



# BRIEFING PAMPHLET ON THE PALESTINIAN STRUGGLE

We are seeing every day on our TV screens the real-life process of genocide being committed against the Palestinian people by the Israeli Zionist Regime and its military.

We used to read in the history books about genocide: that of the Nama and Herero in Namibia at the hands of German colonialists in the early 1900s, of the Jews of Europe by the German Nazi military during World War Two, of the Palestinians by Israeli Zionist militia in 1948 and of the genocide in Rwanda in the early 1990s.

Today we see live images of the killing of thousands of Palestinian children, women and men and the murderous drive to cleanse Gaza of all Palestinians. This is what genocide is all about!!

## **We are witnessing genocide in real time!!**

Many seem to think that what is happening in Palestine is a fight between Muslims and Jews; others say it is a war between Hamas and the Israeli government; and there are those who are saying that Israeli has the right to defend itself and that Hamas provoked Israel.



*About 100 Palestinians had to be buried in this mass grave without proper funerals on 22 November 2023 after Israel bombed them to death, and the graveyards ran out of space.*

## **What is the real story?**

### **This is Not a Muslim/Jewish Conflict**

What is happening in Gaza is not a fight between Muslims and Jews. The people of Palestine subscribe to different forms of religion: there are Christian Palestinians, Muslim Palestinians and non-religious Palestinians. In one of the bombing raids on Gaza the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) bombed a Christian church killing hundreds of Palestinians who were seeking shelter.

Many Jewish people in Israel are opposed to the attacks on Gaza and do not support the Zionist Regime of Prime Minister Netanyahu. In other parts of the world, many Jewish people are also opposed to the Netanyahu Regime. In America, for instance, hundreds of Jews stormed the House of Representatives calling for a cease-fire.

Here in South Africa, an organization called the *South African Jews for a Free Palestine* opposes the genocide.

## Not a war between Hamas and Israel!

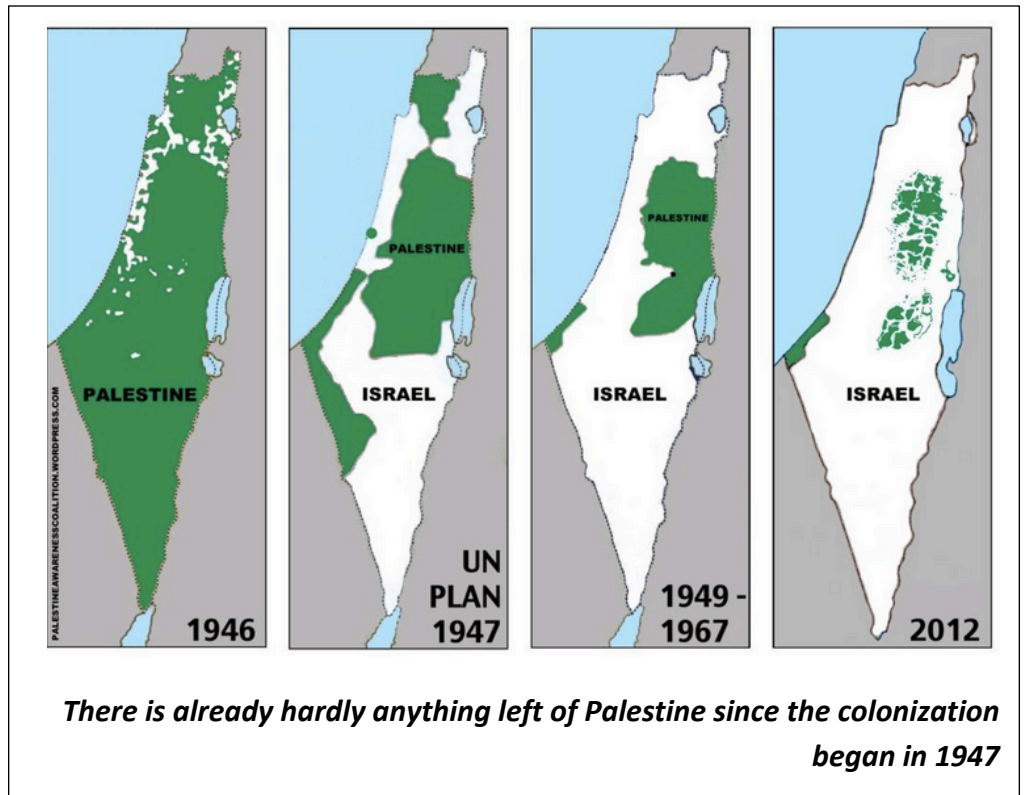
This is not a war between two armies. Yes, there are two sides. On the one side is the oppressor, a colonial power that is the biggest military power in the Middle East armed with highly sophisticated weaponry and nuclear weapons.

On the other side, is the oppressed, is the resistance to colonialism, oppression and military occupation.

