March 2, 2016

Statement of Condemnation of Terrorism: The Intifada is Not Civil Disobedience

We the undersigned 600+ students, alumni and faculty write today to condemn Columbia University Apartheid Divest’s dismissal of terrorism as “civil disobedience.” The first and second intifadas mark tragic low points in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Thousands of innocent civilians on both sides were murdered during these violent periods. The mischaracterization of suicide bombings, stabbings, and shootings as “civil disobedience” is an egregious ethical breach. We proudly uphold the value of free speech, but malicious incitement and fictitious characterizations do not lie within that value and should find no welcome within our campus discourse.

Albert Mishaan CC 2019         Barak Ben Noon GS 2019      Dana Kukin BC 2015         Leeza Hirt CC 2018
Benjamin Lewinter CC 2016      Jamie DeLuca BC 2017        Leigh Bonner BC 2016       Marc Bessler CUMC Faculty

“The group is not representative of Aryeh, J Street Initiative, or any pro-Israel group on campus, but includes both Jews and non-Jews from different places on the political spectrum.”
What’s it even mean? Or LET’S TALK LANGUAGE!

When “long live the Intifada” was posted on Facebook by the Barnard Columbia Socialists—a group officially recognized by the University—I felt exposed and unprotected. “Intifada,” or “armed uprising,” has historically referred to an ongoing period of violence against Israeli civilians.

For me, the word “Intifada” stirs up memories that I want to leave behind—memories of bombings from my childhood during the Second Intifada and of shootings and stabblings from two months ago when I last visited home. These were memories I thought I had done away with by coming to Columbia.

Intifada represents war, hate, violence, civilian attacks, and fear. In my mind, it mostly represents blood. The word demands recognition of an unfathomable truth. At any moment, at any place, everything can cease. Life can simply end.

For much of my life, I’ve felt unsafe in my own home. I’ve lived in fear of simply going for a walk on the street or driving a car. I was especially afraid of being in public spaces—buses, markets, restaurants, train stations, even clubs or bars—because there was a real and tangible threat of a suicide bomb, shooting, or stabbing attack at all times. Intifada...
1987-1993: The First Intifada

- Spontaneous explosion vs building pressure + eruption
- Context:
  - 1967: status quo of military occupation established
  - 1977: Right wing Likud wins Israeli elections, policies become more punitive
  - Settlement growth: "If enough Jewish settlements could be established and enough land seized and placed under Jewish control, the Palestinians would wake up one day and discover that they had lost their country." [1]
  - Mounting economic concerns: labor exploitation, taxation
- Result: strikes, boycotts, walk outs, and targeting of IDF+infrastructure with molotov cocktails and stones

Image via: https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/features/2014/12/14/from-the-streets-to-the-committees-palestine-is-united
Participation and Repression

- Broad-based, democratic participation
- Popular mobilization coordinated by committees, drew upon Palestinian nat’l forces
- Demands on
  - land confiscation, the evacuation of military forces from residential areas, an end to harassment at universities, an end to interference/arrests in the trade union movement, the abolition of taxes, water, etc, + linked to national goals of liberation [1]
- Iron fist policies, “might, power, & beatings” [2]
  - Forced “deportations”, 120k Palestinians arrested [3], 2k Palestinians killed (253 children) + 160 Israelis (60 security forces) [4]
  - Systematic torture - 85% of detainees tortured [5]


The intifada continues http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/the-intifada-continues
Political Outcomes: OSLO

- 1988: PLO recognizes Israel, claims independent state in WB + Gaza, & renounce terrorism
  - Israel: PLO is still a terrorist organization. We do not negotiate with terrorists. [1]

- Sept. 1993 Oslo Accords: PLO recognizes Israel’s “right to exist in peace & security”
  - Israel: PLO is only legitimate rep. of Palestinians. We do not recognize a Palestinian state. [2]

- Oslo as “interim” agreement - 5 years to final peace settlement
  - Pause conditions to make progress → settlements expand, strategic redlining, no Israeli concessions

"I would have conducted negotiations on autonomy for 10 years and in the meantime we would have reached half a million people" [3]

[2] ibid
2000-2005: Al Aqsa Intifada

- September 2000: Candidate for Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s speech on the Haram Al Sharif during Friday prayer
  - Accompanied by 1,000 armed Israeli soldiers

"The Temple Mount is in our hands and will remain in our hands."

