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From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be Free: An Interview with University of Toronto Pro-Palestine Student Encampment Organizers

Sara Rasikh and Mohammad Yassin interviewed by Emil Marmol

Using the October 7, 2023 attacks as a pretext, Israel has initiated and perpetrated what is arguably the most barbaric genocide in many decades. They have conducted this genocide with the active and continuous diplomatic and military support provided by western governments. Consent for genocide among western publics has been provided by a collusive and complicit western corporate and public service media that have done everything in their power to cover up and justify Israeli criminality. In response, students across the world have risen up to bring awareness of the plight of the Palestinians and demand an end to the genocide. These students have been met with extreme surveillance, oppression, and violence from the state, educational institutions working as extensions of the state, and counter-protestors. This paper is an interview with one of the principal organizers, and one of the negotiators and spokespeople, of the University of Toronto pro-Palestine encampment and their experiences while taking part in the protest.

On October 7, 2023, Hamas and several allied resistance organizations launched an attack that resulted in hundreds of deaths, including 314 members of Israel's security forces, and the taking of approximately 252 people as hostages (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2024). Corporate news media framed this event as marking the initiation of conflict between Israel and Palestine, while providing scant, if any, context on what provoked it (Roth & Huff, 2023). However, the historical record illustrates how Palestinians have been suffering for many decades under a lethally violent Jewish supremacist, apartheid Israeli occupation that has steadily robbed them of their land, razed their crops and critical infrastructure, and severely limited their movement and caloric intake Prominent members of Israeli society have repeatedly referred to Palestinians as Amalek (a biblical justification for their destruction) (Omer, 2025) and casually use the phrase "mowing the grass" to refer to the regular culling of their population (Rouhana, 2025).

Marmol, E. (2026). From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free: An interview with University of Toronto pro-Palestine student encampment organizers [Interview]. *Democratic Communiqué*, *32*(1).1

The corporate and public service news media extensively disseminated the now completely debunked claims that Hamas had beheaded 40 babies and systematically weaponized widespread sexual assault during the attack (Conley, 2024; Sanders & Al Jazeera Investigative Unit, 2024; Scahill et al., 2024). Moreover, the corporate media falsely claimed, repeatedly, that Hamas routinely used civilian facilities and human shields in carrying out their subsequent operations (Elgindy & Lurie-Pardes, 2024; Shupak, 2025). Meanwhile, though not nearly as extensively covered by the corporate press, Israeli forces have used rape and sexual assault as a method of torture and humiliation, employed human shields as a daily component of military operations, staged their operations from civilian facilities, and caused the deaths of thousands of babies and children, some by way of decapitation (Aziz & Fayyad, 2024; Drop Site News; 2025; Goldsmith, 2025a, 2025b; OHCHR, 2025).

The corporate news media partook in many additional, serious omissions in their coverage of the conflict. For instance, they failed to convey the fact that Israel implemented the Hannibal Directive on October 7 (North, 2024), and subsequently engaged in an extensive cover up of their actions (Winstanley, 2024), making it difficult to determine precisely how events unfolded on that day, and to ascertain the number of people killed by Hamas and those killed by Israeli Defense (AKA Occupation) Forces. Also substantially underreported in the corporate news media narrative was the discovery that Israel had obtained a thoroughly detailed plan of the attack more than a year in advance (Zhang, 2023), and that Egyptian intelligence warned them just days prior (Sabbagh, 2023). Furthermore, it was concluded that the Israeli response on that day was slow and inadequate (Al Jazeera Staff, 2025). It is completely within the realm of the imaginable to believe that the Israeli government permitted the attack to occur as a pretext for ethnic cleansing and genocide. Coincidentally, not long after the attack, Israeli intelligence and a thinktank with ties to Netanyahu concocted a blueprint for ethnic cleansing, which cited the attack as the perfect opportunity (Ofir, 2023). As recounted by a journalist, Benjamin Netanyahu once admitted with "startling enthusiasm," how the 9/11 attacks on US soil were "very good," because they would "generate immediate sympathy" (Solomon, 2025). Indeed, attacks such as these can be cynically manipulated by the most sinister of actors. Netanyahu's government has certainly exploited public sympathy as illustrated by a grim poll which showed that 47% of Israeli Jews support the complete extermination of Palestinians in Gaza, and 82% support their forced expulsion from the Gaza Strip (Rapaport, 2025).

Israel's ongoing devastation against the Palestinian people has been aided and abetted by the corporate and public service media (Forde & Freedman, 2025; Johnson, 2024; Roth & Huff, 2023), which has demonstrated a long-standing bias against the Palestinians and their right to self-determination, freedom, and basic human dignity (Philo & Berry, 2004; 2011). Western governments have been acting in concert with the corporate and public service media by providing shameless and willful diplomatic cover for Israel on the global stage, while the US in particular, delivers seemingly unlimited amounts of military support (Hansen**,** 2025). Enabled by this mutually reinforcing and self-serving arrangement, Israel has conducted what may be considered the cruelest, most destructive, barbaric, and devastating genocide in many decades (Amnesty International, 2024; Asem, 2025). Some experts and scholars have gone so far as to label Israel's actions a holocaust (Marmol, 2025; Noy, 2025).

In the face of this unprecedented calamity inflicted upon the Palestinian people, students have organized to increase public awareness with the hope of bringing an end to the genocide. Student support for Palestine has manifested in the form of protests and encampments worldwide (AJLabs, 2024). There have been over 500 protests, including more than 130 encampments, with the majority of these taking place in the US (Ulfelder, 2024). Given the exhortations we have received throughout our school-age years regarding the horrors of genocide, and the universal proclamations of "never again," one would think that these overwhelmingly non-violent student acts of resistance (Ulfelder, 2024) would be embraced by our lauded centers of higher education. On the contrary, these protests and encampments have been subjected to intense surveillance, severe repression, and outright violence by state authorities in collaboration with educational institutions who have assumed the role of repressive state apparatuses (Chatelle, 2024; Goodarzi & Dolinar, 2025; Sabin, 2024; Ulfelder, 2024). Social media companies have closed ranks, severely limiting the reach of dissenting voices by censoring and downranking pro-Palestinian content (Ahmed et al., 2025; Di Stefano, 2025; Human Rights Watch, 2023; Shankar et al., 2023), a long-standing practice (Marmol & Mager, 2019; Marmol, 2024). State authorities have violently attacked students and educators alike and have failed to intervene when counter-protestors have committed acts of violence against protesters (Ulfelder, 2024). Thousands of student activists have been arrested (Ulfelder, 2024). As punishment for their participation, students have been put on probation, suspended, expelled, and/or have had their diplomas withheld (Hellmann, 2025), while educators have been disciplined and fired (Lennard, 2024). Some of the more prominent student activists have been kidnapped by plainclothes officers from their university residences (Abunimah, 2025), off the street (ACLU, 2025), and even at a US Citizenship and Immigration Services Field Office after being lured there under the false pretext of a citizenship interview (Democracy Now!, 2025).

