

Palestine and Kashmir: A tale of two occupations

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SPEAKERS

Ryvka Barnard, Ben Jamal, Yara Hawari, Inshah Malik, Dibyesh Anand

Ryvka Barnard 03:00

Welcome to everybody who's joining us. My name is Ryvka and I'm a campaigner at War On Want and I'm very honoured and pleased to be facilitating this discussion today, Palestine and Kashmir A Tale of Two occupations. So before we get into the topic at hand there are a few general announcements that I want to make about how this session is going to be run. The first is just about sort of rules of engagement obviously we want everyone to feel welcome in in this space and for everyone's voices to be heard, so please do bear this in mind when you're engaging with chat or comment boxes during the sessions, don't use inappropriate rude or abusive language don't spam. You all know how it works. A topic about Otter so there's a live transcription service that that's being used for this session called Otter and attendees using this will have to follow a link and open the transcript, as a separate window. And I think that's going to come up in the comments box, box in a second. So there is live transcription for this session. And then the last thing to say is that TWT is free for everyone but it's made possible by contributions of its supporters. So if you're able to consider supporting TWT. There is a link theworldtransformed.org/support and I think that's going to come up for you to see also and please do. Um, click on that and help sustain the incredibly important work that TWT does all year round. So if that's clear and understood by everyone I think we can jump into the topic at hand today. So just by way of introducing our discussion about Palestine and Kashmir we're talking today about two situations of very intense military occupation. And while both are decades old. They've been more recently in the news. This year because of an intense ramping up of the occupations and flagrantly illegal steps by the occupation regimes of India and Israel and moves towards increased and formalised annexation and land grabs. So today in the discussion we're going to be giving each situation its own dedicated time but I think looking at these situations side by side is really productive. And there are four points of parallel that I want to just highlight to begin with and I think all of our speakers are going to refer to some of these points. The first one is just the lived reality of occupation and militarised repression faced by the people of Kashmir and Palestine, and we'll hear about that from from the speakers. The second point of parallel is a legacy of British colonial responsibility and current complicity and that's especially

but not limited to the UK arms trade both with India and Israel that enables these occupations. The third parallel point is the ideological connections between the occupying forces which I think is an area that that deserves a lot of focus and attention. And lastly, and perhaps most importantly for our discussion today. There is a parallel point in the history and current manifestations of people's struggles for liberation and for self determination, as well as solidarity with those struggles so I'm looking forward to hearing from our speakers today about, especially that last point how can people here in the UK show solidarity effective solidarity with these struggles. So, We're joined by very, very distinguished panel today I'm very pleased to be introducing them they're going to be speaking on the current situations on the ground but also on those solidarity movements that I just referred to and what we can do here in the UK. So each speaker is going to speak for about 15 minutes and then we'll have plenty of time for q&a at the end and I'll be looking forward to hearing from those who are who are watching and participating online. So our first speaker is Dr Yara Hawari. She is the senior Palestine policy fellow Shcherbakov the Palestinian Policy Network. She's completed her PhD in Middle East politics at the University of Exeter and she's a frequent commentator on many broadcasts and online news sites. So, I'm very pleased to welcome Yara and I'm going to pass it over to you now.

Yara Hawari 07:34

Thanks for introduction and thank you to everyone for attending this and to the world transformed for putting on this incredibly important session. I'm going to give an overview of what's going on in the ground in Palestine. Right now more of the key issues really facing the Palestinian people. Now, at the start of the lockdown. People in Palestine commentating that the world now finally understood what life was like for many of them. and this was particularly the case in the West Bank and Gaza, where curfews, closures of public spaces, the inability or difficulty in travelling, this lingering anxiety over perpetual uncertainty are really common features of Palestinian life, and I'm sure that the case for many Kashmiris as well and I'm sure my colleagues on this panel will touch upon. This new reality this very dystopic reality that the world has have many characteristics of daily life, that Palestinians have been suffering. As a result of nearly a century of ongoing settler colonialism. And I think it's perhaps pertinent here to define what settler colonialism is and to problematize the title of this session, which is Palestine and Kashmir a tale of two occupations. Settler colonialism is, perhaps, a much better tool, much better framework than military occupation because it defines it as a continuous structure of erasia its a structure that seeks to eliminate and replace indigenous people, Palestinians have been calling this Nakba, the ongoing Nakba, which refers to 1948 catastrophe. When Palestine was wiped off the map and replaced to the State of Israel. And I think many of you are watching this you know, many of the other facets of this continuous structure: ghettoization, displacement incarceration, bombardment, political repression. And you're all familiar with these images of checkpoints soldiers, walls, stone throwing, and there's also many images that we also see from Kashmir. So rather than repeat this I really want to give an overview of Palestinians in Palestine have been going through much more recently, and particularly since the start of the pandemic. And I also want to touch upon some of the political manoeuvrings that have been going on tangentially because I think it really encapsulates what it means to be Palestinian in Palestine. Now while there are a lot of parallels between situation Palestine and that in other countries around the world who are really struggling to get COVID infections, under control. The context of this harsh settler colonial regime, really represents a very formidable challenge is an absolute regime of control, and it has direct and detrimental effects, not only on Palestinian access to health care, but also on the very quality of the care itself. Now, it's worth

noting here that under international law, as a recognised occupying power in the West Bank and Gaza. Israel is responsible for making sure that Palestinians have the fullest extent of medical care. Now not only does it fail to do so. It also makes it actively difficult for Palestinians to do so on their own. Now, I'm going to briefly address the challenges that Palestinians have been facing this pandemic. And each of their social geographic fragments. Within historic Palestine, starting with the West Bank and Gaza who are confronting COVID-19 from a reality of military occupation. And this really weakens the ability of the Palestinian Authority and the people to respect to respond effectively to the deadly virus. We're talking about a 53 year old military occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, which has seriously depleted medical capabilities. And this has included the denial of medical supplies and equipment. For example, treatments like chemotherapy and radiotherapy are severely restricted making it basically impossible to treat cancer patients in Gaza. Whereas in the West Bank, it is very limited. And in such cases like this, Palestinians are at the mercy of Israeli authorities to determine if they can get the treatment that they need. The occupation the West Bank and Gaza has also led to attacks on medical facilities, staff and patients in Gaza, in particular the series of the bombardments over the last decades have really really depleted the hospitals there, and the medical and health infrastructure. Now in terms of COVID as it stands there are only 255 intensive care beds in the West Bank for a population of 3 million and in Gaza during the 120 for a population of 2 million in total between the West Bank and Gaza. There are 6440 hospital beds. So, in addition to all of this, we've also seen the Israeli regime engaged in much more insidious attacks against Palestinian attempts to confront the virus with clinics - COVID-19 clinics being destroyed, such as one in the Jordan Valley, and another one much later in Hebron, which was the hardest hit governor in the West Bank. Now East Jerusalem, they've faced similar challenges, East Jerusalem and its Palestinian residents have been subjected to systematic neglect since it was occupied in '67 and then it was later illegally annexed. The Palestinian health ministry is not permitted access to East Jerusalem and so Palestinians have to rely on the Israeli regime to provide services and funds which it does so inadequately because it diverts most of its resources to Jewish Israeli citizens in the city. And this has led to chronic underfunding, which has resulted in shortages in beds, equipment, and staff. Now the three main hospitals in East Jerusalem - Mukasa, Victoria and St. Joseph - there are only 22 ventilators and 62 beds for COVID patients between the three of them. And this situation of these hospitals in East Jerusalem has really been exasperated by the Trump's administration's decision to cut \$25 million in funding to the hospitals in 2018. And this has really left them on the edge of financial collapse and similarly the Israeli regime has also attacked Palestinian efforts in East Jerusalem as confronted by the virus such as shutting down clinic and arresting volunteers attempting to distribute supplies to impoverished communities. Now the Palestinian citizens of Israel are similarly neglected and marginalised by the Israeli regime they live in crowded localities and they live in enclaves that for the most part are separated and segregated from Jewish Israeli populations. This segregation allows the Israeli regime to deprive the Palestinian population in Israel of adequate services. Now this is a population of 2 million people 20% of population of Israel. And of that 2 million, 47% of that community live under the poverty threshold. So they face even more precarity and insecurity in a public health crisis, such as this. So, I've whizzed through this. I prepared quite a lot for such a short amount of time. But on top of all of this on top of the pandemic Palestinians have also been dealing with ongoing political manoeuvrings that have been that are attempting to entrench the Israeli project of taking as much Palestinian land as possible with as little Palestinians as possible. Now, in particular, we saw this whole discussion around annexation that came up this year. Annexation is very much an international law term, and it refers to when an occupying power extends its

