

# Who is a journalist, Mr. Remnick? Are you? Is Jodie Ginsberg? Are so many others?



by Lev Tsitrin

Oh no. “The rules that have, at least to a degree, protected the safety and freedom of journalists are being violated around the world, nowhere more so than in Gaza,” the *New Yorker*’s editor David Remnick and Jodie Ginsberg, the C.E.O. of the Committee to Protect Journalists, [tell us as they discuss](#) (beginning at 28:55) the “threats to press freedom and safety in countries including the United States, where Donald Trump has labelled reporters “enemies of the people.”

How terrible! 76 journalists have been killed in Gaza, perhaps deliberately, so as to stop them from telling the truth about the embattled strip; 19 have been jailed by Israel. Being a journalist has become truly dangerous,

But just as my hair started standing on end upon hearing these horrifying statistics, a question popped into my head: who is a journalist? Was the late Dr. Goebbels, writing in *Der Stürmer* (peak circulation, 480,000) and *Völkischer Beobachter* (circulating in 1940 at 982,000), a “journalist”? Or the Gaza Palestinians martyred by Israel? The answer came at 40:26 when Ms. Ginsberg gave some examples (“you are a journalist, I am a journalist”) and explained her reasons for such designation, thus providing me with the very definition of journalism I was seeking – “information is the most powerful tool we have for achieving justice and one of our key goals is to be the people documenting what’s happening. It may not change things immediately but hopefully will provide some information that will help achieve justice in the long run.”

So here: the purpose of journalists is to achieve justice, and the main tool, is gathering information and providing it to the public, mobilizing it.

I would never have thought. I provided Mr. Reminick with the information on how the justice is getting administered in our federal courts (i.e. institutions created expressly for “achieving justice”) – namely, federal judges routinely operate, as I discovered in my litigation, in a fashion that is “corrupt and malicious” (as *Pierson v Ray* elegantly put it), and yet Mr. Reminick (who, as I now know, went into journalism to “help achieve justice”) did not give a hoot! Nor did Ms. Ginsberg, with whom I talked close to a year ago in person. Nor, for that matter, did the innumerable journalists from NPR and their subsidiary WNYC that produces the *New Yorker Radio Hour* which educated me on the purposes of journalism – Brian Lehrer (the politics journalist), Brooke Gladstone (the journalism journalist), Brigid Bergin (the “power, institutions and democracy” journalist), to all of whom I talked, and none of whom were interested in the information that could “change things” and “help achieve justice.”

Well, something has to give: if they are journalists, they've got "to be the people documenting what's happening to help achieve justice." If they care neither about "what's happening," nor about "achieving justice" (which is why they don't want to know what's happening in federal courts, I guess), they are not journalists. It's that simple.

And yet, they want to have it both ways. They want to be seen by us as "journalists" while they feed us lies – lies of omission. The question is, how is this journalism rather than manipulative propaganda?

I am sure that the readers of *Der Stürmer* and of *Völkischer Beobachter* saw Dr. Goebbels as a heroic champion of truth, "documenting what's happening ... [to] help achieve justice." And in their conversation, both Mr. Remnick and Ms. Ginsberg treated Hamas journalists as truth-seekers, too.

But was Dr. Goebbels a journalist, Mr. Remnick and Ms. Ginsberg? Were the now-dead Hamas mouthpieces journalists? If a journalist is someone who gets paid for writing for a publication, or talking into a mic, no matter the veracity of what they say (or the deliberate lacunae therein), then yes, by that token, Dr. Goebbels, Mr. Remnick, Ms. Ginsberg, and their numberless MSM ilk are all "journalists." But none of them are journalists if one defines journalism by Ms. Ginsberg's criteria of "seeking information for achieving justice" – not Dr. Goebbels, not Mr. Remnick, not Ms. Ginsberg. They are manipulators, surely – but journalists, no. The conversation between Mr. Remnick and Ms. Ginsberg on NPR, when juxtaposed with their actual indifference to both "information" and "justice," makes at least that much abundantly clear.

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