

A Contribution to Our Review Process on Palestine¹

Over the past three months, a few comrades began drafting a text that is part of our review process on Palestine. For various reasons, the working group was unable to complete this document. Nevertheless, discussions were organized, involvement in the movement was encouraged, and several things were put to paper during the process. Finally, the process was abandoned, which brought me (Thomas aka Thomasito) to the idea that I could still share my notes with you as a contribution to the discussion on Palestine during and especially also after our founding congress. I hope we will be able to relaunch the review process in the future so that, as a collective, we can be more precise about the conclusions we draw from one of the most powerful and inspiring global movements of the last decades, and from an issue that has been key to why many of us left PSL/LSP and agreed to build Project Solidarity. In any case, to relaunch the process it would be crucial to succeed, as a collective, in establishing more profound connections with people from the region and in the Palestinian solidarity movement. On a more personal note, I decided to still share these notes individually, mostly because I have felt for a long time deeply about Palestine and anti-colonialism. I am partly from a country in the “Global South” and the traces (and damage) of colonialism and slavery run deep in my family. I take pride in those roots that have helped shape the person and activist I am today. As for the notes below, the fact that I use “we” may now sound a bit strange. Consider it a trace of the beginning of a collective process, and hopefully also a trace toward its continuation. Also, the notes begin somewhat abruptly, since an introduction is missing, and other parts are quite limited and may therefore feel a bit rough. In any case, the most important point I am trying to make in this text is that the politics of Palestinian liberation should be situated in a regional context, while remaining firmly rooted in Palestinian resistance, without compromise. I am convinced this point will help us in our activism here in Belgium, thus helping the movement more generally. The notes are structured as follows: The Palestinian Resistance(s) and the Question of Violence (p. 2) - Regional Struggle, Regional Revolution (p. 5) - Global Perspectives from Belgium to Palestine (p. 12) - “Intifada” and Other Key Words (p. 13)

1. We understand that politics requires analysis, an analysis of reality allowing for decisions in transforming that reality, its history. Marxist analysis emerges through political engagement in the history of class struggles from the perspective of the working class. However, *intersectional* Marxist analysis avoids any class-reductionist analysis. After all, the working class is inherently diverse, meaning that its struggles are diverse. This diversity is characterized by the different ways in which different kinds of oppression intersect in capitalist society, of which the diverse working class is the living force, the only one that can change the system.

¹ Text completed in November 2025 as part of Solidarity, an intersectional Marxist organization.

2. In the case of Palestinians, their oppression is overdetermined by Zionism. The colonial state of Israel is ready to exterminate Palestinian society as a whole, as recent history clearly shows. Therefore, Palestinian intersectional activists focus greatly on Zionism, yet without giving the colonial oppression absolute priority over other kinds of oppression suffered by Palestinians. For instance, Nada Elia, the Palestinian intersectional activist and author, criticizes “Western feminists” for ignoring Zionism and thus precisely its gendered manifestations, hence silencing Palestinian women: *“When the circumstances of Palestinian women are considered at all, it is generally a denunciation of ‘life under Hamas rule.’ Yet Palestinian women have been explaining for decades that they are at least as much, if not more oppressed by Israel and Zionism than they are by their fellow Palestinian men.”* In a similar way, Al Qaws, the organization for sexual and gender diversity in Palestinian society, sees its queer struggles as fundamentally anti-Zionist: *“Israeli settler colonialism, and tactics such as ‘pinkwashing’ weaponize our queer experiences to place us in opposition to our own society and communities.”*

3. Following an intersectional Marxist analysis, it is then crucial to understand how capitalism produces the different ways in which different kinds of oppression intersect, thus reproducing itself, continuing the exploitation of people and the planet. However, capitalism appears differently in a colonial context. Frantz Fanon has captured this incisively: *“In the colonies, the economic substructure is also a superstructure. The cause is the consequence; you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich. This is why Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched every time we have to do with the colonial problem.”* In other words, any Marxist analysis of the colonial situation in Palestine should stay clear of economic reductionism. Instead, the analysis should interpret the anti-Zionist struggle of Palestinians as a revolutionary struggle. The citizens of a settler colonial state are by definition bourgeois from the perspective of the oppressed. In short, we defend the right of Palestinians to resist and defeat Zionism. It would be a victory for the oppressed and exploited worldwide: *“We are not liberating Palestine, Palestine is liberating us.”*

4. In light of this victory and liberation, we now turn to the Palestinian resistance, after which we will address questions of regional context and strategic alliances. We will conclude with a few reflections on the worldwide movement and especially on solidarity here in Belgium with the Palestinian struggle. Starting with resistance, it speaks for itself that any discussion of Palestine should begin with a merciless criticism of Zionism, which we engaged in through a resolution voted at the last PSL/LSP congress and available in the Project Solidarity members’ drive. As long as the Zionist state exists, this criticism needs to continue.

The Palestinian Resistance(s) and the Question of Violence

5. *“We live a life where all whom one loves are being killed one after the other, or else you yourself are wiped off the face of the earth along with all your immediate family. In the end you might perhaps survive with half a body, half a soul, half a heart.”*
These were the words of a young Palestinian woman in Gaza on 31 October 2023.