Hamas is one of the armed resistance groups in Gaza, resisting the might of the Israeli army. What is currently happening is not a war between Hamas and Israel, but rather the systematic and brutal extermination and cleansing of Palestinians by the Israeli military and settlers.

## A conflict between Colonizer and Colonized

The conflict in Gaza and the rest of Palestine has its roots in the struggle against apartheid, colonialism and military occupation.



Before World War Two, there was no state called Israel in the land of Palestine.

Only a country called Palestine existed. What today is called Israel was part of Palestine. In 1917, the majority of the people in Palestine were Palestinians, making up 90% of the population. A small minority of Jewish people stayed on the land of Palestine making up 9% of the population.

Over the centuries Palestine was under the rule of many different empires. Before World War One, Palestine was ruled by the Ottoman Empire. The latter was defeated during World War One and Palestine then became a Protectorate of the British Empire: a colony of Britain.

The British government published in 1917 the Balfour Declaration giving its support for the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. The people of Palestine resisted British colonialism and demanded independence and self-rule.

In 1936, the Palestinians began the Great Revolt against British colonialism which lasted for 3 years and was only defeated by brutal British repression.

The small minority Jewish community also laid claim to Palestine as their country. In the late 1800s a rightwing political movement emerged, which is referred to as Zionism and it claimed that all of Palestine is the land of the Jews, bestowed to them by God. For Zionism there is no such country as Palestine and Palestinians have no right to be there.

We know that during the 1930s and 40s, Adolf Hitler and the Nazis committed genocide against the Jewish people – which is known as the Holocaust. As a result of this persecution, hundreds of thousands of Jews fled Germany and other parts of Europe and settled in Palestine. This influx of Jews into Palestine increased the Jewish population to around 27%.

After the end of World War Two, in 1947, the United Nations with backing of British imperialism partitioned Palestine and divided it up; vast tracts of Palestinian land were allocated to the Zionist settlers. With the backing and support of British imperialism, Zionist militia unleashed in 1948 a programme of ethnic cleansing and genocide of the Palestinians.

More than 700 000 Palestinians were evicted from their land and homes, tens of thousands were massacred and more than five hundred Palestinian villages were destroyed. The Palestinians called the genocide of 1948 the “Al Nakba”, the great catastrophe.



***The Palestinian Nakba (catastrophe) of 15 May 1948, when Zionists from Europe carried out a genocide against Palestinians, forcing the Palestinians out of their homes and establishing 'Israel' on stolen Palestinian land.***

Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians became refugees in neighboring countries like Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Many also became refugees in Palestine itself. Up till today, 75 years later, there are over 5 million Palestinian refugees outside of Palestine who are refused the right to return by Israel. On the ruins of the destroyed Palestinian villages, Israeli settler villages and settlements were erected; their Palestinian names were erased from history books and replaced by Israeli names.

On this basis of this genocide, the Al Nakba, and with the support of British imperialism, the State of Israel was formed in 1948. The land called Palestine no longer exists in the official records. Ever since the brutal formation of the State of Israel, the Zionist settlers have attempted to drive out the Palestinians from Palestine.

## **What has happened since 1948?**

For the past 75 years Palestinians have been subjected to systematic colonial oppression, racial discrimination, killings and imprisonment.

Destruction of Palestinian villages has continued unabated; evictions from land and homes are a daily occurrence. Israeli settlements have encroached on more Palestinian lands, with the result that Palestinians are now confined to the Occupied West Bank, the open-air prison of Gaza and parts of Jerusalem. They are forced to have passes; their freedom of movement is controlled and regulated by Israeli military checkpoints.

Since 1948, Palestinians have resisted colonialism, apartheid and military occupation. Thousands of Palestinians, including children, are languishing in Israeli military prisons. In 1993, an accord was signed between the Palestinian Liberation movement and the Israeli government whereby the Palestinians were allowed to have a form of governmental authority in Gaza and the West Bank; however this Palestinian Authority is more like bantustans where the Israeli government has full control and the Palestinian Authority cannot act without the permission of the Israeli government. In exchange for this bantustan form of self-rule, Palestinians have to co-operate with the Israeli Regime - the Palestinian Authority must inform the Israeli government of the existence of any armed resistance groups and their activities that threatened Israel.

This accord signed in Oslo, Norway, divided the Palestinian resistance movements. The Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) supported it and others like Hamas opposed it. In 2006, elections were held in Gaza and the West Bank. The PLO won in the West Bank and Hamas won in Gaza.



***The Israeli colonization of Palestine is visible every day – Israel often bulldozes the homes of Palestinian freedom fighters, leaving the extended family homeless. This photo was taken in 2014.***

However, Israel refused to recognize the authority of Hamas in Gaza. Since 2007 Israeli has turned Gaza into the biggest open-air prison in the world where the Palestinians are subjected to military oppression, killings, surveillance and imprisonment. Palestinians have no freedoms, have no rights. The same is the case in the Occupied West Bank where they are also subjected to military oppression and are under constant attack from both the Israeli military and illegal rightwing Israeli settlers.

