

ANTI-DENIALIST COALITION

NAKBA
DISASTROUS
PLANNED-
TERROR
REGIME

NAKBA AS A PLANETARY REGIME

The Nakba [“al-Nakba” (النكبة), the Catastrophe in Arabic, has referred historically to the imposition of a state (of Israel) atop Palestine and the process of destruction, forced displacement and ethnic “cleansing” of more than 750,000 Palestinians from their cities, villages, communities, homes, life-worlds, lands, archives, histories in and around 1948. Today, in the context of the ongoing genocide of Palestinians, in its textbook version taking place in Gaza; it can also be seen in its longer durée as a process of, what some thinkers such as Patrick Wolfe long ago called, structural genocide, which is part and parcel of all settler colonial regimes. More recently, thinkers like the Palestinian lawyer and legal scholar Rabea Eghbariah have attempted to extend not only the temporality of the Nakba but also its possible sense. In a series of legal essays, Eghbariah attempts to also think the Nakba as a legal concept, designating a specific process, form of injustice, violence and subjugation inflicted on Palestinians not only with the superimposition of a state of Israel atop Palestine, but also in that imposition, the development of a process; of systematic, institutionalized, rationalized, racialized management of domination, fragmentation and ongoing dispossession, colonization.

For what we hope will be a longer term commitment to a concatenation of collectivized studies and struggles, we want to extend this opening up of the scale and magnitude of the Nakba in order to perceive the planetary dimensions of what we are confronted with in the current resistance to ongoing genocide in Palestine.

With friends, we have been attempting to think the Nakba as the commencement of a process to eliminate, unsee, forget, deny, destroy Palestinian life and colonize Palestine, with the earliest forms of zionism, weaponized in 1917 with the Balfour declaration and legitimated in 1948 thru to today. These acts of denial accompanied by brutal forms of violence not only instituted a complex system of displacing, presiding over, torturing, segregating, incarcerating, incrementally suffocating Palestinian life, but also, instituted a planetary process and regime which would insist that the murder of millions of Jewish people, Roma, Communists and others considered degenerate or unworthy of inclusion in the Aryan race, would not be linked to the past and ongoing wars waged by imperial, colonial, racial, capitalist, supremacist forces against the non-white, the blackened peoples of earth. By delinking what came to be known as the Holocaust from its ties and precedents, including Germany's historic collaboration with the Ottomans leading to the genocide perpetrated against Armenians, Assyrians and other communities of the Empire under the cover of the First World War, as well as the genocide of the Ovaherero and Nama peoples a decade before; the imperial and colonial powers, made sure that this calamity and mass crime against humanity would be exceptionalized in such a way as to deny its ties to and maintaining their own genocidal-denialist states.

We want to propose to think Nakba as also the name of an ongoing process which falsifies the colonial, racial, supremacist and anti-communist origins of fascism, Nazism, as a means of continuing the regimes built on colonial, racial, patriarchal, capitalist, supremacist brutality - extracting, expropriating, expelling, governing, ruling over earth. Thus, Palestinians, whose dispossession and relegation to oblivion has been at

the heart of constructing this post Second World War legal and cultural architecture, do not merely represent a case of hypocrisy, historical irony serving as emblems of the continuation of colonial, racial rule by new/old means: they certainly evoke all of those. But much more critically, in the light of our analysis, Palestine is also the lynchpin, the rule which has held together the entire matrix and ordering of this world which we see today coming to an end, its inherent contradictions unraveling before our eyes. Palestine reveals the colonial racial underbelly of the enlightened liberal law and order, with its veneer of free speech and free thought. It is where all that which was patched up after the Second World War to keep the colonial crime wave going comes crashing into its always immanent alter-ego, capitalist democracy's plan B, fascism.

Today, Palestine must be sacrificed and this ongoing genocide must be denied, normalized, falsified, excused, because the entire legal and cultural structures erected after the Second World War rested on eliminating it and its people, of pretending they did not and do not exist. And in some ways worse, if they insist to exist, then it shall be in order to perpetually do the time, pay for German and European crimes.

If truth has any connection to reality, then this regime and order of fabrications, deceptions, lies, denials, which we call Nakba, cannot hold for ever, especially in the face of a resistance, like that of Palestinians, that has never given up on 'return' as the only possible horizon of future. Palestinian resistance, par excellence, has not only been an anti-colonial one, but in the face of systematic denial, crucially an anti-denialist one.

If genocidal violence, that is, historically recognized processes which have attempted to eliminate and destroy entire peoples, is premised on denying the existence of a peoples as peoples, the Nakba is not only the name of this genocidal process and its instituted forms of denial, including the superimposition of a state of Israel on top of Palestine in 1948, directed





against Palestinians, but also names the construction of a world ordering after the Second World War, which insures that all the occluded histories of such grave, mass acts of racialized, imperial, colonial, crimes will remain disconnected from the Holocaust, from one another, denied, whiteboxed, rendered inert and inconsequential. And if this order, which was erected after the Second World War speaks or has spoken in the language of 'never again' we realize today that it has always been with the caveat that those who govern that post-war world, that is the ongoing beneficiaries of racial, colonial, imperial brutality and theft, will be the arbiters and determiners of how, when and to whom that principle and its associated laws apply.

