

From: Khan, Stephanie <[EMAIL]>
Sent: Thursday, November 30, 2023 1:51 PM
Subject: Some thoughts on Palestine

Dear TCC community,

It is important that as an educational institution trying to center our work in anti-racism, we recognize and acknowledge what is happening right now in Palestine. I think that this is an issue that affects students, and awareness is necessary for us to be able to better support them. We can compassionately and bravely look at the many ways that our roles as educators are tied to these events.

We are not free until we are all free

We are all connected.

If we are anti-racist, we fight and speak up for all groups that are victims of colonization, violence, and genocides (Racial violence and settler colonialism in the U.S., Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Congo, Uigurs, Rohingya among many, many more). We should speak up for all groups and condemn oppressive and violent actions because our solidarity is our humanity.

At TCC we give land acknowledgements at many meetings that condemn the colonization, land theft, and genocide of the indigenous people who first cared for the land that we have taken for ourselves, but if these land acknowledgements are to be meaningful, it is also important to call out the colonization and land-theft of Israeli occupation in Palestine.

Education, critical thinking, and sharing information helps lead us to truth

Recently in the magazine, 'The Progressive', Jesse Hagopian wrote about the concept of epistemicide – the attempts to destroy information and frameworks that fight oppression. This is a tactic that Israel is using currently with misinformation and war propaganda, but which has roots in the US whitewashing of narratives around harm and violence to Indigenous and Black people, as well as the current efforts to suppress critical race theory in schools.

We are witnessing genocide. These events did not start to unfold on October 7th but are part of an unfolding from the 75-year Israeli occupation, apartheid, and violence against the Palestinian people.

Historical Context leading up to Oct. 7th:

Balfour Declaration (1917):

During World War I, in 1917, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration, which expressed support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine.

League of Nations Mandate (1920-1948):

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the League of Nations, a group of primarily western

countries) granted Britain the mandate to administer Palestine ('mandate to administer' = control and have authority over Palestine).

1948 Arab-Israeli War:

This led to the displacement of Palestinians as Israel took control over more territory than allocated by the United Nations.

Occupation after the Six-Day War (1967):

The Six-Day War in 1967 resulted in Israel gaining control of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights.

The United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 242 - the "inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war" and called for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories.

Israeli Settlements:

Israel has built settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, considered illegal under international law. These settlements have led to the further displacement of many Palestinians from their homes and other restrictions.

Oslo Accords:

The Oslo Accords in the 1990s aimed to establish a framework for resolving the Israeli-Palestine conflict, leading to the creation of the Palestinian Authority (PA) to govern parts of the West Bank and Gaza. However, even though this marks a significant moment in diplomatic efforts, it was not successful.

Gaza Strip in 2005:

Israel withdrew its settlements and military presence from the Gaza Strip. However, it maintains control over Gaza's borders, airspace, and maritime access, creating a blockade and system of apartheid where Palestinians live in essentially an open-air prison with limited resources and freedoms.

Currently:

Ongoing bombing and military violence against Palestinians, estimated 20,000 dead (many children) since Oct. 7th, withholding of resources, and ongoing imprisonment of Palestinians (many children and minors) without charges.

Internationally there is support for a two-state solution, where Israel and Palestine each have their own land, but with Israel positioned as the occupying power and oppressor of Palestine it is not possible for a two-state solution to empower Palestinians with the sovereignty and dignity that all humans deserve.

Islamophobic and antisemitic hate crimes are rising

Both Muslim and Jewish people deserve safety and dignity. However, violence against both these groups is spiking.

It is also important to separate criticism of a government from its people. Jewish people deserve safety and dignity as much as the Palestinian people do – speaking the truth about Israel is rooted in fighting antisemitism as much as it is in supporting Palestinians because both actions are rooted in liberation from oppression and violence and believing in the equal worth and rights of all people.

Final thoughts

I don't understand everything about history and politics, but I know that it's wrong to steal land, I know that it's wrong to kill and harm others based on their religion or skin color, and I know in my heart that if we want to be able to fully support students, it is necessary for us to acknowledge in a public space that this is happening – even if it is just in a campus email.

Best wishes,

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