

Dear friend,

River Valley for Palestine, Jewish Voice for Peace W.MA, and other community organizations have tried to persuade the **Daily Hampshire Gazette** to improve its coverage of the Israeli/U.S. genocide in Gaza but have not succeeded.

We are now publishing an (alt)ernative version of the paper containing material that we wish the Gazette WOULD include. We hope you find it interesting and helpful as you seek reliable news and opinion about the Gaza genocide, Israel's occupation of Palestine, and local campaigns for Palestinian liberation and for all people fighting empire, militarism, colonization, and exploitation.

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Tent encampment for displaced Palestinians in Gaza City, 11/5/25. Dawoud Abu Alkas/Reuters

EDITORIAL

The Ceasefire is a Lie

“The reality is that historically every ceasefire got stuck in the first phase. There has never been a real push to get Israel to adopt or to respect second or third phases of ceasefires. The requirement for disarmament has always been a tool that Israel and the U.S. have used to justify continued acts of oppression and violence against the Palestinian people. If Hamas were to disappear tomorrow, if all of its weapons were to disappear tomorrow, the blockade would not end, the genocide would not end. This is not about Hamas and never has been. This is an Israeli war against the Palestinian people; it’s a demographic war aimed at exterminating as many Palestinians as possible.” ~ Tareq Baconi

“The U.S., in its worst act of complicity yet, is trying to hide the genocide in Palestine behind the smokescreen of a fake ‘ceasefire’ and sham ‘peace process.’ The U.S.-Israel axis seeks to quell dissent, to create space to consolidate their bloody gains in Palestine and across the region, and to normalize the Israeli regime, even as it drips in the fresh blood of innocents. There is no ceasefire, there is no peace process, the genocide continues to rage across Gaza and the West Bank. The world had just begun to awaken from its moral slumber. Don’t let them lull you back to sleep now. Fight this evil until it is vanquished.” ~ Craig Mokhiber

What has been achieved by the resistance of the people of Gaza in the past two years? A great deal, in the sense that the longstanding lie of Israel as a democratic, civilized state lies in its grave, never to be resurrected. The lie is still cynically promulgated by the world’s governments. But the world’s people no longer believe. Many of them never did.

Meanwhile, are the people of Gaza liberated? Is the genocide over? No. The current situation is one of “politically sustainable genocide” (Ali Abunimah, The Electronic Intifada), where the people die of less frequent bombardments. They die from targeted shootings at the “yellow line,” aptly named. Behind it, the cowardly soldiers of the IDF shoot dead any Palestinian within

range. Gazans die of starvation; the IDF allows fewer than 100 aid trucks per day, despite the requirement that 600 trucks per day enter the Strip. Gazans die from poisoned water and air created by the occupier’s ecocide. Gazans die from untreated wounds and diseases caused by the destruction of the healthcare system and physical conditions imposed by the occupier, including rivers of sewage and mountains of waste, some of it trucked in by the occupier. Gazans die from exposure, in tents flapping in the cold wind and rain, in roofless, wall-less “homes” in the skeletal remains of bombed-out buildings. Gazans die from silence, with hundreds of their courageous journalists assassinated and no independent international media permitted by the occupier. In the U.S., meanwhile, the complicit mass media erases the daily reality of deadly Zionist violence in Gaza and deadly Zionist terror in the West Bank caused by rampaging Israeli settlers alongside murderous IDF soldiers. All green-lit by the U.S.

Gazans have welcomed “home” some of their loved ones kidnapped by the IDF, all of whom show signs of torture and starvation. They have received some of their dead from the occupier – many executed at close range, limbs zip-tied, eyes blindfolded, bodies mutilated. Some of the dead are missing organs which the occupying death cult has harvested for unknown purposes (Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor).

Dear people of western Massachusetts, the ceasefire is a lie. Massive local and global momentum for Boycott/Divestment/Sanctions (BDS) against Israel is desperately needed. The people of Gaza are living an apocalypse, a holocaust. If they defend themselves through the armed resistance allowed them by international law, they know that the rapid genocide, supported by our tax dollars, will resume, replacing the current, slower genocide.

