

# Against Genocide: A Palestinian Solidarity Panel

Firestorm & The Final Straw Radio - October 2023



# FIRESTORM BOOKS

This week on The Final Straw, we're excited to share a panel discussion recorded at Firestorm Books entitled Against Genocide: A Palestinian Solidarity Panel, recorded on Sunday, October 22nd 2023.

Event Description: "With the "iron-clad" support of the United States and other Western powers, Israel has made explicit its plan for the systematic destruction of Gaza and the Palestinian people. At this event, participants—including Palestinian and Jewish activists—will discuss the history of the occupation and the present campaign of dehumanization that's paving the way to genocide. We'll also explore the radical solidarities that are necessary to stop the assault on Gaza and secure a just peace.

This event is a fundraiser for The Hebron International Resource Network (HIRN), an organization based in the West Bank that is working to house Gazan workers deported to the West Bank by Israeli forces. Please consider bringing a cash donation! Firestorm will additionally be donating the net proceeds from all sales in-store and online.

Art by Heba Zagout, Palestinian artist killed with her two young children in an Israeli airstrike on Gaza on Friday, October 13."

Zines suggested by Milstein:

- Inexorable Links by Zara from Interviews With Radical Palestinian Women
- Tkhines For A Free Palestine
- Kaddish For The Soul of Judaism: Genocide In Palestine
- Three Perspectives on Zionism, Jewishness, Class, and Liberation
- Jewish Currents Israel-Palestine Explainer

**JULIE:** *Hey, everyone, we're gonna get started.*

*Welcome. It feels good to see so many people turnout for this event. I want to thank everyone for being here and Firestorm for hosting this event and doing the benefit associated with it. [Applause] I especially want to thank the panelists for offering your time, but also your mental and emotional labor in offering to speak on a topic that is extremely personal, but also urgently needs public discussion right now. You've answered the call and I know we're all grateful for that, at a time when it's easy to feel isolated, sitting alone with our thoughts and feelings, and scrolling through social media it's easy to feel isolated. But y'all have allowed us to create a container for speaking about this publicly and collectively. So thank you. I hope this is just the beginning and that more events in public will happen and that folks are gonna keep rejection of genocidal logic and policy in the public eye, at least here in our community in Asheville.*

*After the q&a, we will create space for folks to make announcements about relevant upcoming events and organizing efforts so that if there are folks in the audience who are organizing and doing things... we want to create the option for people to find each other.*

*I'm going to introduce the panelists in a moment. But I wanted to quickly explain the format of the event. We're going to have an hour of panel discussion, where I'll pose questions to the panelists, and then we will have half an hour of question and answer. We're going to do that in a format where we're asking folks to write or text, ideally text, your questions and comments. You should have access to pieces of paper with a QR code. Those will be compiled and then kind of fed to me. So if you write something down instead of texting it, just pass your papers towards the aisles, and someone will come and get it from you.*

*Before introductions I'm going to turn it over to one of our panelists for a poem.*

**ANNE:** Can you hear me? This is by a man named Fady Joudaha. He's a Palestinian American poet and physician, the 2007 winner of the Yale series of younger poets competition. The title of the poem is called *Nemesis*.

*"My daughter wouldn't hurt a spider that had nested between her bicycle handles. For two weeks, she waited until it left on its own accord. "If you tear down the web," I said, "it will simply know this isn't a place to call home and you'd get to go biking." She said, "That's how others became refugees, isn't it?"*

**JULIE:** *Thank you for sharing that. So since you've got the mic, Anne, why don't you start with introductions. The panelists will introduce themselves so you can share*

*how you identify, what brought you to speak here today, what your connection to this issue is, whatever feels important to share.*

**ANNE:** Well, my name is Anne Craig. I'm really trying to be here as a substitute for a friend Said, who was recently in Vietnam, now he's in Thailand. This morning, we spoke on the phone and I took notes on his answers and his observations to the questions that Julie will pose. But just briefly, I've lived in Asheville for 45 years. I was raised a secular Jew of immigrant parents in Chicago and I feel in my heart, that if this issue could be resolved, then we actually can turn this world around.

**CINDY BARUKH MILSTEIN:** I'm Cindy Barukh Milstein, and I use 'they' as a pronoun. I'm feeling mostly like a human being right now. And hopefully we will all be generous with each other. Today I feel like we're all carrying a lot. I'm also a queer, diasporic, Jewish anarchist, and my heart feels really heavy today. I'm here because, I really am grateful, I was asked to do this as a form of solidarity, and I believe strongly in solidarity as one of my political practices. I'm really grateful that this feels like something tangible in a time when that feels hard right now. I'm grateful for Firestorm raising money for a fund that is going to directly get mutual aid to people who really need it, material aid to people who really need it right now.

The last little thing, it's my Jewish practice, or I practice it a lot, to use stones in mourning. I usually put down one or two stones when I do talks. It's kind of been my practice. I thought about that today and I brought a whole bunch of stones, because it feels impossible to try to carry the weight in a mountain of stones right now. But I want to honor all those people that have experienced loss right now and all that we've lost in the last couple of weeks, especially those are in Gaza right now.

**YOUSEF:** Thanks for everyone being here with us today. I am Yousef. I am a Palestinian born and raised in Hebron West Bank. I came to United States in 2017 to live in Asheville. I have been in Asheville since then. I've worked with multiple human rights organizations in my hometown. I came to United States doing human rights work as well and have been doing that since then. COVID has stopped us all from doing what we love to do. So unfortunately, we came all together, again, in these circumstances to try to work for human rights and figure it out if we can. Thanks to Firestorm for hosting us and inviting all of us to the space.