The following is my interview with one of the principal organizers, and one of the negotiators and spokespeople, of the pro-Palestine student encampment at the University of Toronto. They took great risks to their personal safety and professional reputations by organizing and participating in the encampment. They continue to selflessly prioritize the cause of justice for Palestine by participating in this interview. They feel, as do I, that in a time of grave injustice, silence and inaction is to be complicit with the oppressor. We urge you to take action for the sake of humanity.

The Interview

Interviewer: *I would like for you to please tell me a little bit about yourselves, and what role you played in the encampment. I'm happy for either one of you to start.*

Mohammad Yassin: Sure, I can go for it. At the time, I was a fourth-year student at the University of Toronto (U of T). I did a double major in economics and statistics. I graduated in June. So actually, right in the middle of the encampment. And I'm Palestinian. I have family in Gaza from my mother's side. My dad's side of the family is from the north of Palestine, my mom is from the south, but they went to Gaza in 1948. I also have family in Lebanon. So for me, both sides of the family were kind of involved in the conflict at some point directly. Yeah, I mean, I was not really politically involved in things until the genocide started. It was really only after October of 2023 that I felt like I couldn't just do nothing. There

was a burgeoning group of people at U of T who came together to start advocating for Palestine, and that was under Toronto Students in Solidarity with Palestine. I joined that very early on, and we continued to work on Palestine activism to try and get the University to divest and disclose their investments for most of the academic year, until things came to a boiling point where the University had ignored everyone for so long that that was the impetus for the encampment. My role was mostly in negotiations with the administration and as a media spokesperson. I was one of the people who would try to get the deals that we would negotiate back and forth and strategize on that, and meet with the administration. And at the same time, I also gave a lot of interviews to the media.

Interviewer: *So, what motivated your involvement? I'm going to guess that because you are Palestinian, it makes sense that you would be involved because it affects you directly. I'm also going to guess that as a natural human instinct, you probably simply stand against human suffering. Would that be accurate?*

Mohammad Yassin: Yeah, that's entirely accurate. I mean, I also had another motivation, which is that there's a lot of people who are Palestinian, but they wouldn't get involved directly with things like this, because either it's too risky or they have other ways of being involved. They might have other avenues, such as charity, for instance. I believe that it's very important for people to raise their voices against injustice, and I felt that if nobody raised their voice, then things would just go on as they are, without anyone saying anything. And I'm a pretty religious person. We have a principle in Islam, my religion, which is that if you see an injustice, you have to speak out against it. And, that kind of motivated me, whereas during earlier pro-Palestinian protests that took place in the city before October 2023, I didn't feel inclined to participate because I felt like, what did they accomplish? Right, like just going into the streets? But past a certain point I was like, look, even if it doesn't accomplish anything, it's just for my own soul, like I have to do this. That's how, slowly over time, it ramped up to the point where I got involved in all of this.

Interviewer: *Thank you, Mohammad. Sara, so on to you, please tell me a bit about yourself, and what role you played in the encampment.*

Sara Rasikh: Absolutely. I'm a graduate student, completing my master's. I was born and raised in Pakistan, with an awareness of imperialism and occupation, and how colonial histories continue to shape our present. But beyond that, I was also raised with a sense of responsibility stemming from, similar to Mohammad, Islamic values, that injustice anywhere is a call to act. And, so, the encampment to me was a space of possibility where people came in, thinking that they were just showing support for Palestine, but then they left with a deeper understanding of anti-colonial struggle and the ways that our movements are connected.

At the encampment, I served as one of the media spokespeople, which meant that I handled press inquiries. I gave interviews and I helped shape the public narrative around our demands and our actions. In terms of the motivation, specifically, it came from years of organizing for Kashmiri and Palestinian liberation in Toronto, but also witnessing the land back movement, and being deeply inspired from that, and then also just from a deep belief that universities as spaces and institutions that claim to be these sites of critical thinking and justice, that they cannot continue to invest in genocide with impunity, and

they cannot do so with our tuition dollars, and so a deep outrage as well. That is what motivated me to be part of this action specifically, and also a deep belief that the encampment was a necessary escalation in a long-standing campaign to hold U of T accountable. We had occupied Simcoe Hall earlier in the year. We had been protesting continuously since October, but even before that, and the University was getting away with just ignoring us. We knew that we had to disrupt in a way that was permanent and not temporary to get their attention, and to apply the necessary pressure for them to meet the demands of divestment, as well as cutting ties and disclosure.

Interviewer: *Moving on, how did you and others involved, organize and mobilize for the protests? How did preliminary planning unfold?*

Sara Rasikh: I can speak to the coalitions that we built across student groups, and connecting with faculty allies, studying past encampments for strategic insights, but also looking to the US. For example, Columbia and other universities who had also established encampments. Our planning obviously involved logistical coordination, like supplies and communications and security, but there was also an element of political education to ensure that we understood the stakes and the demands before heading into it. In terms of mobilizing for the protests, we did outreach through social media and direct conversations with students. We held teach-ins and other programming as well to get folks involved. And again, a big part of that was political education, but just kind of learning with and from students throughout the process. The encampment itself also just attracted folks and community, many of whom were deeply supportive. And that's how we built it, if that makes sense.

Interviewer: *I agree with you completely that with this kind of movement, and any kind of movement, and in the labor union movement, which I'm a part of, that education, outreach, and solidarity building is a crucial component of the work that is necessary for these movements to be successful. Mohammad, what would you like to say in relation to this question?*

Mohammad Yassin: There was definitely a lot of study that went into things in terms of looking at other encampments as well. So when we're looking at all of these movements, even if there wasn't direct communication between different encampments between here and the US, like, say, definitely in terms of Columbia and U of T, there wasn't a direct line that was there. There was nevertheless a lot of learning that was done through watching how they had done certain things and from their mistakes, so that once things were put into action at U of T, they were not repeated. Basically, there was an element of strategic planning that went into this that was more than just people are going to show up there and pray that it goes well. Now, obviously once you're actually on the ground, not everything that you had planned for materializes. Then you have to start solving new problems that you couldn't have ever anticipated, and definitely over a two-month period, which, frankly, we had never expected that it would be two months. You know, we had expected it would last maybe two to three days and then get cleared. That's when you have to start problem solving. But yes, there was a large element of coalition building. This was built on the back of eight months of raising the student consciousness on campus. If it wasn't for the fact that there was this eight months of political education and rallies, and stuff that was going on, this would have just came out of nowhere, and people would not have potentially supported it or been there for it.