The dream of Palestinian liberation lies in the future. The dream of Palestinian liberation is the dream of human liberation. Stay awake. All must work for it.

(Written by RVP editorial board member Jennifer Scarlott)

SMITH SJP: Smith College Supports Genocide in Gaza

The following testimony concerning investments in the war industry by Smith College was presented by Smith College Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) on October 25, 2025, at the Western Mass People’s Tribunal (westernmasspeopletribunal.com).

During the Tribunal’s proceedings, students from UMass-Amherst, Smith College, and Hampshire College documented ways in which their schools are supporting the genocide in Gaza. Coverage of the Tribunal can be found online at The Shoestring, the Amherst Indy, The Times of Israel, the Daily Collegian, and the Daily Hampshire Gazette.

Smith SJP’s testimony on the college’s efforts to limit free speech and activism on campus, as well as Tribunal testimony by UMass-Amherst SJP and Hampshire College SJP, will appear in coming editions of the Alt-Daily Hampshire Gazette.

– River Valley for Palestine

We, Smith College Students for Justice in Palestine, are here today to hold Smith College complicit in the active genocide and ethnic cleansing occurring in Palestine over the past 24 months. Additionally, we condemn the institution for surveilling students and silencing their voices, and for its failure to uphold its purported values and mission.



Members of Smith College Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) end their 13-day occupation of the College Hall administration building on April 9, 2024, moving their protest to the campus lawn. Nirvani Williams/NEPM

Smith’s administration as a whole is the reason we are here. In particular, the Board of Trustees’ Investment Committee and its subcommittee, the ACIR (or Advisory Committee on Investor Responsibility), are responsible for this. Other people in positions of power at Smith, such as President Sarah Willie-LeBreton, deans, and other trustees, claim they have no control or jurisdiction over where our money goes. That it is not part of their “charge.” However, it is their moral obligation to use the platforms and resources they possess, to take up ethical investment as part of their charge, and to enact positive change. We look to administrators as leaders and role models in our community.

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Amidst genocide, Five College Arabic Language Initiative Collapses After Schools Pull Support

By Alex Pinkowish, ‘26,
Five College Arabic student

The Five College Consortium Arabic Language Initiative is closing, collapsing after Mount Holyoke and Amherst College pulled their support for the program citing insufficient enrollment. The action by Mount Holyoke and Amherst led Smith College, Hampshire College, and UMass-Amherst to withdraw their support for the program as well. The decision was made in private and announced without warning, blindsiding faculty and students. Martha Umphrey, Provost and Dean of Faculty at Amherst College, said she wished to make clear that the decision was NOT political, despite the current climate. But many feel this line between economic pragmatism and politics is disingenuous.



Covid affected all colleges in the country, including each of the Five Colleges. This is evident in the public financial information from each of the schools. What is also evident in the schools’ data is that both Amherst and Mount Holyoke have endowments in the billions that have seen very healthy growth in the years since the pandemic. The discrepancy between the size of their endowments, the growth they have enjoyed, and the cost of running the Arabic language program can only point to political risk being the deciding factor when evaluating the continuation of the program.

The relevance of the study of Arabic language and culture today is undeniable, as the Provost acknowledged. It lies at the heart of many U.S. foreign policy disasters in the current era. Donald Trump has orchestrated an assault on Middle Eastern studies programs, forcing schools to make sweeping changes to curriculum and faculty under threat of pulling federal funds. Trump targets departments whose students challenge his foreign policy narrative, particularly vis-a-vis Israel, and the war crimes that the world agrees are being committed.