sovereignty over an occupied territory. Practically speaking this is the theft of land, it's total control over it, and its resources and it usually involves the displacement of large swaths of indigenous or native populations. Now, when the mainstream media is talking about annexation it's usually only referring to the West Bank and Gaza, despite the fact that the theft of Palestinian land happens across the green line. Now for a lot of Palestinians who live this reality, it's really all equal semantics. Israel, essentially controls, and has applied sovereignty over all of the territory of what was once historic Palestine from the Jordan River Mediterranean Sea. But this year, it was a topic of interest in media and among politicians because the Israeli unity government between Netanyahu, and his and his rival Benny Gantz signed off on official de jure annexation, and they set the date of July the first as the date in which they were put it forward towards- to the Knesset, the Israeli parliament for a vote. Now throughout this period, we saw a lot of condemnation from international actors, about annexation plans. And for the most part these were very lukewarm condemnations in particular from the European Union and they were absolutely no threat of sanctions, and there was a no talk of any kind of clear repercussions. So July 1 came and went and the international community raised this huge sigh of relief, saying you know thank God, nothing has happened. And the lead up to it was a huge crescendo and everyone was begging this Netanyahu left right and centre not to do it. Not because they were concerned about the loss of Palestinian land and the violation of Palestinian rights. But I think because the jury annexation would be too difficult to defend and it wouldn't tarnish the international community. And it would tarnish the international community, and the international legal regime because they couldn't do anything about it. But it's clear to many, even though they won't admit it but Netanyahu will continue to pursue de jure annexation most likely in a staggered, and staged way. Starting with the main settlement blocks around Jerusalem and then later sort of larger areas of the Jordan Valley. For Palestinians annexation is for many Palestinians annexation is a non conversation, it's happened, it's, it's now a discussion, whether it's going to be formalised, or not. Now the recent Israel UAE agreement, which agrees upon the normalisation of relations between the two countries, and includes an agreement to halt annexation is being hailed by many as something that's very historic. Firstly, you know, deals and conversations and diplomatic engagement between Israel and a lot of the Arab Gulf countries is not anything particularly new, and I think that has to be stressed. This is a continuation continuation on a formalisation of something that has been going on for years and you can trace this even more recently on social media, by the increased communication and official pages, promoting dialogue between the two countries. Now there's a very. Secondly, there's a very important point about this agreement that has to be noted, there's an English version of the joint communique between the UAE, Israel the US. And, and it says that the agreement has, and I quote, lead the suspension of Israel's plans to extend its sovereignty. In the Arabic version it says the agreement has led to a plan to annex Palestinian lands being stopped. So we see a difference here suspension versus stopped. Now we've seen these translation issues many times before in which different agreements hold entirely different meanings and in different languages, particularly in British colonial correspondence where these false promises of sovereignty were made to Arabs. But we've also seen this lie of halting the Israeli expansion throughout the process history. Since the occupation of the West Bank, it has never ceased to build settlements. And this is a project may remind you all that was started in 1967 pioneered by an Israeli Labour government. So think about that when you're really trying to form alliances with the so called Israeli left. Now, I want to end here, because I've been talking for quite some time, with some concluding thoughts. I think what we're seeing today on the ground in Palestine is a continuation of the settler colonial policy as aggressive expansionism. But I don't want to give the impression that it's the same old, same old it is getting

worse, it's becoming more entrenched and every week I'm seeing with my own eyes. New colonial infrastructure that makes it really hard to contemplate a non-colonial future and liberated future for Palestinians. And I think we are at a critical juncture in Palestine, and also in many places across the world. I think importantly though when I think about Palestine, I try to think of it in a global context. What's happening in Palestine is not necessarily unique, and it's connected to what's happening elsewhere and these big structures of oppression the powers that will connected, and they all share so many links and so much communication with each other. And I think this is important for us to remember as these structures of power are communicating and working together to oppress us, we've got to work together to challenge that oppression.

Ryvka Barnard 21:46

Great thank you very much Yara and such an important point to end on their I appreciate that. A lot brought up in your presentation that I hope we can take up in the question and answer period too. And in the meantime I'm gonna introduce our next speaker, which is Ben Jamal who's the director of the Palestine solidarity campaign, very important solidarity organisation here in the UK and he's also a member of the British Palestinian Policy Forum. So Ben, the floor is yours.

Ben Jamal 22:20

Thank you. Thank you Ryvka and I want to begin by thanking The World Transformed for putting on this important event and I'm delighted to be there in particular, alongside our brothers and sisters campaigning for the rights of the Kashmiri people. I've been asked in the time allotted to say something about an answer to the question how do we practice solidarity with the Palestinian people, but also how do we address, respond to and resist the attempts to suppress activism for Palestine. A process that is happening not just here in the UK but globally. I want to begin just by picking up on one of the points Yara made in terms of the context and the dynamics and the discussion around annexation and I would say that when Israel did announce earlier this year its plans to proceed with formal de jure annexation of huge swathes of the West Bank, in accordance with a map outlined within the Trump plan the so called deal of the century. That did have some impact in shifting some aspects of mainstream political discourse we saw for example here in the UK, some of you will recall a letter signed by about 150 MPs, and peers and not all of them you would describe as the usual suspects calling for sanctions, if Israel proceeded with annexation and that had some significance because calls for sanctions have largely been framed and presented as an outside legitimate mainstream political discourse when it comes to Israel. And this was a result of the fact that the threat of annexation served to remove the illusion, which has created the rationale for passivity on the part of the international community for decades and this is the illusion that Israel's occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem and Gaza is temporary that there is a willingness or desire within the Israeli political mainstream to end this occupation, and a pathway to achieving that through a peace process and as Yara said although it is clear to anyone who's had their eyes and ears open that Israel's intention has always been to establish a greater Israel, encompassing, as she said, maximum land and minimum Palestinians, the threat of annexation in a sense made it impossible to sustain this illusion this country's destruction technique provided by the Oslo process the risk of course, was the if there were any perception that Israel was rolling back on his intention to annex the mainstream political discourse would return to a narrative of this peace process of the disallowing of calls for sanctions or measures to hold Israel accountable and attention would turn away to the reality, from the reality that Yara has just presented of an ongoing project of settler