How do I feel about what has been happening? It has been really hard to remind myself recently to just breathe and to calm my nerves down and to actually have some hours to sleep and relax. Being able to be in touch with my family in Hebron has been a struggle due to the fact that all kinds of communications has been dead shut down for the most part. The first four days I wasn't able to communicate with my family at all, to know how they are doing and who had survived and who was imprisoned or not, and if they are with their families or not. I wouldn't be able to imagine how that would be for the Palestinians in Gaza Strip, as well.

So it definitely has been a struggle to be away from family, to be away from my hometown, from friends of mine who have been unfortunately either killed or imprisoned, and not being able to be there in person in solidarity with my family and with my friends and community.

**JULIE:** *I'll briefly introduce myself. I'm Julie, I'm a former Firestorm collective member and long term collaborator. I do anti prison, political prisoners support work locally. I am an anti Zionist Jew.*

*So our first question is really more of a personal reflection of what the last couple of weeks has been like for y'all. I think you maybe already spoke to that a bit Yousef, so feel free to say more or to pass. But that's our first question: What has been on your head and the heart and time for the past couple of weeks?*

**YOUSEF:** I'll continue that. I'll follow on what I have been saying. It has been super difficult for me, as a Palestinian, being away from my hometown, from my family and from my friends. Since the 7th [of October, 2023] it has been a struggle to catch up on all of the news. It has been so devastating to actually watch the Western media, what they has been presenting on the media, what all of you possibly have been watching and seeing on the news. It's heartbreaking for me to know that that's the source of information that y'all have. And that you all do not have the other source of information that would show you other information that we Palestinians or Arabs may have access to. It's been hard to see certain words being used to describe Palestinians, to describe the genocide that has been taking place in Gaza, to find out what the press in this region, in Europe, and all over Arab countries have been showing on their screen.

On the other hand, also seeing the devastating bombing that has been taking place in Gaza, it's definitely heartbreaking to see that. Most of the Palestinians that have been killed are children, women and elderly folks. Seeing bombs being dropped at hospitals, on mosques, on churches, and bombs being dropped on the so called 'safe path' to the south. It's been so hard to see people

being on trucks and trying to flee out of there to nowhere, trying to be safe to no safe place, trying to be home to where no home is, and tried to be sheltered where there's no shelter to be had. It's hard to see the questions being asked: "Where the shelters are?" "Where would Palestinians, Gazans be able to go to an underground bunker?" "Yeah, we call that a graveyard."

Not ignoring what's going on in Gaza, but for me, as a Palestinian being from West Bank, it's been really devastating not seeing any news about West Bank as well. Again, not ignoring what's going on in Gaza, that's a really important piece of it. The reason why I'm mentioning this is because it's been devastating for me as well to find out that a lot of Western media ignored it and at the same time, a lot of folks have assumed that means that West Bank is free. Palestinians are free there. They are not.

There have been invasions and raids to all towns in West Bank. There have been invasions to Palestinian homes. When we are talking about invasions, there's a really long description of what time it's happening, how it's happening, how doors are broken, the amount of military, fully armed going into Palestinian homes where children and women are. There has been more than 100 Palestinians so far imprisoned under administrative detention. We are talking about a huge amount of numbers still increasing. Last night we stayed awake until about 4am in the morning watching news about air strikes. An air strike is taking place right now in West Bank. Air Strikes have targeted a mosque in a Jenin refugee camp that killed two Palestinian the injured more. Talking about Palestinians being shot right straight to the head and chest. None of that is taking place in the media.

Talking about a lot of things that we'll talk about more. But mainly it has been really devastating while seeing all the news, being able to rest, being able to function, being able to work and socialize even, being able to even be afraid to be sitting here with all of you, seeing the amount of discrimination that's happening against Palestinians, against Muslims, against Arabs in this country. The amount of hate that's been generated through your media, your social media, and the ideology that's being carried around. I would say we have seen a lot happening in areas, in Michigan in particular, currently where Palestinians are being attacked, Arabs being attacked. In Asheville we invited Palestinians and Arabs to come and be part of the panel, yet they are afraid, terrified, and that's reasonable. I'm terrified myself. But at the same time, if that's what it takes an extra person then, that's what it takes..

**ANNE:** Thank you. I can't say anything after that. What can be said after that? From people living comfortable lives, living comfortable lives in this capitalist,

crazy, abusive, imperialist, society we live in. And more comfortable. What can be said after that? I can't talk.

**CBM:** I haven't been thinking at all for the past two weeks, but I've been feeling and trying. Someone said before this panel started, they're like 29% here, and others of my friends I've been waiting on who are Jewish are just saying how fragmented... Palestinian and Jewish and Muslim friends of mine have been feeling fragmented and alone, and frightened, and grief stricken and every possible emotion. I've been thinking a lot about how much epigenetic trauma and ancestral trauma and historical trauma is impacting Jews, and Muslims, and Palestinians. I obviously can't speak to the experience of what it feels like to be Palestinian or Muslim. I can only speak to being Jewish, but I feel like our fates are so tied, and things could have been so different, and they need to be different. So, the pain of that powerlessness has been really weighing on me.

