

Never against! European collusion in Israel's slow genocide

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The European Union, Israel's largest trade partner in the world, is watching by as Israel tightens its barbaric siege on Gaza, collectively punishing 1.5 million Palestinian civilians, condemning them to devastation, and visiting imminent death upon hundreds of kidney dialysis and heart patients, prematurely born babies, and all others dependent on electric power for their very survival.

By freezing fuel and electric power supplies to Gaza, Israel, the occupying power, is essentially guaranteeing that "clean" water — only by name, as Gaza's water is perhaps the most polluted in the whole region, after decades of Israeli theft and abuse — will not be pumped out and properly distributed to homes and institutions; hospitals will not be able to function adequately, leading to the eventual death of many, particularly the most vulnerable; whatever factories that are still working despite the siege will now be forced to close, pushing the already extremely high unemployment rate even higher; sewage treatment will come to a halt, further polluting Gaza's precious little water supply; academic institutions and schools will not be able to provide their usual services; and the lives of all civilians will be severely disrupted, if not irreversibly damaged. And Europe is apathetically watching.

Princeton academic Richard Falk considered Israel's siege a "prelude to genocide," even before this latest crime of altogether cutting off energy supplies. Now, Israel's crimes in Gaza can accurately be categorized as acts of genocide, albeit slow. According to Article II of the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the term is defined as:

"[A]ny of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:
(a) Killing members of the group;
(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; ..."

Clearly, Israel's hermetic siege of Gaza, designed to kill, cause serious bodily and mental harm, and deliberately inflict conditions of life calculated to bring about partial and gradual physical destruction, qualifies as an act of genocide, if not all-out genocide yet. And the EU is suspiciously silent.

But why accuse Europe, in particular, of collusion in this crime when almost the entire international community is not lifting a finger, and the UN's obsequious Secretary-General,

who surpassed all his predecessors in obedience to the US government, is pathetically paying only lip service? In addition, what of the US government itself, Israel's most generous sponsor that is directly implicated in the current siege, especially after President George W. Bush, on his recent visit, gave a hardly subtle green light to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to ravage Gaza? Why not blame the Palestinians' quiet Arab brethren, particularly Egypt — the only country that can immediately break the siege by reopening the Rafah crossing and supplying through it the necessary fuel, electric power and emergency supplies? And finally, why not blame the Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority, whose subservient and visionless leader openly boasted in a press conference its "complete agreement" with Bush on all matters of substance?

After Israel, the US is, without a doubt, the guiltiest party in the current crime. Under the influence of a fundamentalist, militaristic, neo-conservative ideology that has taken over its helms of power and an omnipotent Zionist lobby that is unparalleled in its sway, the US is in a category by itself. It goes without saying that the PA, the UN, as well as Arab and international governments maintaining business as usual with Israel should all be held accountable for acquiescing, whether directly or indirectly, to Israel's crimes against humanity in Gaza. It is also true that each one of the above bears the legal and moral responsibility to intervene and apply whatever necessary pressure to stop the crime before thousands perish. But the EU commands a unique position in all this. It is not only silent and apathetic; in most European countries Israel and Israeli institutions are currently welcomed and sought after with unprecedented warmth, generosity and deference in all fields — economic, cultural, academic, athletic, etc. For instance, Israel was invited as the guest of honor to a major book fair in Turin, Italy. Israeli government-funded films are featuring in film festivals all over the continent. Israeli products, from avocados and oranges to hi-tech security systems, are flooding European markets like never before. Israeli academic institutions are enjoying a special, very lucrative, association agreement with the relevant organs in the EU. Israeli dance groups, singing bands and orchestras are invited to European tours and festivals as if Israel were not only a normal, but in effect a most favored, member of the so-called "civilized" world. Official Europe's once lackluster embrace of Israel has turned into an intense, open and enigmatic love affair.

If Europe thinks it can thus repent for its Holocaust against its own Jewish population, it is in fact shamefully and consciously facilitating the committal of fresh acts of genocide against the people of Palestine. But Palestinians, it appears, do not count for much, as we are viewed not only by Israel, but also by its good old "white" sponsors and allies as lesser, or relative, humans. The continent that invented modern genocide and was responsible for massacring in the last two centuries more human beings, mostly "relative humans," than all other continents put together is covering up crimes that are reminiscent in quality, though certainly not in quantity, of its own heinous crimes against humanity.

In no other international affair, perhaps, can the European establishment be accused of being as detached from and indifferent to its own public opinion. While calls for boycotting Israel as an apartheid state are slowly but consistently spreading among European civil society organizations and trade unions, drawing disturbing parallels to the boycott of South African apartheid, European governments are finding it difficult to distinguish themselves from the overtly complicit US position vis-a-vis Israel. Even European clichés of condemnation and "expressing deep concern" have become rarer than ever nowadays. Moreover, Israel's relentless and defiant violation of Europe's own human rights laws and conditions are ignored whenever anyone questions whether Israel should continue to benefit

from its magnanimous association agreement with the EU despite its military occupation, colonization and horrific record of human rights abuse against its Palestinian victims. If this is not complicity, what is?

Morality aside, sinking Gaza into a sea of darkness, poverty, death and despair cannot bode well for Europe. By actively propping up an environment conducive to the rise of fanaticism and desperate violence near its borders, Europe is foolishly inviting havoc to its doorstep. Instead of heeding — or at least seriously considering — calls for boycott, divestment and sanctions against apartheid Israel, adopted by virtually the entire spectrum of Palestinian civil society, it may soon have to reckon with uncontrollable forces of irrational and indiscriminate violence and its resulting chaos.

It seems European elites are currently determined never to oppose Israel, no matter what crimes it commits. It is as if the bellowing — and increasingly hypocritical — slogan upheld by Jewish survivors of European genocide, “Never Again!”, is now espoused by European elites with one difference: the two letter, ‘s’ and ‘t’, are added at the end.

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