

# Letter to the Editor: Re: The Gaza Genocide

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Dear Editor,

At the heart of what is facing us all is the dehumanization of a group of people based on their ethnicity or religion. Clearly the Holocaust is the most shocking example of this in contemporary times. It happened when world history was understood to be civilized, by a nation that was perceived as civilized and carried out with a ruthless efficiency that killed (best estimates) between 5 and 6 million people. (Times of Israel, 2025) As a result of this international law was established with the prime movers being the UK and USA to ensure 'never again' ... not just never again for Jews but for anyone (UN Charter 1947).

It could be argued that the state of Israel was established by the British Empire in 1947 for two reasons:

1. To free Britain from Zionist terrorism that had blown up The King David Hotel in Jerusalem killing and injuring dozens and their continued killing of British soldiers (Lane, 2025)
2. However, in my opinion it was also a form of antisemitism because it enabled Europe to avoid facing up to consequences of embedded antisemitism in European Culture by giving Jews a state of their own

The seeds of what we see now were sown then. Before the establishment of Israel Jews and Arabs had lived peacefully together in the region for centuries (Rotem, 2016) but Zionism is essentially a political ideology founded by European Jews. There are first person reports that Holocaust survivors (best estimates less than 100,000) who emigrated to Israel post WWII were treated with contempt – 'why

didn't you fight?' (Jockusch & Patt 2025) So, the nature of Israel from its beginning has been militaristic and aggressive. In 1948 Zionist settlers & military expelled or killed about half of Palestines' Arab population (750,000) (Masalha, 2012). Subsequently Israel adopted Hitler's policy of 'Lebensraum' that is pursuing the necessity of a Greater Israel (Petrie, 2024).

The reason this history is important is because Judaism and Zionism have become conflated and any criticism of Israel, particularly in the US, UK and EU, has been defined as antisemitic (Shanes 2024). Ironically there are many, many Jews worldwide and even within Israel who reject Zionism as a political project that has nothing to do with Judaism (Robson, 2025). Christian Zionism, however, is a whole other complexity not discussed here.

By now, after all the evidence compiled by respected Human Rights group (including in Israel) legal bodies, genocide scholars, UN committees and many more it is clear Israel is committing genocide in Gaza (B'Tselem, 2025; Martinez, 2025) & breaking international law in the West Bank. **My position is that Genocide is wrong whoever commits it and social work has an obligation to call this out.**

Antisemitism is now being used as a political weapon by non-Jews in the West to further political objectives. It's in the political interests of what is an extremely Right-Wing Israeli government to claim they represent all Jews although they don't. However, their genocidal behaviour places a target on all Jews and is already causing a rise in antisemitism worldwide (Rosen, Rottenberg, Freedman 2025)

I think, however, there is a generational trauma resulting from the Holocaust. It explains to me why Israel from its establishment has been militaristic and aggressive in initiating wars. Throughout the education system children and young people are taught to hate Arabs and perceive them as the existential enemy. Conscription reinforces this and some of the worst atrocities were and are being perpetrated by very young adults. Most Israeli citizens, even though they hate Netanyahu, don't think there is anything wrong with killing babies or toddlers or (as discussed in the Knesset) raping men in prison with objects (Patta, Reals 2024). Unfortunately, some Zionists outside Israel share this mentality and it is exploited for cynical reasons by politicians in the West wanting to use Israel to control an oil-rich region and generate personal wealth (MacKenzie, 2025). I am aware that some Jews, particularly in the US, really do feel Israel is their only safety. Israeli Hasbara has been very sophisticated and effective in pushing this narrative although that is beginning to fail (Saps, 2024).

Ultimately, I don't think this issue can be “both sided”, either Genocide is wrong or it isn't whoever the perpetrators, whoever the victims.

Dr Stephanie Petrie

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