colonialism, of the establishment of a structure of control that meets the definition of an apartheid state. Another de facto annexation, and we have seen that, to a large degree that risk being enacted in the reaction to the UAE deal that Trump has brokered between Israel and the UAE, which has been welcomed by the Labour Party by the UK government by most Western governments by the UN by the EU and the frame of that welcome has been that this has put on Hold on, or even represents a rolling back of Israel's intention to move to de jure annexation that's a myth. As Yara has outlined in the press conference immediately after the deal was announced, Netanyahu said this, and I quote, there is no change to my plan to expand sovereignty, our sovereignty in Judea and Samaria, in full coordination with the United States. And when he talks of Judea and Samaria he's talking of course about the West Bank. So these does, as Yara said, represent a moment of danger, a moment of urgency the Trump plan is founded on a framework of creating an alliance between Israel and Arab states that would lead to the normalisation of their relations with Israel and the sidelining of the Palestinian people and their struggle for the realisation of their core collective rights now when Trump's deal was announced, when it was initially announced Palestinian civil society, over 100 organisations, came together and issued a statement calling for renewed global solidarity to oppose this deal which they described and I quote, as nothing less than an attempt to liquidate the Palestinian cause entirely. And that call for solidarity begins as a call for understanding, and as a call for empathy understanding. First, first of all to recognise the truth of the injustice being visited on the Palestinian people, and the dynamics and shape of that injustice but secondly empathy calls for us to care about this, to recognise our common humanity, and to understand that an injury or a harm or an injustice to you is an injustice to make an injustice to everyone whether you are a black South African a black American, a Kashmiri or indeed a Palestinian. But solidarity of course calls us beyond understanding beyond empathy to action and the Palestinian people when reasserting their call for solidarity have also given us a guide to the action that they require of us they launched in 2005, a call for a global campaign of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions until Israel ended its violations of the core collective rights of the Palestinian people and in renewing that call for solidarity in the face of the Trump deal. They renewed the call for support for that campaign and for that movement and indeed they called for a global routing up of such activism. So to the question posed to me that I've been asked to address how do we practice solidarity with Palestinians. The simple answer I give is that we first educate and inform ourselves and others through events like this. But then we act, and we act in the way that the oppressed people have asked us to, to act. We follow their lead. And we do so because they're asked, also called us to act justly in accordance with respect for international law, in accordance with respect to conventions on human rights, and in full accordance with anti racist principles. And we recognise that not to do so. Makes us complicit once we understand the situation as being one of justice and injustice. Then we are obliged to follow the principles that Desmond Tutu articulated when he called for solidarity with the struggle of black South Africans and support for the South African led campaign for BDS in the 70s and 80s remember what he said in a situation of justice and injustice if you are neutral, then you are on the side of the oppressor and this was a message I heard consistently echoed by Omar Barghouti the co founder of the BDS movement earlier this year in pre COVID that is when he came to London and I accompanied him to a number of meetings at which he was asked the same question to which he gave the same consistent reply. What should we do, what can we do to show solidarity with you and your struggle. And his answer was consistent end your complicity. So when UK local government pension schemes, invest as they do over three and a half billion pounds in companies that support the infrastructure of Israel's illegal occupation and illegal settlement building and supplying weapons and

technology to the Israeli military that are used on Palestinian civilians in the commission of war crimes, then they are complicit which is why we call for a programme of divestment when UK universities, invest as they do over 450. million pounds in complicit companies that they become complicit which is why we support students on campus in their campaigns for their universities to divest, and when the UK government in the last three years alone grants export licences worth more than 400 million pounds of for the export of arms and military technology to Israel, then they are complicit and if knowing this, we do not take action we do not challenge that complicity then at an individual moral level we too become complicit. Israel can only sustain its regime of oppression, if it receives diplomatic political and financial support from complicit companies, complicit institutions and corporations, and consequently Israel knows that the biggest strategic threat to its ability to sustain its regime of oppression is becoming diplomatically, politically and financially isolated that's not just my analysis or the analysis of people like me those are the conclusions of the Reut Institute, an influential Israeli think tank, which in 2010 produced the report in which it identified the BDS movement as the greatest strategic threat to Israel, this narrative and understanding was echoed by Benjamin Netanyahu when in 2015 he tasked an entire ministry, the Ministry of strategic affairs with the remit of coordinating global action to delegitimise and suppress the BDS movement and the actions taken in this campaign include the use of lawfare - the efforts to have laws introduced globally, to suppress, criminalise or prescribe BDS action we've seen the law used in this way in the United States, more than 20 US states have introduced such laws we've seen it introduced in France in Germany and elsewhere. Here in the UK, the UK government made its first attempt to introduce such law when in 2017 it attached regulations to pensions law that would prevent local government pension schemes from divesting from a complicit company and Palestine Solidarity Campaign challenge that in the courts and earlier this year we won a victory when the Supreme Court ruled in our favour. However, perhaps in fact almost certainly in anticipation of that victory, the incoming Boris Johnson government included within its Queen's speech and intention to introduce a new anti BDS law, a law that would prevent public bodies from divesting or not procuring from companies complicit in violations of international law in any situation where the government itself has not introduced sanctions and it's worth noting that such a policy would have made any would have made it legitimate any action by public bodies in the 1970s and 80s to divest from companies complicit in sustaining South African apartheid because of course the UK Government never itself, employed sanctions against South Africa and PSC is working with a range of civil society organisations to oppose this law. Now, part of the rationale used for introducing such laws and an underpinning narrative used to seek to delegitimise a BDS and wider activism for Palestine is of course the argument that BDS is inherently anti semitic, and we have to recognise that a tool in this process has been a formal redefinition of anti semitism, and the promotion and promulgation of a particular definition the IHRA definition, which conflates certain types of narratives, and discourse about Israel with anti semitic discourse. So for example, there, there are examples which are attached to the definition 11 examples, some of which have been used, for example, to say that calling for BDS is inherently anti semitic because you are holding Israel to a standard, to which you do not hold other countries, unless you are simultaneously putting as much energy into calling for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against other countries if you're focusing on Israel, then you are inherently anti semitic and by definition that makes an organisation like PSC which focuses its attention on the rights deprivations being visited on Palestinians and inherently anti semitic organisation. Other examples that I used to suggest that to describe any of the laws, policies, or acts of the Israeli government as racist in nature or indeed to describe Israel as a state that meets the legal definition of apartheid is inherently anti semitic. That's

