

Professorial Propagandists for Hamas: Part II, Sherene Seikaly & Zachary Lockman



Sherene Seikaly

by Andrew E. Harrod

“Every single liberation struggle has taught us that no one is free unless we are all free,” gushed University of California-Santa Barbara Associate Professor of History [Sherene Seikaly](#) during a November 21 [webinar](#) sponsored by [Massachusetts Peace Action](#) and [Historians for Peace and Democracy](#). Discussing “The Past, Present and Future of Israel/Palestine,” she and her colleagues continued to the whitewashing of Gaza’s jihad against Israel covered in [Part I](#).

"I speak with you today as a child of a Palestinian woman and man who became refugees in 1948," Seikaly intoned, referencing [some 600,000 Arabs](#) who [fled](#) or, in some cases, were expelled by Israeli forces from the territory that became Israel during its independence war. "I am a product and a scholar of what we call our ongoing [Nakba](#), our catastrophe, that spans the one hundred years of denial of Palestinian political rights," she continued, using the Arabic word that helps [propagandize](#) the memory of the war against Israel's birth.

Seikaly's skewed presentation described rapacious, aggressive Jews, among whom "looting, massacres, and imprisonment prevailed" during Israel's self-defense against Arabs sworn to destroy it. By contrast, she branded Israel's self-defense a "war of conquest" and mislabeled the defense program [Plan D](#) of the Haganah, the Israel Defense Forces forerunner, as a [preplanned expulsion measure](#). She also cited the [debunked tale](#) of a massacre by Israeli forces during an April 9, 1948, attack on Deir Yassin, a strategic Arab village on Jerusalem's outskirts, where she claimed falsely that Jewish soldiers "pillaged the village, shot fleeing civilians."

Seikaly's "ongoing Nakba" for Arabs throughout the territory of the former post-World War I League of Nations British Palestine Mandate was manifested by "colonization, brutality." She particularly decried that Israel's Arab citizens had "become second class," even though they enjoy [rising living standards](#) far [better](#) than those of [Arabs](#) throughout the Middle East and, according to recent polls, have [little desire](#) to [trade life](#) in Israel for a Palestinian state. Even Palestinians under Israeli military control after the 1967 Six Day War received [enormous socioeconomic benefits](#) from Israeli rule.

Seikaly's assessment of current events assessments were similarly hyperbolic, as she noted that the [anti-Israel](#) "UN [warns](#) of a risk of genocide against Palestinians" from Israeli military action in Gaza, a judgment [rejected](#) by critical

observers. “We are in the apocalypse,” she concluded before elaborating on her vision of doom and gloom. “From perpetual climate crisis to the extinction of plants and animals, to the forces of white supremacy, misogyny, and global fascism, we live in a world of generalized catastrophe,” she fretted.

On the bright side, at least for a serial propagandist, she celebrated Palestinian society’s ostensible progressivism – a woeful mischaracterization of a culture better known for tossing gays off buildings than tolerance.

Echoing Juan Cole’s effort to separate Islam from its adherents’ actions, Seikaly ignored [broad Palestinian support](#) for Hamas’s latest jihad outrages along with any Islamic doctrinal threats, claiming that “religion is never one thing; it’s constantly changing.” She chose instead to link Palestinians with woke intersectionality, as the “struggle for Palestinian liberation is completely at its best form committed to fighting all forms of racism, to fighting antisemitism, to fighting anti-blackness, to fighting xenophobia.” Meanwhile anti-Zionism could not be antisemitism, for “there is a long and honorable tradition of Jewish anti-Zionism; that Zionism and Judaism are not synonymous categories,” she stated, reiterating a [stale antisemitic trope](#).

Seikaly’s fellow speaker, New York University Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic studies and History [Zachary Lockman](#) tried in vain to present Palestinians in a kinder, gentler fashion. “What happened on October 7 was a massacre, it was a war crime, it’s not acceptable,” he acknowledged. But there is a “context,” he argued, and “as historians, as scholars, as thinking people, we have to understand the difference between justification and explanation.”



Complementing Seikaly and Cole's comments, Lockman noted how many Palestinians in Gaza descended from 1948 refugees who lost their homes in Israel. In the 1950s, Arabs from Gaza often crossed over into Israel "in many cases to visit the lands, the villages, the farms that had been theirs," he said. Israelis [recall](#) instead numerous murderous incursions from Egyptian-sponsored, Gaza-based Palestinian fedayeen terrorists.

Beyond the [falsely described](#) "indigenous Arab population of Palestine," Lockman attacked Israel's nature as a Jewish national home to which any Jew can immigrate and obtain automatic citizenship. Israel is "as if the United States defined itself as a as a white Christian nation, so anyone who wasn't white and wasn't Christian had a subordinate status, was a second-class citizen, or maybe not a citizen of at all," he stated. Yet Israel's Jewish nature is not racial or religious, but rather national, [like other democratic nation-states](#) with national minorities such as Arabs.

Seeking to ward off charges of antisemitism, Lockman charged that several organizations have longed tried "weaponize" such allegations. As hate-filled displays of support for Hamas go global, he worried instead about an "unprecedented tsunami . . . of attacks on free speech and academic freedom," analogous to the "Red Scare of the 1950s." Several "chapters of Students for Justice in Palestine [SJP] have been suspended or banned" and "there are vicious attacks on individual faculty and students doxing," he stated, as if the [noxious, antisemitic SJP](#) did not merit rebuke.

The monotonous uniformity of anti-Israel bigotry by Lockman, Seikaly, and Cole exposes the hollowness of Lockman's cries of a new McCarthyism. Far from suffering persecution, such academics have turned Middle East studies into an intellectually homogeneous pillar of the increasingly antisemitic establishment – an accomplishment that would make any card-carrying Communist proud.

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