Hope seems hardly appropriate, and even survival is ambiguous, with human life reduced to half its worth. Perhaps it is indeed where Palestinian resistance begins. In times of genocide, grand arguments on humanity mean little to those resisting their fate, somehow surviving their death. The Palestinian resistance is rooted in this radical sentiment. It is a sentiment difficult to connect with for those who grew up in the world of human rights, which are definitely rights worth fighting for, but this is not where people in Gaza begin. So how to discuss the Palestinian resistance here in Belgium, basically without any connection to the situation and sentiments on the ground? It is a question that continues to haunt us – a question that was particularly present and unbearable in the early stages of the recent movement, and which continues to work us in waves. The provisional solution is simple: “Don’t stop talking about Palestine”. If it is difficult to connect and say something meaningful, at least don’t stop talking about the existence of Palestinian society, about the inalienable right of Palestinians to live and resist Zionist oppression and genocide.

6. In this part, we originally intended to say much more about the Palestinian resistance. There are several reasons why the part is finally so limited, but the conclusion is that we need to continue it. We need to continue discussing and trying to connect with the Palestinian resistance, which is the most crucial part of the struggle for Palestinian liberation. After all, only Palestinians can lead the liberation of Palestine, though the solidarity of others will be needed, others equally liberating themselves. Thus, solidarity with Palestine means taking a principled position in defense of the Palestinian resistance, including its armed resistance, which does not mean automatically agreeing with the political perspectives of its leadership. We will touch on this and a few other things very briefly before moving on to the next part. But we especially want to invite all comrades to not stop talking about Palestine, to dig deeper for the radical sentiments inspiring the Palestinian resistance, and to take up the task of studying its history and politics.
7. A basic point about the Palestinian resistance is that it is very diverse, just as Palestinian society is. While Zionism overdetermines the political reality of the resistance, it is necessary to distinguish five further realities, five resistances, as it were: (1) The resistance in Gaza, which is led if not dominated by Hamas (the Arabic acronym for Islamic Resistance Movement), but with Islamic Jihad and the PFLP also participating in the action of Oct 7, and with all three recently rejecting in a joint statement any “foreign guardianship” over Gaza. (2) The resistance in the West Bank, where in the poor neighborhoods and refugee camps, small protests and new armed groups are constantly developing but are also constantly repressed (especially since Oct 7) by the Israeli state with the help of the Palestinian Authority led by Fatah, which also leads the PLO coalition. Therefore, the PA can hardly be seen as part of the resistance. (3) The Palestinian-Arab second-class citizens of Israel (the term “Israeli Palestinians” is totally inappropriate), constituting around 21% of the Israeli citizenship, who try to resist Zionism from within, forming coalitions mostly among themselves. (4) The Palestinian community in East Jerusalem, (mostly) without Israeli citizenship yet under direct Israeli control, so without political representation, any means to resist, and even poorer than the Palestinians in Israel. (5) The Palestinians of the diaspora, who make up half of all Palestinians and mostly live in Jordan and other Arab-majority countries. They often face imperialist-Zionist

violence in the form of racism, economic precarity, and state repression. At the same time, they are crucial to the regional and global solidarity movements, as they allow others to connect more deeply with Palestinian resistance.

8. The armed resistance is primarily led (but not only) by Hamas and its Al-Qassam brigades. In the context of the latest ceasefire and “peace” negotiations, Hamas has refused to disarm, reaffirming that *“we do not need to limit ourselves to the Israeli terms and definitions related to weapons.”* That is, *“we will not be captives.”* For Hamas and the others resisting besides them, the question of military action is an organic continuation of their political struggle for national liberation. The military action of Oct 7 was in that sense an act of armed resistance against Zionism and imperialism. But armed struggle entails great risks of human tragedy and political derailment. This is why a close study of the politics and history of the Palestinian armed resistances is necessary. For instance, we know Hamas is an Islamic supremacist and reactionary capitalist party, but we don’t know much about its military policies and social composition and base, nor about how its relations with other Palestinian and regional (armed) resistances are evolving. For now, we will conclude with two additional points on Hamas that need further elaboration. First, Hamas receives almost all of its military means from the oppressive regime in Iran. However, Hamas is not a puppet of the Iranian regime, as political disagreements do exist – differences that could be exploited by progressive Palestinian and regional forces. In short, the Palestinian resistances should not be moralized based on how they obtain weapons, even when these come from oppressive regimes. Instead, space for political debate and progressive alternatives should be opened. Second, Hamas implicitly accepts the two-state solution and is willing to give up its arms if a sovereign Palestinian state is established. During the ceasefire negotiations last October, Hamas allegedly said it was open to a decommissioning process of its offensive weapons. Meanwhile, however, Hamas repeats in public: *“The resistance is present in the field with weapons in hand, and will be present until the last inch of our land is liberated.”*
9. We propose concluding this part with a brief study of Fanon on violence. The first and longest chapter of *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Fanon’s seminal book on colonialism, is titled “Concerning Violence”. There, he posits that decolonization is a violent phenomenon: *“What is the real nature of this violence? It is the intuition of the colonized masses that their liberation must, and can only, be achieved by force.”* Violence awakens the colonized masses to the question of their force and thus the balance of forces. Fanon then situates this awakening on two levels. At a collective level, he observes that *“the violence of the colonized unifies the people.”* In other words, violence plays a politically progressive role in advancing national liberation. *“At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force [la violence désintoxique].”* It rehabilitates the individual to their own eyes, giving them self-confidence and moral strength. Together, these two levels make the colonized understand their revolutionary power, understanding that liberation is a democratic process from below: *“Even if the armed struggle has been symbolic and the nation is demobilized through a rapid movement of decolonization, the people have the time to see that the liberation has been the business of each and all and that the leader has no special merit. Violence raises the people to the level of the leader.”* In an important speech