As a Jew, this is not a path I would have ever understood to come out of my own epigenetic and ancestral trauma and historical trauma and my current organizing, and the pain of that. There's been so much loss. I have friends who are Israeli Jewish organizers who have resisted going into the military to spend time in jail, and they're a mess. Some of them have friends in Gaza who are taking photos right now and they're trying to support them and they're a mess. I have friends who have family in kibbutzim. A dear friend of mine who has long done amazing anti-colonial work in so-called Canada, one of their cousins, they are Israeli-Canadian, and one of their cousins was killed in the kibbutzim massacre that happened and all they care about even more is freeing Palestine and ending the occupation and ending settler colonialism. I watched them they sat Shiva for a week and then we were talking and just the beauty of them being like, "This actually has only made me stronger in that commitment." Then my own relatives in that same kibbutzim, a cousin who was killed there, and they've gone sort of from liberalism to full fascism. I don't even know if I'll ever be able to talk to those relatives again. It's a different pain, but the personal-ness of this of this for so many of us and how close we are to it and the proximity feels so much more. I don't know, I just feel like my heart has been hardly able to stay in my chest for this past two weeks.

I guess the last thing I want to say is I feel like the first week or so I felt like I was vacillating. This is so not how I usually respond to things, between fear and frozen-ness and isolation and complete powerlessness and despair. I just want to end on this I've also been feeling the beauty and the promise of watching, I've been watching a lot, there's a photographer in particular been watching and Gaza. I don't even understand how brave this person is and how they're taking these pictures that are so moving and how they're still alive. I keep looking

at the pictures which are horrific. But they also keep pointing out that even in the worst moments, people are caring for each other in the hospitals at the price of their own life. People are offering mutual aid. People are being there for each other and offering care. Someone I was talking to before this panel began talked about how we can't cure or fix things, but we can care. Not just care but care in ways that are substantive.

Again, to come back to us being here today, I really appreciate everyone. I think the hard part about this week is it doesn't stop, this powerlessness to not be able to stop all the deaths that are gonna happen and are happening feels so horrific. Yet I really appreciate that Yousef had suggested this fund where material aid will go to people. I don't know. The horror and the conundrums that sit side by side are hard right now. I'm sorry, I spoke so long.

**JULIE:** *So the word unprecedented has been used a lot in the media to describe Hamas' attack across the border fence, and then subsequently, the all out siege and air assault on Gaza. So I'm curious, does that framing of 'unprecedented,' resonate with you? What is and is not different about this moment in this one conflict?*

**YOUSEF:** We have been seeing a lot of words that have been used to describe this conflict like it's new, like it's never happened before, that this is a surprise, a shock. This is not the case. To describe this, we have to go back in history, way back. We do not have enough time to describe the unrealistic way that the Western media is using these kind of terms to describe the current events taking place in Gaza and in Palestine in general.

This might be a surprise for you, a surprise for the Western media. They have been ignoring this for long enough. Same for the international media. You will be surprised about the amount of ignorance they may have towards the Palestinian cause. But for Palestinians, for us, for me, as a Palestinian who was born in 1992... The only thing that I saw growing up is guns pointing on my face and tear gas inhaling rather than the oxygen that y'all are enjoying. That's something that is not new for us. For me, as a Palestinian and for Gazans, as well, for Palestinians in Gaza, that is not something new. They have been living in prison, in an open prison.

One way to describe what's going on is that Gaza and West Bank both are concentration camps. That's one way to word it. If they want to use wording that is actually going to describe what's going on. It's genocide, ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people. We have been saying it long enough. Palestinians are seeking human rights, seeking international law, seeking international justice. They are asking for the siege on Gaza to be lifted, asking for the settlements to



be out of West Bank, out of Gaza and the surrounding of Gaza, asking for equal life, asking for normal life really.

For this term (unprecedented) to be used, it is definitely something that the media is using for their own interest, and nothing else. For how much information I have and that I could say about this particular thing, it could take hours. It's devastating to see all of this specific wording that is being used that is not really describing what has been taking place for years against the Palestinians.

**ANNE:** I have so many notes. It's a propaganda war foisted on us by the US government, the Israeli government, and the complicit mainstream media. The Palestinians have been expressing non-violently their wish to be free, to experience self determination, to have human rights, for years and years. Israel doesn't listen because it doesn't have to, because we were complicit with it.

Norman Finkelstein, who is a history scholar and whose parents survived the concentration of World War Two, and Ilan Pappé, the historian who got thrown out of the University of Haifa, and now lives in England, both explained that the oppressed resist. Ultimately, when humans are pushed to a point that non-violent resistance doesn't work, humans resist violently. They cited the uprisings of the enslaved people in the United States who killed innocent civilians. They cited the indigenous uprisings in the United States, where innocent civilians were killed. When settler colonialism comes your way, and it doesn't let up, when the boot is on your neck for 75 years, we could expect some kind of violent response.

Norman Finkelstein said, and Said agreed with me when I spoke to him today, that the Hamas fighters were most likely young men who had "nothing to live for in this life," they would have been born and raised in virtual prison. They had no prospects for "job and normal life." Norman Finkelstein said that they probably talk to their family, or remembered their relatives who had been persecuted or killed in Gaza and that martyrdom was preferable to make a statement against the oppressor, and they sure did. It's horrible when the world continues to be inhuman, humanity continues to be completely inhuman to each other and to the natural world. We're feeding the god Moloch, we're feeding him our children, we're feeding him this beautiful planet.

**CBM:** I really appreciate what you said about it not been unprecedented. I really struggling for language. It feels like some kind of crossroads or turning point too, at the same time. The gigantic demonstrations of people all around the

world, unprecedented numbers of people actually coming out even when it's been made illegal to stand with Palestinians.

I guess I'm trying to think about the different shifts that are taking place within the United States since the past generation or so, which has gone to try assimilate out of the trauma of the Holocaust, which I think was the wrong direction. Trying to find safety in assimilation. But because of the work of a lot of young Jewish people of a different generation within Jewish circles and a lot of them queer, trans, and anarchistic have really pushed toward an anti Zionism. That is being challenged right now.

