



Yanis Varoufakis on Israel-Palestine, Ukraine and the Hypocrisy of the West

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Zain Raza (ZR): Thank you for tuning in today and welcome back to another episode of The Source. I'm your host, Zain Raza. And today I'll be talking to Yanis Varoufakis about the conflict in Israel-Palestine, as well as issues surrounding the border in Ukraine. Yanis is the former finance minister of Greece and now the secretary general of the Democracy in Europe Movement 2025. He's a well-renowned economist, bestselling author and public intellectual. Yanis, welcome back to the show.

Yanis Varoufakis (YV): Thank you for having me. It's good to be back.

ZR: I would like to begin with a short recap. On October 7th, Hamas launched a surprise attack breaching Israeli defenses and killing around 1400 Israeli civilians and capturing 220 hostages. In response, Israel launched a massive aerial bombardment campaign in Gaza, which has thus far killed 5000 Palestinian civilians, 40% of them being children. Israel also imposed a complete siege of Gaza, stopping electricity and water supplies, and has ordered 1.1 million Palestinians to flee to the south of Gaza. Hamas has released four hostages thus far, an American mother and daughter and two elderly women. And Israel has sent small units of infantry troops and tanks in Gaza for localized raids, but as of yet has not begun a major ground military operation. Can you comment on these developments, in particular Hamas's attack and Israel's response?

YV: It's a tragedy that is never ending, which is just continuing. Each side wants to blame the other for war crimes, for crimes against humanity. And the fact is that they both have perpetrated them. The main points that we need to make are twofold: Firstly, war crimes are never justified. Never. Whatever your grievances, whatever somebody has done to you - an army of occupation, a group of militants -, you are never justified to perpetrate war crimes. The Geneva Convention is not à la Carte. It is meant to be applied at all times for everyone, independently of how deeply they have been wounded, independently of how great their grievances are. That's the first part, the first dimension of my answer. The second dimension

of my answer is that this is what happens when for 70 years you have a very concerted attempt at ethnically cleansing a group of people. This is why, on the day after the attack by Hamas, which of course was absolutely criminal to kill babies and to abduct people. But it was completely within their rights to try to escape from an enclosure, a fence that was illegally placed there. The main point that I wanted to make, and for which I received a lot of attention, let me put it politely, is that, you know what we Europeans are to blame. For centuries, we have persecuted the Jews. For centuries, we practiced anti-Semitism. For centuries we have turned a blind eye to pogroms against the Jewish people. We are responsible as Europeans for the Holocaust, not just the Germans. The Holocaust had collaborators in Croatia, in Greece, in Italy, in France - everywhere across Europe. And then after that, we have tried to cleanse ourselves of the guilt by turning a blind eye to the ethnic cleansing, the genocide of the Palestinian people by the Israeli extremists. Not by the Jews, we must be very clear about that. But by the Israeli extremists. And in the end, we have a situation where the extremists of both sides are in control. Because let's face it, Hamas was created by people like Netanyahu. And people not like Netanyahu are Hamas's greatest friends because they each justify the atrocities of the other. When you have a conflagration that has been going on for decades, what matters is one thing: to end the causes of the conflagration. And the cause of the conflagration is the attempt to establish an apartheid state in Israel, which is against the interests of the Jews, against the interests of the Muslims, against the interests of the Israelis, against the interests of the Palestinians, against the interests of the Bedouins, the Christians and all the other people who are inhabiting the ancient lands of Palestine.

ZR: Talking about Europe, let us now look at the developments surrounding this issue taking place on the international stage. On the 23rd of October, EU foreign ministers met in Luxembourg to discuss the situation in Israel-Palestine and find some common ground on this issue. However they could not find that, as some countries as Spain and Ireland who call for a ceasefire and on the other hand countries like Germany stated, and let me quote the German foreign minister Annalena Baerbock here, quote, "We've all seen that the terrorism continues nonstop, that massive rocket attacks against Israel are taking place. We can't end the humanitarian catastrophe when terrorism from Gaza continues", unquote. As someone who has seen the workings of the European Union from inside, how do you judge its stance or lack thereof?