Sara Rasikh: Absolutely, and if I may just add, that we did have internal interpersonal conflict and challenges. Although we tried our best to build these coalitions, this was still a rapid mobilization in response to the genocide, and while crucial, it did still lack, I think, the foundational relationship building necessary for fostering trust in each other's decision making, but also in moving in and now living in such close proximity with one another. Obviously, solidarity entails a practice of care work and a commitment to organizing that is grounded in cultivating relationships. Without these elements, sometimes efforts to organize in solidarity risk becoming disjointed or they fail, I would say, to create the meaningful connections needed to navigate complex struggles effectively. And so, while the relationships that we had built were grounded in mutual care and respect, essential for building trust and ensuring that our collective actions were sustainable, not all of the encampment, quote unquote, organizers were trusted by all encampment participants. I think the slow, intentional work of cultivating mutual respect and understanding and trust, which cannot be rushed was not fully realized. And so, you know, our shared political commitment to justice, maybe wasn't enough to navigate some of these more complex interpersonal challenges and grievances.

Unfortunately, we did see things like racism and homophobia and transphobia, and all these different forces reproduced within the encampment, and I just don't want to romanticize the encampment. I do want to mention that there were many tensions also between different organizing styles and power dynamics. Some participants, for example, were more comfortable with traditional forms of hierarchy and clear lines of authority. Others were committed to horizontal organizing, which required constant negotiation and dialogue. This often led to delays or indecision. The pull and push between these approaches did leave many people also feeling unheard, no matter how much effort we put into fostering dialogue and fostering inclusivity. I think it's important to mention that there were moments when certain voices dominated and others struggled to be fully engaged. It was ultimately an action that was a rapid mobilization, and although we were trying our best to foster as healthy a space as possible, building trust requires slow work that can take years, and we only had a few months. But yes, I also agree with everything Mohammad said, and I think that without building the relationships that we did, it wouldn't have been what it ended up being.

Interviewer: *I can 100% identify with what you're saying, both from an academic standpoint and from my involvement in the labor movement. I do know that there are all these issues that come up. I like what you said about not romanticizing the movement, because in every movement we do see oppressive and marginalizing beliefs and isms emerge that must be dealt with. Moving on to my next question, what were the central demands made by the protesters, and what outcomes did the protesters hope to achieve?*

Mohammad Yassin: So, we had three central demands. The first demand is that we wanted the U of T to disclose all of its direct and indirect investments. The second demand was for them to divest from any Israeli institutions. So this kind of split into two, another demand as well, which is the cutting of academic ties. But mostly this one was financial. So, this was any weapons companies that are funding or directly aiding the genocide. This was any companies that had investments in Israel in the occupied territories and things like that. The third demand was cutting academic ties with Israeli academic

institutions particularly, and more specifically the ones that were on occupied territories, such as occupied East Jerusalem.

Sara Rasikh: Yeah. So, like the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, AI partnerships with Technion, and then part of that was also just committing to a review of all partnerships and then to terminate partnerships, like exactly what Mohammad said, that operate in the settlements, or that sustain the apartheid policies through systemic deprivation of Palestinian students, or our faculty's rights to academic freedom and other freedoms.

Interviewer: *So, what slogans were used, and what protest paraphernalia were displayed? In your view, did these resonate with the public, or shift public opinion?*

Mohammad Yassin: Yeah, I think this is a very important question, because this ended up being one of the central outcomes of the court case down the line, was the protest slogans. I think the main slogan was a more general one that is in the movement and not specifically just university related was, from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free. That ended up being turned into a smear campaign against us, of being accused of antisemitism over that, basically trying to equate that slogan with genocide of Jewish people. That was like half of the court case that we fought. The injunction was just on that, to which the outcome was that the judge himself ruled that all of our slogans that we were using were not antisemitic. We were just obviously supporting Palestine with them. Yet, you know the way that it was framed in the media, and even through the university's public press releases that they had put out or public updates, was that there were fears of antisemitism because of these slogans and chants. We had other chants that were directly aimed at the university. So, U of T your hands are red, things like that, basically trying to bring awareness of the fact that the University is funding and directly investing in military companies that are directly involved in the genocide. And so, directly, the university had its hands red, and particularly we targeted the university's president, Meric Gertler, who is now stepping down soon to end his term. But, you know, we had lots of chants that targeted Meric Gertler saying that his hands were red. This also then became a focus of the court case, where we were accused of antisemitic stereotypes of blood libel which none of us had ever heard of at the time. We were in court arguing about blood libel, because we painted Meric Gertler's hands red and painted devil horns on him. And suddenly we were accused of antisemitism over it.

I feel like these did resonate with the public, though, in terms of shifting opinion, because there were lots of people who came by the encampment, who, you know, just saw it as a spectacle, and they just kind of walked by, and they saw all of our posters and slogans, and the art that we had on the outside, which was very attention grabbing and banners and stuff. They struck up a conversation, and they came to the gate, and they were like, you know, I'm curious, can I be let in? And, if they weren't hostile or anything like that, we're like, yeah, sure, come on in. There were plenty of people, including even some professors and faculty who weren't directly associating with us, and they just wanted to see what was going on. They came inside and asked questions, what do you guys mean by this? Can we have a dialogue about it? A lot of people did move towards our side of the story. Now, obviously, there were some people who, like I said, just accused us of antisemitism, or didn't even engage with this kind of

stuff, but those people, typically, if you just showed them the Palestinian flag, they would just call you Hamas. There was no dialogue to be had with certain people to begin with, and so we didn't really focus as much on them with our slogans.

Interviewer: *I'm aware of how, from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free, was framed as an antisemitic smear, and the blood libel smears, and all those sorts of dishonest tactics. And I can certainly relate to the fact that there's some people you just can't have a conversation with. I wear this Keffiyeh every day. I haven't run into many problems, but I did have someone at the GO train station glare at me and loudly call me a terrorist. So I'm familiar with that as well.*

Sara Rasikh: Well, the encampment, what you see inside it, featured banners and cafes and posters, some with the names of martyrs. We also had tents covered in messages of solidarity, and many of the solidarity banners were hung on the fences, including from student groups, community organizations, and from unions that asserted this broad-based support that we were able to build. I think that these visuals, when paired with the programming, the teachings, and the outreach that we were doing, did resonate with many students and faculty. It did center Palestine and assert our space at King's College Circle. So, I do think that it helped shift public opinion, and I do think that it brought people to our protest.