## **American Imperialism and Israel**

We have seen that American imperialism has given its full and unconditional support to the genocidal military campaign of the rightwing Zionist Regime of Netanyahu. There is a solid bedrock alliance between the USA and Israeli. The USA government has provided extra military assistance worth \$14 billion to Israel to carry out this genocide. This is in addition to the ten year deal that guarantees \$38 billion in U.S. military aid to Israeli. Not only is the U.S. the military financier of Israel, it is also Israel's strongest international diplomatic supporter and economic donor.

There are two strategic reasons for the U.S ruling class' support for Israel: to secure U.S interests in the oil-rich Middle East Region which contains the world's biggest supply of oil and which is of decisive importance for the functioning of global capitalism; and to prop up Israel as an important reactionary counter-revolutionary force in the Middle East to contain anti-imperialist movements. The oil-rich Middle East Region has long been a site of global imperialist rivalry and domination. Before World War Two, Britain and France were the colonial powers: Lebanon and Syria were under the military colonial occupation of France; Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Palestine were under the British. The U.S. emerged after World War Two as the superpower of the West and took over the imperial role from Britain and France in the Middle East region.

In the decades following World War Two anti-colonial mass movements emerged in the Middle East demanding freedom from colonialism, national autonomy over natural and strategic resources and the right to self-rule without imperialist coercion. The 1960s, in particular, were marked by heightened anti-imperialist struggles and western powers faced a real prospect of being expelled from the region. Radical nationalism was a critical part of the resistance. Socialist politics and ideas were also a critical component of this radical anti-imperialism.

In 1967 a war broke out between Israel and some of the Arab states in the Middle East. Israel, however, with the support of the U.S defeated the Arab armies. This defeat dealt a blow to the national states in the Middle East and to Arab nationalism as a progressive political project. The 1967 war cemented the US-Israel strategic alliance and Israel became the watchdog of US imperialism in the Middle East. It is therefore no surprise that US imperialism supports the genocide of Palestinians underway in Gaza today. US capital today has a direct interest in Israel's genocidal military operation so as ensure the Palestinian resistance suffers a historical defeat.

## South Africa and Palestine

Historically the struggle against apartheid-capitalism in South Africa had important similarities with the liberation struggle of the Palestinians. The Black working class has a shared history of resistance to forced expulsions, evictions, land



***This photo was taken in Gaza on 10 October 2023, just 2 days after Israel began its latest bombardment of the Palestinians. Since then, Israel has bombed 1.5 million Palestinians' homes and killed about 20 000 Palestinians, mostly women and children.***

seizures, colonialism, apartheid and capitalism. Like the Palestinians, the South African masses were denied basic freedoms of movement, of speech, of assembly, of collective organization and were subjected to racial oppression and exploitation. Israel also supported the apartheid regime of the National Party. Israel not only played the role of US watchdog in the Middle East, but also in other parts of the world, by providing arms to dictators and other regimes that the US could not support directly. It provided supplied arms and military training to the NP Apartheid Regime.

The ANC knows this shared history and connection with the masses of Palestine. It was once a national liberation movement that fought against colonialism and apartheid. Why then is the ANC government reluctant to cut all diplomatic and economic ties with apartheid Zionist Israel? The answer lies in the political evolution of the ANC from a national liberation movement to a political party that safeguards and advances the interests of the old white ruling class that existed under apartheid capitalism.

Ever since 1994 the ANC has driven a neo-liberal programme that entrenches the interests of white monopoly capital bringing misery, poverty and unemployment to the black working class. What we need to understand is that white monopoly capital is very much integrated and connected to imperialism, especially American and British imperialism. The white elite in the country see its values, culture and so-called civilization being that of the western world. Also many threads of finance, commerce, trade and business connect white monopoly capital to western imperialism.

Breaking diplomatic and economic ties with Israel means upsetting the white elite and western imperialism and this is what the ANC government is not prepared to do. This reluctance on the part of the ANC government is no different to its

reluctance to upset the wealth and power of the old white elite so as to create a better life for the majority black working class. It is not to prepare to upset its master for the benefit of the South African masses and it is certainly not going to do it for the Palestinian masses. It is said that a country's foreign policy is nothing but a reflection of its domestic policy.

## **Solidarity with the Palestinian Resistance**

Our solidarity with the Palestinian masses is rooted in the shared history of resistance to colonialism, apartheid and capitalism. This solidarity is critically needed at this critical juncture when the Palestinian Resistance is facing the prospect of a historical defeat of epic proportions. The way to show this solidarity is to mount mass pressure on the ANC government to cut all diplomatic and economic ties with Israel and thereby isolate the Zionist Regime of Benjamin Netanyahu.

**Free, Free Palestine!! From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!!**