YV: Scandalous. Yet another example of the moral decrepitude and the political paralysis of the European Union. They can't even agree. To call for a ceasefire. They agree to pay money to get humanitarian aid to the Palestinians. That they agreed on, right? But how are they going to get the aid there without the ceasefire? So they are committing a crime against logic because they have no moral spine. They have no political process that can make the European Union function as an operational, functioning, decision making entity. So this is why I keep saying that I'm not going to condemn Israel, Palestine, Hamas, the settlers. Of course, they committed war crimes, but for us Europeans, who are responsible for anti-semitism and for

Islamophobia and for the impasse in Israel-Palestine. For us to be like Ms. Baerbock - the absolutely hapless minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, together with the greatest failure that has ever come out of the European Union's machinations, of course, Ursula von der Leyen. A failed defense minister who was sent over by Merkel trying to get rid of her from Berlin. She was sent to Brussels to represent us without a mandate going to Israel and becoming a leader of the mass bombing of civilians. For us Europeans who are such a profound failure and such a profound guilty party to the crimes that have been committed in Palestine-Israel for decades now; for us to take the high ground and look down upon the Israelis and the Palestinians and to condemn violence coming from either side, we just don't have the right to do that. We are guilty. We should be hanging our heads in shame and doing whatever it takes in order to start making progress in reaching decisions that at least are logically coherent and which are not in gross violation of the Geneva Convention and the United Nations Charter.

ZR: Let me take this issue to another higher international stage, the United Nations. Let me recap what has happened so far. On October 18th, the United States vetoed a United Nations Security Council resolution that would call for a humanitarian pause in the conflict to allow some humanitarian aid to enter the Gaza Strip. Then yesterday, Israel's foreign minister Eli Cohen addressed the U.N. Security Council and stated, quote, " Hamas are the new Nazis", unquote, and called on the civilized world to fight against Hamas, as it did in Germany in 1945. U.N. General Secretary Antonio Guterres, on the other hand, strongly condemned the actions of Hamas, but also mentioned what you already talked about. That this conflict is not happening in a vacuum and it was 56 years of Israeli occupation settlement expansion. However, he said there's no way that the attacks of Hamas can be justified based on that. In his response, Israeli officials have accused him of being a terrorist apologist or someone who's justifying terrorism. They've canceled any scheduled meetings with Gueterres and will not issue any visas to U.N. representatives. And they stated, quote, "The time has come to teach them a lesson", unquote. "Them" implying, of course, the U.N.. In your opinion, is it fair to mention the Israeli occupation and expansion of settlements in a time of crisis like this, which involves a lot of emotion? And secondly, does this in any way justify terrorism as claimed by Israel?

YV: Allow me to comment on the statement by the Israeli ambassador to the United Nations that he or Israel is going to teach the United Nations a lesson. Now, there have been many times when I've disagreed, personally speaking, with a decision by the United Nations Security Council, by the General Assembly. I disagreed with things that the secretary generals of the United Nations have said. And I think that it is absolutely legitimate for anyone to disagree with what the United Nations does, says or doesn't say. But to have a state that is a member state of the United Nations, threaten the United Nations that it will teach it - the United Nations - alas, that's a bridge too far. Israel has become officially a rogue state that must be expelled from the United Nations. If you threaten the United Nations with a lesson, then you don't deserve to be a member of the United Nations. On the very pertinent question

