

Journalist Katie Halper censored and fired for telling the truth about Israeli apartheid

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On September 28, left-wing independent journalist and podcaster Katie Halper was censored and fired by the Washington D.C. newspaper *The Hill* for a video monologue she delivered two days earlier defending Michigan US Representative Rashida Tlaib's recent characterization of Israel as an "apartheid government."

The *World Socialist Web Site* condemns the censorship and firing of Katie Halper by *The Hill*. It must be opposed by the working class and all defenders of free speech as an attack on basic democratic rights.

In a blog post on October 3, Halper explained that she had recorded the op-ed video for *The Hill* TV show "Rising," a program to which she had contributed as a guest host for three years.

She wrote, "*The Hill* refused to publish my piece on their YouTube channel. When I pushed back and respectfully urged them to reconsider, they not only fired me as a guest host but told me I was no longer needed as a weekly guest."

Halper further explained that "the higher ups at *The Hill* and at NexStar media, which recently bought *The Hill*," blocked the video from being published despite the efforts of producers to "do the right thing." She subsequently went to the independent media outlet *Breakthrough News* to have the video comment published on YouTube.

At the heart of the censorship of Halper is fear within the imperialist ruling establishment that the long-standing lie equating opposition to the racist apartheid repression of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza by the Israeli government with "antisemitism" is not being accepted by growing numbers of people around the world.

As Halper explained in a statement about her censorship and firing by *The Hill* to the *World Socialist*

Web Site, "It's dangerous and wrong to conflate antisemitism and criticism of Israel. It trivialized actual antisemitism."

In her censored op-ed video, Halper used a clip of CNN anchor Jake Tapper saying that Tlaib had been criticized "for what several of her Jewish colleagues have deemed antisemitic comments" that the congresswoman made in an online forum sponsored by Americans for Justice in Palestine Action.

Tapper's clip contains Tlaib's statement in which she said: "I want you all to know that among progressives it has become clear that you cannot claim to hold progressive values yet back Israel's apartheid government. And we will continue to push back and not accept this idea that you can be 'progressive except for Palestine.'"

Tapper then went on to say that the CEO of the Anti-Defamation League, Jonathan Greenblatt, "slammed the comments" of Tlaib, because "Israel does not have an apartheid government," and quoted a tweet from Greenblatt asserting that Tlaib was telling "American Jews that they need to pass an anti-Zionist litmus test to participate in progressive spaces."

Tapper also quoted statements of Florida congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz calling Tlaib's comments "outrageous" and "nothing short of antisemitic."

In her censored 12-minute video, Halper delivered a devastating exposure of the lying claim by Greenblatt and Wasserman Schultz—supported by Tapper—that Tlaib was antisemitic for calling Israel an apartheid state. She said, "I understand that Greenblatt and perhaps Tapper feel like Israel is not an apartheid state, but unfortunately for them, apartheid isn't about your feelings. It's about facts."

Halper then went on to provide a historical review of

the term, going back to the 1973 United Nations international convention that referred to the “crime of apartheid” as “inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them.”

She also quoted the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which defined apartheid as “inhumane acts of a character” that are “committed in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime.”

Halper went through the history of Israeli apartheid policies against the Palestinians, beginning with “The Law of Return” of 1950, which grants “anyone with one Jewish grandparent” the right to move to Israel and automatically become a citizen of the country along with his or her spouse, even if the spouse is not Jewish. She said, “Palestinians, of course, lack that right.”

The Israeli Citizenship Law of 1952, Halper said, “deprived Palestinian refugees and their descendants of legal status, the right to return and all other rights in their homeland.” She added, “It also defined Palestinians present in Israel as ‘Israeli citizens,’ without a nationality and group rights.”

Halper also gave a lengthy list of organizations and individuals—including video clips of their statements—both within Israel itself and internationally who have declared the Israeli government to be an apartheid regime. Prominent on the list was Nelson Mandela, who, in 1997, said, “We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians.”

The attempt to silence Katie Halper comes at a time of intensifying international crisis and fear within the US ruling establishment that anyone challenging the lie that opposition to the criminal policies of Israel is antisemitism will gain a following in the public. Therefore, the corporate and financial interests at Nexstar Media Group, the \$3 billion media empire based in Irving, Texas that owns *The Hill*, moved swiftly to prevent Halper’s views from making their way onto its morning news program.

Meanwhile, the US political and media establishment downplays the fact that the Republican Party, the military-intelligence apparatus and police forces around

the country are full of fascists and antisemites—as evidenced by the participants in the attempted coup in Washington D.C. on January 6, 2021—and that the American government is financing and arming Ukrainian neo-Nazis in the US-NATO war against Russia.

While the WSWS has a well-documented record of political opposition to Representative Tlaib, who is a Democratic Party politician and member of the pseudo-left Democratic Socialists of America, we defend her right to speak out about the Israeli government and its crimes against the Palestinians.

Rashida Tlaib and the other members of what is known as “the Squad” in the US House of Representatives—including Ilhan Omar of Minnesota and Alexandria Ocasio Cortez of New York—have been the target of repeated racist comments, xenophobic attacks and death threats from far-right individuals and fascist political groups since they were elected in 2018.



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