I also think there's some opening that feels different than it has in the past. So I'm trying to look at whether this a crossroads, to be able to actually name in the same way that the George Floyd Uprising brought the word abolition to the fore. Maybe this is a moment where Anti-Zionism can be named a lot more strongly and Zionism can be connected to white Christo-fascism, Islamophobia, and Antisemitism and start naming these things. I don't know, unprecedented is not the right word, but what kinds of Crossroads or openings can we find right now?

**JULIE:** *What should people living in the United States understand about this country's political, military, and economic involvement in this conflict today and historically? To the extent that local linkages exist, please illuminate those.*

**YOUSEF:** I think we have been seeing the American support to the establishment of the Israeli State from the beginning. We are seeing it right now as well currently when Biden is doing all these announcements that "Israel has the right to defend itself," and supporting Israel and military aid, support in billions of dollars. We have been mentioned in it for many years. We'll talk more about the letters and talk about more about what we have been doing, in a sense of writing letters to the city and council and politicians to try to stop the aid from your tax money [from going] to genocide and to killing civilians.

We have been seeing it, obviously, more currently. We have heard the news about the American military ship being sent closer to the region, mainly to threaten that no one else should participate from the surrounding Arab countries in this conflict, supporting Israel in either money or in bombs. Actually, a lot of analysis have come out about the bomb that being dropped at Al-Ma'dani Hospital, that it's the same bomb that has been given to the military to use against Russia. A lot of analysis have come out, that it's the same sound that it made before it drops, and the same impact as well. These analysis' have come out. It's not my word. I'm not a military analyst. This information is out there in the

in the media. There was a video that came out from a Palestinian in Gaza who was filming out of his window, showing the seconds right before that bomb was dropped. The Western media is saying that Hamas' missiles somehow circled back and landed, but we all know what Hamas' missiles are capable of doing. So we have to understand the amount of military aid that has been sent to Israel through this crisis.

A couple of days ago, we learned that it's not just federal money is going there. But in Charlotte, there was a city meeting that was trying to plan to cut the city budget to send funds to Israel through the cities. I learned about this through the Palestinian folks in Charlotte. They were trying to speak against it during that meeting. I'm pretty sure that will take place in other cities and states within the United States.

It's unfortunate, I think what we are seeing, it's a game of politics. We have to look at the fact that we have elections coming up in the United States. We all know that politicians use that as points [to try to get re-elected]. I believe that's one way that they are showing voters to vote for them again, they will do whatever you want. We are seeing it in Israel as well, in terms of Netanyahu's leadership. It's a game of politicians, a game of reelection.

In relation to the wording aspect, for Israel itself to call it a 'war.' It is not a war, Israel used that term in particular to activate a war protocol within Israel itself. Which it means that all aid, money, and gas, things that could go to an Israeli civilian have to be a priority for it to go to the military first. That code means that whatever Israel is doing is for the sake of self defense, and it's a war act, collateral damage in a war code is fine, for an Israeli war code, for hostages to possibly be killed is justified. We are kind of mixing two aspects in one but, it's all a combined political game as far as naming, for the people to think that this war is between two equal countries. It is not.

Palestinians have been under occupation. That's something that we have to understand, that Palestinians have the right to resist, we are actually facing another genocide against Palestinians. We are going through another Nakba, we are going through another ethnic cleansing, we are going through another format of replacing Palestinians from their original homes to somewhere else. The news has been asking why Egypt doesn't open its borders. We do not have control of our borders. That's something that you'll have to understand. Egypt may have control over Rafah border, but they do not. A lot of people are asking why Egypt doesn't open the borders for medical aid, it's because the Egyptians do not control that crossing. There has been airplanes over the Rafah border, just hours before the humanitarian aid went through to make sure that Israel is over-watching what's going on. Two hours ago, Israel apologized about a

miscalculated airstrike on the Rafah border again that killed or injured actually Egyptian military personnel. We are not sure about the information yet. I'm not sure about that.

The point is that we are actually heading towards a massive massacre. The countries in power are part of it and military aid is going through as well and money is going through that too.

**ANNE:** It's a real web of deceit. Right here in Asheville, we have Pratt & Whitney, the division of Raytheon, that I think is now called RTX. Maybe if I don't get it all right, if somebody connected with working on challenging that plan could help me but it's making component parts for the engines for some of the planes that Israel uses, among other countries.

As Medea Benjamin of Code Pink says, "The weapons makers are making a killing on killing." That's our number one industry. What kind of sickness is this? And how can we challenge it? And how can we get solidarity within various communities in our community, who need good jobs, who need to be able to afford apartments or homes and see Pratt & Whitney as a way to go toward that goal? We're not trying to challenge the workers. We're trying to challenge the power structure here that brings plants like this here, and then sells everybody a bill of goods. That's part of the problem with trying to develop solidarity, because they're just so powerful.

**CBM:** Not exactly local in terms of Asheville, but I know many people have been following and/or have been part of and are doing support for the Stop Cop City movement, which has spread way beyond, hopefully, so-called Atlanta. But the training facility, the largest police training facility that's proposed to be built there. They're planning to build other training facilities in a lot of other communities. It directly ties into here, too. They would use that facility. I don't know the details of it, but exchanges with IDF policing. And just a few days ago, they did a mock training practicing going after " Hamas terrorists," and they created a fake scenario in Atlanta where the police practiced what it would look like to do that. We understand, I think, many of us that when they start practicing trainings like that, and they use the word terrorist.

