



Genocide in Gaza: When Does the History Begin? – Paul Jay

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Walter Kiriaki (WK): Hi. Welcome to the *North of 48*. We are at day 783 of the Ukraine invasion. Anne Lee has a column in the *Daily Kos* titled *Russian Military is Leveraging Delays in U.S. Military Support*. We're at 192 days of the Israel conflict, which has now dragged in Iran. Or were they part of it to begin with? We don't know. Our guest today is Paul Jay. He's in the house. Paul is a journalist, filmmaker, founder, editor-in-chief, and host of *theAnalysis.news*, which you can find on YouTube. Hi, Paul. How are you, sir?

Paul Jay (PJ): I'm good. Thanks for inviting me.

WK: What are your thoughts about the Middle East right now? Is there an end game there? I know what Iran's solution is as an end game, but do you think things will calm down, or do you think it's going to ratchet up?

PJ: Well, I'm not sure what you think the end game for Iran is. The end game for the Iranian theocracy is pretty much the same as the end game of the Israeli theocracy/political-economic elites, which is to stay in power. Then they have the specificity. The agenda for the Israeli state and elites, especially this government, but not only, as pretty much every government they've had and might have, is to maintain the supremacy of the Jewish state and to force the Palestinians into an unliveable situation. They still hope that the Palestinians in the West Bank will end up in Jordan. They still hope that the Palestinians in Gaza will somehow be absorbed into Egypt. In the meantime, they'll make life absolutely unbearable for these people as much as they can. It's obvious to anyone who looks at the situation. In fact, even former Prime Minister [Ehud] Olmert said this. Hamas is, to a large extent, the actual creation of Israel. Israel had chances to negotiate with Fatah and others. There were several important other organizations that were—

WK: The PLO.

PJ: That were progressive. Some of them were socialists. They would have created a perspective for a whole different Palestine. That is the last thing the Israeli elites wanted. Instead of adding any serious negotiations, they nurtured, and Olmert says, even financed through Qatar, that Netanyahu actually sent money to Hamas over the years. They wanted an extreme Islamic organization on the other side that, at least in their documents, said they wanted the extinction of Israel because it meant they didn't have to negotiate with anybody. They thought every few years, they could bomb the hell out of the place, not as badly as this, but they have that phrase mowing the grass. So often, you bomb civilians in Gaza, and generally, with an illegal siege, prohibit Gaza from any normal economic development. You mentioned I had the show CounterSpin.

WK: Yes.

PJ: I once had a debate between Uri Dan and Robert Fisk. Fisk is well known. He passed away recently, but he was one of the best independent journalists. In fact, he wrote for the British newspaper *The Independent*, covering the Middle East for years. I arranged a debate between him and Uri Dan. Uri Dan was one of the closest advisors to Ariel Sharon, who people will remember was like a Netanyahu. To get him to do the show, I'm on a phone conversation with Dan, and he's trying to suss out where I'm at on these things to see if he wants to do it. I told him my sister lived on a kibbutz for 10-11 years. Her kids grew up in Israel, which is true. He's thinking, oh, okay, this guy's with me. Then he said, "Well, what did you think of Israel?" because I had told him I visited there. I said, "Oh, it's a beautiful country. It's so beautiful." Of course, I was talking about the geography, not the apartheid system. Anyway, he figured I was with him, so he started talking to me very openly. He said, "You know, if it takes a thousand years and a thousand Jewish lives every year, someday from the river to the sea, all of this will be ours." That was the first time I ever heard the slogan 'from the river to the sea,' which makes it ironic that it became a slogan for Palestinians. I hate the slogan, whichever side it comes from, but that's what they want. They want to diminish and eliminate a Palestinian presence as much as they can. It may not be a realistic plan. I was at a film festival in Tel Aviv. I had submitted my wrestling film.

WK: I'll tell the audience to watch it. It is very good.