why the definition has been opposed by numerous bodies, including the Institute for Race Relations academic experts on anti semitism leading human rights lawyers. It's been opposed on the basis that it prevents or seeks to prevent Palestinians bringing the facts of their dispossession and oppression into the public domain that threatens the freedom of expression of all of us, but it also undermines, a consistent anti racist politics because one cannot be a consistent anti racist, unless you tackle all forms of anti racism, all forms of racism, including ideologies of ethno nationalism, and the policies and laws that flow for them. So practising solidarity for the Palestinian people in conclusion. Now involves us in actively resisting attempts to stifle that opposition, or that solidarity, including opposing pernicious laws, such as the one that the government intends to introduce here in the UK, while simultaneously, we refused to be silence and we continue to build campaigns including BDS campaigns and we do that because we are internationalist, and that means we always stand on the side of the oppressed and never the oppressor. We do that because we are anti racist. And as I said, we recognise that a consistent anti racism calls upon us to resist all doctrines and policies of ethno nationalism and their manifestations of institutionalised state racism, particularly in its most egregious form that of apartheid. And we do this because we are Democrats, and we recognise that the freedom of expression, the ability to argue political points and call for others to take action is the glue of democracy. That is what is asked of us of the Palestinian people, they deserve nothing less than that we continue to stand in solidarity with them to campaign alongside of them until they enjoy what is their birthright freedom, justice and equality in their historic homeland.

Ryvka Barnard 38:30

Thank you so much Ben. Such an important reminder of the principles of solidarity and and and the threats to the solidarity that we have now and I'm sure there will be some, some good questions in the question and answer period about how much more we can do to face that. So now we're going to switch focus a bit, and look at the situation of Kashmir. Our next speaker is Inshah Malik, an assistant professor at Kardan University and author of Muslim women agency and resistance politics the case of Kashmir so obviously someone with great expertise in this topic and I'm really pleased to to introduce you in Inshah and give you the floor.

Inshah Malik 39:23

Thank you so much, and thank you for giving this opportunity to be able to discuss what's happening in Kashmir right now. Um, I think what I want to speak to, in this conversation is more to do with the disappearance of Kashmiris from the International discourse about Kashmir and consistently kind of tried to speak back at how international politics positions Kashmiris with either looking at them as a bilateral issue and an issue that needs to be sorted out between India and Pakistan, and never really about the agency in the structure within which Kashmiris have grown up and I being one such Kashmiri that grew up in Kashmir. And we've seen the oppression and and and now the first annexation of Kashmir by Indian forces. It's pertinent to even ask the questions like, Okay, what are - who are Kashmiris and what are they doing and what is their agency are they different or the same in the solidarity movements per se, I guess, it becomes a sort of a, you know, consistent comparison between Palestine and Kashmir and I just speak to and reflect back at Palestine and understand the situation which is really grave even horrible, to say the least. But at the same time looking at Kashmir and its own intricacy it's very much important for those who are positioning themselves to speak for Kashmir at this point. First, first and foremost, for last 70 years of this conflict We have not seen Kashmiris representing themselves or their

cause internationally, and possibly for the reason that there are international discourses and also a sort of consensus. It's a matter that India and Pakistan in resolve by through bilateral talks. And it's a it's a difficult to pursue that line of thinking because when Kashmiri speak to India they say we don't you don't have an issue like your issue is non existent so basically the ultimate dehumanisation and if you look at, if we look back at what happened last August, it's a complete irreverence of what Kashmiris want, or what Kashmiris demand and somehow passing laws and passing different sorts of processes that completely neglect, Kashmiris are thinking and their agency as human beings. So what I considered as a perfect dehumanisation process. And per se, when when the question of Kashmiris arises they're always like saying Oh, they are either Muslims who have come from outside or somehow the settler colonialism works in a way that it can be justified that okay they can go to other neighbouring Muslim countries they don't have to necessarily insist on their Kashmiri identity and continue to demand demand justice in this case for that particular reason to actually then locate Kashmiris is outside of the discourses, the International discourses between India and Pakistan, you know, at least after night after this fight, what we are consistently seeing is that Pakistan is also unable to frame it as is a bilateral issue in India consistently says that this is not an issue between us this is a this is a issue that we have with Kashmiris and we'll sort it with them. And so this duality of how have concerns and questions of Kashmiri, human rights, addressed in an international system is actually quite, quite a big issue right now. So for that reason to actually locate Kashmiris in a, in a certain framework where they can come and we can represent themselves and their ideas and their history and their politics. It's important that there needs to be an international space that can engage with Kashmiris as independent actors. Like for instance in the Palestinian case we've seen that happening with the BDS movement like speakers. Ben was just speaking about. But in Kashmir's case, it's very much intermixed with the politics of what the two countries bring to the UK, and I think it's really important right now to disconnect from that. And speaking to that I want to talk about the 1857 Shawl Weavers Revolt against the Dogra Regime, which was installed by the British. This is the first instance or the historic moment in Kashmiri history where the shawl weavers, who were organised came out and and basically, opposed the taxation laws of the Dogra Regime, and there was the first instance of the formation of Kashmiri nationalist identity, or at least trying to talk about Kashmiris as a separate or somehow having aspirations that are different from India and Pakistan. And of course, to remember quite well that in 1857 we didn't have Indian and Pakistan in the first place. When you go back and trace that history shawl weavers came out and in opposition to the very brutal taxation laws, they cut their thumbs, and they say we're not going to weave shawls anymore because of the oppression that is faced by the labourers in that industry, and perhaps that first instance itself shows that Kashmiris have consistently organised themselves in is sort of the alternative worldview, or alternative level or question of solidarity question of sovereignty, where they see themselves as separate from Indian and Pakistan. And if we look at what happened after 1947 if we look at the International resolution the UN. The consistent need or the consistent pressure that needed to be put on international bodies to recognise that Kashmiris may have something different to say, having ignored. And I guess like at this stage, it's fundamentally important within the solidarity circles to recognise that Kashmiris do have opinions about their history about their culture about their political future. And those also needs to be included with an international culture, and not just facts, not just not just be spoken for but also be allowed to speak for themselves. This is an essential essential point that I wanted to bring home. In addition to that, what we see, after 1947 is those Kashmiris who did try to engage with the Indian system. Try to articulate a Kashmiri ethno nationalist movement or other nationalist movement, which consisted of various ethnicities, who have been living in the Kashmir

