



Bad Conscience

I kick myself every time I am tempted and fall for an e-debate with one or more Zionists on Facebook after I read a provocative comment. No matter what I post, and no matter what they post, the dispute often ends abruptly when I say, "That's my last post on this. Thank you for an exemplary exercise in futility!" I normally add one or two comments for the road and don't read their last posts!

Seriously though, the level of contempt, the intensity of insults hurled, the disdain, the haughtiness, the questioning of your origins and ancestry, the bigotry, and the sheer hatred at times is unbelievable. Naturally, this comes from both sides! Anyway, any argument is met with a counter argument. Any document presented is met with two contradicting documents. And the charade continues endlessly. I have not heard of anyone "converting" the other as a result of such discourse. Zero, zilch.

Interestingly enough though, a few years back, you would rarely see Palestinians boldly arguing with Zionists on social media platforms. Today, I can safely say that they're at least a match. Pro-Palestinian internationals often join the circus and come down on Zionists like a ton of bricks; something we hadn't witnessed in the past. As if they finally got the chance to divulge what they'd been harboring for a long time. Everyone knows that the virtual arena is another battleground (although mostly for pacifist wimps with big mouths). As distressful as the experience is for us Palestinians, however, it is an opportunity to make known our opinions on matters that more often than not never make it to the mainstream media. No doubt, the apparent shock on the Zionist front during such debates is far greater than that experienced on the Palestinian side, which is already familiar with Israeli *hasbara* or propaganda. The dismissal and disbelief of (any) Palestinian argument is immediate, but when you hear something shocking, particularly for the first time, especially when it is against everything you believed in all your life, you do not forget it easily, even if you pretend you do.

The chance of being dismissed as a Palestinian virtual interlocutor becomes even more remote when you, directly or indirectly, bluntly or subtly, convey the message that Palestinians have a narrative, a deep-rooted culture with a rich oral history, folk tales, songs, and dances. Palestinians have a flag that they rally around, olive groves and vineyards that they cherish, and they have their own heroes and people they look up to. The fact of the matter is that, according to international law, the Israeli presence is nothing less than occupation and is thus subject to the Geneva Convention. Sooner or later, justice will prevail. The Palestinians certainly aren't going anywhere, so the earlier the question of Palestine is resolved, the better for everyone.

A guy once asked me, "Who are you people?" "We're your bad conscience," I replied. I never heard from him again, and I certainly have not managed to convert him.



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