Interviewer: *What factors do you think motivated some students to participate while others chose not to? Were there specific circumstances that influenced these decisions?*

Sara Rasikh: I think that many students were moved by the moral urgency of the moment, their own experiences with racialized repression, or their commitment to anti-colonial organizing or the anti-colonial struggle, I think, brought many students and faculty members to the encampment. Others hesitated, due to maybe professional retaliation or academic retaliation, especially in an atmosphere where any Palestine solidarity organizing is being so aggressively criminalized. International students particularly faced risks related to visas and immigration status and those were factors that maybe influenced their decision to not participate. But there was a sense of collective outrage and anger that you could feel if you entered the encampment, and I definitely think that brought students to the protest and also students who are outraged at the fact that their tuition money is funding a genocide and being invested in weapons manufacturing companies. So, that's what I think brought students in and kept some away.

Mohammad Yassin: Yeah, I think that across the board, the only reason people wouldn't have gotten involved, even if they were supportive of it, was just the risk. I had friends who didn't come to the encampment simply because they were just worried. They're the kinds of people who are watching it on TV, and, after the fact, they're like, yeah, I was watching all of your interviews and stuff like that, but they were like, I never came because I was scared. It kind of got normalized. It became kind of like home for us in a way, where it was actually safer inside the encampment than a lot of other places. It was a place that you could just go back to, which now doesn’t exist, and it's strange to think about. For a lot of us, if you were out, and you needed somewhere to go at any time of day or night, you could just go

to campus and go to the encampment. But, from the outside it was seen as this very radical thing, especially for people who were not directly involved or had never seen it in real life or come over.

There were people who on day one were there for that giant protest that came to protect us from police involvement, who came to the protest on the outside, but they never stepped foot inside, fearing that there would be repercussions. To be very honest, there were lots of people for whom those fears were justified, in a sense, because there are lots of people who showed up to protest on the outside, or maybe posted a selfie or something at the encampment, or posted something on their Instagram story, or whatever, and those people got tagged on Canary Mission for their involvement, even though they had nothing to do with the organizing, they had nothing to do with anything other than just being there and committing the "crime" of wearing a Keffiyeh or something. So, that's why people were worried. Lots of people said, I don't care, I'm just gonna come anyways, or some people didn't even think about those kinds of risks. I'm sure that's why some people got involved. For the organizing team, these risks were calculated and kept in mind. There was a serious risk assessment before any of this, both social and legal, as to any particular action that would go forward, and just involvement more generally.

Sara Rasikh: Absolutely. There was intense surveillance as well. I mean, surveillance that extended beyond the presence of Zionist agitators who monitored us and harassed us. The university administration utilized technologies such as long-distance audio recording, and night vision cameras. They had Wi-Fi interception tools, and this did ensure that participants had virtually no privacy even within our own tents. This invasive monitoring exemplifies the university's disregard for the fundamental rights of students, particularly racialized individuals who are already disproportionately targeted and criminalized by surveillance technologies. The heightened policing and profiling, and obviously the punitive measures that come after, are borne predominantly by black and brown communities, and it definitely kept folks out as well. In addition to these technologies, we also had plainclothes campus safety officers regularly patrolling, and Toronto Police Service (TPS) in the area as well. So, we knew that the university's decision to invest in surveillance rather than addressing the legitimate concerns we had, was a broader reflection of its complicity in colonial violence and repression. They weren't engaging with us in good faith, and students had real and legitimate fears around what may come from them engaging with the action, but also just being there as a participant.

Interviewer: *I actually wasn't aware that the university committed such flagrant acts of surveillance and infringement upon your privacy. Although I'm shocked, I'm not at all surprised.*

Sara Rasikh: I'm just going to link an Instagram post in the in the Zoom chat where we break down each surveillance technology. So, just for your reference.

Instagram post by OccupyUofT documenting the People's Circle for Palestine encampment at the University of Toronto. From OccupyUofT [@occupyuoft], 2024, Instagram. (https://www.instagram.com/occupyuoft/p/C64OtmoAHcl/). © 2024 by OccupyUofT.

Mohammad Yassin: Yeah, and also just for reference, the U of T spent millions of dollars on the encampment. This was a number that came out during, I believe it was a Governing Council meeting, where they spent at least two million. I believe it was on lawyer fees just for the injunction, and they spent at least one million on surveillance and police and security. This is not including, obviously, them working with the TPS. And you know, campus safety, quote unquote, as they call them, which are just police officers to surveil, because TPS and campus safety also had their own surveillance technology that was allowed by the university. That's kind of how it works is the U of T in many cases has allowed them to do things like set up a permanent surveillance structures. Some of them got taken down after the encampment, like some of these cameras, for example. Not all of them were. So, if you look on top of University College, there are still cameras that did not exist before the encampment. We had drones flying over our heads nearly twelve hours a day. Sometimes we had police vans that had these giant towers that would come up, which we suspected had some sort of facial recognition. We were aware of the fact that police cars also had this kind of technology that could overhear conversations from like a kilometer away. So, we were under the assumption that they could hear everything everybody was saying at all times, everywhere. This was something that we lived with day to day, and that I'll be very real with you, instilled a huge sense of paranoia. Everyone was constantly paranoid all the time, and we learned to distinguish different helicopters from each other: Is this a police helicopter? Is this a media helicopter? These are the kinds of conversations we were having. This was all done by the university

and the police working hand in hand purposefully. The university denied a lot of this, or they just ignored any of this criticism that was coming out.

Interviewer: *I would also be totally paranoid if I was subjected to all these types of authoritarian surveillance and monitoring, and repressive tactics. Moving on, can you describe how interactions between protesters and counter-protesters unfolded? Were there inconsistencies in how you were treated relative to counter-protesters?*