given in Ghana in 1960, Fanon captured his take through the expression “by any means necessary”, which Malcolm X would famously use a few years later. Fanon basically meant that, in the fight against colonialism and imperialism, violence is unavoidable, if not necessary: *“The colonised people, caught in a web of multiple, diverse, repeated, cumulative violences, are soon logically confronted by the problem of ending the colonial regime by any means necessary.”* It is not a question of the end justifying all violent means. It is a question of using any means necessary to end the permanent violence and genocide against Palestinians and all colonized bodies. Otherwise, there will be no human ends whatsoever left to pursue.

Regional Solidarity, Regional Revolution

10. On 13 June 2025, after more than 600 days of relentless genocide, Israel started bombing Iran, the biggest sponsor of Hamas and the Palestinian resistance in Gaza. Iran quickly retaliated. The mutual bombing continued for twelve days, during which the whole region was on the brink of nuclear war. Asked about the Iranian state being a genuine source of resistance against Zionism, an Iranian feminist started answering as follows: *“I want to preface this by saying there is a big difference between the problematic cheerleading of the Islamic Republic by many on the global left and the celebrations by people affected in the region, especially in Gaza. In the context of the endless horrors of occupation and genocide and the fact that Arab regimes have not only abandoned Palestinians but are actively complicit in the extermination campaign we have to understand why any perceived blow against Israel would be welcomed and applauded.”* In other words, the solidarity movement outside the region should not celebrate the acts of the oppressive regime in Iran. Instead, activists should study and explain why those acts matter to the forces resisting Zionism, hence strengthening solidarity with the resistance, internationalist solidarity from below, which may encourage revolutionary alliances in the region.
11. Thus, the goal is not to develop a “correct”, static position concerning the contradictions of the emancipatory struggles in the region, particularly the Palestinian struggle. The goal is to strengthen solidarity and actually contribute to the liberation of Palestine. And while it is only the Palestinians who can ultimately liberate Palestine, they will not be able to do so if others do not liberate themselves as well. The question is, therefore, with whom will Palestinians most effectively be able to develop such a liberatory dynamic? It is the strategic question par excellence, and it directly includes the question of how we can contribute to this dynamic and, in doing so, liberate ourselves. The question is also particularly relevant to raise in the so-called West, given its immense responsibility in the ongoing colonization of Palestine. Ultimately, however, the responsibility extends beyond the West: it concerns a global political task towards what we call humanity. As that Iranian feminist remarked in the context of the twelve-day war between Israel and Iran: *“That’s why it’s crucial that the global Gaza solidarity movement has a proper analysis of events in Iran and the region. It’s not an academic exercise but a key strategic question: who are the allies and who are the enemies of Palestinian liberation?”*

12. The direct enemy of Palestinian liberation is the state of Israel and its cross-class allies, who oppress Palestinians. Therefore, any strategic discussion on Palestinian liberation should start with an uncompromising criticism of Israel as a whole, the Zionist entity. The entity is an integral part of the larger capitalist-imperialist system, a particularly critical part, given the revolutionary impetus the anti-Zionist struggle has elicited globally for more than two years now, and much longer. Although, as Marx argued, the revolution of capitalist society can only be led by the working class, this does not mean that a revolutionary strategy for Palestinian liberation should prioritize unity with the Israeli working class, whose economic position is deeply embed in Zionist structures and thus bound up with the oppression and exploitation of Palestinian society, including its working class. In this sense, a general strategy centered on anti-Zionist working-class unity between Palestinians and Israelis is nonsensical. This does not preclude a role for progressive – that is, anti-Zionist – segments of the Israeli working class, however limited they may be, within a broader revolutionary dynamic oriented towards Palestinian liberation. The Israeli anti-Zionist Marxist organisation Matzpen already concluded in 1972: *“Anyone who follows closely the revolutionary struggles within the Arab world becomes aware of the dialectical relationship between the struggle against Zionism within Israel and the struggle for social revolution within the Arab world. Such a strategy does not imply that activity within the Israeli working class should be neglected; it only implies that this activity too must be subordinated to the general strategy of the struggle against Zionism.”*
13. The quote by Matzpen offers a clue as to who the closest allies of the revolutionary Palestinian struggle may be. In his account of the first major anti-Zionist revolt (1936-1939), the Palestinian author and revolutionary Ghassan Kanafani observed: *“On the one hand, the Pan-Arab mass movement was serving as a catalyst for the revolutionary spirit of the Palestinian masses, since a dialectical relation between the Palestinian and overall Arab struggles existed, on the other hand, the established regimes in these Arab countries were doing everything in their power to help curb and undermine the Palestinian mass movement.”* This analysis has been – and continues to be – taken up by the most revolutionary segments of the Palestinian resistance, particularly the PFLP, founded in 1967 and shaped by the worldwide decolonial and anti-imperialist movement in the 1950s, specifically the Arab Nationalist Movement. Very recently, the Lebanese revolutionary Georges Abdallah stated: *“The value of the Palestinian revolution lies in its role as a lever for the Arab revolution. It is the historical lever of the Arab revolution.”* To which he added: *“But it is no longer playing its role for various reasons. The Palestinian leadership must answer this question: Why has it abandoned this role?”*
14. In any case, it is important to note the close historical and political dialectic between the Palestinian and Arab struggles for freedom and self-determination. A more objective, crucial fact concerns the millions of Palestinian refugees living in other Arab-majority countries, who carry significant potential to inspire and connect national liberation struggles across the “Middle East” and North Africa (MENA). However, this potential also helps explain why Palestinians are often politically disenfranchised and discriminated against in many of these countries, most crucially in Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt. Moreover, Palestinian political parties have largely