region, and try to use the Indian constitution to get to a point where they can pass a certain referendum in favour of Kashmir's independence. And what we see is like in 1953, Kashmir's then Prime Minister is arrested and put in jail for about 20 years for not being able to, you know, I'm not allowed to actually articulate his wishes, or the wishes of his people in a different way. So, even those people who are those Kashmiris who had engaged with the Indian Constitution and the system have repeatedly faced a sort of, you know, marginalisation or, you know, in the way Hindu settler colonialism and we'll call it or hindutva oriented settler colonialism has worked. It has worked by excluding Kashmiris, of course it's not a very different process than what happens in Palestine you know it's basically the whole idea of Hindu nation is constructed on the graveyard of Kashmir, it's like, where Kashmiris are non-existent dehumanised subjects who cannot speak of rights and who don't have even international systems or international procedures in, you know, accessible to them. So, with with what's happening right now, per se, perhaps like what is important to understand is that it's not happening just after Aug 5th, it has happened. For the last 70 years and even if we go back to the British instal, which was a Hindu government installed on a 95% Kashmiri Muslim population, you repeatedly see the same kind of pattern of Hindu cultural domination and Hindu civilizational domination on kasmiri Muslims do who do have had a very separate cultural identity from India and Pakistan. As we will understand and know that Kashmir, was one of the main trade routes on the ancient Silk Roads, and it had its own identity of engaging with a lot of Central Asian regions and Central Asian countries. And those engagements and those transactions have been completely cut off after 1947, due to the formation of the Line of Control that has divided Kasmir into two parts, one with India and one with Pakistan, and both sides, Kasmiris are unable to travel and meet each other and this active line control, I guess, is also important to mention is one of the most brutal line of controls the armies of both countries are stationed there so it's not a permanent boarder, it's something that changes waxes and wanes based on how much the fighting has been going on. And the fate of some Kashmiris living along the line control is that they may wake up today as Indians and tomorrow Pakistanis. So that shows how active active, the occupation and settler colonialism is in the region and how it affects the ordinary Kasmiris, their sense of Geography their sense of history and how they want to present themselves within the international system. And perhaps what has happened, just from last year then is a kind of paradigm shift in terms of, like, whatever engagement Kashmiris had before with the Indian system was completely sidelined. on August 5, they arrested- The Indian Government arrested all pro India politicians and locked them in jails and of course not to speak of those who are articulating political freedom in a different way. And what has happened and what I want to leave you with thought is that this sort of marginalisation and dehumanisation is increasingly turning into a cultural domination where Kashmiris are only allowed to speak about their politics or political future, if it is articulated in the language that is approved by the Hindu or Hindu nationalist forces in India, that the government will be run from the central New Delhi itself is quite threatening to understand or even imagine what the future holds for Kashmiris who are living inside, I don't have much time but I would be happy to speak more.

Ryvka Barnard 51:01

Thank you so much Inshah. So much important sort of historical lessons in your talk that I really appreciated and also a really important imperative to the solidarity community here. So thank you for that. Again a lot to bring up and pick up in the question and answer period. So, last but certainly not least we're joined by Professor Dibyesh Anand, who teaches at London's Westminster University and is

the author of a Hindu nationalism in India and the politics of fear, so I'm really looking forward to hearing what you have to say Dibyesh. Welcome to the panel.

Dibyesh Anand 51:41

Thank you so much for having me here. I mean, I'll follow on from what other speakers have been talking about. I mean, we take into account a shared understanding that something is happening in Kashmir, and Palestine and with Palestinians and Kashmiris that's not fair like it's unfair that some of justice, little freedom. In essence, we're taking that for granted. Now, the question for us is, I mean, and of course a lot of similarities I will talk about that. But think of India. So, India is a product of British colonisation and a resistance to it, right. So India emerges as a post colonial country on the grounds that colonisation is wrong, colonial rule by outsiders is wrong, and therefore what we need is we need to build a new country that's fair and equal for all citizens. That's the idea behind India that idea made any post colonial country. But what happens of course is that was India becomes post colonial what takes place with Kashmir is a full fledged colonisation. So, even before settler colonialism, there was colonialism, in terms of India and Kashmir. It starts with 1947, when of course Kashmir that was an erstwhile princely state gets divided between India and Pakistan divided between as Inshah pointed out, that is how Indian and Pakistan saw and portrait and that is how international community of states are not seeing international community of people not international community states because international committees essentially have a community of states, is seen as a sort of property distributed between India and Pakistan. And in this context while India and Pakistan are quite different, their approach to Kashmir is quite different from each other right. There's a commonality and that commonality remains one of the property disputes. So that's how they manage, and they haven't very successful in that because over time and Inshah, that's how majority of people are states in the world see, it's about Indian Pakistan so whenever there's an uprising in Kashmir. Whenever there's incidents of, let's say conflict in Kashmir or people dying people so india pakistan should talk to each other and solve it. Now the challenge with that of course is complete erasure of Kashmir from international discourse, but that's what Inshah and others have covered. So what I would like to focus on what is happening in India, that allows Indians to do it, but also live with it. Of course in recent times we find a rise of Hindu majoritarianism in India. The Hindu majority believes India should probably be a hindu nation. And because it should be Hindu nation, who are the enemies that we have to tackle. So, in my own book I've looked at the ways in which Hindu nationalists argue that the enemies of India, slash Hindu nation are Muslims, Christians to large minority, communist, secularists and in the past it was also westernised media. Now that westernised media discourse has now gone to the more or less media in the pocket of the Right, right. So now it's essentially Muslims, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Communists and secularists, who are the Muslims and Christians are seen as minority Communists are also seen as our outsider, left wing enemies. So who are the secularists? According to them secularists are those Hindus, who refuse to see India as a Hindu nation. So Hindu nationalism, itself, it happened almost hundred years, and the basis of Hindu nationalism is an organisation called Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, RSS. And RSS is essentially a fascist organisation, that's there since 1920, and the fascist prognosis in every way possible. Now, it has been there but was not that strong. Yes, what you had was secular nationalism of India had Hindu elements, no doubt, but it was still not Hindu in the same way, and in fact it was seen as enemy by Hindu nationalists. What we've seen in recent years is an assent to power by Hindu nationalists, the Prime Minister of India is Modi is a hindu nationalist, and he's a proud Hindu Nationalist. He's not he doesn't even sort of say that oh you know this that, liberal,

he doesn't even use the liberal language. So very clearly a Hindu nationalists, and they have a particular agenda, they do want to convert India into a Hindu nation. how do they do it? They do it by showing Muslims their right place. right places basically should be subservient. So in practice what's happening in India is conversion of Muslims from citizens to subjects to something that's quite similar to what happens with the Palestinians who are forced to be Israeli citizens said something along those lines. An important aspect and of course, Kashmir is not the only factor for the question is only one of the many things so they want to essentially make all Muslims, ambitious in Indian society, and of course to defeat secularism. Kashmir is in a way, the receivers to what they did last year in Kashmir by removing the de jure autonomous statehood, i say de jure, not de facto Kashmir was already practically annexed by India. They had hardly any autonomy in reality, but at least in theory, they have some autonomy, even that was taken away. And the question is not that the autonomy was taken away but it was taken away without consent. And what we find of course is what is then how do we describe any kind of political rule that governs a population, without any consent - it's colonisation, colonialism. So that's what we find. But what we find in August 2019, of course isn't next to the colonisation, not a new colonisation, and what has happened in India and we can look at India in Kashmir, while Hindu nationalists are, in a way, be extreme and doing it with blatantly without any shame. Indian was already colonising Kashmir since 1947. So while, in India, this whole debate about secularism Hindu nationalism and all of that. For Kashmiris there's hardly any difference between secular Indian nationalists right wing Hindu nationalists, and for that matter left nationalist. So the only difference would be the left Indian National so that Kashmir belongs to us, but they should be given some rights. The secularists would say, Kashmir belongs to us because the Muslim majority will be a secular country either Muslim majority state to show that we are secular, but they have no right for to ask for self-determination. Kashmir have no right to self determination, but the moment they are asking any rights we have the right to dehumanise them, so that's a difference. But from Kashmir's perspective its a full fledged colonisation. Therefore, within colonisation I've been in my own work I've been looking at Britain and a lot of Kashmir have been pointing out his political rule, military occupation, military occupation of a small but the important part. Another important part is paternalism. And this is where, I mean, we have to bear in mind that as we know it colonisation is never about simply - It's never about violence - use of violence - it's not simply about political rules territorial control economic control social control cultural transformation and all of that. It's also the representation. The representation of Kashmir as Muslims, and therefore separatist Muslims who are victims of Pakistani separatism. Muslims and therefore terrorists. Muslims and therefore threat to India. Right, so this is the kind of representation and Islamophobia is the heart of it. But not only that, and something that determine the current. So the eraser of Kashmir, even politically last year or whatever your your question politically in terms of the Indian constitution right and conversion of Kashmir from an autonomous state, in theory, to something that's completely Indian territory and therefore directly ruled by deli was practically justified in the name of liberation. Right. And it was justified, largely, taking revenge for what according to a Hindu nationalist Kashmiri Muslims the two Kashmiri pundits, Kashmiri Hindus. So, in a way, India's Indian state nationals portray themselves as defenders of the original inhabitants of Kashmir. The Kashmiri pundits. That's how the portrait of god that's not the reality but that's how they portray themselves like that they are the defenders of the minority they're different women they're defenders of all kinds of minority. So this attempted demonization of Kashmiri Krishna Muslims in particular, and valorization of Kashmiri Hindus, to this a Kashmiri Hindus the victim Hindu the victims and we need to take care of it. And that's how they are functioning in all that what of what happens is this acceleration of dehumanisation the