I think is another sloppy use of language. Because the vast majority of people that are getting called terrorists right now in the United States are people that are doing things like Stop Cop City. It comes back on us. That's another struggle where the connections are very palpable and real. So putting support into that movement, and spreading that movement out to other places, has a direct tie in as well.

**JULIE:** *I think we've got time for about one or two more panelist questions. So for many people, the so called 'Two State Solution' is a touchstone in this conflict. Throughout decades of official US policy, it's provided that dominant framework for a lot of people for understanding what a viable path for so-called peace looks like in the region.*

*What is your association with this idea? And how has it changed for you over time as situations have evolved on the ground?*

**YOUSEF:** I believe when a lot of politicians, particularly in the United States, suggested the idea of a two state solution, I think that comes from people who have no clue what's going on the ground. People have no clue what is actually happening in West Bank and Gaza Strip. From my perspective, as a Palestinian, the two state solution is no longer on the table. Why, from my perspective and my belief is that Israel is not interested in that two state solution. That is being shown on the ground in detailed information. It's out there. What's happening in Gaza is an explanation. As we mentioned, it's a it's a genocide, more than 4000 Palestinians are being killed. About 1800 of these are children, more than 1000 of that is women. Last night by itself over 24 hours the airstrikes that has been taking place in Gaza, just the past 24 hours, have actually killed more than 500 Palestinians in Gaza. The airstrike itself in Janine that happened last night as well.

A lot of things are happening in a really fast way. We have seen it before happening, but slowly. Happening in a way that we are not sure what's going on. But this time it's happening so quick, we are not able to actually keep track of what's going on. What I'm trying to get to is that pushing Palestinians in Gaza, all the way down to the south, even though that south of Gaza is not safe either. Israeli military is trying to, by foot, enter into in the Gaza Strip. That by itself right there is a 'No State Solution' resolution. The fact that cities in West Bank are divided, so divided. When this whole thing started, gates from the Israeli military were simply closed. All Palestinians in Hebron city, for example, could not get to Palestinians that are in Bethlehem or into Ramallah or into Jenin. These are gated cities. They are gated cities. There are roads that connects the cities together. Some of them are shared.

My last visit which was just a couple of months ago, to West Bank, showed me that there are actually roads currently built in West Bank that are only for Israeli settlers. So, when a an Israeli settler is living in Kiryat Arba settlement close to Hebron, the largest settlement in West Bank, they can simply get into their car to get to their job in Tel Aviv without any interruption. We are seeing that development the infrastructure that Israel is doing, is to actually

make the life of Israeli settlers in the settlements in West Bank, more comfortable and more protected is in no way taking Israel itself to a 'Two State Solution.'

The way that I look at it right now, from what is taking place, so far, I might be wrong, but I believe that what Israel is trying to do is simply wipe off Gaza Strip. 100%. The Palestinians that survive, they will get immigrated to, or they will be refugees to Egypt, or Jordan, or the West Bank. These cities in the West Bank, they will be concentration camps. Anytime there's a military that can push these doors open and walk in, march in, terrorize, make their presence felt, as Israeli military personnel have said, that's their technique, to make their presence felt. To terrify civilians, make them feel that they are not in control of their life. Anytime they want, they can block these gates block these main roads, and jail these Palestinians.

A lot of people are saying, the Two State Solution you have your access to water, electricity so on and so forth. We do not. Palestinians do not have their own water resources. They don't have their own or access to electricity. Any second, the Israeli government can simply say, "There's no water, there's no electricity, there's no transportation, there's no this and no that." The crossing between West Bank and Jordan, since [October] 7th is partially open. A lot of Palestinians were not able to leave from West Bank. So we are talking about borders being controlled, talking about resources being controlled, talking about infrastructure being controlled. A lot of people will say, "Well, what about the Palestinian Authority?" From my perspective, the Palestinian Authority is just a trial of what a Two State Solution look could like from an Israeli perspective if they give them the chance to survive that long.

**JULIE:** *Is there a liberatory vision that you hold for the region? What acts of struggle, resistance, and solidarity would be needed to work toward that vision? What do you see happening today, if anything, that brings that vision closer?*

**ANNE:** Well, few things. Ilan Pappé said that, "Zionism destroyed the Palestine of Muslims, Christians, and Jews coexisting, and that every village had a stream of freshwater and Palestine was not a desert. It was a beautiful place." Said said to me today on the phone, "For those who think Israel represents them, remember that Israel is changing for the worse, and resentment will continue to grow and that will fuel antisemitism." He said, "Change the minds and the hearts of genuine Jews. Jews have played major roles in other national movements and efforts for human rights. You need to see that this government supported by the West is not going to give us the vision we want for both Israeli Jewish and Palestinian children."

“US Jews need to understand that Israel cannot be a perpetrator and a victim at the same time. You can’t convince people you are a victim. You are the occupier. The laws of occupied people, the international law of how to protect occupied people need to be enacted.” He said, “All that’s happening now is more death, more destruction and more trauma.” He said, “Your safety (Israeli Jews he’s referring to) the way it is now is dependent on my lack of it.” That’s Said speaking.

He said, “That policy doesn’t solve any problems. How are kids going to grow up in such an environment?” And he also said, “Israeli soldiers have to join the army although more and more starting to refuse. But Palestinian fighters volunteer.” So he said there’s more determination on their part and that Palestinians always have hope.