- Provocation, assertion of Israeli sovereignty over contested site [1]
- Wave of demonstrations met with harsher punitive measures.
- Cycle of violence ensues.
  - 6300+ Palestinians (1300+ children), 1000+ Israelis (100+ children) killed. [2]
  - Israel: live fire, military escalation, extrajudicial killings, collective punishment, punitive home demolitions, checkpoints, curfews, deliberate targeting of children, attacks on infrastructure, torture, unfair trials [3]
  - Palestinians: armed resistance, retaliation through civilian targeting, bombings (esp. suicide bombings), extrajudicial killings, torture (of suspected collaborators)

Oslo: Process Over Peace

- Maintenance of status quo to defer “final settlement” issues in 5 year interim
  - Jerusalem, borders, refugees, water
- Provisions for end of occupation, semi-autonomy in territories, limited self governance
  - Israel maintains control of 87% of WB
  - No method to block unilateral action/HR violations
- What happens in the interim?
  - Strategically placed settlement expansion
  - Infrastructure of apartheid develops
- 1999 final settlement negotiations
  - Israel: no concessions on borders, Jerusalem, settlements, refugees
  - Palestinians: basic

http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/let-the-intifada-pave-the-way
Political Outcomes

● 2002: Apartheid wall construction approved and begins
● Understanding that dream of “Eretz Yisrael” (Greater Israel) was not possible. Movement past “some form of limited autonomy” of Oslo
● Israeli disengagement from Gaza
● Former senior adviser to Israeli security chiefs: “[Israel] argues that it cannot make peace while there is violence, and when there is no violence it sees little reason to make peace.” [1]
  ○ Status quo was costly.
  ○ First statements from Israeli & American presidents that Palestinian state was needed [2]
The Right to Resist under IHL

UN Resolution A/RES/43/106 (1988)¹:

“Considering the denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, sovereignty, independence and return to Palestine and the brutal suppression by the Israeli forces of the heroic uprising, the intifada, of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories, as well as the repeated Israeli aggression against the population of the region, constitute a serious threat to international peace and security,” the resolution calls on all states to recognize the right to Palestinian self-determination and to reaffirm the legitimacy of the struggle for independence and liberation from colonial domination “by all available means, including armed struggle.”

¹ UNGA A/RES/43/106.
The Right to Self-Determination

The right to resist military occupation is grounded in the fundamental right to self-determination, as established in the 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples:\(^1\):

“1. The subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights, is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and cooperation.

2. All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”

Self-Determination and the Right to Resist

When a people’s right to self-determination is not respected, they have a right to use “any means at their disposal” to achieve it, as is confirmed by numerous UNGA Resolutions:

**UN General Assembly Resolution 2649** (1970):

“1. Affirms the legitimacy of the struggle of peoples under colonial and alien domination recognized as being entitled to the right of self-determination to restore to themselves that right by *any means at their disposal*”

**UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/3246** (1974):

“3. *Reaffirms* the legitimacy of the peoples' struggle for liberation from colonial and foreign domination and alien subjugation *by all available means, including armed struggle*”

**UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/33/24** (1978):

“2. *Reaffirms* the legitimacy of the struggle of peoples for independence, territorial integrity, national unity and liberation from colonial and foreign domination and foreign occupation *by all available means, particularly armed struggle*”

This is again reaffirmed in UNGA Resolution A/RES/34/44 (23 November 1979), UNGA Resolution A/RES/35/35 (14 November 1980), UNGA Resolution A/RES/36/9 (28 October 1981), and many subsequent resolutions that form part of customary IHL.
The limitations of “armed struggle”

“If [armed] resistance is ineffectual or cannot be mounted, then the dilemma is more serious: terrorism or surrender, with both options appearing unacceptable. It is a severe abuse of occupation to put a people in these circumstances....Years of denial of Palestinian rights without an effective UN response has left the Palestinians aware that self-help is their only hope. Acts of resistance must be appreciated as arising out of such a troubled background”¹

