

“Let’s Talk about what Zionism Means to Palestinians”

Facebook Evaluates Boosts of Posts that Include Anti-Zionist Speech as Having a “low Quality Attribute”

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Global Research, April 24, 2021

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

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*For Palestinians, it takes a lot of courage to say, “Let’s talk about what Zionism means to Palestinians... We are not allowed to question the concept of Jewish self-determination in historic Palestine,” as **Dima Khalidi**, founder and director of Palestine Legal expresses below in an excerpt from a [webinar](#) hosted by the US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, [USACBI](#), titled: “Weaponizing anti-Semitism: IHRA and Ending the Palestine Exception.” And once we say it, we are not allowed to boost it.*

In the two-minute [video clip](#) excerpt I boosted, Khalidi is discussing how the [IHRA definition](#) entrenches Zionist ideology and answering a question about how that suppresses Palestinian speech (Palestine Legal protects the civil and constitutional rights of people in the U.S. who speak out for Palestinian freedom):

To shield Israel from criticism, to win the rhetorical battle as you say, Professor Falk, and yes, it is intended to legitimize Israel as a Jewish state. It is intended to make it beyond question that Israel is a Jewish state. We are not allowed to question the ideology of Zionism. That’s what the IHRA does. We are not allowed to question the concept of Jewish self-determination in Palestine, in historic Palestine, and this ideology is so entrenched already in the political discourse among the political elite, and I think one of the most important things that IHRA should do is give us the opportunity to say, wait a second, you know, this is really about Zionism. Let’s talk about Zionism. Let’s talk about the foundation of the state of Israel. Let’s talk about what that means for Palestinians and who Palestinians are and what we are. We are working towards our own freedom and self-determination and liberation. so I think that is really one of the main things behind this definition.”

I [posted](#) this clip on a Facebook Page I administer called [One km to Palestine](#) and boosted it to reach a wider audience with this important message. However, although the ad was reviewed and accepted by Facebook as a post addressing a “political or social issue” for which the Page has been cleared, I received a notification that the ad was shown to “fewer people than would typically see it,” because it contains “a low quality attribute.” That “attribute” turned out to be suppression by “people feedback”, as I [learned](#) from the

following:

Misleading experiences: When people give us feedback about their experience with advertisers, such as being dissatisfied with advertising and websites that misrepresent products, expected shipping times, customer support experiences and more. [Learn more](#), and, as a reminder, if we detect that an ad violates our [Misleading Claims policy](#), we'll reject it.

Similarly, a boost of a [post](#) about the Deir Yassin massacre is not doing well, and I expect to hear about its “low quality attribute” soon after it runs its course, just as a boost of a [post](#) about the 3D reconstruction of the Mughrabi Quarter in Jerusalem and digital mapping of the city with Maryvelma Smith O’Neil was also stopped in its tracks: “[LEARN ABOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE OLD CITY OF #JERUSALEM THAT ISRAEL DESTROYED HOURS AFTER THE JUNE 1967 WAR.](#)”

The website I linked to in the Deir Yassin post was the Palestinian Alternative Path Conference ([Masar Badil](#)):

“Together against #Zionism and in support of the Palestinian people’s resistance until liberation and return.” — مؤتمر المسار الفلسطيني البديل

As a friend commented, this Facebook practice is “not surprising especially after #Facebook and Instagram appointed Emi Palmor to its Independent Oversight Board. Palmor is a former general director of the #Israeli Ministry of Justice’s Cyber Unit that was responsible for the removal of thousands of pieces of #Palestinian content from Facebook.”

It may not be surprising, but it is certainly galling.

I am a denizen of Facebook in that I spend an inordinate amount of time there. In addition to posting on my profile, I am a member of many Groups and I administer the Page referenced above, One km to Palestine, that has quite a few followers—certainly more than I have here on Medium.

Thoreau once wrote about how the creaking of the crickets reminded him that he was “a denizen of the earth.” He described it as “a sound from within, not without.”

What reminds me I am a denizen of Facebook is the sound from within, the creaking sound of Facebook notifications, which are, to keep borrowing from Thoreau, “at the very foundation of all sound” in Facebook.

Like many on Facebook, I don’t really understand the ebb and flow of that creaking. The whole concept of “algorithms” is a mystery to me. Zionist trolls used to be on the rampage, but Facebook has effectively closed the doors on them. One can “hide all” from troll or “block” troll and that’s the end of it.