**CBM:** I said at the beginning that I’m an anarchist. A liberatory vision feels so far from where we are right now. What is the world without prisons, police, States, fascism, and all these other big categories look like. So we can all self determine and live freely and become the whole people we want to be and not have to ever think about things like genocides. I guess this moment, after the first four or five days of this, I don’t believe that begging the State is going to stop what’s happening. I don’t believe in begging those in power, the logic of capitalism and colonialism and States, they’re not going to suddenly be like, “Oh right, we’re not going to do that anymore.” I don’t believe.

So I spent a day or two really thinking about how do I return to my own values and ethics and what do people do in moments when a liberatory vision doesn’t feel possible right now in a lot of ways. How do we return to what we know we can do ethically? As a Jew, as an anarchist, life is precious. Life is the most sacred value. And so is liberation and freedom to me. How we can do that ourselves, how we can be ungovernable on their terms and be self governable on ours.

My liberatory vision is grounded in the reality of places like Rojava right now, which is also under assault, a place that was facing similar [circumstances], dispossessed peoples who faced genocide for a long time in a region under war, under fascism, with gigantic superpowers trying to kill them on all sides. They set up a huge autonomous zone and practiced self governance and self determination and providing what they needed for each other across different faiths and cultures and traditions. It’s not perfect, but it’s a powerful example of some other vision. They are doing that under unfortunately, very similar terms, not exact,

Chiapas, another situation where people have done something different. A friend of mine, another Jewish anarchist wrote something really poignant the other day, which I sort of knew intellectually, but I'd forgotten: when the Holocaust happened, and Nazis decided to kill not just Jews, but a lot of other people, and a lot of other people were killed during that time, too. Some of the groups they killed first, were the radicals. They killed off most of the socialists and anarchists and folks who had a vision, especially Jews of another path that was not Zionist and not about creating a State. The Warsaw ghetto was possible, the Uprising, because of a group called 'The Bund,' which was anti Zionist, and a deep forms of organization. They were able to organize a resistance. That wasn't spontaneous. They've been organizing, similar to Palestinians, have been organizing for a long time to resist. Most of them died. And with it, the other path was killed off.

My friend pointed out, it's this moment where after 1945, most of who I would understand to be my chosen ancestors had been killed. The people that survived... Zionism won, and it shouldn't have. The British used the trauma, and other super powers use the trauma of the Jews at that moment, and the trauma of the Palestinians and other peoples to impose something on peoples that had lived side by side in many ways, cooperatively. So, how can we go back to moments before Israel and look for pathways and liberation?

Those are all big things. I just want to end with the fact that I've been going non-stop. After about five days, I'm like, "I know what I can do as an anarchist. I'm gonna go back to the roots of what I know I can do because I can't stop those goddamn bombs from falling. I don't have power over that. I don't have geopolitical power. And my friends don't have geopolitical power to do that." But we're so imaginative about other forms of resistance. So I've been looking around, just scanning for all the things, myself included. Some of us here organized a public mourners kaddish a few days ago. Many people are talking about forms, Banner drops, I think there was one yesterday against Raytheon here in Asheville. There are groups that are blockading and shutting down machinery of military contractors around the globe.

I have friends that are military refusers that are Israeli Jews, and they have defied joining the IDF and many people are called up. I know people in this community have family members that are being called up, give them the resources to refuse to do the IDF's work. They're going to have to go to jail. But sometimes that choice is the right choice, right? I've been looking at people putting out literature and Zines. I have a zine here that some Israeli Jewish anarchists put out about their understanding what's going on, and they just did an interview the other day and it turned into a zine. It's over there, people want



it. A lot of artists are making really incredible art that can be wheat pasted or turned into murals. Will stop the bombing right now? No. But it creates a different landscape of a vision of what's possible. So, any forms of like self-organization, disobedience, us practicing how to take care of each other better. There's a group that does 3D printing that are making tourniquets in Gaza right now in the hospitals. There's things that we can do that can actually save lives and change not the whole path, but part of it and that feels liberatory to me.

I'll just end on one thing that's felt, I don't know if 'liberatory' is the right word, but a lot of us are turning to each other to support each other through profound trauma right now, and grieving and loss and not going crazy. I think that's another act that we can do and we should do, and make a commitment to doing that to be there for each other right now. To answer the texts of people who have family in Gaza, that need to talk to someone. Looking for all the strong acts.

I'll add one more that really moved me yesterday. There was a gigantic Palestinian solidarity demonstration in Amsterdam, and some folks squatted a building and hung banners to free Palestine from it. They connected it to gentrification, and militarism, which happened to be connected to funds related to Israel. They connected and interwove. Again, is that going to stop the bombs? No. But they're starting to open up space for other possibilities and within that squat, people can organize and understand what liberation might look like. They can put out a message and they can start directly disobeying and making clear who the forces are that we should shut the wheels down of.

Local Organizer: Hi, everyone, I just wanted to say that we are trying to organize a rally in downtown Asheville. And we're putting in all in that work, so please check social media for it and show up.

While I have the mic I just wanted to say this... I have been working in Asheville with the Racial Justice Coalition and other organizations that talk about racial justice, and the silence on this issue is deafening.

So please, please, please speak up.

And I can't I know that some people are afraid Palestinians are afraid. I, personally, know people that don't want to show up to this, this is where it's important that the white people's voice comes in. Please support us

**GAZAN WOMAN:** I am from Gaza. And this is the first time I have left my house since seventh of October. And today I decided to stop crying, and to just do what humans do, to start moving from sadness to taking action.

And I want to tell you that we are, as a human here on the earth, we are experiencing a very serious test. This test, maybe we will fail, maybe we will

succeed. We cannot now change big things, we need to start to change the small things. The small thing I am inviting you to do is to please to give Gaza, to give the victims, half an hour of your time tonight today, before you go to sleep. This half an hour is needed to stop a very big crime.