adopted – albeit under pressure – a strategy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of neighboring states. This has often gone hand in hand with a tendency to collaborate with ruling elites and oppressive governments, rather than actively fostering regional solidarity from below. In practice, such strategies of non-intervention and collaboration risk fostering opportunism and deepening the isolation of Palestinians, both within Palestine and in the diaspora, thereby undermining the possibility of building broader revolutionary alliances across the region (see Abdallah's question above).

15. Still, we should remember that the key source making revolutionary change impossible is the Zionist entity, which functions as a particularly critical node within the broader capitalist-imperialist system. In the MENA region, this global system is structured above all around oil production and strategic global trade routes. Politically, it is sustained by authoritarian regimes that oppress their populations while facilitating the exploitation of the region's wealth, labor, and natural resources. These regimes – and their repressive apparatuses – are frequently denounced in popular protests as complicit with Zionism, particularly through the normalization of relations with the Israeli state and their alignment with major global powers. These include not only the United States and Europe, but also Russia and China, all of which maintain a military presence in the region. At the same time, regional powers such as Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, India, and the UAE play significant and often competing roles. In short, the capitalist-imperialist landscape of the MENA region is highly complex, and “the West” does not have a monopoly on its dynamics or on the possibilities for transforming it. After all, regional revolutionary movements have at times achieved significant victories (usually followed by defeats, of course) relatively independently of Western or other imperialist forces. Such movements have also crossed borders, as they often do, helping to advance broader struggles for liberation. It is precisely in relation to these dynamics that a revolutionary politics of Palestinian liberation becomes more clearly visible. We therefore propose to revisit the so-called “Arab Spring”, a key political and historical process that emerged some fifteen years ago and still offers important lessons for ongoing regional and Palestinian struggles. At the same time, our analysis remains limited by our own partial knowledge and by the fact that we do not read Arabic. Further study is clearly needed, especially in dialogue with those who participated in these uprisings – not only Arabs in countries such as Tunisia or Egypt, but also Palestinians, non-Arab indigenous populations, and even people beyond the region who were drawn into its revolutionary momentum. In this sense, the “Arab” Spring has been called a “Democratic” Spring: a process of democratic revolution (and counter-revolution) in Arab-majority countries that nonetheless raised the political stakes of the region as a whole, somehow bringing it closer – however unevenly – to the horizon of Palestinian liberation.
16. The Democratic Spring was sparked when a young Tunisian street vendor set himself on fire on 17 December 2010 following his humiliation by corrupt state officials. In the next months and years, the regional masses rose under the slogan “the people want to overthrow the regime”. Leaders were toppled in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, and Libya, while regimes were seriously challenged in Bahrain and Syria – where the government was ultimately overthrown in 2024. Important reforms were

introduced in Morocco and Jordan, and protests also took place in Saudi Arabia, Western Sahara, and Palestine. In 2018, a new wave of mobilization emerged, bringing significant political change in Iraq, Sudan, and Algeria, alongside large-scale protests in Lebanon, Egypt, Morocco, and Gaza. Today, some commentators speculate that a third wave may be on the horizon.

