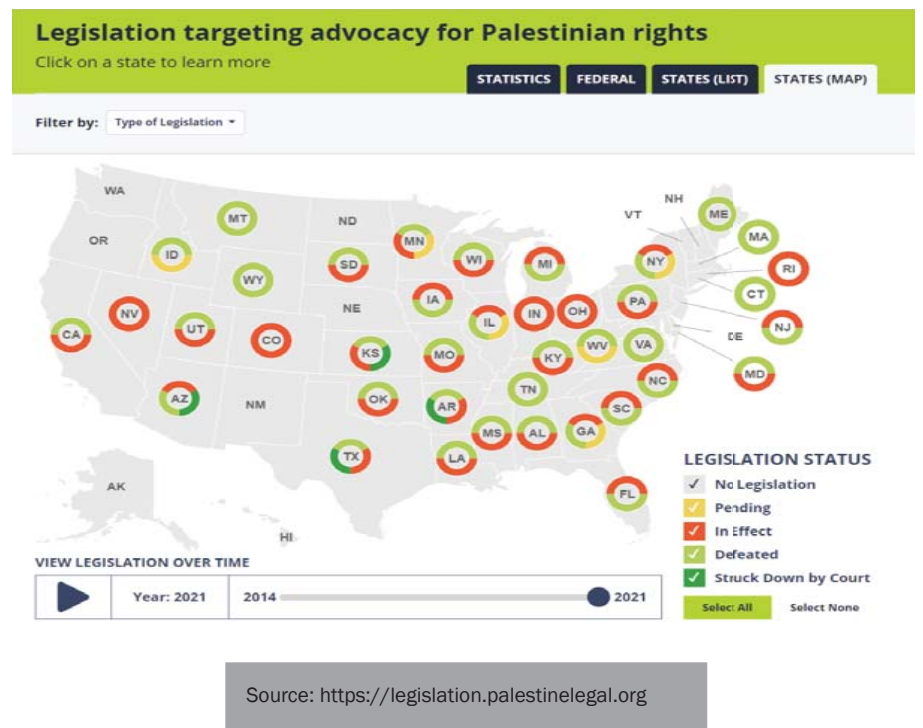


1e.3 Anti-Palestinian legislation in the West

PROBABLY THE British have gone the furthest. There, on December 12 2016, legislators adopted a definition of anti-Semitism that includes legitimate criticism of Israel. They’ve also banned boycotts. Most US states have enacted legislation forbidding any boycott of Israeli institutions or products – they have declared boycotting Israel illegal. Palestine Legal has prepared a map of anti-BDS legislation in the US (on the opposite page). The organization fights these bits of legislation in court, as they are unconstitutional. But as long as politicians can be bought or bullied, lawmaking bodies remain fertile ground from which to launch attacks on expression for Palestinians. Periodically, the Ontario legislature has a debate on whether to condemn the campus movement for Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) in Israel. For years this took the form of the legislators solemnly gathering to issue a condemnation of a week of campus events – usually a few film screenings and lectures – called Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW).

More recently the legislators get together to denounce BDS itself, as written about by AJ Withers in the article “Boycotting Apartheid: Ontario’s 50 year long attack on the campaign for Palestinian rights.” . In his book *Race Against Time*, former Ontario legislator and UN envoy Stephen Lewis talks proudly of being the first to introduce a bill boycotting Apartheid South Africa.

Palestine has no such champion – instead, today, the legislators



get together to endorse the equivalent of the apartheid state and denounce resistance against it.

2. Forms of anti-Palestinian racism: Asymmetric language

THE FOLLOWING are just a few examples of asymmetric language that is characteristic of anti-Palestinian racism. Once you are aware of the pattern, the examples will start to jump out at you.

2a. Palestinian corruption but not Israel’s corruption

ISRAELI POLITICS has been totally mired in corruption scandals, from the very top to the bottom. This has not affected the billions of dollars given in aid to Israel by the US or EU, year after year. But when the destruction, siege, and de-development of Gaza (and the West Bank) is raised, anti-Palestinian racists claim that Palestinian corruption is to blame. The problem is not the destruction of all of Gaza’s infrastructure and the sealing in of millions of people into a prison, in this view, but the supposed corruption of Palestinian leaders who accept aid money and don’t get it to the people. Using “corruption”, which is present everywhere, as an excuse for the humanitarian catastrophe created by Israel’s genocidal policies is