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Election News

Zohran Mamdani elected mayor of New York City
“The election of a candidate – in ‘the most Jewish city in the world’ – who supports BDS, accused Israel of war crimes, and said he would arrest Benjamin Netanyahu if he set foot in New York City, was unthinkable just two years ago. Mamdani has not been punished for his views – he has been rewarded for articulating what many Americans already believe.” – Etan Nechin, Haaretz, 11/6/25



Zohran Mamdani rolls up his sleeves during a campaign event on June 23, 2025, the day before his victory in New York City’s Democratic mayoral primary.
Adam Gray/Bloomberg News

Mayor Sciarra barely wins re-election in Northampton
Gina-Louise Sciarra appears to have squeaked to a 76 vote victory over Jillian Duclos, with Duclos called upon to request a recount. The extreme thinness of Sciarra’s mandate increases the power of new City Council members to challenge her on her shortchanging of public schools; planned reconstruction of Main Street; and her accommodating attitude toward Eric Suher, Northampton’s major landlord and L3Harris Technologies, the increasingly unpopular weapons-maker at 50 Prince Street.

SAVE THE DATE!

A Benefit Dinner for the Sumud School of Gaza City will be held on Sunday, 12/7/25 at 3:30pm at Christ Methodist Church on Rocky Hill Road (Rt 66) in Florence. \$50 per plate for adults, \$5 for children under 12. Palestinian food, live music.

Ticket required: <https://buytickets.at/friendsosumudschool/1921235>

Palestine and Colombia Push Back on Empire

By PR

As a Latin American living in the heart of an empire, grave human rights violations throughout Latin America resulting from resource extraction and militarization have created a perpetual knot in my stomach. I have often wondered why nothing changes even when the full truth is revealed.

In recent years, some of the history has been unearthed, thanks to the efforts of courageous activists and organizations. In 2023 for instance, the confluence of corporate actors like Alabama-based Drummond mining company and their paid paramilitary henchmen who protected the entire supply chain of coal extraction and exporting in the Caribbean region of Colombia was news for what seemed like a minute. Yet, it has left behind vast destruction, death, and displacement of local communities.

Why is it that a critical, in-depth examination of the system that enables companies and governments to dominate, surveil, control, destroy (in the name of protecting resources for the powerful few who live elsewhere) is never given much attention in mainstream narrative and media?

Colombia is a small South American country, but this happens around the world. In the past two years, for example, human rights violations and genocide are happening in Gaza. And yet nothing stops it, not even a ‘peace agreement’ (crafted in secrecy, but treated as if there is actual peace), devised by global actors that themselves provide the arms for the decimation. No surprise.

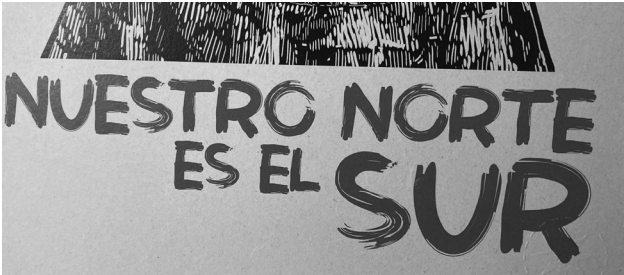
Few ask: Where does this surveillance and control super-capacity come from? It urges us all to think more about the technology built by defense contractors in many parts of the U.S. L3Harris Technologies, which has a factory in Northampton, MA, for instance, has U.S. government contracts to build photonic masts that have replaced the more limited functions of periscopes in submarines. These masts contain sensors with infrared cameras that enable 360 degree visibility and improved image processing

in real time for operators and top-level decision-makers. The company also produces electro-optical targeting systems used in U.S. Navy and Coast Guard warships, thus easing the work of detecting and attacking enemy submarines.

The most recent military escalation in Latin America involves the arrival of the USS Gerald Ford aircraft carrier in South American waters, to bolster the surveillance and striking capabilities of highly problematic Pentagon-ordered operations and killings of supposed drug traffickers in the Caribbean near Venezuela and now in Pacific Ocean areas off Colombia. It will join eight vessels already in the region, including a nuclear-powered fast attack submarine. The U.S. has killed more than 70 people in at least 17 strikes. What are the real intentions of this military buildup, much of which is supported by local defense contractors?