As some friends have written, genocidal violence is inseparable from denial, it is preceded with forms of denial, it is the oxygen fanning its flames, the fuel filling their tanks and planes and its future is secured by instituting that denial in the form of life, of law, of the culture the perpetrators produce, enjoy, compel their 'citizen-beneficiaries' to reproduce. We see today the broader architecture of states and their cultural institutions enforcing denial and using every means to criminalize those who would seek any form of accountability for the perpetrators and enablers of these massive acts of oblitative violence stretching for decades. But this "securing" function is only as tight as the perpetrators' ability to coerce us to prop up and seal the leakages of their denialist world ordering. Without an active struggle against these forces on the side of oblivion, the future we look at today, dictated by the terms of order of those who remain inheritors and beneficiaries of genocidal supremacist violence, is and will remain denialist.

One of the central questions confronting the movements who struggle against the unfolding genocide in Palestine and fight against all forms of colonial, racial capitalist violence today including the widening ecological devastations we live through is how and whether we can imagine our way out, a way to stop the rationalization and systemic blindness to the ongoingness of racial colonial imperial violence and the ruination it

continues to produce without wrestling our way out of the straight-jacket of the denialist cultural forms, institutions, political and legal frameworks these perpetrator-inheritor states have produced.

If forms of denial have been sewn up in the institutional forms, in the forms of life, in the cultural and educational forms of late-genocidal, so-called post-colonial, imperial, modern, capitalist states, then how to think a politics of exiting those states of denial? Can we imagine notions such as freedom, justice, liberation beyond the terms of those genocidal-denialist states? Can we overcome this ongoing violence against our peoples and our lands without inventing, reclaiming other forms, fields of study, of thought, of cultural practices, of relations which are not premised on ongoing forms of biocide, ecocide, genocide and their legitimation? We see the struggle for life and freedom unfolding today not only in Palestine but also across the planet as inextricably linked to such questions.

If Nakba names the catastrophic violence perpetrated against Palestinians and the process of justifying and unseeing the structural genocide of the settler colonization of Palestine; then in its planetary reverberations it also names the process of a catastrophic world sundering and reordering initiated in the midst of the First and composed after the Second World War, as means to continue to close off the past and guarantee a future for the inheritors and profiteers of imperial, colonial, racial violence throughout the planet. Nakba, then, as a planetary process of institutionalizing a genocidal-denialist world order, at once absolving and securing a future for states founded on genocidal violence and institutionalized denial. The profiteers of this world ordering are entities who have amassed and concentrated tremendous amounts of wealth and power through imperial, colonial, racial, supremacist, in the last instance, fascist forms of violence. The concentrations of wealth bestowed to such historic processes require that even the acknowledgment of such crimes remains untethered from any consequence or meaningful process of reparation of what we know to

be irreparable. In this way, the insistence of the Palestinian struggle on return threatens the politics of irreversibility which the colonial imperial genocidal powers hoped to institute after the Second World War.

If Eghbariah's attempt to construct a legal framework for including the Nakba into international law is one possibility of integrating and salvaging the Palestinian experience as a remedy for a clearly racist and imperially, colonially mandated international legal framework; our proposal to think the Nakba as a planetary regime, takes up that dimension of the Palestinian struggle which has resisted incorporating or integrating Palestine into the existing order of things or state of affairs. Rather, it sees our struggle at this conjuncture as a call to radically part from that post Second World War order constructed on forms of violence its architects wished to deny and continue to perpetrate. It is a call to question all the forms of politics and culture that were instituted as remedies, forms of confronting, memorializing or even responding to the camps and the atrocities of Fascism and Nazism. That architecture of denial and ongoing violence was constructed on the attempted obliteration of Palestine and on processes of unseeing the crimes of the Nazis and Zionists as integrally part of longer histories and strategies for maintaining colonial, racial, capitalist and supremacist rule.

Today's struggles confronting all the institutionalized forms of denial including in universities and art institutions, call us to reclaim, invent cultural and political discourses, practices which not only remake a sense of this near history, by opening up the deeper wounds that were meant to be sutured and relegated to oblivion; but also call us to divest, delink, depart from, decompose, disintegrate, destitute and abolish the cultural and political fundamentals of a world which has never stopped extending its theaters of war, theft, land grabs, erasure of communities and life forms, of genocidal violence and its denialist forms of futuring. For those of us who have been categorized, classed, gendered, racialized, dehumanized, colonized, this construction of a world "order" has never meant anything but the continued destruction of our worlds.

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