

# Israel Charged with “Deliberately Sparing the Lives of Palestinians”

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Jasbir Puar

The general outrage over the barring of Reps. Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar from visiting Israel, although they are both working earnestly for the destruction of the Jewish state, is crazy enough, and it calls to mind [an incident from last year](#) that was beyond crazy:

*A Rutgers University professor who accused Israeli forces of deliberately sparing the lives of Palestinians in order to debilitate them has been awarded [sic] by the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA).*

*Jasbir Puar, an associate professor of women's and gender*

*studies, co-won the NWSA's 2018 Alison Piepmeier Book Prize for her work *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability*.*

*Published by in November 2017 by Duke University Press – which has come under scrutiny for its editorial advisors' ties to the Palestinian-led boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel – the book posits that the “Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have shown a demonstrable pattern over decades of sparing life, of shooting to maim rather than to kill.”*

**How diabolical can those Israelis get, deliberately “sparing the lives of Palestinians”?** Thank god for Jasbir Puar, “associate professor of women’s and gender studies,” for seeing through the Israeli strategy, which is to “debilitate” the “Palestinians” by sparing their lives. In fact, they don’t even “shoot to maim,” but only to stop rioters attacking soldiers or attempting to breach Israel’s security fence. They shoot only after all other means, such as rubber bullets and tear gas, have failed, and aim at their legs to halt, not to “maim” them. Jasbir Puar might add, to the next edition of her award-winning book, a chapter on Israeli doctors who provide care for both Israeli Arabs and, in emergencies, for “Palestinians” from Gaza and the West Bank, in Israeli hospitals where treatments is available to “Palestinians” in medical need, and – most diabolical of all – frequently that care given by the Israelis is free. What could be more sinister than that? Obviously such care can only weaken the resolve of the “Palestinians” to remain steadfast in demanding their rights from the occupier. Israeli kindness is only a facade for cruelty.

But no one should be fooled. The Israelis have used the same clever strategy of fake “kindness” even with other Arabs. Since 2013, Israel has been providing medical care to many thousands of wounded civilians in southern Syria. They are

treating them, of course, not because Israel wishes them well, but only in order to “debilitate” them, that is, in order to control them, though admittedly it’s still unclear just how Israel will control Syrians in Syria.

*“Yet it [Puar’s prize-winning book] contends that this “purportedly humanitarian practice of sparing death by shooting to maim” is not rooted in a desire to minimize fatalities, but rather seeks to maintain “Palestinian populations as perpetually debilitated, and yet alive, in order to control them.”*

*The NWSA award’s review committee called *The Right to Maim* a “major milestone book,” which argues “that debilitation and the state production of disability are biopolitical projects both useful and productive for states under Neoliberal capitalism.”*

“Debilitation and the state production of disability are biopolitical projects both useful and productive for states under Neoliberal capitalism”? Could the awards committee, which called *The Right to Maim* a “**major milestone book**,” and proves itself to be a dab hand at the same kind of gobbledygook as is in the book, please explain what “biopolitical projects” means?

Puar – a supporter of BDS who wrote that the book’s “ultimate purpose ... is to labor in the service of a Free Palestine” – has attracted controversy over the work, with critics accusing it of advancing a blood libel against the Jewish state.

The book, its author unashamedly admits, has a tendentious purpose, which is not to write history, but “to labor in the service of a Free Palestine.”