We get a clue from what is happening in Gaza, but more is revealed through the solidarity efforts organized by individuals and grassroots groups around the world questioning the increased military operations in Gaza and in their own countries. Solidarity movements have been in the streets in places like Mexico, Argentina, and Chile. But Colombia comes to mind again both because of the history of U.S.-Colombia military alliances, and because the country’s current left-leaning president, Gustavo Petro, faces confrontation from President Trump. Whether it is foreign policy, immigration, drugs, or trade-related, these spats seem designed for disruption and dominance.

A recent street protest in front of the U.S. embassy in Bogota was particularly eye-catching. In mid-October, grassroots groups organized a march in support of Palestine, Ecuador, and Venezuela, since the people are facing the same use of force from their own governments or foreign governments. The protestors decried genocide, demanded humanitarian assistance, and called out



Nuestro norte es el sur translates to ‘Our North is the South.’ It refers to a common anti-colonial sentiment in Latin America that highlights the creativity and strength of grassroots organizing and peoples’ alternatives to neoliberalism and militarization imposed from abroad.

companies doing business with Israel. Yet the protestors were attacked, as they always are, by police and military forces.

Perhaps the story caught my attention because of a similar one by Andreas Malm and Maxi Guedes in an article called The Making of a Coal Boycott (*Jewish Currents*). Malm and Guedes explained what prompted the Petro government to take the unprecedented step of reissuing a decree prohibiting the export of coal from the Colombian Caribbean to Israel. The coal helps power Israeli military factories, intelligence-gathering, and settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. The first decree had been issued in June 2024, but the mining company Drummond (mentioned above), had continued to send its coal ships to Israeli ports. So the Petro government doubled down, this time explicitly ordering the interdiction of the ships within Colombian-controlled waters.

That decision, spurred by the efforts of Palestinian and Colombian civil society and adopted by a government willing to challenge the militarized status quo at its very roots (or minerals, actually), may help bring change. It is in the growing power of grassroots solidarity struggles against militarized empire that the world’s people may create a real chance for peace and dignity.

PR is a resident of western Massachusetts, an educator, and an environmental and human rights advocate.



Ahmad Faleh Warsh Agha, 14-years-old, Gaza, November 2025.

“The child Ahmad Faleh Warsh Agha (14 years) lost his father during an airstrike that targeted their home in Gaza. His father was trying to protect the family when the shell hit, and he was killed instantly before Ahmad’s eyes leaving a wound that will never heal. After his father’s death, Ahmad was injured twice, on April 3, 2025, and on June 25, 2025, when his brother was also killed.

The repeated injuries resulted in the amputation of his right hand, a pelvic fracture, and serious head and intestinal injuries that required the installation of a colostomy bag. He also suffered a severe knee injury, a fracture in his left arm, and still has shrapnel fragments lodged in his body. Ahmad now lives in harsh displacement conditions and is struggling with limited mobility and daily challenges. He urgently needs comprehensive medical care and rehabilitation, after losing his father and brother and part of his body in a war that has left him with nothing but pain and memories.”

– Mahmoud Abu Hamda

Please make a donation to Doctors Against Genocide: <https://tinyurl.com/8dxfnnyj>

Five College Arabic Language Initiative Continued...

The students who were enrolled in the Five College Arabic Language Initiative were themselves politically active. Many are engaged in several areas of study, hold positions in student government, and leadership roles in Five College student clubs and organizations. They cite their studies in Arabic to be central to their accomplishments, motivations, and academic journeys, despite the program being underfunded for years. Rather than seeing the Arabic Language Initiative as a program of curricular and political significance and strength, the administrations of Mount Holyoke and Amherst apparently viewed it as a liability.

This is exactly what Trump’s actions were designed to elicit. The Five College Consortium is rewarding his abuse of power by voluntarily removing a program that directly challenges the narrative that Trump is trying to enforce. In the face of draconian censorship, we MUST support dissent and freedom of speech and inquiry. The academic and political culture of the Five College community will suffer with the termination of this program. Its termination may also increase tension among students, faculty, and administrations of the Five Colleges.