acceleration of violence. Now, if you look at resistance efficient resistance Kashmir ranges from non violence to violence, right. Ranges from what would be seen as secular to quite religious, but what Indian nationalist, and definitely Indian nationalist, not only Hindu. Indian Hindu and Indian secular nationalists have been good at. They've been good at reducing the entire gamut of Kashmiri resistance to Islamic Resistance, and Islamic violent resistance in particular. Why do they do it because it suits the agenda so the agenda of portraying themselves as victims of not being a coloniser but victims of Islamic extremism and that Islamic extremism, essentially, would imply that we are like Israel, like the US, like west, like China like every other country in the world with victims of Muslim separatism, Muslim chauvinism, muslim extremism, and Islamism and India has been good at that. In fact India has got better at it than the US since 1990s. What the US has been doing post-911 India has been doing that since 1990s. From the very beginning, there was an armed uprising, 1989 19 Kashmiri an armed uprising and elements, secular elements and also for independence from both Indian and Pakistan and those who were more religious oriented and wanted to join Pakistan, all kinds of India reduced everything to be think about joining Pakistan and Islam. Now, this argument made sometimes by those who. Kashmiri don't and so Kashmir. What India is doing is what Israel have been doing. What Kashmiri Muslims are facing is what Palestinians are facing. What, what it because this might be useful but we have to be wary, we have to be wary because - and this is what India has been doing now, regardless of what Israel has been doing. Even when India was very pro Palestine remember in 1950, '60, '70. It was quite pro Palestine. But Indian was doing exactly the same in Kashmir and therefore, while solidarity between Kashmir, and Palestinians and pro Palestinian and Kashmir movement is important, bear in mind that India was the original colonial power in Kashmir from 1947 regardless of what Israel does. and the second argument about what Kashmir experiences since 1947 in fact one could say Why not have a descriptor of what Kashmir experienced or what Uyghurs experience, what Kurdish people experience. What Palestinians experience and Kurds are experiencing. What we find of course is in the international arena there's more discussion now, of Palestine and Kashmir is almost the same that Palestinians are the favoured and favoured victims, and we need to have our approach, or our blueprint as like them to get international attention. We know that what was gonna bring growth. That's how separate, but this has limited, especially on what Palestinians are Kashmir facing. Will it be Tibetan. Uyghurs, who are occupied by China and colonised by China in concentration camps and everything. And why is that there's a reason for that. And the reason for that of course is the geopolitics geopolitics because that's where we have to be careful, who supports who, and who can speak with one says talking of Kurds and Palestinians. Like, what am I speak about a dropping of Uyghurs and Kashmir will upset China, China, Pakistan, which is seen as an ally based on Kashmiri geopolitics is very complicated, but that does not imply that we as activists, as follows do not at least recognise similarities in terms of colonial projects, taking place in different parts of the world, and those parts will include Israelian Palestine, India and Pakistan to an extent especially your work, China with the Uighurs and Turkey, you've got various other countries Ethiopia with the garden people. We have to recognise that we are dealing with a world which is technically in a post colonial, but in reality very colonial. Events very colonial we need to acknowledge and recognise, what are the different approaches, taking place in different parts of the world. And when you have a situation whether its in Isreal, India, China, the US and even Turkey, learn from each other while completing with each other's components collaboratively together. There's also a need for the victims, the colonised people to have solidarity with each other and support colonized people to have solidarity together. So coming back to India and Kashmir again, an important aspect is that India is facing a major crisis like India is facing a crisis like even the global

democracy that exists right in jeopardy because India is facing a real threat of not only fascism being in power but fascism becoming the hegemonic ideology. So what Indians need to realise is what happened, in Kashmir is happening will happen will happen, large parts of India and I think even from the perspective of Indians that it is very important to rethink and questions their own states approach towards the Kashmir. The story to push me to what that mean happening and, ultimately, build a Solidarity Movement, which is not about what we should do it because it hurts us although that would be a start, but about all human beings in the world being equal and I think we need to be genuinely post-colonial then we need to challenge these violent patterns and everything, and we need to have solidarity with all those who are colonised, Kashmir and others. Thank you very much.

Ryvka Barnard 1:06:21

Fantastic. Thank you so much, Dibyesh and I really appreciate the points that that you made on the sort of limits of the parallels and I think going back to some of the some of what you've said and other speakers have said about the principles of solidarity it's not about kind of trying to draw direct parallels but, but our sort of movements need to have those principles of international solidarity with the mind towards the sort of global political stage so very, very appreciative of your talk and of the points. And thanks to all of the speakers, I think it was a really fantastic presentation, and there's some really good questions that we have in the box. So I'm going to move to those questions now and I think yes we're going to bring off the speakers up for this. So, the, I'm just kind of looking at my notebook here at the. Actually, the first question I want to go with is a sort of specific question I think this would be for Inshah and Dibyeshand it was just a question about the disenfranchised disenfranchisement of the marginalised through the NRC and the CAA and if you can also tell us about what what is the NRC and the CAA that'd be very appreciated. Thanks.

