



US Citizens in the IDF — Why Is Nobody Talking About It?

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Glenn Greenwald (GG): Next question. Michael Kirkland: "I hear and read next to nothing about the number of Americans who are part of the IDF destroying Gaza and enabling settlements in the West Bank. Why is this not a more publicised number? Not only are Americans forced to send tax dollars overseas for something practically no American wants, but we are forced to support an even smaller number of Americans, who are perpetrating endless wars. Your thoughts, please?" I have to say, there are certain things that we get so used to and we kind of stop realising how bizarre they are. It just kind of becomes part of the woodwork. And so we're like, okay, I guess that's just how things work and we don't really ever go back and analyse them because it's just been that way for as long as we can recall. And one of those things is the fact that huge numbers of American citizens born in the United States, exploiting all the benefits of American society, getting rich from American society, all the political benefits that come from being American, all the privileges, decide they want to go join a military and they don't go join the military of their own country, they go join the military of Israel. And there are tons of people like this. Jeffrey Goldberg, who's one of the most influential media figures, I would say for better for worse, but it's clearly for worse, who did critical parts of selling the war in Iraq when he was at the New Yorker based on total lies, now is the editor-in-chief of the Atlantic where he made the Atlantic ground zero for all sorts of hoaxes, Russiangate hoax, tonnes of others, just like the most kind of midwit people posing as intellectuals, that's what the Atlantic is for. But it's still an influential journal, midwits journals, people posing as intellectuals often are influential. He is somebody who grew up in the United States, supposedly American, a key figure in American media. When he wanted to go to join the military, he went to Israel and worked as an IDF prison guard in one of those Palestinian detainee camps that we began by discussing. He was an IDF soldier guarding Palestinian prisoners, detainees, in these dungeons. And afterward, he wrote a book when he got home, supposedly recognising the humanity of Palestinians. Congratulations, won a bunch of book awards, but it was all written from an Israeli perspective. And this is so

commonplace. The woman that was hired at TikTok while it was being forced into the hands of Larry Ellison and Marc Andreessen and a bunch of other hardcore Israel supporters and servants of the US security state, the ADL demanded that she be hired. She's an American citizen like Jeffrey Goldberg, who went to join the military, never joined the military of her own country, she's a IDF soldier; former IDF soldier. Now she supervises censorship on all matters relating to Israel and anti-Semitism and Jews.

I don't understand how you don't forfeit the privileges of citizenship if you go join a foreign military. And I'm not really particularly nationalistic. Nationalism doesn't really fully define my worldview. A lot of people are much more nationalistic than I. It's not nothing. I think nationalism actually is important as a limiting principle for governments as a way to keep them focused on what they ought to be doing. But it's not like anything that even cuts a little bit against the nationalistic identity, offends me, but that's so basic. If you are willing to put your life on the line, not for the United States, but for Israel, you're obviously to Israel, and if your loyalty obviously is to Israel why shouldn't you be a citizen of Israel and not of the United States? Why should the United States have citizens that are more loyal to a foreign country than to its own? It's obviously not healthy or good for the people who the government is supposed to be serving or living and being citizens of that country. So I find it unbelievable.

Now, is it true that we don't really know the number of Americans? Let's see; number of Americans in the IDF. An estimated 13 to 24,000 American citizens serve in the IDF, including both dual nationals residing in Israel and lone soldiers from the US. Americans represent the largest contingent of foreign nationals. There's a Guardian article, headline: Why do so many Americans join the Israeli military? Tens of thousands of Americans serve in the country's ranks, amid genocide, investing in and propagating occupation. There's an article trying to come to terms with this. You may remember that the last American hostage in Gaza that Trump devoted so much effort to getting out of Gaza, gave away a lot of stuff to Hamas and other things, gave a lot of promises, his name was Edan Alexander. We were told he was the last American hostage, the last American in Gaza held by Hamas and Trump freed him. Turns out Edan Alexander was a soldier in the IDF. He still is. He's a dual citizen, Israeli and American. His life is centred in Israel. They kind of had him come back to the United States after he was freed and rescued. I don't know why we called Israeli military soldiers in active duty who were captured on October 7th, hostages, they're clearly prisoners of war. That's what we always call soldiers who are detained pending the end of hostilities, prisoners of war; I guess we have an exception for Israel, if an Israeli is detained or kidnapped, even if they're from a tank shooting at people in a war, they're still hostages. They're hostages, such sympathetic figures.

So anyway, Edan Alexander was released, the last American hostage. He went to New Jersey to his hometown where – it wasn't even his hometown, it was his family hometown in New Jersey. And if you look at the video of this town welcoming him, I would say 90% of the flags – there were hundreds of flags there – 90% were the flag of Israel, maybe 10% American. I don't even think so, maybe 95% Israel. And then when he was done with this

little media tour pretending he was American, he went back to Israel and rejoined the IDF and is back in a war zone in Lebanon or Gaza. This is all throughout our culture. There was recently this report from 2024 that resurfaced. A lot of people were implying it was recent. It is recent. It's just not now, but members of Congress and both parties introduced a bill – I kid you not – this bill says that if you go join the Israeli military and fight for the IDF, if you're an American citizen, you have most of the rights or all of the rights and privileges and benefits that you would get if you were a veteran of the American military. They were trying to make it – I think it should be banned. How can Americans go fight in a foreign military? Some do, some go fight as mercenaries in Ukraine. But still, it seems so bizarre to me that if you want to risk your life, become a soldier, defend, go to war, defend your country, if you go and pick a foreign country that you want lay down your life for, to defend and not your own, you should be go and be a citizen of that country. If you're a dual citizen, you should lose your American citizenship. You're demonstrating that your loyalty is not to the United States. And if you're living in the United States and voting and contributing money and getting all the rights of American citizenship, but your loyalty is to a foreign country, how is that possibly good for the people who live in that country that doesn't command your greatest loyalty?

I find it somewhat mind boggling and it's so very common, and the fact that not only is it not stigmatised, they're people trying to encourage it and enable it and even reward it the same way they would be rewarded if they went into the American military and the Congress hasn't passed that, it didn't really make a lot of headway, but I wouldn't be shocked if it did and it reflects this kind of ethos, like so many of the hostages that we were told were American hostages were there in Israel because they moved to Israel or because they went to join the IDF. I mean, there's Americans living in literally every country on the planet pretty much sometimes thousands or tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands and so if a country goes to war with that other country and kills or captures people who are in that country because they live there or went to go join the military it's now the obligation of the American military, the United States government, to go and protect them or go to war or to avenge them?! No, that would never be true for any country other than Israel. And yeah, I find it remarkable how open people are about it, how they come back. They demand positions of authority, even though they've demonstrated with their actions very clearly, it's not even something wrong necessarily, if you have your loyalty to another country, okay, there's nothing necessarily inherently immoral about it. But why should you then get to come back and be an American citizen and start exercising rights and influencing the country, when you've demonstrated that that country is not your place of loyalty?

END

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