Many professors are scrambling to look for work after this decision, and students who are enrolled in the program and/or need the language for a postgraduate internship or work position are left searching for ways to restructure their immediate future. Students and faculty were particularly harmed by the secrecy of the decision, which prevented the Five College community from devising ways to save the program. The political and economic realities of the decision are inseparable. Terminating the program will contribute to muting anti-genocide voices. In this national political climate, this amounts to capitulation.

SMITH SJP Continued...

By refusing to act and do everything in their power to cut off Smith’s material support of Israel’s genocide and the U.S. War Machine at large, they let the entire Smith community—alumnae, faculty, staff, parents, and students—down. Palestinian students at Smith have to bear this weight the most.

Smith may tout its progressive values, but money doesn’t lie, and our investments tell a very different story. As of November 2024, Smith was invested in two Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs): a Vanguard real estate ETF and an iShares aggregate bond, which has holdings in “aerospace and defense.” This includes companies like Raytheon, Lockheed Martin, Caterpillar, General Dynamics, L3 Harris, and Northrop Grumman. Lockheed Martin supplies Israel with fighter jets—including the F-35 warplane—and the Hellfire missiles used to target journalists and Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City. L3Harris, which has a branch in Northampton, provides phone tracking devices and other equipment to the Israeli military as well as U.S. immigration authorities. Because of the nature of index funds, these holdings are also always changing, giving Smith little control over where their money is going and what harm it may be fueling.

The college administration continues to deny calls for transparency and disclosure, so although we do not know exact numbers, we know that students’ money is directly supporting the genocide of Palestinians as well as global warmongering. By our best estimated calculation, Smith holds 171,157 shares in this ETF, valued at \$16,987,332. This translates to almost 68,000 quarterly and amounts to about **272,000 dollars annually invested in the war machine**. It may seem like a small percentage point, but that is still a lot of money—and any money going to genocide is too much. **Furthermore, if the amount of money going to genocide is so “negligible,” in Smith Admin’s own words, why would divestment of such an amount of money be so detrimental for a school with a multi-billion-dollar endowment?**

As an organization, Smith Students for Justice in Palestine has met with the Board of Trustees several times to discuss divestment and other ways of financially cutting ties with genocide. The furthest SJP has gotten is the possibility of Smith making “ethical donations” to counteract their investments in the war machine – like carbon offsets for genocide. But we know you can’t **cancel out** a genocide. No matter how many meetings we have, trustees say the same thing, continually stalling and trapping us in unproductive discourse without substantial change. Smith claims on its website

that, “As part of its mission, the college works to educate students to develop solutions to complex, urgent problems.” Smith cannot allege to be fulfilling, let alone trying to uphold this mission if trustees and admin continue to shoot down the student body, which has been supporting a real solution to the urgent problem of Smith College’s endowment fueling war machines that are actively committing genocide—and scholasticide—in Palestine.

As an institution, Smith purports to care about the issue of ethical investment. On the ACIR’s website, they claim they take “mission alignment” into account, saying, “Alignment with Smith College’s core mission, values, operations, and strategic priorities is the first and primary factor when weighing a request for socially responsible investing.” This, along with their continuous refusal to divest from war machines, proves that Smith’s values do not truly include social responsibility. We have not seen any indication of its ethical considerations regarding the genocide and its complicity in it, in their financial decisions, or in their response to student activism. Smith College claims to be “a college of and for the world... developing engaged global citizens and leaders to address society’s challenges.” However, when its students address global issues and the stake that the college has in them, the administration refuses to make any real change or statements supporting us.

CONNECTING
WITH PALESTINE
IN WESTERN MA

- » See the W MA Coalition for Palestine calendar for local standouts & events: <https://tinyurl.com/4zxjetvc>
- » To sign up to receive weekly newsletters detailing action for Palestine, email to: W MA SURJ: westernmasssurj@gmail.com & JVP W MA: westernmass@jewishvoiceforpeace.com
- » Recommended reading & viewing: The Electronic Intifada, Mondoweiss, Drop Site News, Democracy Now!