you asked - does the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, the state of apartheid, the behavior, the murders of settlers, of Palestinians, does all that justify war crimes by Hamas? The answer is a clear no. Nothing justifies war crimes. You know, once upon a time we thought that at the end of the Second World War, we had all agreed on that. It doesn't matter what gets done to you, you have the right to defend yourself, but that does not mean that you have a right to commit war crimes. Which are very specifically stated, like, for instance, transfer of populations, targeting civilians, switching off the water of civilians. These are all established war crimes and you are not allowed to do them, whatever the other side does to you. Right? So the answer to this question is clear. But at the very, very same time, not to focus on the whole picture while trying to find an answer to the question of what needs to be done to end these crimes on both sides, is it essentially to take the side of the criminals? Nothing, nothing reinforces Hamas more than a United Nations or a United States or European Union, which says that the war crimes perpetrated against the Palestinian people are a right but the war crimes of Hamas not a right. That is why I'm saying that Netanjahu, Biden, Ursula von der Leyen, Ms. Baerbock are the best friends of Hamas. They don't want to be. But essentially they are working for Hamas because - Zain, let's ask ourselves a very simple question, okay? Let's say that Hamas is the worst thing that's ever happened to the world. It isn't. And by the way, this is a parenthesis. It is a major, major violation of Jewish history to compare Hamas with the Nazis. Hamas may be very nice to people who do atrocities. But the Nazis and the Holocaust are unique in the history of humanity. The crimes that the Nazis perpetrated against the Jews in the Holocaust are nothing like anything that has ever happened, and hopefully will ever happen again. So to conflate Hamas with the Nazis is essentially to diminish the significance of the Holocaust in the hierarchy of evil. I close the parenthesis here. But let's say that Hamas is the worst thing that has ever happened in the history of the world. Let's say here is a mental experiment that I invite people to perform alongside me. Suppose there is a button here on my computer and I can press it or you can press it, and Hamas disappears to the annals of history. Let's say that we can have a time machine and go back in time, like in science fiction movies and Hamas doesn't exist. What would then happen? People say to me, well, why can't the Palestinians pursue their legitimate rights peacefully? Well, they tried it and see what happened in the West Bank? Because there's no Hamas in the West Bank. They're being ethnically cleansed. Their houses are being bulldozed or taken over by settlers that arrived from the United States or Canada or from wherever. Their authority, the Palestinian Authority that has renounced the violence, which has renounced terrorism, which has recognized Israel and the right of the Jewish state to exist - what has happened to the Palestinian Authority? It's been humiliated. It's been taken to the cleaners. It's been reduced into a speck of dust in the winds of history. So those who oppose or contest the significance of looking at the problem in its entirety and who say if you are a supporter of terrorism, if you talk about the apartheid state that is being implemented in the West Bank or Gaza - my message to them is: you are Hamas's best friend.

ZR: Since we are at international law, I wanted to talk to you about a certain double standard that we have observed. For example, when it comes to Ukraine, whenever Russia annexed its

territory, as it did this year and last year, figures like Ursula von der Leyen, Annalena Baerbock or Joe Biden all decry and invoke international law and human rights. However, as you've mentioned, Israel has been doing this for at least 56 years, and even this year a record amount of settlements were announced. It's not like the West does not criticize this. In 2020, for example, Germany and France made a collective statement saying that there will be consequences for Israel if it continues to annex Palestinian territories. Earlier this year, in 2023, the US State Department said that this escalates the conflicts between Israel and Palestine and is against the two state solution. So why, in your opinion, do these figures come with sanctions, international law, when Russia annexes territory in Ukraine, but on the other hand, in Palestine, even though the voice criticism failed to take any action?

YV: When Putin's troops invaded Ukraine, DiEM25, the Democracy in Europe movement, which I'm part of, and myself, we came out and condemned the invasion. And one thing said back then, which was unfortunately prescient, was that DiEM25 will always take the side of the occupied, of the invaded. And we mentioned and said whether it's Ukraine, Yemen or for that matter, Palestine. Whoever invades will find us in support and in solidarity with the people that they invade. I wish the European Union could be consistent like that. I wish Mrs. von der Leyen was not so insanely inconsistent as to make, on the one hand the point which was correct, that when Putin was switching off electricity and power supply and water and so on, of the people in Mariupol or the people in Kharkiv, or the people in Kiev for that matter, that that was a war crime. But when the Israelis are doing it to Gaza, it's self-defense. That was Mrs. Ursula von der Leyen essential self cancellation. She just canceled herself as a legitimate spokesperson for anyone. That's why she must go. DiEM25, we have a petition which is running - please go and sign it. Ursula von der Leyen must go. She does not deserve to be the president of the European Commission. This is the gross inconsistency that you mentioned. So when Putin flattens Mariupol, completely flattens Mariupol and talks about the Ukrainians as terrorists that need to be eradicated. That's a war crime. That they were Nazi Ukrainians in Mariupol, there is no doubt - they say it themselves. Some of the Azov battalions even have this Swastika here. They're not hiding it. That does not give Putin the right to flatten Mariupol, to kill people in the theater, to kill people in their homes and to switch off their electricity and water. So the European Union, which condemned that as a war crime, was correct. But when Israel is doing the same thing, saying that because Hamas is hiding amongst civilians, they will kill all the civilians or as many as they want. And the president, Mr. Herzog, of Israel, said that the civilians, because they are supporting those Hamas guerrillas, they are legitimate targets. He completely and utterly stated it. What happened then? Suddenly, they reminded me of what President Roosevelt once said about a dictator in Central America: "He's a bastard, but he's our bastard." And that is the kind of rhetoric that we hear from the European Union. But you're asking, why is it that the European Union is falling flat on its face with these inconsistencies? The reasons are, again, twofold: on one hand, because the European Union, especially ever since the Ukraine war broke out, has ceased to exist. Effectively, they get an email from Washington, D.C., and whatever the line might be on E-Mail as to what they should say - they just parrot it. Gone are the days of

François Mitterrand or Jacques Chirac, or even Schroeder, who articulated a European foreign policy. And the second reason, of course, is - I mentioned it at the beginning - we Europeans have, especially the Germans, a major, major guilt complex over the persecution of Jews. But my question to especially my German press, is: how many Palestinians need to die? With your license for you to expunge this guilt.