The Israelis are sending messages to Al-Quds hospital in Gaza, which is full of people who were injured and full of healthcare providers and refugees, people who don't have homes. And it's the first time in our history, in our resistance, that people can't find a place for shelter or can't go to hospitals. And this is very risky. I have never heard of this happening. The hospitals, roads and gardens, are full of people, 1000's of people go to hospitals because they think it's the safest place and that by international law, it's illegal to bomb it.

So that is if we succeed tonight, to send letters to Congress, to Biden, and we say that "it's a shame to bomb a hospital" that means we can start to save all the humans rights, to avoid many peoples deaths, so they can live through 2023. We can reach all of these kinds of paradises and experience human rights. And we are living up to these amazing international laws.

If we today cannot make this law reality, show the power of a human and show the power of rights and stop this massacre from happening, that means that we can start to move towards the correct road and the correct steps, make this right. None of us can now stop the war. No one at this moment can because it's a big trick, it's big policy. What's going on is beyond all of our imaginations and all of our explanation of what's happening. We are all in shock. And the people won't benefit if we keep just crying and stay in shock. We need to start showing our power as humans.

Please, we want to stop the numbers of people who are killed, we will not be able to give them safe homes. We will not be able to send them food, we will not be able to send them water as they need it, within the 24 hours. We can only stop more families from dying and disappearing from the registration of Palestinian families.

So please donate, write and send letters that comes from your heart to the people in power in order to save them. Al-Quds hospital is related to the Palestinian Red Crescent Society. And this Palestinian Red Crescent organization is member with the International Red Crescent with others all over the world. And there are hundreds of people who've donated from over the years to build this amazing hospital. And there are horrible situations inside the hospitals. I feel so sorry for the healthcare providers home who are working 24 hours a day to save people and see many things we could never imagine. But their patients keep dying.

The first shame was when they destroyed Al-Ma'dani hospital and 1,000 died and we lost doctors, nurses, people, kids, mothers, fathers father's families. And the second shame was when they bombed the church and many Christian people lost their relatives, many losing one or two members from each family. And now in the third test for us as humans is that we need to give time, give energy, be hard, be sharp in our letters to politicians. And I that's all I can say.

If this hospital is allowed to be destroyed, no hospital anywhere in the world will be safe. Can you imagine, to give you an example, no one would wear pants with holes. And then someone started a trend or a fashion, all over the world, that teenagers will wear pants with holes in them. It's the same, believe me, when we are silent for destroyed a hospital. It will be fine for hospitals to be destroyed in conflicts all over the world. It will be a fashion and it will destroy all sorts of people who would pay with their lives and fight for human rights, who would fight to help us live in safety and enjoy all of this international human rights law.

So please, let us try to think to act now because the people will not benefit from our tears, will not benefit from our from our sadness. They will benefit from our actions. Sadness means nothing if we are not jumping to action in response to our sadness. Thank you so much!

**JULIE:** *Thank you. We've got about 10 minutes for audience questions. Thank you to those who have helped compile these. I'm gonna read the first one: "I'm struggling to find sources of trust. I turn to social media to watch firsthand accounts and they say not to trust the news. I read the news and they say not to trust social media. I know I can turn to books to learn history, but who can I trust to give me information on what's happening now?"*

**YOUSEF:** I would say Al Jazeera+, AJ+ is definitely the way to go for English speakers. They have dozens of videos about the history about what's going on. That's definitely a great source for news for y'all. Some of you may have heard that Al Jazeera is making news a bigger of a deal? Well, it is a really big deal. What's happening is really jarring, it's really extreme. If you do not want to trust a pre-recorded Al Jazeera videos... Go to live. Al Jazeera has five or six screens with live footage from either Lebanon or Gaza or West Bank. So, there is that source I could mention.

**JULIE:** *“I would like to know why the Western media only highlights resistance groups like Hamas, but ignores others who are active in resisting occupation in Gaza and the West Bank such as the PFLP, which holds secular Marxist Leninist approaches towards creating a free Palestine?”*

**YOUSEF:** We can talk about other political parties that they have been part of the cause. If you want to talk about an armed resistance organization or political party, we could simply talk about the Palestinian Authority in West Bank. If that’s the route that the Western media wants us to go. Okay, well, we can negotiate with an armed group. Well, here is the Palestinian Authority in West Bank, for example. If it is a more of a which route you’re taken in a sense of negotiation. If you want the peace negotiation and the dialogue and that sit on one table here, here’s the Palestinian Authority and they have been doing that since the 90s and forward. That’s one thing, but at the same time. We know how media works sometime. They find a little small thing that could make it a bigger of a deal that benefits what they are supporting.

**CBM:** I was just gonna say that the media never covers our forms of resistance until it gets too big. Then they’ll do it for a while. So trying to find sources, like the Palestinian youth movement. They’re actually resisting and following them. Following people who are doing the resisting. We’re also in Firestorm books. Come to places like this and ask for things to read about resistance.

**JULIE:** *“To the extent that it can be talked about publicly, would you say military recruitment centers and Raytheon subsidiaries are some of the main places that are findable and accessible that people in the US should know about that are supporting the Israeli military’s war? Thinking about this in terms of solidarity with Palestine?”*

**ANNE:** Is the question to show up at places like Pratt & Whitney? I don’t quite understand the question. Sorry.

**JULIE:** *I can attempt to clarify it, but feel free if you’re comfortable identifying yourself as the asker of this question, you can clarify for yourself.*

**ANNE:** Resisting recruitment. I mean, is always a good thing. We had an effort around 30 years ago. The alternatives to Junior ROTC in the United States and trying to give alternatives to militarism here. I don’t know how that applies in

Israel Palestine, but there's a number of us that have been showing up at the Pratt & Whitney plant and been doing a lot of a lot of work in trying to bring attention to not wanting a military contractor of that caliber in our area. We certainly would welcome people who are interested in joining that effort.