PJ: Yeah, it's on [*theAnalysis* website](#) in the documentary section. I wasn't even going to go because I didn't feel right going to an Israeli film festival. But anyway, I asked, are there any Palestinians coming? It turned out there were. There were about 10 Palestinian filmmakers that were coming to it. It is a small independent festival. I figured, okay, if they're coming, I'll go. I was told there, and this is back in '98, I guess, that if it wasn't for the threat of Palestinian existence, at the time, there wasn't much terrorism left, but there had been some. If it weren't for that, Israeli society would break out into a civil war between the Orthodox versus the secular. The secular population was absolutely fed up with the amount of power Orthodox rabbis had over normal everyday life, including how people get married and a whole range of things. They resented that Orthodox boys and girls didn't have to join the

military. As long as there's an external threat there, they're able to keep this down to some extent. The agenda of the Israeli elites is the status quo and or more. How would one think, if you caused such suffering in Gaza, that there won't be a response? Sometimes people ask me what I think of Hamas, and my answer usually is that I think the apartheid Israeli system is the underlying cancer. Hamas is a malignant tumor produced by that cancer. You can't talk about the tumor if you don't talk about the cancer. That's more or less what mainstream Western media and governments – Yeah, what happened on October 7 was a terrorist attack on civilians. Hamas must have figured the response would be devastating to the Palestinian population in Gaza, and apparently, they didn't give a shit. Maybe it is what they wanted. History didn't begin on October 7, obviously.

WK: Right.

PJ: Also, history didn't begin in 1948 because there is another side to this, which is several thousand years of the hatred of Jewish people. It weighs on the brains of many living Jews like a nightmare. So that can't be discounted either. If I'd still been in Ukraine, in theory, it wouldn't have been me, but whoever, probably most of my Ukrainian family that was left, my Jewish-Ukrainian family that didn't get out, they'd all be dead. It doesn't weigh on my brain as much because I grew up in Toronto, and I didn't experience that much anti-Semitism, but many people did. You can't discount how that affects people. But of course, it's no justification for the Israeli state and elites to do the same thing to the Palestinians as was done to the Jews. The dehumanization of Palestinians that is done in Israel, the extent of the racist feelings towards Palestinians, and when I was there last, about 11-12 years ago, I was just astounded by how openly racist storekeepers and others were.

WK: In Israel?

PJ: Yeah, in Israel, towards Palestinians. Just openly.

WK: Because they have Arabs. Arabs are—

PJ: Palestinians [crosstalk 00:11:04].

WK: Palestinians. There are some who are citizens of Israel.

PJ: Oh, yeah. More than a million, I think.

WK: That's right. That's what they were worried about.

PJ: They're very second-class citizens, too. They claim their citizens but put all kinds of restrictions on Palestinian-Israelis that don't exist on Jewish, including the right of return. Any Jew in the world has the right to immigrate back to Israel. It's not true for Palestinians.

WK: Well, isn't that true. There are houses that were taken over by people from Israel that were—

PJ: There were 750,000 Palestinians expelled in '48. Let's step back a bit here.

WK: Okay.

PJ: You can't judge any of these situations without also looking at internationally; why is this geopolitics as it is? You can't look at this without looking at how global monopoly capitalism works. The fundamental thing about monopoly capitalism is the first word: capitalism seeks monopoly. Whether it's Pepsi versus Coke, if it's at the corporate level, you seek as much market share as you possibly can. If you can possibly completely dominate a market, you do. The way Google, to a large extent, dominates online advertising. But that happens at the nation-state level, too. It's an expression of the same that nation-states, to the extent that they can, try to monopolize. Now, only the United States, and this is because of objective historical development, not because capitalists in the U.S. are somehow worse than others; they had the opportunity to become a global hegemon. Now, there is some specificity to the U.S., which makes it particularly violent. It's a country that was founded on the genocide of native people, a slave system, and then transitioning to a foreign power, imperial power, in the late 19th century. It fought a civil war. The issues were settled between rising monopoly capitalism and industrial capitalism versus the slave system. It's been a very, very violent society, which makes it somehow more acceptable for this society to commit crimes abroad. There's nothing that comes close since World War II. You go through the wars and hundreds of thousands and millions, really, of people that have been killed in wars instigated by the U.S. in order to maintain global dominance. And somehow, that winds up acceptable to most Americans, and even when it's not, it quickly fades into memory. The Iraq war was just an out-and-out blatant grab for oil and some advantage in the region, which both blew up in their face. It didn't get them an advantage in the region. They didn't even wind up with control of the oil. It made a lot of money for arms companies along the way, including [Dick] Cheney's Halliburton.

