

# “Palestine Must be Demilitarized”. According to Israel, there is no “Occupation” of The West Bank and Gaza

Stop Taking for Granted the Justification for the Existence of Israel

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*Soapbox (described on Facebook as Russia state-controlled media) is circulating a [video](#) of veteran Israeli journalist Gideon Levy lecturing against the Zionist occupation of the West Bank.*

In the first few frames Levy says:

“Palestine must be demilitarized.” Sorry, why should Palestine be demilitarized? Don’t they [Palestinians] have their right to self-defense?

Levy is here defending Palestinians’ right to armed resistance against the occupation (immediately following these words, we are shown action images, first of a stone-throwing Palestinian and then of Israeli soldiers in riot gear); he is saying, though he doesn’t use these words, that Palestinians have a right to security, a right to self-determination in the West Bank and Gaza.

There is one crucial fact that puts a wrench in Levy’s rhetorical argument: Israel has yet to acknowledge it is occupying the West Bank or Gaza Strip. Israel has long argued that Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention (“The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population in the territory it occupies”) doesn’t [apply](#) to Jewish colonies in the West Bank, because ... there is no occupation. ([Check out](#): Myth: Israel’s Supreme Court Thinks the West Bank is Occupied)

In truth, all of Palestine, and not just the remnant of “Palestine” Levy refers to, must be demilitarized from the river to the sea and decolonized as well. [See](#): Infographic — Vanishing Palestine: The making of Israel’s occupation (Historic Palestine continues to be wiped off the map as Israel maintains policies implemented in 1948 and 1967).

Complicity with the Israeli state through discourse such as Gideon Levy’s is sometimes difficult to unpack. But one must ask, not only who Levy is speaking to, but also who he is

benefiting when he shares such knowledge about the Israeli oppression of Palestinians within a framework of utterly false equivalencies between the oppressor and the oppressed?

It is incomprehensible and pathetic that veteran journalists like Gideon Levy, when defending Palestinian human rights, must still address their fellow Israeli Jews and Zionist Jews abroad in neoliberal and neocolonial terms around the misleading concept of “conflict.” It goes to show how persistently Israeli citizens are willing accomplices in Israel’s regime of occupation, settler-colonialism and apartheid.

Levy is, in the words of a friend, gradually opening the eyes of Jews who have been indoctrinated in Zionism to the fact that they’ve been lied to all along:

Ordinary Jews have been sold a bill of goods by Zionist ideologues. It’s our task to open their eyes. Israeli reality is horrible. But Zionists’ continued success in blinding ordinary Jews’ eyes to that reality is the key to the Zionists’ political strength in the US and Canada. It’s up to us to educate them.

Gideon Levy’s defense is impassioned and admirable, but it does not go far enough, focusing as he does only on part of Israel’s Big Lie. Much of what Levy is doing is reiterating the Palestinian version of events but diluting it to make it palatable, and that’s what I am objecting to here. I am bemoaning the astounding reality that, decades after the Nakba, the facts around Palestine still do not speak for themselves and need to be doctored with a spoonful of sugar.

As we have learned very dramatically recently through the impeachment trial of Donald Trump (in Edward Said’s words), “facts do not all speak for themselves, but require a socially acceptable narrative to absorb, sustain and circulate them...The Palestinian narrative has never been officially admitted to Israeli history, except of that as non-Jews.”

I am also chagrined that the ultimate authority on Palestine/Israel to most people in the West, including those who applaud what Levy is saying but refrain from applauding a Palestinian, such as historian Nur Masalha for example, who’s been saying the same exact thing for ages, remains the voice of the powerful.

In the Soapbox video clip, Levy says that Israel has never had any intention of bringing an end to the “peace process” with a “two-state solution.” Very true. But when Levy asks, “Why should Palestine be demilitarized? Aren’t their lives in danger much more than we Israelis?”, he situates us back squarely in the land of the so-called “contested” narratives, the one that takes for granted the justification for the existence of Israel as a Jewish state that deserves to live in peace while gobbling up and judaizing the rest of vanishing Palestine and blocking the return of Palestinian refugees to the property and land from which Israel has dispossessed them.

The video also has the text at the end that “the Israeli-Palestinian conflict... began in the mid-20th century”. This is a false claim in two ways: It’s a colonization/occupation rather than conflict, and it began earlier — in the late 19th century. ([See](#): See: A Short History of the Colonization of Palestine)

The headline of the Soapbox video clip is: VETERAN ISRAELI JOURNALIST CONFRONTS POLICY ‘OF OCCUPATION’: Veteran Israeli journalist exposed the truth on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

What I would like to watch is a video clip headlined: Veteran Israeli journalist confronts Israeli policy of colonization and exposes the Zionist Israeli invasion and colonization of Palestine since 1948.

Gideon Levy, let's hear why all of Palestine should be demilitarized and decolonized from the river to the sea. Let us hear the truth, the whole truth.

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