

Labour's verbal shift is a chance for us

Many committed activists dismiss Ed Miliband's new lines on Palestine as hypocritical or irrelevant.

The Foreign Secretary wants to rescue Labour's credibility with the left and that of the Two-State solution, which is dead. Telling us **"you were right"** for slamming Labour over Gaza but staying silent as people are arrested for saying *"I oppose genocide, I support Palestine Action"* is indeed pure hypocrisy. He won't call Israel's war crimes in Gaza **"genocide"** but cites the UN Independent Commission which did so. Miliband mentions "ethnic cleansing" but not **Apartheid or Zionism**.

But those who have fought for Boycott Divestment and Sanctions since the launch of the Palestinian-led BDS movement in 2005 need to go beyond exposing Miliband and ask whether Labour's declared shift opens the door, even a crack. We think it does.

Opening a crack

Miliband wishes to avoid any sanctions against Israel itself, even though the settlement and annexation project involves the entire Israeli state. He declared his opposition to BDS. In contrast, the TUC voted to support BDS. ASLEF also threaten to strike if the Spanish firm CAF running the Jerusalem Light Rail to the settlements wins the contract for ScotRail.

But Miliband has moved something. He announced a ban on settlement imports and *"action against specific companies and individuals who provide services such as construction, infrastructure, financing or real estate for settlement expansion"*. This includes Israeli banks which must now choose between business in settlements and business in Europe.

Eleven other countries are imposing sanctions. Dutch police challenged claims that certain goods are not from settlements. That could also happen here.

Gaza is on the agenda

The Foreign Secretary declared that the Occupation is illegal and cited the July 2024 International Court of Justice ruling, which covers Gaza and the West Bank. This means the UK accepts Gaza is illegally occupied. The UK must now take steps to end support for the occupation.

Miliband then said the UK would *"refuse all licence applications for arms and other exports that materially contribute to the occupation"*.

That should apply to the components for US-made F-35 jets sent to Israel and used to bomb Gaza.

In 2024 Labour knew Israel broke international law. But Defence Sec Healey told Business Sec Reynolds that suspending F-35 component licenses would *"undermine US confidence in the UK and NATO"*. Healey is now Chancellor, Streeter is Defence, and Reynolds is Business Sec.

We were right. We don't absolve Labour of its crimes or sit back and trust they will deliver even the sanctions implied by Miliband's words. We can fight to make it happen.

What You Can Do

- **press for Merseyside Pension Fund divestment from Elbit, Amazon, Raytheon... and Israeli banks:** tinyurl.com/mpfform1
- **Demo** 2pm Sun 1 Nov Catholic Cathedral.
- **Boycott Barclays.** Leaflet outside Lord Street branch Mondays 1:30pm. Tell the City Council to switch its account, like LJMU.
- **Boycott Israeli pharmaceutical TEVA.** Give your pharmacist a letter tinyurl.com/tevalet1
- **Tell your MP: demand a full two-way arms embargo on Israel. Use the words "ethnic cleansing", "apartheid" and "genocide".**

The illegal occupation of Palestinian Territories, including the siege of Gaza, began long before 7th October 2023. Under international law, an occupied people have the right to resist the occupation, including by the use of force. Targeted attacks on civilians (by both Palestinian and Israeli forces on 7th October) are forbidden, but nothing that happened on 7th October justifies Israel's continued genocide of the Palestinians.



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