Fighting for justice, for Palestinians to be free in their own land, is not antisemitic!

Speech given by Layna Crandell, an anti-Zionist Jewish member of the Anti-War Committee, gave this speech at our Al Nakba protest on May 17, 2025

Today is a day of mourning and of continual struggle, to commemorate the Nakba, the day in 1948 when the Zionist state of Israel kicked out 750,000 Palestinians from their homes through force, massacre, and through destroying entire cities and towns. Others consider this to be Israel's national independence day, but they are celebrating an atrocity.

I was asked to speak today as an anti-Zionist Jewish voice. Many people still think that saying "Free Palestine" is antisemitic. I am here to tell you all that is not true. Antisemitism has never and does not have any place in the Free Palestine Movement!

It has been a year and a half of genocide. The world is waking up to the ethnic cleansing of Palestine throughout the past 100 years done by the Zionist Israeli state. Our government and people in power are conflating antizionism with antisemitism, a tactic to dominate the conversation about the genocide, to take away from us talking about the relentless bombings of

civilians, the systematic starvation and refusal to let aid in, the brutal shootings in the street, the IDF soldiers raping imprisoned Palestinians, and the continual land theft, the actual things that are occurring. On the anniversary of the Nakba this year, Israel has unleashed hell, bombing and killing hundreds in just a few days.

This genocide is our modern day Holocaust!

I could talk about how Jews can't be safe while Palestine is under attack, until Palestine is free, but ultimately this isn't about us. Our solidarity is with Palestinians and their liberation. Our solidarity is with Palestinian resistance, who have fought for decades for their people and land.

Many of you have already heard us say that this didn't start on October 7. It also didn't start with the First or Second Intifadas. It didn't start in 1967. It didn't even start in 1948. Israel's ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people has been the Zionist's desired outcome over the past 100 years and this genocide is where Zionism inevitably leads. Many people want to say it's complicated, that both Jewish and Palestinian people have been oppressed, so we must not take sides. The truth of the matter is that Israel is a colonial occupying force that has relied on ethnic cleansing and genocide to exist.

It's not too late to learn the real history. It's not just Netanyahu or Ben Gvir or Smotrich. Israel has been a strategic pawn for US imperialism for decades and continues to exist through US economic and material support. Israel has been a stable ally throughout the US's destabilization efforts in the Middle East in pursuit of their own economic interests. Israel has also allied with the US through supplying weapons to paramilitaries and far right governments in Latin America, collaborating with apartheid states in Africa,

and supporting US-led invasions in Asia. The IDF even trains our own police!

This is why both sides of the political aisle, Democrats and Republicans, have never taken a stand against Israel. Democrats wouldn't listen to us and end aid to Israel, and now Trump is embracing an even more extreme far right agenda to further the genocide and further destabilize the region.

In fact, any actual antisemitism is coming from our far right government who supports Israel! They say antisemitism is on the rise, but actual attacks taking place here are against Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim people, along with all immigrants and refugees in the US. All of these destabilization efforts by the US and supported by Israel are what has forced people out of their homes as immigrants and refugees, just for them to be abducted by ICE for speaking out against genocide.

This is why it is up to us to fight back! Us at the Anti War Committee have been organizing with labor groups around Minnesota to demand that the Minnesota State Board of Investment divest the $5.4 billion dollars of public pension funds and taxpayer dollars from Israel and companies profiting off this genocide. For example, the SBI invests in Elbit Systems, an Israeli defense company that is responsible for surveillance at the US-Mexico border wall and the Israeli Apartheid wall. We have been met with repression from the SBI because they see that we are organized and not going away. They have rescheduled multiple meetings and limited public testimony, even only appearing on Zoom so they wouldn't have to face us! But even with this repression, our movement has grown and we have been showing up with even larger numbers! Be on the lookout for a new date for the postponed SBI's quarterly meeting, and come stand with us and public

employees to call for the SBI to divest from apartheid Israel. And learn more about our divestment campaign at divestmn.com.

Now to end my speech, I want to keep it simple. People are still telling us that saying from the river to sea is antisemitic. But I am once again saying that fighting for justice, for Palestinians to be free in their own land, is not antisemitic! So repeat after me:

FROM THE RIVER TO THE SEA PALESTINE WILL BE FREE!