

# Palestine, Armed Resistance, Jewish Voice for Peace and Zoom

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Global Research, April 27, 2021

Region: [Middle East & North Africa, USA](#)  
Theme: [Law and Justice](#), [Media Disinformation](#)  
In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

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*Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) has come a long way since its liberal Zionist days, finally declaring its anti-Zionist position, and has since been a staunch supporter of the Palestinian cause. But apparently there are still limits.*

These limits surfaced in a recent meeting between JVP’s Executive Director **Stefanie Fox** and **Professor Rabab Abdelhadi** of AMED Studies, SFSU on the issue of Zoom’s censorship of a scheduled event by Abdelhadi.

“Is JVP National willing to help us liberate Palestine but only if we conduct our liberation struggle peacefully”?

In September, I [wrote](#) about the abrupt cancellation by Zoom, Facebook and YouTube of Professors Abdulhadi’s and Tomomi Kinukawa’s (Women and Gender Studies, SFSU) virtual historic round-table conversation with Palestinian feminist, militant, and leader [Leila Khaled](#).

The cancellation was a result of the Lawfare Project (among other Zionist groups), which [threatened Zoom](#) with criminal liability (under 18 U.S.C. § 2339) if Zoom “knowingly permitted Leila Khaled to use its platform to communicate directly to U.S. college students.”

The cancellation resulted in widespread protests against Zoom’s action (most notably in an amazing [campaign](#) by USACBI titled, ‘We will not be silenced: Day of action against the criminalization and censorship of campus political speech’) with the result that Zoom has recently changed its [policy](#) announcing it will leave content moderation issues to universities for virtually all matters “related to the institution’s academics or operations” and engage in content-based censorship only under rare, clearly delineated conditions.

These “rare, clearly delineated conditions” mean that Zoom still reserves the right to act if Zionist organizations persuade the company that it is in legal jeopardy, which is what Zoom has claimed (falsely) re: Leila Khaled.

Zoom’s policy in this regard was borne out on April 21 when a twitter account calling itself

@ BDSreport circulated a petition to put a stop to a second upcoming [talk](#) Professor Abdelhadi had announced involving Leila Khaled and reported gleefully that Zoom has cancelled it. The [tweet](#) calls @AmedStudies of San Francisco State University (SFSU) “a radical group” and Khaled a “Jew hater”. Facebook has also [cancelled](#) AMED’s Page.

The tweet’s language and mindset are typical of venomous Zionist language heard loudly all over the internet. But why in the world would JVP go along with it? Following is a glimpse of what transpired between Stephanie Fox and Rabab Abdulhadi based on an e-mail being widely shared:

JVP National informed us yesterday that JVP will not support our petition. In her response, Stefanie said, “Our board has been very clear with me that we cannot promote anything that has to do with armed resistance, and an event with Leila Khaled would fall under that.” However, she offered to meet with Rabab and we hurriedly put together a meeting this afternoon.

In the meeting, we argued that the scheduled event involved issues of freedom of speech for liberation movements and had nothing “to do with armed resistance”. We argued that our petition was asking for the restoration of the AMED FB page, ending FB’s interference with academic freedom, and allowing Palestinian voices to be heard on FB’s platform. Rabab argued that JVP’s silence on this issue was tantamount to tacit approval of FB’s actions. It also contradicts ... [JVP’s] petition “Facebook, We Need To Talk” which highlights FB’s continuing censorship of Palestinian voices. Furthermore, JVP’s rejection of a leadership role on this issue signals an intention on the part of JVP to choose which Palestinian voices they are willing to uplift.

Stefanie responded that the by-laws of JVP are clear that the group can only support non-violent action (a petition is hardly a violent action). She stated that she understands that AMED and Rabab have been the target of repressive actions by the Zionist lobby. Furthermore, she supports, in principle, the intention of AMED to take on a leadership role in the academic discussion of all issues of justice and liberation, not only with regard to Palestine. However, she is concerned that in supporting the restoration of the AMED FB page, it will immediately be linked to the event that featured Leila Khaled. According to Stefanie, the inevitable coupling of the event with the AMED page would put JVP in a position that they are not willing to defend. For JVP, it seems to come back to Leila Khaled.

Rabab pointedly asked Stefanie that if JVP compromises its stated progressive positions on censorship and supporting Palestinian voices, what is the next compromise that JVP will have to make to protect its position in the movement?

Stefanie said she would continue to consider the matter and discuss it with the JVP Board of Directors. We asked her to reach out to JVP’s partners in their myriad campaigns and consider joining together to support our petition. She agreed to speak with Palestinian groups within their umbrella of allies. She promised to get back to us and report on her discussions.

I hope the Jewish Voice for Peace Board of Directors will reconsider and support Professor Rabab Ibrahim Abdulhadi’s petition to Facebook to restore the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas Studies (AMED) Page they cancelled over a scheduled talk with Leila Khaled.

Professor Abdulhadi, whose advocacy for Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas studies, and Palestinian liberation are [both longstanding and well-known](#), responded with: “We will

not be silenced! We will continue teaching, researching and advocating for justice in/for Palestine as part and parcel of the indivisibility of justice.”

What’s most shocking to me related to what Fox said is this statement: “we cannot promote anything that has to do with armed resistance, and an event with Leila Khaled would fall under that.”

Is JVP National willing to help us liberate Palestine but only if we conduct our liberation struggle peacefully?

It’s one thing to condemn terrorism, but this goes way beyond such a position, one that does not even acknowledge Israel’s state terrorism.

Israeli soldiers and Israeli politicians who have led, or been involved in, terrorist actions resulting in mass murders of Palestinians have long been invited to speak on US campuses. Not a peep about that from JVP, ever!

On the question of armed struggle against colonization, the best position to take is one that Dan Segal, Vice-President, Claremont Colleges AAUP, communicated to me:

“My own view on the violence question is that personally, given my own positionality, I do not think I can or would participate in violent resistance, but I also am not willing to make a categorical judgment against the use of violence in resistance to oppression. I am not an oppressed person, and I cannot say to those who are that it is wrong for them to deploy violence in pursuit of freedom. Or perhaps I can turn this around and say, I love non-violent resistance, but I also am not willing to take a categorical stance against violent resistance.”

([Read](#) also: It’s time for Israel to accept that as an occupied people, Palestinians have a right to resist—in every way possible.)

People may have different views, but they certainly cannot dictate to Palestinians and still call themselves in solidarity.

To invoke Frantz Fanon, Israel has a choice whether or not to act violently against Palestinians, whereas Palestinians do not have that choice. That’s the equation between the colonizer and the colonized, the oppressed and the oppressor. ([See](#): “THE LIBERATION PSYCHOLOGY OF FRANTZ FANON: STRUGGLE AS NORMATIVE AND NECESSARY”)

In “What’s Stopping the 3rd Intifada?” Jamil Hilal [writes](#),

“Palestinians must understand resistance to mean a holistic strategy that goes beyond military resistance and covers all forms of engagement, including legal, diplomatic, political, cultural, and economic avenues, as well as measures to boycott, divest from and sanction Israel as advocated by the BDS movement. As for the private sector, it needs to be oriented so that it promotes an economy capable of functioning under and resisting the Israeli occupation while meeting the needs of the WBG Palestinians in their struggle for survival.”

A holistic strategy includes armed struggle.

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Featured image: Left inset, JVP's Executive Director Stefanie Fox/ Right: Professor Rabab Abdelhadi of AMED Studies, SFSU

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