When Facebook asked me mindlessly whether I was happy with the suppressed Dima Khalidi post boost I describe above, I “creaked” this response into the void:

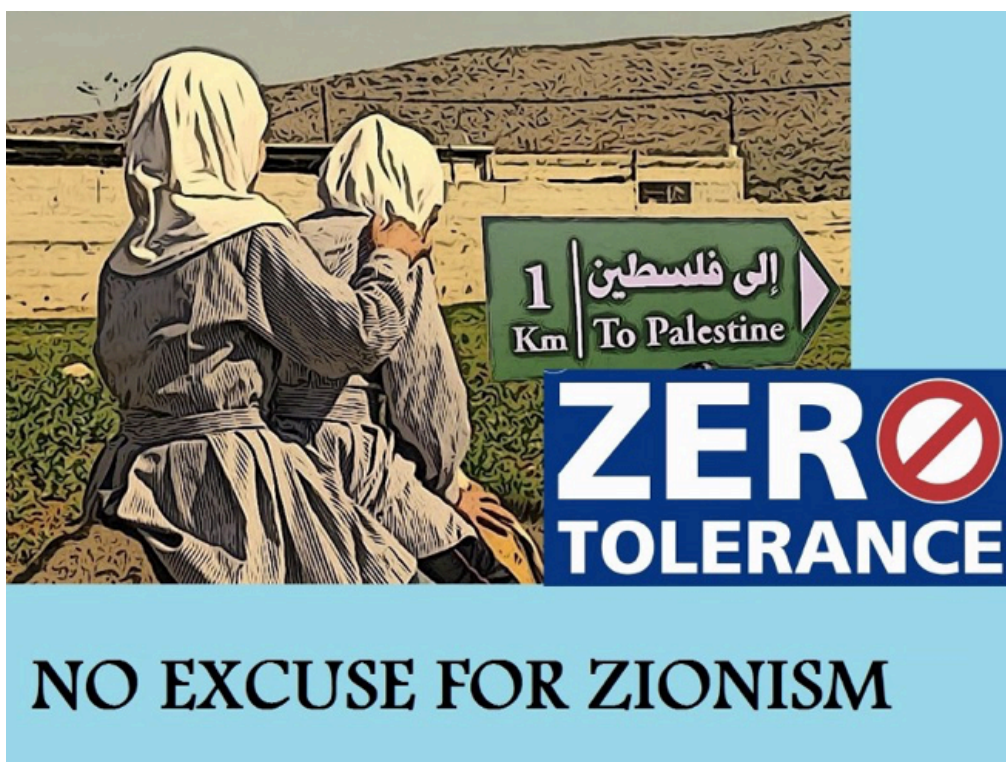
“This Page is not a business and the ad was approved as addressing a political/social issue. I don’t understand why it is described as ‘using language that entices people

inauthentically to engage with the ad.' I looked at the [examples](#) in the Ads Help Center and they all apply to products not issues. This ad does not seek to deceive the reader in any way; it is an excerpt from a webinar by the Director of Palestine Legal that seeks to educate about an issue central to the Page description."

The problem is that in the corner of Facebook that has to do with advocacy for Palestinian liberation or preaching the gospel of Zionism, the structure is such that each side is largely preaching to the choir. Furthermore, mechanisms on Facebook meant to chill the Palestinian voice are firmly in place. Boosts offer the chance of stepping outside a little bit.

When I say, "preaching the gospel of Zionism," I am not using language as metaphor. Zionism as it has manifested in Palestine has now become akin to a religion, and speaking against it is considered by Facebook and much of the world as blasphemy, not to mention antisemitic.

The way, I see it, though, and as I recently posted in One km to Palestine, There is no excuse for Zionism:



One km to Palestine: Zero tolerance for Zionism

NO EXCUSE FOR ZIONISM

Our motto is: Zero Tolerance for Zionism!

The way I see it: Simply put, Zionism in Palestine=Jewish nationalism, Jewish self-determination, Jewish supremacy in Palestine.

If you are an anti Zionist and for one democratic state in Palestine, it follows you are against all that comes after the equal sign, including a bi-national state.

And YES we can, and we will #return.

What would happen now if I try to boost the above post in Facebook? Or a post of this very article for that matter? According to Facebook:

“Pages, ad accounts, and domains that consistently promote low quality ads are more likely to be considered low quality in our system, and as a result, all ads from those entities may be shown to fewer people than would typically see them for their budget.”

As it happens, Mondowiess has also published [a story](#) along similar lines:

Facebook censored Palestinians in Gaza from sharing our story with the world

BDS activists in Gaza tried to promote a video on Facebook that compares Israel and apartheid South Africa. The platform rejected the promotion and shadow banned the account. Unfortunately this is not an isolated case.

... Facebook and its platforms rejected a sponsored promotion request for the aforementioned materials after taking no less than 24 hours to consider the request, accepting it for a few hours then shutting it down entirely.

And that’s how the system works when Zionism is at issue. We need “people feedback” on all the ads Facebook publishes glorifying the apartheid Zionist regime in control of Palestine from the river to the sea.

Facebook has grudgingly accepted anti-Zionist speech as long as it portrayed Palestinians as victims, because such language is no threat, as the Zionist so-called narrative excusing the savagery is everywhere.

But with any hint of resistance language that empowers Palestinians and frames the “conflict” as a struggle for liberation and Palestinian self-determination in their own homeland, Facebook comes down on us like a sledgehammer.

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Note to readers: please click the share buttons above or below. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

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Featured image: Dima Khalidi, founder and director of Palestine Legal (still from “[Weaponizing anti-Semitism: IHRA and Ending the Palestine Exception.](#)”

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