Sara Rasikh: I'll try to keep it short. I have so many thoughts. I mean, we had members of the Jewish Defense League, which is a designated right wing terrorist group, the FBI designated them as a terrorist group in the early 2000s, and they repeatedly targeted the encampment. On some occasions they would arrive as late as 3 a.m., blasting the Canadian National Anthem toward the fence near the sacred fire, where we had indigenous elders sleeping. Other times they would appear during the day to block the encampment's main entrance, and that would obviously prevent us from moving in and out freely. Meir Weinstein, who is the director of JDL Canada, would arrive on campus with Eli Schwarz, who's a member of Kahane Chai, which is a group designated as a terrorist entity by Public Safety Canada. Kahane Chai is also a collaborator with Rebel News, which is a right-wing media outlet, and they would frequently appear on campus wearing clothing branded with the Kahane Chai name and crest. Meir Weinstein would also drive a truck around campus displaying some really Islamophobic slogans and displaying Canary Mission's website, which included the faces and names of encampment participants. On several occasions, both of them chanted harmful slogans. We have video footage of them saying "make Gaza a parking lot." They would also direct Islamophobic and racist slogans and slurs at individuals. Again, there's another video of them shouting, "get out of Canada! This is our country!" and this was to an indigenous elder. In addition to these verbal threats, we had instances, for example, we don't know if they're a member of the JDL, but they would attend counter-protests organized by their members, and they remained at the encampment overnight, on the outside. They would follow vulnerable students to nearby bathrooms, and on one occasion, when the students attempted to flee, they assaulted them and threatened them with physical harm with a broken beer bottle. I believe *The Varsity* newspaper covered this specific instance, and they interviewed the students who were attacked and threatened. Thinking through all of the different instances of harassment and intimidation, obviously the University Administration, Campus Safety, and TPS took no action. They issued no response or statements in response to these events, and they made no attempt to ban or remove these individuals from campus, either during or after their involvement in these activities. You know, in early February, a few months after the encampment, a criminal code search warrant at Eli Schwarz's residence found that he had soft armor, like a body vest, and a rifle was found with ten boxes of ammunition. That tells us we were not just dealing with words or threats, but we were dealing with somebody who had the means to carry out violence, which is really frightening.

In addition to these specific individuals, we also had unaffiliated Zionists who attended these pro-Israel rallies, and they would frequently threaten to return at night to harm encampment residents. They openly spoke about their intent to disrupt students' sleep. We had an instance where we had razor blades put into our food that was delivered to the encampment, and thankfully our kitchen team caught it before it

was distributed to encampment participants. We've had these agitators attempt to climb over the fence and force their way in. We've had agitators force their way in and sexually assault female-identifying encampment participants. The lack of response from Campus Safety obviously compromised our sense of security, but it also just brought forward what we already knew, that there is a disregard for student safety. All of this goes to demonstrate that these bullshit accusations of antisemitism that were employed to undermine our encampment were obviously bad faith distortions. They were propagated by the same university administrators who showed complete indifference to protecting students, including Jewish students and members of the encampment, who were especially targeted during Shabbat service that we would hold weekly on Fridays. Zionist agitators would target these students and faculty members and staff, and the university didn't care about their safety.

In these instances, Campus Safety played an active role in the intimidation and harassment of students. They made veiled threats against encampment members. We've had Campus Safety officers tell members of our gate team that they would hope that we would receive door knocks from the TPS after decamping, which is obviously a threat that the police would target us in our homes. So, there is a broader antagonistic relationship between Campus Safety and student organizers. We had to create our own safety mechanisms and culture, because we definitely knew that relying on TPS or Campus Safety would make us more unsafe. So yes, there were some major inconsistencies with how the University treated participants of the encampment versus counter-protesters. They never even made a statement about the harassment that we were dealing with. In fact, we were framed as attracting the agitators.

Interviewer: *Both of you have mentioned Canary Mission.*

Sara Rasikh: Yes, it's a website that doxes students and professionals involved in Palestine solidarity organizing. So, it puts our personal information out. It misleads people to believe that we're antisemitic, or hateful, or violent. One thing that they've started doing now, that they've done on my profile, is that they'll fabricate images, or they'll edit images to make it seem as if I've engaged with certain posts on social media that I've never engaged with on Twitter. You can't even access somebody's likes, but they have these fake screenshots of me liking certain pro-Hamas tweets. I've checked, and I have never engaged with said Tweets. It's really just a targeted campaign to harm students, both professionally as well as to come for their academic standing.

Mohammad Yassin: Sara covered most of everything, but there are a few points that I just want to hammer home a little bit. All of the examples that Sara gave, there's probably ten times more examples of each of these things happening over the two months that don't even come to mind immediately, like the example of the razor blades. That wasn't even the first, or only time, where somebody tried to poison people's foods or harm people. There were instances of people lacing donuts with diuretics and things like that and giving them to people. That one we only caught because the Zionists who did it were bragging about it as they were walking out of the encampment and someone overheard them. So, thank God for that one. But all of these things were brought up to the university who then did nothing about it. I was in these meetings with university administration throughout our negotiations, and a part of these meetings early on, because the university was supposedly so obsessed with our safety. The reality is that

the first part of the meeting, before we even negotiated demands, was the university basically complaining to us about all these claims the Zionists were making about feeling unsafe on campus simply because we existed. We would then, in turn, bring up the fact that someone had tried to kill us and poison our food, and they wouldn't really do or say anything about that. They never cared enough to actually take action when we brought up the JDL coming in and Meir Weinstein. They didn't take action at all until months and months after the encampment was over. I'm not sure if they even banned them officially. Sara, if you could, what was the group that they banned or said that they're not allowed on campus?

Sara Rasikh: The ones who dress in their military uniforms. I'm forgetting.

Mohammad Yassin: Yeah, there was one group of people that was associated with the JDL, but not officially, who were told they shouldn't be on campus because they're riling people up. But, the entire duration of the encampment, when these people were showing up, being antisemitic towards our Jewish students who were participating in Shabbat, calling them not real Jews or traitors to their race, and things like that, and somehow this was permitted.

This is something that also kind of goes forgotten sometimes, which was kind of a crazy point during the encampment, is that we had a protest of a Governing Council meeting that took place towards the end of the encampment. They were having a Governing Council meeting inside Simcoe Hall, which was right outside the encampment. We basically stood outside with megaphones and a speaker, and we could be heard inside the meeting, which was live-streamed, so we were kind of having a conversation with them from the outside, because we weren't allowed to be in this meeting, and they could hear us. Towards the end, Meric Gertler, who's the University President, was leaving, and the police brought him a car to get him out of there. Even though he could have left from some other exit, they brought him out through the main exit, which we were right in front of. The police then brutalized the students who were there to get him off that property. So, they intentionally start tripping students over, throwing them to the ground, hitting them with bikes and things like that, which is entirely unnecessary. If you were there at the time, the video will show it. You can see cops who are Campus Safety, mind you, who are the same people who are surveilling us, and quote unquote, protecting us, tripping people over, putting their bikes in front of some of our people to trip them over and throw them to the ground.

These same Campus Safety cops, whenever these counter-protesters or Zionists would show up on the outside, who were actively trying to get in and harm us and try to start fights, would face us when they would make a line. Campus Safety would face our side, not theirs, implying that we were the threat that they had to be vigilant about. This was continuous, like the incident of the broken beer bottle that this person threatened our people with. All of these incidents were brought up to the university. They didn't care nor do anything about them. Instead, they just tightened restrictions on us and made it difficult for us to do anything. Then, in their public releases, blamed us for attracting these instigators. It was entirely victim-blaming here, like, you guys are the ones who are bringing these agitators, and you guys are creating the unsafe environment by doing your protest. Instead of the university accusing these Zionists

of all the stuff that they were blaming us for, or saying that they were the violent ones, it somehow was our fault. Complete victim-blaming.