ZR: I would like to get some more concrete information about this situation taking place in Israel and Gaza. There's a lot of disagreement about Israel's response. However, many observers believe that a government cannot simply do nothing after such an attack, especially when it comes to a hostage situation. Therefore, my question to you is, if you were now advising the Israeli government, how would you ask them to react, number one, to the terrorist attack? And number two, to save the hostages from Hamas?

YV: Well, suppose there was a hostage situation in Berlin. Suppose gunmen, doesn't matter who, will take 200 people hostage in a building in downtown Berlin. What would the German government do? They would immediately encircle it, put their people - their people, their army, their police, riot squads and all that, special forces - on high alert, circle the area and start negotiations for the release of the hostages. Imagine if somebody were to condemn the German government for not doing anything because they did not bomb the hell out of a building to kill everyone, including the hostages? I think that's my answer.

ZR: I would like to switch gears here and move to Ukraine. According to the latest data from the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, the U.S. has provided 42.1 billion in military aid to Ukraine, whereas Germany has provided 17.2 billion. The U.S. also supplied Ukraine with long range missiles that Ukraine used for the first time, inflicting heavy damage on two airfields in Russia occupied territories. It is expected many of the advanced tanks and fighter jets that the US agreed to supply to Ukraine early this year will become active in the coming months. How do you assess Ukraine's counteroffensive over the summer and do you think it can finally make a breakthrough in the next few months given all these new weapons are becoming active?

YV: I'm not a military expert. We have too many military experts on, especially on television screens these days, talking rubbish. What I do know is that this war cannot be won either by Russia or by Ukraine. And when you have a war that cannot be won, then peace and the negotiation leading to just peace is the only alternative to perpetual massacres. But that's what we have now. We have perpetual massacres. Ukrainians have lost more soldiers in a year and a half and Russians as well, of course, than the Americans lost in a 12 year struggle in Vietnam. When I hear the West talking about supporting Ukraine until victory, I shudder to think what that means. How do they define victory? Would they take Sevastopol, Crimea? And how do they expect this to play out in Moscow around the suitcase with the codes for the nuclear weapons? In any case, the battle lines in Ukraine resemble the great war - trench warfare. Not much movement either way. There are major assaults on both sides, there's a

Russian one happening now. So it seems to me that if the West truly believes that Putin is like Hitler. Then I have a question for them. Why are you not sending troops in? Because when there was a Hitler, we sent every man and woman we could to the front to take Berlin. We didn't negotiate with Hitler because we shouldn't negotiate with Hitler. And we went all the way to Berlin and killed him in his bunker. Do you want to do this with Putin? Be my guest. But staying on the sidelines, sending weapons to the Ukrainians to keep killing themselves in trenches that are more like the First World War than the Second World War. That is irrational, bordering on the criminal. When Mr. Biden, the president of the United States, talks about dragging Putin through the International Criminal Court, which, by the way, the United States does not recognize, okay? Talking about hypocrisy. Exactly how is he going to do this unless he takes Moscow? And how is he going to take Moscow if he's not participating in this war? So there's just hot air coming out of the mouth of the Western leadership. When instead of that, there should be a peace process involving, of course, Zelensky and Putin, Biden, President Xi of China, the European Union - maybe, if we can find anyone to lead in these discussions, we do seem to have a small problem of representation. Who would represent us? But that's another matter. The DiEM25 has a particular proposal in place. We have had it now for almost a year and a half, which is really very simple. Give Putin a way out. Demand that he withdraws his troops to where they were before the 24th of February 2022. In exchange for guarantees of the security of Ukraine. Without, however, NATO membership for Ukraine so that Putin can go back home to Moscow and say, I secured what I wanted. NATO's not coming to our border. That doesn't mean that Ukraine is going to be undefended. Israel is not a member - speaking of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict again -, he's not a member of NATO, but they get plenty of support from the West, especially the United States. Austria was a member of the Western family of nations during the Cold War, and not a member of NATO. So what's this fixation with Ukraine becoming a member of NATO, which would be detrimental to everybody, including Ukraine? Because imagine if Ukraine was now a member of NATO, then we would have to send troops in and maybe even nuclear weapons. So, immediate ceasefire, withdrawal of Russian troops to where they were before the latest invasion, guarantees by the international community for Ukraine, an EU investment program, a Marshall Plan for Ukraine, financed by the European Union. Even start the process of accession of Ukraine to the European Union. If the Ukrainians still want that, maybe bring them into the single market. And for the Donbass area, which is a clearly contested area in the sense that there are two populations there. Those who have a Ukrainian identity and those who have a Russian identity. Well, we have found solutions for such very difficult situations in the past. Think of Northern Ireland. The Good Friday Agreement, we proposed something like the Good Friday agreement for the Donbass area. Demilitarized, with communities that are run by both sides simultaneously on a basis of unanimity and with foreign guarantees of peace and reconciliation.

