

Harvard Professor Noah Feldman denounces opposition to the Gaza genocide as the “New antisemitism”

David North
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Time Magazine has chosen as its cover story Harvard Professor of Law Noah Feldman’s maliciously dishonest and morally bankrupt defense of Israel’s savage war against the population of Gaza.

The “old” antisemitism was a central element of fascism, espousing virulent nationalism, anti-communism and anti-socialism, and implementing genocide of defenseless people.

The “new” antisemitism, according to Feldman, is a central element of the left, which opposes Israeli fascism, nationalist xenophobia, anti-Arab racism, and the mass murder of defenseless and oppressed people in Gaza.

Feldman’s propaganda piece consists of the crudest historical falsifications. He writes, “Ultimately, in different ways, both Nazism and Marxism identified Jews as an enemy deserving liquidation.” This is an outrageous lie.

The Marxist and socialist movement led the struggle against antisemitism in Germany, throughout Europe, and in the United States. Fundamental to Nazi and fascist ideology and politics was the identification of Jews with socialism and the labor movement.

Feldman dissolves Judaism as a religion into Israeli nationalism, proclaims the Israeli state as the supreme manifestation of Jewish existence, and asserts its “status as the only homeland for a historically oppressed people who have nowhere else to call their own.”

This claim ignores the fact that more than half the world’s Jewish population, including Feldman, hold citizenship in countries other than Israel. And, one might add, that thousands of Israelis abandon this “homeland” every year.

Feldman resorts to the most vile sophistries to minimize Israeli crimes, such as the claim that ethnic cleansing practiced by Israel “would arguably not count as genocide under the legal meaning of the term.”

He also states, “The genocide charge depends on intent. And Israel, as a state, is not fighting the Gaza War with the intent to destroy the Palestinian people.”

According to Feldman, since Israel’s “stated war aims” are merely “to hold Hamas accountable,” it cannot be accused of genocide. Israel’s “aims are lawful in themselves.”

Writing as an attorney for mass murderers, Feldman asserts, “There is no single, definitive international-law answer to the question of how much collateral damage renders a strike disproportionate to its concrete military objective.”

Feldman, shedding a tear, writes, “The number of Palestinian dead, over 29,000 as of this writing, is heartbreaking.” But the actual killing of the 29,000, according to Feldman, is not a crime.

Of all the arguments advanced by Feldman, the most cynical is his claim that “Accusing Israel of genocide can function, intentionally or otherwise, as a way of erasing the memory of the Holocaust and transforming Jews from victims into oppressors.”

This is the same argument made by the Polish government in introducing a law in 2018 illegalizing references to the complicity of Poles in the mass murder of Jews during World War II.

The bill passed by the Polish Senate declared that “whoever accuses ... the Polish nation, or the Polish state, of being responsible or complicit in the Nazi crimes ... shall be subject to a fine or a penalty of imprisonment of up to three years.”

The fascistic Polish government justified this law on the grounds that references to Polish complicity in the Holocaust detracted from the sufferings of the Polish people during the years of Nazi occupation. Israel denounced the Polish law.

Feldman invokes the Holocaust as a cover for Israeli atrocities. But his defense of Israel's genocidal war, with the support of the US, is a desecration of the memory of the six million Jewish victims of Nazism and the universal significance of the Holocaust.



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