**JULIE:** *I think this will likely be our last question. I think it's a good one to end on. "One of the main calls to action is to call our representatives and ask them to support a ceasefire. Do you think that we should organize in person actions at their offices to put up the pressure?"*

**ANNE:** Well, some of us older folks think that is a good idea. I understand that some other folks don't think that is a worthwhile thing. But maybe I'll let you as an anarchist speak to that.

**CBM:** I'm not speaking for all anarchists. Last week, there was a gigantic call by really prominent on anti Zionist Jewish groups who've done a lot to change the discourse. I'm feeling very skeptical right now, even about the imagery, because a lot of it was like, "Ceasefire Now." Why is that any different than, of course, the bombing should stop. But that doesn't bring in [arguments about] settler colonialism and the occupation and genocide. But, it did feel powerful to a lot of people to see, especially a lot of Jews standing up against the army, this government funding Israel.

For myself, the tactic of blockading offices of people who probably very likely will not change their mind versus finding other targets where we might have more impact and thinking creatively, I will return to Stop Cop City. That started by people doing, without talking about whether it was a good choice, started out with pretty powerful direct actions and self organization and occupying the forest space and prefiguring different relationships, making connections with indigenous people who've been kicked off at land, who've come back, doing rituals on the land, a whole bunch of other tactics, and has turned toward the later part of putting pressure on the city of Atlanta to just show how they actually are not going to change their mind. I feel like how we think strategically about when we do things, how they fit together.

We all only have so much time and energy right now, so if we're going to blockade places, what are the places that actually might make a difference if we shut them down or blockaded them? Who could we convince not to go to their workplace and do the work of making weaponry? I don't know. I do not know the answer at all. I just think we all have to really look into our heads

and think, “Okay, what are the strategic points that actually will probably make more sense.”

So, to go back, to end on everyone going to DC. I heard how much money was going into that, just because I’m on different threads. One of the groups was paying people airfare to fly there. I’m like, “Why don’t they give the money to send material aid right now to Gaza? Like to Hebron?” I was in screaming and acting aggro, because this is not a good use of money right now to ask Biden to change his mind and some senators who are not going to. So I’m a minority in a critique of this action.

But strategically, what do we want to have happen right now? I think material aid right now to that region is absurdly crucial, because we probably can’t stop the bombing quickly. Right? I don’t know. Sorry, I’m just ranting because this makes me so angry. We all feel such an imperative right now to do something. So I think we have to breathe and then be like, “Strategically what actually is going to make the most amount of difference within our own power right now?”

**JULIE:** *I just want to end again by thanking the panel, thanking Firestorm, thanking all of you, and put it out to the panel... If there’s any closing remarks, anything left that you want to say to leave us with, then do it.*

**YOUSEF:** Actually, I remembered that in terms of news resources. A couple of days ago, a comedian, his name is Bassem Yousef, he actually presented a great argument on TV on and that was eye opening for Western media. That’s definitely something that you could watch. Bassem Yousef. YouTube it. It has millions of views right now, because he hit the point when he was asked on TV. I cannot remember the British... Piers Morgan. He described it. It was really dark humor. But that’s a Palestinian thing to have. You do have a dark humor. He answered these questions in a really open aspect, “What is the difference between what Israel is doing right now and what they have done before?” He pointed to a couple of things that opened my eyes myself about “why Palestinians have to die and be bombed for us to actually have this [attention]?” Why we do not understand the fact that this occupation is not just only when Gaza is bombed, it’s not when West Bank is being sieged out. Not when schools are locked down, not when Medic aid and that hospitals in Gaza do not have any more of the medical aid that they need. There is no power for these patients to survive. That’s a great point, an argument that he made, how many Palestinians? What’s the death rate this time? What’s the death rate that is required for the international community to understand this is a genocide, this is wiping people off of the map. In

terms of wiping people off the map, we all heard about Google taking Sinai off of the map for a period of time and international pressure put it back. Talking about the sources of media, again, Bassem Youssef has presented it in a way that politicians have failed Palestinians. So watch that and that may lead you to a bit of understanding of the history of what we're dealing with...

[off-mic reminders about other sources, Democracy Now! and the Israeli journalist, Amira Hass]

Actually, we forgot about something really important. HIRN, the organization that we are sending our funding to. It's a Hebronite organization led by Palestinians, that gives support and aid to Palestinians in general. But specifically the Gazans and find themselves in West Bank during the current situation. Unfortunately, there are a lot of details about that. We can talk about it if we have more time. But unfortunately, 115 Gazans that were trapped in West Bank, who had permits to to work in Israel. When the event took place, they found themselves being collected by the Israeli military and dropped in West Bank. They weren't allowed to go back to to Gaza. They founded shelter when Palestinians hosted them in West Bank, unfortunately, the Israeli military found where they were hosted, some of them have been arrested and now they are jailed. The remaining yet still need aid, we have information from a trusted source giving us updates that many were thrown at checkpoints, checkpoints dividing the walls and West Bank. They were thrown at these checkpoints in their underwear. So, they are providing clothing, they are providing shelter, food and resources for them. That's where the funding is going. And we do appreciate you all participating in that. [applause]

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