

David Davis

Islamophobia: The brief of Jasmin Zine

The [brief](#) of Jasmin Zine is problematic. By referring to a "post 9/11 *déjà vu* as the massive scale of Israel's deadly violence in Gaza continues to unfold and the legacy of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism as a global project continues", she suggests that the Israeli response to the October 7th attack and global support for it are Islamophobic and anti-Muslim. Yet, the facts show otherwise.

Israeli forces, in responding to the Hamas attack October 7th, have made every effort to avoid civilian casualties through systematic advance warnings by leaflets and roof knocking, as well as aborting attacks when there are civilians unexpectedly present. The reason for civilian casualties in spite of these Israeli precautions is the efforts of Hamas to engineer them.

Her reference to "the massive scale of Israel's deadly violence in Gaza" is mistaken. There is deadly violence in Gaza, but the responsibility for that violence lies primarily with Hamas.

Zine shows no recognition of these facts:

1. Hamas knowingly provoked the Israeli response after October 7th by their attack of October 7th
2. Hamas had deliberately built a tunnel network underneath civilian structures and tunnel entrances at or near these structures, and retreated to those tunnels after the October 7th attack
3. Hamas urges Palestinians to ignore Israel warnings of impending attacks on those tunnels and tunnel entrances and the civilian structures which shelter them;
4. Hamas blocks the flight of Palestinians preventing from leaving locations of intended Israeli attacks;
5. Hamas threatens Palestinians with harm if they leave the sites of intended Israeli attacks;
6. Hamas issues calls to Palestinians for martyrdom to attempt them to persuade to stay at locations of intended Israeli attacks;
7. Hamas denies to Palestinian civilian access to Hamas tunnels for bomb shelter protection;
8. Hamas does not use its tunnels as a means of delivering humanitarian aid for Palestinians;
9. Hamas systematically stores and uses arms, rockets and rocket propelled grenades and houses headquarters and data centres in tunnels underneath hospitals, residences, mosques, schools and UNRWA premises;
10. Hamas steals humanitarian aid, food and medical supplies, for resale;

11. Hamas has corrupted the education system to become a propaganda exercise of hatred of Israel and Jews;
12. Hamas issues fatality statistics without distinguishing between Hamas operatives, voluntary shields and innocents, attributing all fatalities to Israel;
 - Hamas flees with the Palestinians, blending in with them;
 - Hamas operatives do not consistently wear uniforms, failing to distinguish themselves from civilians;
 - Hamas recklessly kills Palestinians through friendly fire, taking little or no precautions to prevent these tragedies.

Zine states:

"Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu strategically dehumanized Palestinians using racist colonial tropes by referring to Israel's deadly onslaught as 'a war between forces of light and forces of darkness, between humanity and animalism.'"

In the [article](#) Jasmin Zine cited as a reference for her quote of Netanyahu, Netanyahu did not mention Palestinians. The article did not mention Palestinians. Only Hamas and terror groups were mentioned. Jasmin Zine transposed the quote of Netanyahu about Hamas and terror groups to Palestinians. She then condemned Netanyahu for a reference to Palestinians which he had not made but which Jasmin Zine invented and then put in the mouth of Netanyahu.

Jasmin Zine further wrote: "the 10/7 generation are protesting Israel's genocide in Gaza". Yet, Israel is not committing genocide in Gaza. Some contend that Israel is committing genocide and are engaged in protests based on these contentions. However, it is wrong for Jasmin Zine to refer to these protests as if the basis for the protests were well founded, which they are not. Zine supports the quoted statement by a footnoted reference to others who agree with her. Regrettably, the attitude Zine manifests is widespread. However, the fact that she is not alone in her views does not make them right; it does not even make them tenable.

Zine states in the same footnote that "Acknowledging that Palestinians are facing a genocide ... was accepted as plausible by the International Court of Justice." Yet, the Court did not find that it was plausible that Israel had inflicted genocide or was inflicting genocide or was about to commit genocide. The Court found only that it was plausible that, in the future, there was a risk that Israel might inflict genocide.

Jasmin Zine then wrote: "And yet the 'political safety' of pro-Israel students on campus is portrayed as more dire than the physical safety of Palestinians, Muslims, and their allies." Though she puts the phrase "political safety" in quotation marks and she also refers to something that someone else or some others have,

according to her, portrayed, there is no source for these statements. Here again Zine makes an unsupported statement for the purpose of criticizing it. Although Zine does not identify the portrayer or portrayers, she is presumably referring to those who oppose antisemitism. She does so for the purpose of trivializing opposition to antisemitism. She wants to demonstrate that opposition to antisemitism is hypocritical. Yet, antisemitism is not a trivial problem. Trivializing antisemitism and accusing those who oppose antisemitism as hypocritical without an evidentiary basis for this claimed hypocrisy are improper.

Zine then writes: "students ... demand their universities divest from Israeli military interests". On its face this is an odd statement, since the Israeli military does not seek investment from Canadian universities and Canadian universities have no such investments. The Israeli military is totally state funded, by the Government of Israel. Zine states later: "Palestinians, Muslims, and all people of conscience in this country have been demanding the Canadian government unequivocally condemn genocide and all Israeli military and corporate interests that support it." So, divestment to which she is referring is divestment in corporations which support military interests. This is a vague statement, but even if we take its most narrow meaning, corporations which sell arms to Israel, this too is a mistaken position, because it attributes to Israel the Palestinian victimization engineered by Hamas.

Zine further writes: "Facilitated by the problematic IHRA definition of antisemitism, political challenges to Israel have been wrongly cast as an assault against Jews. Yet as Columbia university professor Joseph Massad writes, 'Palestinians continue to resist Israel on account of its racial supremacy and settler colonialism, not its Jewishness.'" So, Zine then both rejects and indulges in antisemitism. She rejects the widely accepted definition of antisemitism, a definition adopted by the Government of Canada. She appears to acknowledge that the positions she refers to as political are antisemitic according to this standard definition. She then excludes from the definition of antisemitism which she would prefer anything she wants to say or quote.

There as well in the brief of Jasmin Zine some statements that are unexceptionable. The Committee, in considering this brief, needs to separate the wheat from the chaff.

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