ZR: To my last question, and I need to get your assessment on this, given that you're an economist. Business activity in Germany contracted for a fourth straight month in October, manufacturing's downturn and the blame is being levied on high energy prices and the

geopolitical situation. In spring, the German government was talking about economic growth, but now it is expected the economy will shrink by the end of this year. To calm the situation, German Economy Minister Robert Habeck has brought into a discussion energy subsidies for the industry. In your view, is there a course to take for Germany where it can still become an economic powerhouse while sanctioning Russia and still importing US LNG gas?

YV: To begin with, the idea of energy subsidies is like King Canute ordering the tides to return. It's not going to work, Mr. Habeck. Germany has to come to terms with the fact that its business model, which was never sustainable, never sustainable - it was sustained for a very long time without being sustainable - is now kaput, finished. It was based on dirt cheap gas on low wages for German workers and on boisterous Chinese markets for its exports. Initially, Greek, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese markets. Then when our countries went bust in 2010, then with Chinese markets. The new Cold War between the United States and China has ended this ready-made market place China for Germany. The war in Ukraine has destroyed the foundation of cheap energy and the end of the lockdowns and the unleashing of all this liquidity - money that has been produced by the central banks through furlough schemes and so on has caused inflation that has also inflated wages in Germany. So all plans of the German business model have gone, finished. Meanwhile, Germany is now facing the music. It is paying the cost for 13 years of zero investment. Because Mr. Schäuble and Mrs. Merkel were responsible through the austerity they imposed upon the Greeks. The Greeks and the Germans. It started here in Greece in order to take austerity to Germany, they imposed essentially circumstances of minimal investment in Germany. That's why the infrastructure in your country for green energy, for digitization, for artificial intelligence, for lithium batteries, for all the things that are the next phase of industrial revolution - Germany is behind. And it is behind because of mercantilist, idiotic macro-economically insane policies that divided Europe, that crushed investment in Germany, and which have left Germany in this state of apoplexy of polycrisis, as some other economists have called it. What's the way forward? Well, I think that we need somebody else other than Mr. Christian Lindner in the federal Finance Ministry, because he's simply reproducing every idiotic aspect of the playbook of Merkel and Schäuble. We need a Germany that understands that its future lies in consolidation in Europe of creating a federal treasury. Creating a proper investment plan not just for Germany, but for the whole of Europe. Green Investment Plan. Everything that DiEM25 was campaigning for in the 2019 European Parliament elections, which were ignored - had those things been done in 2019, today Germany would be in a very different place. Is it too late? Maybe it is too late. But if you ask me, take our program, the Green New Deal for Europe from 2019 and implement it and maybe you have a chance. But I do not see this happening.

ZR: Yanis Varoufakis, world renowned economist, bestselling author and public intellectual, thank you so much for your time today.

YV: Thank you.

ZR [00:32:35] And thank you for tuning in today. Please don't forget to join our alternate channels on Rumble Telegram and a podcast called Podbean. It is in times like these, where giants like YouTube, which is owned by Google, can shadowban and censor us as we are providing an alternative perspective to the mainstream media. Also, if you're watching a video regularly, make sure to donate today. Even though we have 142,000 subscribers, only a few percent donate to us on a regular basis. Please take into consideration that there's an entire team working behind the scenes from camera, light, audio and in the case of a German video is translation and voiceover. So if you want us to continue providing you with information that is free from governmental corporate interest, make sure to donate today. I'm your host, Zain Raza, see you next time.

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