Dibyesh Anand 1:07:47

Okay i'll go ahead with this. The NRC is the National Register of Citizens. In India, this whole discourse around Hindu nationalist political discourse that is not large enough infiltrator the foreigner is in chydoney Bangladeshi Muslim. There is a demonisation of Bengali speaking Muslims as not Indian, but as Bangladeshi. So this whole register. They were creating a new register for citizens, which would imply identify who the citizen who's not a citizen. Now, India has also passed law where if you are a non Muslim. You could be Hindu Christian Parsi. But Sikh and others from the neighbouring countries of India but India, you are technically then entitled to citizenship. So basically there's a move by Hindu nationalists to disenfranchise, we talking about 10. million millions of Bengali speaking Muslims, by identifying them as non citizens. Now what do they do with it what do you do with let's say, a 10 million people who are now no longer a citizen of your country, India, unlike many countries does not have has not signed Geneva Convention on refugees right so you can be refugee there also. So what you do is, of course, put them in concentration camp. Okay music concentration camp enables a detention camp, but the the detention camps like the Uighurs is a detention camps where you have put in there and you're never out. So you are dealing with the situation therefore in parts of India where there will be large number of Muslims will be recognised as not citizens and either they pay money somehow, and they go to corruption they get some kind of citizenship or they will remain within India in limbo without citizenship, but they can't be sent back anywhere because they have no other home except India. So that's an Indian Government.

Yara Hawari 1:09:39

Thanks very much for that. I'll go now to actually, Inshah, did you want to add anything on that point before I go to the next question.

Inshah Malik 1:09:50

No that's fine. I think division is covered.

Ryvka Barnard 1:09:52

Great. Okay, thanks. So the next question is, is a question about our situation here in the UK. And it's about the Labour Party capitulations on solidarity with Palestinians and solidarity with Kashmiris. So, so two parallel capitulations I guess you could say so if I can go to to Yara and then first and then move back to Inshah and Dibyesh, and this is in some ways about our the terrain of our solidarity here in the UK.

Ben Jamal 1:10:36

I'll start. I mean what what I would say first of all I understand the basis for the question and is there a legitimate fear about in relation to Palestine, particularly a shift of direction in relation to policy for Palestine the part of the context of that is that the last two Labour Party conferences have passed good motions in relation to Palestine and calling for action on part of the Labour Party. Yes, there's a legitimate fear I would say at the moment of interesting to hear what Dibyesh and Inshah say that in terms of direct policy and reversals at the moment we've seen that probably more specifically in relation to policy on Kashmir than we have on Palestine, but there is a concern. And part of that. It is unavoidable in answering this question. Not to identify a specific part of that concern is about how the narratives of anti semitism how the adoption of the IHRA definition has raised concern about the stifling within the Labour Party have the ability to speak out on Palestine is a real and significant threat. But in terms of at the moment actual reversals on policy. We haven't seen them but there are worrying signs so what what do we do about it I think someone said how do we address this there's no if there were simple answer that would be fantastic there aren't. But first of all we do challenge we have to challenge and respond to the attempts to try to delegitimise and exclude certain narratives about what Israel is doing and calls for action. And part of the way we do that is by direct challenge but also by being clear about our narratives. So one thing I would say, for example, there is an attempt to suggest that if you frame what Israel is doing is racist if you make analogies to apartheid, then that's inherently anti semitic and part of the way we challenge that is by providing clear information why such narratives not only legitimate but accurate and I would give a plug here I think this can be posted in the chat. A PsC is hosting throughout October on successive Thursdays a series of webinars that will learn precisely how the label of apartheid applies we have a range of excellent speakers including Yara. The second thing we do we have to operate strategically we look at where are the basis still support and power and leverage we have within the Labour Party, my assessment would still be although we're seeing changes in the dynamics at the base amongst ordinary members of the Labour Party, there is still intuitive support for Palestine, we see that manifested in many ways. So we have to channel that. And part of the way we do that is not get into a defensive stance of snatching where most of our conversation becomes about defending ourselves against narratives of anti semitism, but the positive promotion of policy on Palestine and encouraging that through giving appropriate motions to clps. The other area of significant strength we have in the UK is, is support within unions, 12 major trade unions

are affiliated to PSC have password policy on Palestine. They are under attack at the moment, there is a definitive attempt to get unions to row back that has to be resistant. And an example of what we do proactively the next ci you see so there is a meeting you see conference happening in September. There's a motion that will be proposed there that we expect to be past that takes forward the narrative and apartheid and reinforces and to, to you sees a commitment to take action to oppose complicity with Israeli settlements and occupation, that's an important motion and that's part of how we tackle this attempt to stifle our voices.

Ryvka Barnard 1:14:40

Thanks, Ben. Yara, Did you want to comment on that.

Yara Hawari 1:14:44

Just add to just one point, I'm not so involved in British politics, because I live in Palestine. But, you know, I do have some background there. But I would say this. I think the Labour Party leadership has not just capitulated on on solidarity with Palestinians and Kashmiris. I would say that they've capitulated on a whole host of issues. I would say that they've abandoned so many communities and groups who saw some kind of hope in Jeremy Corbyn's labour. So I think it's important to widen that that discussion, and how do we how do we address that I would say is not to abandon those those radical networks and groups that were formed as a result of of the revitalised revitalization of that that the politics of that that Corbin supported. And I would say to refocus energies and rebuild the radical left outside of stablishment politics. I really think this is how we convince the masses, there was such a such from what I could see from afar that is such a beautiful collaboration and communication and networking between so many groups with the hope that there could be a real radical change within the Labour Party, that might not be possible, but those groups still do exist and they exist outside the Labour Party, and I think we have to remind ourselves of that.

Ryvka Barnard 1:16:18

Thank you. Thanks for that. Inshah, do you did you want to speak on this point?

Inshah Malik 1:16:24

Yeah. Well, I mean, I only had one chance to speak to some of the groups. Earlier, like, earlier this year in UK, so I am slightly familiar with what happens with the politics of representation of Kashmiris within the circles of left in UK. I think one of the biggest challenges is of course to get past the ideological bickering between Indians and Pakistanis and or whoever else wants to represent Kashmir. I guess the voices of Kashmiris do get really stifled, and they aren't really heard, and for me as an academic as a scholar my interest has been that it needs to be more engagement with Kashmir's regional history. It's a, it's, it's actually its own position, outside of India and Pakistan's imagination of itself, because that's what will help us to then articulate a narrative, which is not necessarily, you know, very easily bracketed. If you're seeing like Islam, like I mean, the narratives of Islamophobia were like okay, these people they are all supported by Pakistan they're all jihadist so they're all terrorists, and they don't have their own standing for what they demand. And I think it's important, internationally to look at the Kashmiris, outside of those, those frameworks and actually shift the narrative from what it has become an a very dormant, or very sort of back and forth between, between the right wing and the left wing. And I think that can also create a possibility for a fresh conversation about movements and

solidarity per se. In general, and speaking back to what Ben and Yara are saying about in in case of Palestine. I think, increasingly, it's difficult to speak in a language that you can get clubbed under you know being anti this or anti that or I guess there needs to be a more cohesive and comprehensive narrative for the left which speaks about anti semitism in the same way as speaking for Palestinians or Kashmiris or Uighurs or let's say Kurds, without necessarily, you know, talking of, you know, without seeing them as issues that are against each other or in really like outside of the interests of each other. Because what I see is that the solidarity is also forming within these neoliberal world orders and the actors that are the key people for instance you look at the relationship between Israel and India it's a it's alarming like the kind of arms deals the kind of interaction the kinds of training and capacity building of each other and handling and tackling issues of customers and communities, I think there's a scope to have a much more contextualised and broader understanding of Kashmiris and Palestinians, and other oppressed minorities in the region and the possibility I really just see within left and not any other force. So I guess those are some points I think that needs to be considered in your case.