17. The Democratic Spring, however, was much more than only a sudden popular uprising against oppressive regimes. It was a dialectical process directly related to the nature of capitalism in each country and the whole region; through this process the popular masses and working classes increasingly became conscious of their shared political and socioeconomic interests – effectively, their revolutionary power. Consequently, at various times and locations, elements of “dual power” emerged. Our comrade Cédric Gêrôme explains, based on what he experienced in Tunisia: *“This means that outside and in opposition to the capitalist class and its state machine, the revolutionary process initiated the creation of local grassroots structures, the seeds of a new state built by the masses themselves: self-defense and neighborhood committees, and in some cities also popular councils. Once in motion, the masses were not content with the departure of degenerate and parasitic rulers.”* Furthermore, Koen Bogaert and his colleagues have highlighted the revolutionary dialectical process between politics and economics during the Democratic Spring in Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco: *“The effective realization of the fusion of the political and the economic takes place in concrete instances of struggle where civil-democratic and class actors “come together” and participate in a shared activity system, such as the regional UGTT branches in Tunisia; the popular committees in Mahalla, Suez and Port Said; and the local cells of the 20 February movement in Morocco.”* In other words, the power of the Democratic Spring lay in its capacity to imagine and organize “shared activity systems” among the region’s popular masses and working classes. After all, a democratic revolution does not end in secular democracy alone; rather, it demands expansive class alliances to seize the state from below. Thus, by democratizing the revolutionary struggle, these movements revolutionize capitalist society within and beyond national borders and social identities – a permanent task for the internationalist and intersectional working class.”
18. It is important to note how the Palestinian question plays a crucial role in the dialectical process through which regional and global revolutionary forces develop. While many Arab countries experienced significant economic protests following the implementation of neoliberal programs by the IMF and World Bank in the 1980s, the early 2000s marked a distinct political shift – starting with the Second Intifada. This reality fundamentally altered the regional landscape, heightening despair regarding imperialism, as underscored by the normalization of relations between Arab states and the Zionist state. The Oslo Accords of 1993, which had accelerated these normalization efforts, proved to be a trap for Palestinian liberation; their collapse galvanized both Palestinians and the broader regional masses. The subsequent, aggressive imperialist war in Iraq further politicized these populations. These developments radicalized political consciousness and grassroots organizing, which, during the Democratic Spring, culminated in the demand to overthrow regimes collaborating with the imperialist-Zionist system.

19. Perhaps the most significant expressions of solidarity with Palestine during the Democratic Spring occurred in Tahrir Square in the summer of 2011. Demonstrators chanted, “the people want the liberation of Palestine,” and thousands stormed the Israeli embassy in Cairo – a stark rejection of the state’s normalization of relations with the Israeli state, which had been in effect since 1980. Following the Egyptian revolution, the Rafah border crossing was partially reopened, the new Egyptian leadership adopted a firmer stance against collaboration with the Zionist state, and a summit was organized in Cairo to improve relations between Hamas and Fatah. However, both factions remained fundamentally hostile to the Democratic Spring. While they feared the rise of independent leftist or Islamist forces, their primary concern was the mobilization of the masses themselves. In essence, this momentary reconciliation was less a genuine shift in policy and more an attempt by the Palestinian bourgeoisie to reposition itself following the loss of key regional allies. Although protests occurred within Palestine – despite active suppression by the ruling parties – and solidarity with the Palestinian cause was voiced throughout the various revolutions, the Palestinian question ultimately remained marginal to the broader trajectory of the Democratic Spring.
20. Ultimately, the history of the relationship between the Palestinian question and the Democratic Spring clarifies the primary adversaries of regional liberation: “*The local reactionary leadership; the regimes in the Arab states surrounding Palestine; and the imperialist-Zionist enemy,*” as Ghassan Kanafani articulated. The dialectical relationship between these struggles implies that a movement such as the Democratic Spring sharpens the political understanding of Palestinian liberation, and conversely, Palestinian liberation deepens the scope of the regional struggle. In November 2023, Tunisia’s former president, Moncef Marzouki (the first constitutionally elected president following the Tunisian revolution), observed: “*We believe that the Arab Spring is at the beginning of the beginning of the beginning. Now for us as human rights activists, democratic activists, politicians, etc, we believe that there will be a third wave. (...) What’s happening now in Gaza could be the trigger of this new wave of popular protests.*” However, predicting an uprising is distinct from rigorously analyzing its objective causes and learning to navigate them. Advancing the struggle requires explaining the necessity of such an uprising and carrying that necessity to its logical conclusion. Therefore, while recent events in Gaza may indeed catalyze a new revolutionary wave, its efficacy will depend on the regional masses seizing the strategic initiative – inventing new forms of mobilization and forging tangible connections between their own liberation and that of Palestine.
21. To illustrate this aspect of revolutionary strategy, one can turn to Rosa Luxemburg’s analysis of the mass strikes in Germany over a century ago: “*If anyone were to undertake to make the mass strike generally, as a form of proletarian action, the object of methodological agitation, and to go house-to-house canvassing with this “idea” in order to gradually win the working-class to it, it would be as idle and profitless and absurd an occupation as it would be to seek to make the idea of the revolution or of the fight at the barricades the object of a special agitation. The mass strike has now become the centre of the lively interest of the German and the international working-class because it is a new form of struggle, and as such is the*

sure symptom of a thoroughgoing internal revolution in the relations of the classes and in the conditions of the class struggle. It is a testimony to the sound revolutionary instinct and to the quick intelligence of the mass of the German proletariat that, in spite of the obstinate resistance of their trade-union leaders, they are applying themselves to this new problem with such keen interest." The masses of the MENA region will gather a similar instinct and intelligence when the moment arrives. And only they can know when exactly.