*Seth Mandel, an op-ed editor at The New York Post, accused Puar on Twitter on Saturday of receiving an “award for book-length medieval blood libel because academic anti-Semitism is*

*not just tolerated, but encouraged and rewarded.”*

*Andrew Getraer, director of Rutgers Hillel, added in response, “the fact that this unreadable piece of dreck received an academic award is unsurprising.”*

*The book has raised concerns since it was first published, with Richard Cravatts – president emeritus of Scholars for Peace in the Middle East, a network of academics that seeks to counter “anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism” – asserting that its core notion was “an outrageous and grotesque resurrection of the classic anti-Semitic trope that Jews purposely, and sadistically, harm and kill non-Jews.”*

*Kenneth Waltzer – executive director of the Academic Engagement Network, which opposes the BDS campaign against Israel on university campuses – said at the time that Puar was “more interested in defining and theorizing than in getting things as they are.”*

*He also accused the professor of advancing “terrible (and unapologetic) antisemitism” during a 2016 event at Vassar College, when she said that Israel “manifests an implicit claim to the right to maim and debilitate Palestinian bodies and environments,” according to a transcript of the talk provided by the Vassar alumni group Fairness To Israel.*

*During that appearance, Puar repeated allegations that the bodies of “young Palestinian men ... were mined for organs for scientific research.” She also asserted that Israel’s actions could be called a “genocide in slow motion,” and said, “We need BDS as part of organized resistance and armed resistance in Palestine as well. There is no other way the situation is going to change.”*

There are no cases, none, of Israel mining “the bodies of young Palestinian men” for organs for scientific research. But that hasn’t stopped Jasbir Puar, for whom the truth is

irrelevant, from making the charge. Puar is a fighter; her work is intended to complement the armed resistance inside “Palestine” with whatever nonsense and lies she can produce, outside, that is, of her grotesque pseudo-scholarship in the service of “Palestine.

If Israel is committing a “genocide in slow motion,” as Jasbir Puar charges, it is certainly going about it the wrong way. In *The Weekly Standard*, Jonah Cohen discussed the “genocide” charge:

*At the end of the Six-Day War in 1967, when Israel took over the territories from Jordan, the average Palestinian in the West Bank and Gaza expected to live just 49 years, according to a U.N. report. In 1975, Palestinian life expectancy rose to 56; by 1984, it climbed to 66. Since 1984, Palestinians have lived an average of 75 years. That’s not only higher than the global average, but longer than the life expectancy in many Arab and South American countries—and even in some European countries. Israeli Arabs, meanwhile, have the highest life expectancy in the Muslim world.*

*Infant mortality is another marker of genocide and it’s been declining in Palestinian life, having shown dramatic improvement since 1967. The high birth and low death rates of Palestinians in Gaza put the territory near the top of the world in population growth. It is a strange kind of “genocide” that creates the conditions for a population of people to flourish.*

*With improvements in physical well-being have come advances in culture. Palestinian literacy is impressive indeed: an astonishing 91 percent adult literacy rate. That makes the Palestinians the most educated population in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, according to a 2006 World Bank report.*

*And if voting with their feet is any indication, a majority*

*of Israeli Arabs prefer to live in Israel rather than other countries, as suggested in various polls. Many even favor Israeli-ruled East Jerusalem over Palestinian citizenship in the territories.*

In 1967, the Israelis conducted a census of both the West Bank and Gaza. **The West Bank then had 661,700 inhabitants; it now has 2.16 million Arabs, an increase of almost 300%. Gaza in 1967 had 354,700 inhabitants; today it has 1.84 million, an increase of 400%.** Only someone as hate-addled as Jasbir Puar could describe that as “genocide.”

As for Israel, you can be sure it is going to continue with its diabolical scheme of deliberately sparing the lives of “Palestinians” in order to “debilitate” them. And it will no doubt continue to offer free medical treatment to “Palestinians” in need, and to thousands of wounded Syrian civilians, too. But don’t be fooled. In the end it’s all part of a “genocidal” plot by Israel that has been so cleverly hidden behind that steep rise in the “Palestinian” population, that it takes someone as unfoolable as Jasbir Puar, Associate Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies, to pull back the curtain on the real story, that of Israeli malevolence and cruelty. And sparing “Palestinian” lives is a typical Israeli trick. But don’t be fooled; just read Puar’s breathtaking analysis. For revealing that “biopolitical” plot, Puar has certainly earned her award. Rutgers must be very proud.

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