- Richard A. Falk, Professor of international law at Princeton University and UN Special Rapporteur on Palestine (2008-2014)

“Terrorism” and Discourse

“When Palestinians attack IDF soldiers, that’s terrorism”
No, Palestinians have the right to resist military occupation under UNSC Res. 43/106

“When Palestinians attack Israeli civilians, that’s terrorism”
If one wants to take this stance, one must also call it terrorism when the Israeli military (the internationally-recognized occupying force) massacres thousands of Palestinian civilians

The real question is: what is one’s aim in employing the term in the first place? What type(s) of phenomena is one trying to describe?
NORMAN SAYS...

IF HAMAS BLOWS UP A BUS, AS IT USED TO DO IN TEL AVIV, AND THEN SAYS...

WE INTENDED TO DESTROY THE VEHICLE, NOT THE PASSENGERS!

IN PEOPLE WOULD LAUGH!

BUT HOW DIFFERENT IS IT IF ISRAEL DROPS A ONE TON BOMB ON A DENSELY POPULATED NEIGHBORHOOD IN GAZA, AS IT DID IN JULY 2002, AND THEN SAID...

OH, WE DIDN'T INTEND TO KILL THE CIVILIANS, WE JUST INTENDED TO KILL A PALESTINIAN TERRORIST!

http://www.normanfinkelstein.com
The Black Panther Party

COINTELPRO - FBI program created and directed by J. Edgar Hoover\(^1,2\)
"the Black Panther Party, without question, represents the greatest threat to internal security of the country" - Hoover, June 1969\(^2\)

Fred Hampton (chairman of the Chicago BPP) and his family's phones were tapped by the FBI beginning in 1969.\(^{1,3}\)

Hampton's bodyguard was enlisted as an informant in 1968, and subsequently provided a floor plan of Hampton’s apartment to the FBI.\(^{1,3}\)

\(^1\) https://vault.fbi.gov/cointel-pro/cointel-pro-black-extremists
\(^2\) http://www.pbs.org/hueypnewton/people/people_hoover.html
Angela Davis

UCLA Professor, fired after 1 year at the request of Governor Ronald Reagan due to her Communist Party membership.

Charged with first-degree murder in 1970 after a high school student killed a CA judge using weapons she had purchased

Immediately put on FBI’s Most Wanted list. Upon arrest, President Richard Nixon congratulated J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI on its “capture of the dangerous terrorist, Angela Davis”

After 2 years in solitary confinement, was found not guilty on all charges by an all-white jury
May 2, 2013

Most Wanted Terrorists

Act of Terrorism - Domestic Terrorism; Unlawful Flight to Avoid Confinement - Murder

JOANNE DEBORAH CHESIMARD

Aliases:
Assata Shakur, Joanne Byron, Barbara Odooms, Joanne Chesimard, Joan Davis, Justine Henderson, Mary Davis, Pat Chesimard, Jo-Ann Chesimard, Joanne Debra Chesimard, Joanne D. Byron, Joanne D. Chesimard, Joanne Davis, Chesimard Joanne, Chen Chesimard, Sister-Love Chesimard, Joann Debra Byron Chesimard, Joanne Deborah Byron Chesimard, Joan Chesimard, Josephine Henderson, Carolyn Johnson, Carol Brown, "Chas"
The American Indian Movement

Formed in 1968, in response to decades of Indian Termination Policies ("assimilation" policies) initiated during the Truman administration

Joined Fred Hampton’s “Rainbow Coalition” with the BPP in 1969 - added to FBI’s list of terrorist organizations shortly thereafter¹, and listed in June 18, 1976 issue of FBI’s Domestic Terrorist Digest, circulated to all US law enforcement agencies²

Wounded Knee Incident

Occupied the town of Wounded Knee, South Dakota in 1973 to protest treaty violations. FBI agents surrounded the town and killed 3 AIM members.