22. At the same time, it is worth noting – as Georges Abdallah has done in recent interviews – that the regional masses have remained largely passive since Oct 7, with Morocco and Yemen serving as notable exceptions. A primary factor in this passivity is the widespread normalization of relations between Arab states and Israel. Since the Oslo Accords – and continuing through the post-Democratic Spring era – many Arab-majority countries have effectively functioned as extensions of the imperialist-Zionist apparatus. Conversely, certain states refuse to recognize the Zionist state and continue to reject international passports bearing Israeli stamps, including Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, Libya, Iraq, and Kuwait (along with Iran, which, while not an Arab-majority country, maintains a similar posture). In countries such as Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco, protesters have openly denounced their governments' complicity with Zionism, frequently facing arrest for their dissent. Yet, as Abdallah observes, state repression is not the fundamental obstacle. One must critically assess the risks taken by the masses in the name of Palestine: in the MENA region, the number of casualties resulting from confrontations with security forces during these recent protests has been effectively zero. Abdallah suggests that this disparity creates a profound sense of shame among the Arab masses, particularly when contrasted with the global movement, where activists have faced significant peril to support Palestinians. But the shame cannot and will not last. The history of the Democratic Spring demonstrates that when the masses rise to demand dignity, the state's apparatus of repression becomes insufficient, and victory is within reach.
23. Of course, a crucial reason for the passivity of the region's popular masses is their severe socioeconomic precarity, which is closely tied to life under autocratic regimes. A recent example of this precarity nevertheless being transmuted into action occurred in February 2024 at Egypt's largest state-owned textile complex in Mahalla – one of the most significant textile hubs globally. Here, 7,000 workers, a majority of whom were women, organized independent of official trade unions to demand wage increases, leading to confrontations with security forces. The workers organized independently of the trade unions, which made union leaders nervous. They were mindful of the Mahalla workers' mass strikes between 2006 and 2008 against the former Egyptian dictator, during which the workers played an important role in the revolutionary struggle that culminated in 2011. The 2024 mobilization directly challenged the new dictator El-Sisi's government, who bears ultimate responsibility for the state-owned enterprise yet failed to address the workers' demands. While these workers did not explicitly call for the regime's overthrow or frame their struggle through the lens of Palestinian solidarity, their actions possess a transformative potential. By converting precarity into organized action, such struggles act as a vital catalyst that can inspire others across Egypt and the region to transform the general passivity into anti-imperialist-Zionist action and liberation.

24. Clearly, the Israeli masses, waving the Zionist flag, won't participate in any regional revolutionary process. They fall outside what we call the "regional masses" – those who, historically speaking, have nothing to lose but their imperialist chains. Addressing this in the context of the Democratic Spring, Cédric G  r  me argues in his 2021 book: *"While some commentators were a little too quick to dismiss Israeli indifference to the issues that drove Tunisians and Egyptians onto the streets, the imprint of the revolutionary processes in these countries was clearly visible in almost every major demonstration by Israeli Jewish youth and workers in the months that followed. During a strike for higher wages in March 2011, involving at least 10,000 Jewish and Palestinian social workers, one of the main slogans was: 'We want to breathe – just like in Tahrir Square.'"* While the events in Tahrir Square were globally inspiring, merely drawing tactical cues from one regional protest to organize within Israel is not equivalent to aligning with the anti-oppression aspirations of the regional masses – aspirations that are inevitably anti-imperialist-Zionist. For instance, during the summer of 2011, Israel witnessed its largest socioeconomic protests; yet, these movements were conspicuously devoid of political demands for democratic rights and, most crucially, any reference to the Palestinian question. In short, revolutionary coalitions between the Palestinian masses and the Israeli Jewish working classes are highly unrealistic, if not impossible. The few brave anti-Zionist Israeli Jews are likely most effective as part of broader international coalitions for Palestine. Ultimately, Palestinian voices remain paramount, as does the imperative to build the regional coalitions necessary for revolutionary change. Therefore, it is untenable to argue today that Israeli Jews possess a right to self-determination, given the Israeli masses' alignment with their colonial state. This question can only acquire relevance within a context of revolutionary anti-Zionist change – a process necessitating the dismantlement of the Israeli state. This would, in turn, liberate Jewish individuals from the colonial structures of Israel, integrating them into the regional masses capable of realizing a democratic socialist federation that guarantees self-determination for all emancipating groups.
25. The dismantlement of the Zionist state aligns with the Palestinian demand for a single, democratic state – one that is secular, socially just, and upholds the Palestinian right of return. Such a state could be binational or plurinational, prioritizing the autonomy and rights of all constituent communities. Furthermore, this plurinationality could be integrated into a broader transnational framework, reflecting the struggles of Arab and regional populations to establish a democratic socialist federation. A key example here is the Kurdish people. Though divided across nation-states – Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria – they constitute a transnational people whose movement offers vital lessons in resistance, solidarity, and anti-imperialist struggle. In Syria, the Rojava revolution – initiated in 2012 – continues to build a secular, plurinational state rooted in direct democracy, gender equality, and socialism. While the history of Kurdish-Arab relations remains complex and at times hostile, the Palestinian struggle would undoubtedly benefit from a rapprochement with the Kurdish movement. Notably, the Kurdish slogan "Woman, Life, Freedom" has mobilized feminists and oppressed populations across the region, including the masses currently challenging the regime in Iran – a major regional power and a primary sponsor of Hamas. A revolutionary, internationalist, and intersectional

approach to Palestinian liberation demands regional solidarity from below to dismantle Zionist apartheid alongside gender apartheid and all forms of capitalist oppression. Ultimately, the task of overturning this world system belongs to the worldwide masses and working classes – the living forces of our time.