WK: It did.

PJ: But that said, the Palestine-Israeli conflict has to be seen in the position that if the U.S. is going to be a global hegemon, it has to be a hegemon in every region. Or then you're just regional. Let's say your only power is in Latin America. Well, you're a regional hegemon, but they want to be a global hegemon. They have been very successful, more or less successful, at dominating. Although, I must say not dominating as much as some of the left suggests. They try to become the global hegemon, but they've lost every major war they've been in since World War II. What did they win? Grenada. Even the Korean War, at best, you could say it ended up as a stalemate. They didn't really get what they wanted. It was the overthrow of the North Korean government.

WK: We got some good movies out of that Grenada War, too. [Laughter].

PJ: Yeah. Within the system, which is based on seeking monopoly, each of these bigger powers that has the capability tries to become as dominant in their region as possible. Then you get the odd one that, because of history and geography, has the possibility of being a global hegemon. For them, that means Israel is one of the levers of power, or at least has been in the Middle East.

WK: It's financed quite a bit by the USA—billions of dollars in armaments.

PJ: Oh, yeah. Well, unless they go make a deal with somebody else. I don't know.

WK: They might have to get along with their neighbors if they didn't have the billions of dollars.

PJ: Well, yeah. But they call Israel a land-based aircraft carrier for the U.S., and it has atomic weapons. It's there to threaten the rise of any popular nationalist movements, like [Gamal Abdel] Nasser. In fact, Israel did get involved in the Suez Crisis against Nasser. Now, there's some debate in American foreign policy circles, whether it's still advantageous or is it more of a liability, Israel. But as long as they can work out deals between the Israeli state, Saudis, and Emirates, that creates a fabric of alliances that are pro-U.S. But even there, they're not totally in control. China started to develop good relations with the Saudis and brokered the deal between Iran and Saudi Arabia. The Americans strive for global hegemony, and in financial terms, they do. They've been quite successful using the CIA covertly. Their actual military footprint has been far less successful. Part of the logic of being a global hegemon is defending democracy around liberal American values. I'd love someone to explain to me what those values are that justifies all the expense. The power and lobbying power of the military-industrial complex and the nuclear weapons complex are profound. I'll say this quickly, but if you want to ask me another follow-up, I can go into it more. From the very beginning of U.S. industrial capitalism and the very beginnings of the role of finance, financialization, which means the growth, importance, and dominance of big banks, has evolved right alongside militarization. It starts, at the very least, from the Civil War. The J. P. Morgan bank grew out of selling and buying Union army bonds, government bonds, and selling weapons to the Union army, even though it was outright corrupt. Buy rifles for

\$2.25 and sell them for \$22. Even there, the war profiteering was terrible. Out of that grew the Morgan bank. So this marriage between financialization and militarization being one of the most important pillars of the U.S. economy has not changed.

WK: That's true. I would also put in that the Anglo-American. The British had quite an interest in the Middle East, especially British Petroleum with Mosaddegh in Iran. Again, it's the capitalists who have their fingers in the pie and are stirring it up.

PJ: Listen, you and I are both living in Canada. If Canada could, they'd be the global hegemon. If somehow, through some historical, geographical opportunity, a bigger population, and this isn't something particularly unique about American elites, it's how it developed. All the capitalist elites would love to be the global hegemon, and the Canadians are very happy to ride on the U.S. gravy chain, even though a lot of times, Canadians like to have some moral outrage about one thing or another. It's skin deep because our arms industry is totally integrated with the American arms industry.

WK: Well, we'd be kinder and gentler power control of the world.

PJ: No, we wouldn't. Oh, yeah, because we treat Indigenous people in Canada so nicely.

WK: We'd be polite about it.

PJ: Yeah, sure. No, we wouldn't even be polite. I don't even know where that came from. It's so nonsensical. Watch Canadian hockey players. They beat the shit out of each other.

END

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