FBI brought charges against 2 AIM leaders, but case was dismissed by federal judge due to “misconduct, negligence, and deceit by federal prosecutors and the FBI”\(^1\)

Pine Ridge Shootout

On June 26, 1975, AIM activists were fired upon by FBI agents, and AIM member Joe Stuntz was killed. In the ensuing firefight, two FBI agents were subsequently killed\(^1\)

AIM members Robert Robideau and Dino Butler were acquitted on all charges, on the grounds that they acted in self-defense.

A third AIM member, Leonard Peltier, was extradited from Canada and found guilty in a later trial - he is currently serving two life sentences. EU Parliament resolutions B4-0169 (1994) and 0199-99 (1999) called on President Clinton to pardon Peltier\(^2\), and a 2014 Amnesty International report called on President Obama to do the same, citing “serious concerns about the fairness of proceedings leading to his conviction”\(^3\)

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2 [http://www.webcitation.org/5LSGc933r](http://www.webcitation.org/5LSGc933r)
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONSIDERS PELTIER TO BE A POLITICAL PRISONER WHOSE AVENUES TO LEGAL REDRESS HAVE LONG BEEN EXHAUSTED. THE US GOVERNMENT HAS REPEATEDLY DENIED REQUESTS FOR A SPECIAL EXECUTIVE REVIEW. AMNESTY INTERNATIONALrecognizes that a retrial is no longer a feasible option and believes that PELTIER should be immediately and unconditionally released. - AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
Nelson Mandela and the ANC

African National Congress

- Governing social-democratic party in South Africa today
- Founded in 1912 to work for the rights of the black South African population
- Represented the main opposition to the SA government during apartheid
“The Commission has taken note that of the three main parties to the armed struggle – the state, the ANC and the PAC – only the ANC signed the Geneva Convention in regard to the conduct of wars of national liberation, and made the most conscious effort to conduct its armed struggle within the framework of international humanitarian law.”

African National Congress

Due to opportunities for investment, Soviet opposition to Apartheid, and the similar racial policies in several U.S. states under Jim Crow laws, the U.S. strongly aligned itself with the apartheid regime in the 1970s-80s.

Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger had adopted a policy known as the Tar Baby Option, according to which the US ought to maintain close relations with the white rulers in South Africa.¹

Reagan condemned the ANC as terrorist as late as 1988, 6 years before the end of apartheid and ANC was democratically elected as the leader of the South African government.

Nelson Mandela

Nobel Laureate and President of the ANC - was placed on the US terrorist watchlist by President Ronald Reagan, wasn’t removed until 2008

Reagan condemned the “calculated terrorism” of Mandela and the ANC throughout his presidency; vetoed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986, passed by both House and Senate\(^1\)

“I was called a terrorist yesterday, but when I came out of jail, many people embraced me, including my enemies, and that is what I normally tell other people who say those who are struggling for liberation in their country are terrorists. I tell them that I was also a terrorist yesterday, but, today, I am admired by the very people who said I was one.”\(^2\)

\(^2\) [http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0005/16/lkl.00.html](http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0005/16/lkl.00.html)
Edward Said’s Symbolic Act

Said threw a stone at an Israeli watchtower on top of the border wall “to make a symbolic gesture of joy that the occupation had ended.”

-Said

What’s missing from this picture?

The context: Said hadn’t been to Lebanon since the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, which marked the start of an 18-year Israeli military occupation of South Lebanon.

http://columbiaspectator.com/2000/07/19/edward-said-accused-stoning-south-lebanon
The Response?

Accused of “inciting violence” -Abe Foxman

ZOA president: "There is no such thing as 'symbolic' rock-throwing just as there is no such thing as a 'symbolic' stabbing or shooting. Bullets, knives, and rocks can kill and maim. Eight Israelis have been killed and thousands maimed by Arab rock-throwing attacks."

Freud Society of Vienna canceled Said’s lecture in response: “A lot of members of our society told us they can't accept that we have invited an engaged Palestinian who also throws stones against Israeli soldiers.”

“As if it could ever be compared with the ravages and suffering caused by decades of military occupation and dispossession” -Said

"Freud was hounded out of Vienna because he was a Jew," Said said. "Now I am hounded out because I'm a Palestinian."

http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/10/arts/a-stone-s-throw-is-a-freudian-slip.html