Global Perspectives from Belgium to Palestine

26. In this part, we wanted to analyze the dialectics of the worldwide living forces in relation to the Palestinian struggle, as observed from our vantage point in Belgium. We actually wanted to analyze many things: the global articulation of (neo)colonialism and Palestine; international non-Western responses to the recent Zionist aggression (South-Africa, Colombia, Malaysia, China, etc.); the genocide and systemic violence facing oppressed peoples in the DRC, Sudan, Kanaky, Rojava, and Kashmir; the role of GenZ-led mobilizations and their impact on the Palestinian solidarity movement in Belgium; state repression, especially in relation to Palestinian prisoners and refugees, and Palestinian tactics of resistance; radical direct action, people's boycotts, and workers' boycotts or strikes in solidarity with Palestine; etc. However, below we only discuss BDS and the inherent link between genocide and ecocide: the systematic destruction of life, the living forces.
27. Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) remains probably the most popular global pro-Palestinian campaign, including within the Belgian context. Its significance calls for critical examination. Founded in 2005 – one year after the International Court of Justice ruled the West Bank separation wall illegal – BDS is a Palestinian-led initiative for human rights, modeled on the South African anti-apartheid struggle. Historically, BDS emerged in the wake of the Oslo Accords' collapse, a period characterized by the increasing isolation of the Palestinian masses from their regional and international counterparts. Since then, the movement has matured, securing significant victories in isolating the Zionist entity. Its tactical utility is undeniable: BDS raises awareness regarding international complicity by centering Palestinian human rights and serves as a vital tool for self-organization, enabling supporters to engage in concrete acts of solidarity. However, the BDS's efficacy is often tied to contexts of institutional complicity – primarily in Western countries – and thus demands a focus on institutional pressure. In pursuing this strategy, BDS regularly distances itself from more radical forms of direct action, sometimes undermining the political solidarity around armed resistance (as happened in several student encampments in Belgium). In May 2024, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) explicitly noted that *"the BDS National Committee statement on armed resistance contradicts our people's legitimacy in practicing resistance and ignores consensus,"* affirming instead that: *"We value all positions, forces and personalities that express their support for the Palestinian resistance in the face of the war of genocide and Zionist colonialism."* As Leila Khaled aptly put it: *"BDS, of course, on the international level it is very effective. But it doesn't liberate, it doesn't liberate land."* Consequently, BDS warrants critical scrutiny when it operates as an exclusionary force that marginalizes tactics involving direct confrontation with the oppressor – confrontations that will ultimately be led by the Palestinian masses

themselves. To retain its revolutionary relevance, the BDS movement must remain fundamentally linked to popular uprisings rather than standing apart from them.

28. Finally, the struggle against genocide is inextricably linked to the fight against ecocide. As Andreas Malm observes: *“The destruction of Palestine is the destruction of the Earth.”* Colonization represents the dual exploitation of the land and the oppression of its inhabitants. In Belgium and elsewhere, radical climate activists have increasingly recognized this, evolving into committed anti-colonial organizers. We see this convergence in initiatives like *Code Rood/Rouge* and its support to the “Stop Arming Israel” campaign, as well as in the shift of figures like Greta Thunberg and other climate strikers toward anti-imperialist militancy. This convergence of struggles is a lived reality, rich with revolutionary potential. Malm traces the history of this convergence to 1840, when the British Empire deployed coal-powered steamboats during the so-called Oriental Crisis – a pivotal moment of imperial projection in the Levant. He argues that “fossil capital” was transformed into “fossil empires” (Britain, France, Russia, the Ottomans, etc.), which paved the way for the further development of fossil capitalist imperialism (USA, Europe, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iran, Russia, Turkey, etc). Within this framework, Malm situates the Zionist project: *“When the Zionist movement was eventually assembled, it was a wagon that could be placed on ready-made tracks, laid out by the British Empire after 1840: the dominant classes of the metropole had already constructed the logic of its satellite colony in Palestine, if only as a mental image. Zionism did not take material form in 1840, as the exercise of steam-powered violence did. We might conclude from this that the latter [steam-powered violence] had causal primacy in history. Zionism first existed at the level of superstructure, on the base of the fossil empire.”* In essence, genocide and ecocide are dual expressions of a single cause: capitalist imperialism. To dismantle this system, we must challenge both, ending “fossil Zionism” – a particularly violent, early manifestation of “fossil fascism” – which constitutes the systematic destruction of life.