Interviewer: *What kinds of interactions occurred between protesters and university administrators? How would you characterize the administration's stance toward the encampment? How did this impact the protest? I realize that you've already covered quite a bit of this, but is there anything else that you'd like to add?*

Sara Rasikh: Mohammad would definitely be the best person to answer this. I can really quickly just say that the administration was hostile, and they refused to engage in good faith. They initially presented their first offer as their final offer. They have bargained with unions; they know that that's not how negotiation or bargaining works. They framed our demands as unreasonable. They looked to constantly delegitimize us by framing us as antisemitic. And, as you know, they ultimately turned to police violence to start negotiations. What we learned from court documentation, when they filed the injunction, is that they had, in fact, tried getting TPS to come and clear us out earlier from the encampment. Obviously, the TPS didn't agree to do so, and they asked for a court order to come and clear us out, which is why they filed the injunction.

Mohammad Yassin: Yeah, definitely echoing the points on the fact that the administration didn't come in with good faith from the first day. So, the negotiations with the administration, I would split up into three periods across the two months. There was almost a month until the order to clear the encampment, the trespass notice was issued. Then there was the period after that until negotiations broke down. The first month was really just us having meetings back and forth largely. As I said before, the university was just wasting time talking about safety. They were complaining about every single, you guys said this, someone felt unsafe because of this, whatever. This culminated in two top people from the administration coming to the encampment gate. They had these flyers with pictures of some of the banners that we had outside. The banners featured a man in a Keffiyeh with a slingshot. That's literally what it was. Somehow, they argued this is instigating violence against Jewish people is what they took that as. We had one of our members meet them at the gate. We basically had to give them a lesson on Orientalism and how racist that was to say. Well, what about this was antisemitic other than the fact the guy was wearing a Keffiyeh? It's a man with a slingshot, and somehow they were spinning this as actively promoting the genocide of Jewish people. So, this was the kind of relationship we had with them.

After that, what Sara mentioned is them presenting their first offer. The final one was that we went into a meeting expecting that we would have some kind of offer on the table, and what we basically got was, we're serving you with a trespass notice, sign this within twenty-four hours, or we're calling the police on you. So, you know, that was kind of a crazy meeting that we had, and we walked out. We had to regroup and hold a press conference. Obviously, we stood our ground, so the university called TPS. TPS refused to come in, because they understood how much of a public relations nightmare it would be for them to come in and clear this encampment, and be violent with students. So, the University then took it to the court to force TPS to come in through an injunction. Just to put this on the record, the TPS, which is notorious for brutalizing people, and especially people who are marginalized and racialized, were

more sensitive about this issue, even if it was just for optics, than the university itself, who was basically begging them to come do this. Everybody was playing this blame game where they're trying to shift the blame. The university didn't want to be blamed for calling TPS, and the TPS didn't want to be blamed for brutalizing us, so they shifted it to the court, so that the court would force them to go do this thing throughout negotiations, in that second phase, when we had more leverage. That's when the unions came out. That was when there was a resurgence of numbers in the encampment, and there was this second wind of negotiations. We would have meetings like every day or two, going back and forth, having different deals on the table, striking out clauses, putting clauses back in. The reason that we say that they were not acting in good faith is that they then filed this injunction in court. So we were sitting there, basically being sued by the university who had just called the police on us, trying to have a serious negotiation. They were talking about the injunction as if it was a force of nature like, we can't stop this, we didn't do this to you, this is just how it is. We thought they can't be seriously thinking that we can negotiate when they have a gun to our heads, with the power imbalance, and they never acknowledged that.

They never wanted to write the word Palestine. Gaza, in particular, was something they never wanted to have on paper at any time. We specified Israel in any kind of document that we put forward. Like, we need to cut ties with Israeli universities. They were like, we can't budge on that. Eventually, they were like, we'll review all of our academic ties, instead of specifically talking about Israel. Whenever we talked about genocide, they wouldn't want to use that word. They basically refused to actually come to any sort of serious negotiation on the topics at hand. They were circling around it, because they were worried, from my understanding, that they didn't want to specify Israel. They were like, we can't be political, we can't do this. We reminded them they had cut ties with Russia over the Ukraine war, you guys don't have ties with Russian academic institutions, you don't have Russian scholarships, you don't do any of that after Ukraine started. They argued, well, that's different, we can't do that anymore. The university was like, we're never going to put out any public political statement ever, because now Israel is so sensitive to them that they can't criticize Israel, that this has stopped them from being political ever again.

This is the level that we were dealing with. Every time we'd come in it was this insanity where they were treating it as a normal conversation where they're coming in just kind of like, you know, complaining about their normal day, while we're being surveilled and sued. And the administrators aren't even the people who have to deal with the lawsuit, because they can just give it to their lawyers to deal with it somewhere else. There was never this acknowledgment of the danger we were in. There was never this acknowledgment that they were the ones who were largely fueling it through their public press releases, which drew more and more Zionists every time. For instance, alluding to the fact that there was wood coming into the encampment for the sacred fire, making people think, oh, what are these crazy terrorists building, what are they doing with this wood? People in the media would be like, what are you guys doing with all this wood? It's going to the sacred fire, which the Canadian Government says is allowed to exist. There are laws and treaties allowing it. It was very strange. There was a disconnect. It was this kind of crazy reality where we'd walk out of the encampment and into this boardroom where we're

having this meeting with them, and they're trying to joke around. They're like, what do you guys want to have for lunch? And, we're thinking, stop suing us, please. You know, it's a very bizarre disconnect that they had with reality.

Interviewer: *Moving on to the next question, to what extent did campus protesters draw inspiration or strategies from other university protests? Were there specific actions or ideas that influenced your approach?*

Sara Rasikh: Yeah, I can go first. We drew heavily from the history of student organizing, including the South African apartheid divestment campaigns. Then, more recently, the Gaza solidarity encampments across North America. We tried to continuously adapt tactics based on what worked elsewhere, especially in terms of security culture and media strategy, and also just maintaining momentum looking at different leadership styles that, for example, worked at different encampments, and looking to constantly draw that inspiration, but also staying in touch and in contact with other students around the world organizing on campus at their respective institutions. There were specific actions or ideas that influenced our approach well. The encampment itself was inspired by the student encampments in the US. We did occupy Simcoe Hall earlier in the year, and so we knew that occupying space was a tactic that had been successful for us in the past. We did get a meeting with the administration, which was our goal for the Simcoe occupation, and we knew that sustained occupation was the way to go to not only get the university's intention, but to force their hand to meet our demands.

Mohammad Yassin: Yeah, just echoing all of that, I mentioned earlier that there was a lot of sharing and learning of tactics and strategies from other encampments, especially in Canada. People visited different encampments across the board. So, people from McGill University came to U of T, and people from U of T went to McGill and other encampments, to get a better understanding of what the layouts were like, and what problems people were facing. I think the astounding thing is that everything that we're talking about in this interview was largely similar across encampments. So, this wasn't a unique situation to the U of T. Everything, from the way that administrations dealt with their students, and the surveillance and force that they dealt with, to even the social dynamics inside the encampment and some of the social breakdown internally were similar. There were similarities in the challenges that people faced there, the unity that they had, and also, the positives that came out of it, like the cultural production and the educational aspects. All this was nearly one to one across the board. It was actually terrifying when you're speaking to people from McGill, and they're telling you stuff as if they had stayed in your encampment the entire time. They're describing the situation almost one to one. So, at least from my experience, anything that we're talking about today is very much replicable to the rest of the encampment movement. It isn't just like a one-off case.

Interviewer: *Hearing you tell me about what's happened in Toronto, I can't imagine how much more horrible it was in the United States, and now with what's going on with people just being abducted and kidnapped off the street by plainclothes officers wearing face masks.*

Okay, so, you both have spoken a bit about social media and the media in general. What do you think are the main features of what may be dubbed a protest pedagogy for anti-war/anti-genocide activism in the

digital age? More specifically, what were the benefits or challenges that you experienced regarding your use of digital tools and platforms?

Sara Rasikh: A protest pedagogy today, integrates digital organizing with direct action. We use our social media platforms for rapid mobilizations. If we wanted to hold a rally to maybe defend us either from a threat from the administration, or if we had a feeling that the police may be coming in on us, we would be able to do that through social media, and also live stream our press conferences, and any communication or messages that we wanted to get out to the public. We would do this using social media. We would use encrypted apps for internal security and communication, which was super helpful, especially when it came to the injunction, because a lot of us were cross-examined, and asked to disclose the personally identifying information of other participants. Using encrypted apps with pseudonyms was helpful when it came to that, and when it comes to security culture. Another key benefit of social media was the ability to amplify our message globally and to join hands with encampments and student organizers around the world, which made it difficult for the university administration to isolate us. Those were a few pros. But of course, the challenges were what we still see happening today, you know, digital surveillance, algorithmic suppression, and other things. This made it difficult to reach wider audiences, but I think we still did. Social media was still really, really great, even when we needed it for community call outs, if we needed food covered, or if we needed support financially, if we needed tents. We would just put call outs on social media and the community would pull through. This wouldn't have been possible without everybody's contributions. And so that's kind of what it looked like at the encampment.

Interviewer: *I'm a media scholar, and you mentioned something that interests me. You talked about algorithmic silencing or censoring, and perhaps shadow banning. Can you say that you experienced these issues? To what extent can you say that this occurred?*

Sara Rasikh: Well, I know that some of our posts got taken down by Instagram, or when we would go live. I know that we had a ban on going live for a certain period of time. I know that the ban was lifted, but we couldn't go live, and live stream. Our press conferences and our stories were not getting the amount of engagement that they used to get pre-encampment. They were not showing up on people's feeds and people were not able to view them.

Interviewer: *Please tell me what comparisons can be drawn between the current wave of protests, to the extent that they may still exist, and earlier movements that you may be aware of, or that perhaps you have participated in yourselves?*

Sara Rasikh: Our protest challenged university complicity in war and imperialism. For example, like the Anti-Iraq War Movement of 2003, we faced intense media bias. So, we see the same tactics being employed to delegitimize protest actions. But, unlike past movements, I would say that today's repression is a lot more sophisticated and multifaceted with governments and universities using surveillance, legal and illegal intimidation, and doxing. Not that it didn't happen before, but especially the surveillance aspect with the tools that are now accessible to our institutions, it looks different. At the same time, digital tools have also allowed, as we mentioned earlier, for unprecedented global

coordination. It's a unique time, but also there are definitely parallels. There are these delegitimizing tactics that are employed to delegitimize us and to intimidate us.

Interviewer: *Those in power will certainly use those tools that have been developed, the newest technology, to maximize suppression and oppression. However, there are spaces and avenues for movements to use those tools to their advantage. I will briefly add that I was very active in anti-war protests against the destruction of Iraq. I was in San Francisco in February 2003, and I took a baton to the ribs. I will also strongly agree with what you said about intense corporate media bias during that time. I was reading and comparing what the corporate news media was reporting versus alternative news sources, and it was like completely fabricated propaganda coming out of the corporate media. What would you like to add, Mohammad?*

Mohammad Yassin: I want to add the fact that it's a very strange situation where lots of tactics that were used against earlier protest movements are definitely being used. It seems like governments and all these institutions are really pulling out all the stops here. You have every single institution, and the government, and the media, and the police, and everybody being in high gear to shut down environmental protests and things like that. I've never seen things be this crazy before, especially with what you're seeing in the US right now with the criminalization of students, and student's visas getting revoked, and then people being deported to a mega prison in El Salvador. This is something that has never been done before in terms of shutting down a specific movement, at least in recent memory. The reason that this is worrying is that it sets a new precedent in terms of what can be done against other movements as well, but it also highlights the disruptiveness and importance of the Palestine movement, and that Zionism runs through these institutions like iron runs through your blood. It's very ingrained. When you have the heads of the police department in Toronto taking pictures with pro-Zionist groups, and at their barbecues and stuff like that, it's very much a personal thing. These people are threatened in a personal way by anti-Zionist movements. It is really just a self-defence mechanism without any shred of morality to it. My personal opinion on this is that the repression that we're seeing is completely new in a way. Although it mirrors previous eras, it's taken up to a different level. People's homes are being raided for rallies that they attended a year ago. This is currently happening in the city at the moment. The police are going around knocking on people's doors. This is the level we're at, and I haven't seen anything like it.