“Intifada” and Other Key Words

29. To end, we propose to review a few important words from the movement in solidarity with Palestine. First, *Nakba* – literally “the catastrophe” – denotes a process that has been ongoing since the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948. In that moment, Zionism consolidated its state power, transforming the colonization and displacement of Palestinians – and ultimately, their ongoing genocide – into a permanent reality.
30. *Intifada* has arguably been the most prominent word within global protests over the last two years. Translating to ‘to shake off,’ the term signifies a popular uprising against an oppressive force. While it has remained central to national struggles across the MENA region – from Iraq to the Western Sahara – it became most known through the Palestinian uprisings of 1987 and 2000, the First and Second Intifadas. These were not spontaneous outbursts in a void, but were rooted in specific political impasses: the First Intifada emerged as a reaction to the PLO’s weakening following its expulsion from Lebanon by Zionist invaders, following its earlier expulsion from Jordan by King Hussein; the Second followed the definitive collapse of the Oslo

“peace” process. Consequently, intifada has come to symbolize both the urgent necessity for political reorientation and the essential spontaneity of resistance against overwhelming power. Young people in Belgium have been particularly vocal on intifada, having played a particularly important role in the first year of international mobilisations since Oct 7, most notably through the student encampments and “student intifada”. When protesters today chant “yalla, yalla, intifada” (“come on, come on, intifada”), they are not merely echoing the past; they are invoking a strategic imperative to shake off the status quo and demand liberation.

31. The significance of intifada can be further highlighted in relation to *thawra* – the Arabic term for revolution or revolutionary change. While intifada describes the act of shaking off oppression, *thawra* denotes the comprehensive structural transformation of both government and society at large. carries historical and institutional weight, evidenced by the PLO’s historical periodical *Filastin Al-Thawra* (“Palestine the Revolution”) and the widespread democratic uprisings in the MENA region starting in 2010. Where intifada is decentralized and often defined by the urgency of spontaneous resistance, *thawra* represents a certain grandeur in the search for a new political and social horizon. Intifada is the catalyst; it is a desperate but hopeful movement that, in its most advanced form, seeks to evolve into revolutionary renewal. This is the logic embedded in the chants of the movement: “There is only one solution: intifada revolution.” And ultimately: “One solution: revolution.”
32. The concepts of intifada and *thawra* converge within the rallying cry to “globalize the intifada”. This synthesis is exemplified by *Samidoun* – the international Palestinian prisoner solidarity network, whose name is derived from *sumud* (“steadfastness”). On December 10 2023, marking the anniversary of the First Intifada, the network issued a statement asserting: “*Globalizing the intifada today means developing the international popular cradle of the resistance – the growing recognition that the Resistance of the Palestinian people, joined by their comrades, brothers and sisters in Yemen, Lebanon, Iraq and beyond, today represent the hope of humanity on our collective front lines.*” The statement centered this global call in a local reality: “*The Great Intifada launched from Gaza’s Jabaliya refugee camp, often called Mukharyam al-Thawra, the camp of revolution.*” In sum, a global intifada implies the multiplication of Palestinian resistance in service of the revolutionary renewal of humanity itself. While the mere call to globalise the intifada obviously – and perhaps intentionally – leaves much to the imagination; effectively transitioning this slogan into a tangible reality will require further clarification and the development of a coherent, concrete revolutionary strategy.
33. We must consider a few additional keywords essential to the movement. First, *Sumud* – meaning “steadfastness” or “perseverance” – is the bedrock of the Palestinian struggle. It signifies the refusal to be displaced, a deep-rooted connection to the land that is, in practice, synonymous with resisting the Zionist colonizer. This concept has resonated globally, inspiring initiatives like the Global Sumud Flotilla. It is also important to address the concept of *Jihad*. While frequently caricatured in the West as a holy war – a framing fueled by Islamophobic tropes common in Belgian society – its etymological root is the struggle and striving inherent in the daily tasks of life. While the term is rarely invoked in this way within the secular Palestinian

movement, the pervasive association of Arabs and Palestinians with Islamic fundamentalism is a weaponized narrative used to delegitimize their resistance. Closely related to this issue is the use of the word *martyr* by Palestinians, Arabs, and others. Revolutionaries understand martyrdom as a highly political word crossing the boundaries between the religious and the secular, refusing victimhood to be a condition of passivity and innocence, and instead insisting on death as part of the daily, lived reality of the anti-Zionist struggle.

34. Finally, a key slogan is “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” – or “is almost free,” according to the most combative and hopeful Palestinians. In Arabic, we often hear “*min el-mayeh lil-mayeh, Falastin Arabiyeh*” (“from the water to the water, Palestine is Arab”). This phrasing firmly inscribes the Palestinian struggle within the Arab nationalist movement, evoking the historical origins of the PLO and the various Palestinian political parties discussed earlier in this analysis. These historical origins, inextricably linked to a broader decolonial history, must be taken seriously; the assertion that “Palestine is Arab” is a cornerstone of this identity and should not be denied. However, the struggle also develops in the other direction, allowing a translation of “Palestine will be free” as “*Falestin hurriya*” (*hurriya* means freedom or liberation; *hurra* means free as in “*Falestin, hurra, hurra, Israel, barra, barra*”). Our internationalist approach should make us and others sensitive to the different directions in which the struggle translates, while advancing a revolutionary liberation (*hurriya*!) of all the oppressed and exploited. However, the struggle and slogan also evolve in a different direction, as seen in the ending “*Falestin hurriya*” (“Palestine is freedom” or “Palestine is liberation”) – think also of “*Falestin, hurra, hurra, Israel, barra, barra*”. Our internationalist approach requires us to be sensitive to the diverse directions in which the struggle translates across borders, while advancing the revolutionary liberation (“*hurriya*!”) of all the oppressed and exploited.