Interviewer: *I'll just briefly say this is the kind of thing you see under undemocratic, authoritarian governments.*

Sara Rasikh: Yeah, I also just think that we've become so familiar with the tactics of the war machine when employed overseas. For instance, if we're talking about forced disappearances. The Zionist regime continues its genocide, right? They murdered nearly a thousand people in the last week, and they disappeared nearly 10,000 Palestinians. I think that it just shakes us up when these same tactics return home, but it's important to also name that they were first practiced on indigenous and black bodies and then taken overseas. The war machine is going to do what the war machine is going to do. These tactics have just come back home. We just became familiar with them. And, like you mentioned earlier, I'm

desensitized when they're practiced on Palestinian bodies or Kashmiri bodies or Sudanese people. I think it's important to just name that while maybe unprecedented in the ways that they're being employed against students specifically within these movement spaces, they're not new. We shouldn't be surprised that they've made their way back, because it's cyclical. We always knew that they would make their way back.

Interviewer: *Okay, so, I'm going to assume I'm much older than you both. I've been politically active for a long time, and I've not seen anything like this. This is completely new territory for me as well. The comprehensiveness and totality of repression and oppression is staggering and disorienting.*

So, finally, as a scholar and as a politically active individual who cares about a number of things such as war, genocide, inequality, the environment, etcetera, whenever I write a piece, I lay out the problem and then provide some potential solutions. As Karl Marx (1978) said, "philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it." So, this final question is very important to me as an academic and as someone who's involved in different movements. In retrospect, how might you organize differently in the future? Given the experience you've gained, what advice would you give to others?

Sara Rasikh: Yeah, that's a big question. I think that future actions should incorporate even stronger internal structures to prevent infiltration and burnout. I also think that we need to expand base building beyond activist or organizer circles to ensure that our actions are backed by community pressure, and that we're able to get that buy-in from the community. My advice would be to build coalitions early, to do the slow, intentional work of building trust. It can't be rushed. Political education is important, and solidarity can't be assumed, ever. For example, if you know that somebody's politically aligned with you, that doesn't necessarily mean that they stand in principled solidarity with you, and so do not take that for granted. To train people in security culture, to constantly share knowledge with others, and to never underestimate the power of strategic escalation as well. I think that would be my main takeaways and advice to future on-campus student organizers. I do want to say that there is a gap in institutional knowledge and memory. That's especially why I'm happy to be part of this this article and to contribute to it, because it's important for us to share our learnings to hopefully inform future on-campus political organizing, because that gap exists. As Mohammad said, it's important to not be silent. It's important to share our learnings and hopefully inform future organizing.

Mohammad Yassin: What I would do differently is focus a lot more on community building and be very clear in terms of political lines and coalitions. I think the biggest flaw with the encampment is that everybody had assumed it would only last two or three days maximum. No one anticipated that it would be a community that would be self-sustaining and last for two months. Because everyone applied their degrees, the day-to-day functioning of the encampment was actually quite miraculous in terms of the sanitation systems and electricity. We had an actual functioning city in there, but the problem was the social dynamics. This was not thought through. I think in the future, people have to put some deeper understanding into how to build community, how do you actually maintain it, and what are the social and politically acceptable lines for coalition. The coalition was a very, very broad one to the point where

you had people from all ends of the political spectrum coming together to support the right to return and the Palestinian right to resist the occupation. But that's a very broad spectrum with potentially opposing views on many other matters. Obviously, lots of political tensions came from that. How do you even run things internally in our organization? As Sara mentioned earlier, there were disagreements on horizontal or vertical structure, power vacuums, and some people having too much power. If we could redo this again with time and hindsight, all of this stuff would have been considered.

In terms of this question when applied to the movement more generally, and not just how do you organize another encampment, that is something that lots of people in the movement are debating right now, and nobody really has a clear idea. There have been examples of direct action that have worked. There have been disastrous examples of direct action. There have been examples of taking other approaches that are pacifistic that have worked, and others that have been disastrous. In this current moment, closing in on two years now of an actual genocide, where people are continuously getting murdered day in and day out, there's a sense of what more can be done other than just tearing everything down? When you have institutions that can't be reasoned with, because everybody who's involved has a personal stake in Zionism, whether it's directly through their investments, or their own ideological bent, they're obviously not just going to give up because they saw the light of moral reasoning, or they saw the light of God. What can you actually do in the face of this? In light of the fact that these institutions have been shown to be unbending in these two years, because of all these conflicts of interest that people have with the Zionist entity, what can be done in the face of these institutions and these people to get them to move from their position? I honestly don't know, and that's something that is worrying.

Unfortunately, a takeaway that I've taken from the encampment is that we had thousands of people, we had an encampment that lasted two months, we had union support, and negotiations, and lawyers, we had community backing, and funding coming from the grassroots, and everything, without achieving our objectives. What more can be done to the university to make it shift? How much more leverage do you need? That's something that's very worrying to think about. Unless you're stripping the university of its millions directly, or the government forces them to divest, I'm honestly kind of skeptical. We see this with the US, with Columbia University, where the government tells them to jump, and they're now saying how high, despite the fact that in the last 20 to 30 years, Columbia and these other Ivy League universities have been putting out all these academic publications on decolonialism. Suddenly, the government tells them, your funding is going to disappear if you don't do what we say on this one issue, and they capitulate.

You know, one of the people who was on the negotiations team on the university side was a scholar who had written works on decolonization in terms of indigenous communities here in Canada. Yet she was on the side of propping up Zionism at the university. We brought that up with her multiple times on how insane and hypocritical this was. She was kind of like, well, I can't do anything about it and try to rid her conscience of it. I don't know. It's a very strange situation we're in. What I am saying is that this person who had written about decolonization of indigenous people is in negotiations, who dropped a hint of being pro-Palestine with her comment about being part Irish, and I was like, well, that makes it worse, because you're propping up Zionism, knowing about foreign domination directly through your own

family. It's a very strange kind of situation where everybody feels they don't want to give up anything, they're all in the system, and either they're pushing it or they feel they have too much to lose.

Interviewer: *I'm going to make just a few final comments. Yes, it's the most brutal and sadistic of genocides. The things Israel has done are unfathomable, heinous, and unbelievable. And, like you said, it seems there's no stopping it. Another thing I want to say is that it appears nonviolent protests are not achieving their aims, as the case of pro-Palestine protests and encampments has illustrated. Perhaps non-violent protests can obtain results, but they must be of a much larger magnitude and far more disruptive. For instance, something along the lines of a massive shut down, such as a general strike, where everything grinds to a halt. One last thing I want to say is, you find out who your true comrades are in situations like this. There's a lot of academics who talk the talk, but they're full of shit, because when it comes to standing up for what's right, they don't. That's when you identify them as not an ally and not a person that you need to be involved with. I'm really sorry about your experience with that academic you mentioned. Just to finish up, I want to thank you both immensely for this insightful interview. I'm so thankful that you've taken the time to provide such a candid, detailed, and thought-provoking interview that will add to the discussion and provide knowledge to those hoping to make lasting, positive changes to our world.*

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