Ryvka Barnard 1:19:43

Well, thank you for that very useful and Divya ship I can go to you now and I'd love to hear your thoughts on this.

Dibyesh Anand 1:19:51

Labour Party right i mean there was. Now, of course. I mean, we often talk of pro this or pro that lobby. If there is one ethnic minority group that's very elected electoral very powerful in the Indians, right? people like myself, so when they hear and what is happening, of course, when they have all kinds of things. They Indians like myself, Indian origin, who are very clear that if you fighting racism here as a victim, then you have to fight racism in India, if you're fighting for equal rights you have to fight for equal rights of Kashmir broadly on both lines. And of course, then the Indians who would say that, of course, you're victims here but we are the Hindu, we support Hindu nation so what has happened is within the Labour Party there have been a mobilisation of pro Nerendra Modi Indians and making it very clear to Labour party that you will lose again and again, unless you sort of thought. I'm not being harsh with Labour Party I can see what they're doing, but I'm going to work because now they are stereotyping and imagining what Indians want, but in that process. They ignoring Indian muslimism. Let's forget Kashmir, we're just talking about Muslims, especially Muslims colonised by India. But they are the ignoring people like myself. Now, one thing to bear in mind with Labour Party and with that because there's no answer to it, and Inshah pointed or hinted at this something we have to bear in mind that even the Labour Party resolution that was pro Kashmiri. I mean, if you scratch beneath the surface you realise that it was not actually pro Kashmiri resolution was very clearly driven by a particular agenda, and that agenda in UK context and UK is the worst place of all the countries of the world other the India and Pakistan where the Indian Pakistani lobbyists, they have a crucial role in shaping the discourse. So a lot of times within Labour Party, you have a resolution that will say pro Kashmir but you scratch beneath the surface, it's very clear is India or Pakistan. So, you know, that's largely about Pakistan, and then the pro Indian lobby does the other way around. But sadly, unlike Palestine solidarity campaign and I think there's a lot to be learned from Palestinians and others in how to mobilise here, but I'll end with this- once challenge I know through, let's say, pro independence Kashmiri based here, the faces, they face, of course, the tragedy what's happening suffering of Kashmiri Muslims by Indian occupation, but they also suffer problems here by the pro Pakistanis, were they accused of being secular. They

accused of being not pro Pakistan handsome how pro India, and therefore demonised much in life. So this is a lot of that also taking place and if you and us beyond the labour politics election but as a political British media.

Ryvka Barnard 1:22:33

Thank you for that that's really that's a really important contribution I think to the thinking about the framing and understanding it. There's, there's a few more questions that came up, many of which were sort of addressed by the speakers. I wanted to if possible pull something out from from everybody, which is the point actually that that Yarra sort of started out by, which is a bit of a question of framing. But I heard all of the speakers actually say you know occupation is a part of this but there's an, an issue of the larger framing. And likewise, you know as a sort of parallel question. The the sort of limits and possibilities of international law so for solidarity movements for the liberation movements themselves, how to navigate that question of when is international law the base of what of what is being demanded. And when is it sort of a tool that can reflect some of it so I'm sorry that's big questions but I heard a little kernels of it and what everybody said so I'd love to hear more and maybe Yara I could start with you since you're the one who sort of put the question on the table.

Yara Hawari 1:23:52

Thanks for the question Ryvka. Yeah. So I think there are limits of international law, that we need to recognise and I think international should not should play a part in our struggle for liberation, particularly when it makes it difficult for the settler colonial regime to continue violating Palestinian rights. But I also think that we need to have a reckoning with it, especially in the Palestinian case you look back at our experience and we have yielded, very few results from from international law and that's not to undermine the continuous struggle and effort of Palestinian human rights activists and organisations which have been phenomenal, but unfortunately there's been a process in which Palestinian civil society many Palestinian organisations have been forced to adopt international law as our framework because of this donor atmosphere in which organised Palestinian organisations now can only survive with with foreign funding and have to compete for that foreign funding and that foreign funding, not only demands. International law as a framework, it actually goes beyond that and defines a lot more things from Palestinians, which actually violate international law. So it's a very vicious circle. So it's very it's a difficult one, but I think it should only play. You know, it should only be one tool in the toolbox, which Palestinians use to fight for liberation, particularly because international law has a very limiting discourse when it comes to Palestine, international law renders Palestine as you know the West Bank in Gaza completely ignores '48 Palestinians, it ignores the fact that there was a Palestine, from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea international law also doesn't provide for tools to fight against settler colonialism there is very limited, very limited discussion about settler colonialism in international law actually indigenous people, as defined in international law should have their rights protected so long as it doesn't affect the settler colonial structure. So I think there are serious limits, I think we have to recognise that I don't think it means abandoning international law, but I think there has to be a reckoning for sure.

Ryvka Barnard 1:26:19

Thank you for that and thanks for bringing that question or framing up at the beginning. Dibyesh, if I can go to your next because I know you I think you're teaching at two aren't you?

Dibyesh Anand 1:26:32

Broadly international law, international norms - I'll focus on international law international plan of how they help or hinder what Kashmiris want. I mean that's what I focus on in terms of against me, we talk to the international community international communities communities states, primarily through United Nations, the UN had passed a resolution in 1947 and '48 - 2 resolutions, which essentially said that India and Pakistan. They acknowledge self determination, but solve it amongst themselves, or something along those lines to what Indian Pakistan did around that time was, they spoke the language of self determination to an extent but very limited extent, but made it about who should own entire Jammu and Kashmir, and Jammu and Kashmir, of course includes not only Kashmir but other regions also. Now the innovative international law if you focus on largely about states then it becomes about human rights and of course, no right to sovereignty allows states to deny human rights. That's part of it for international law that becomes an ally for the Kashmiris, but it does not become an ally for the aspiration of those customers who may want independence from both states right so that the international apart is international. And third factor we have to bear in mind is that delicate China. China is a definite integral parts of Jammu and Kashmir occupied by China also you deal with a very complicated conflict and policy conflict is already very complicated so many actors but he also the other company in conflict where you've got two emerging powers, India and China, right, very powerful, they're huge they're big lot sizes, both with very strong sense of being victims of colonisation and victims of Western imperialism. And yet willingly implement it right. So now what international law can be life for Kashmir. When it comes to human rights, and it can be because, and I have this image which I wanted to show to you. And this is one of the many images I mean you can see calendar. It is from association of parents of disappeared persons. So between eight to 10,000 Kashmir disappeared by the Indian state in last year 20 years. You have got people who have been blinded, and this is the case of mass blinding in India pellet guns to blind people, torture, extrajudicial killing rape user sexual torture, all kinds of human rights abuses. So long, international and even technically domestic law of India should be an ally for Kashmiri right. The problem is in terms of Indian law, and this is where Indian gets by being a democracy, which is also similar to Israel again right. The only democracy in the Middle East, kind of. Now, in case of India. Normally, democracies concept to which people ask them or right from the state. In the case of Indian and Kashmir, democracy the facade used by India to deny any rights to Kashmir by saying we are a democracy. So the moment you say to India, but you know how can you have these laws that allow you to do these things. They're saying you can go to court, go to the court because they have a court system. Fine, Kashmiris can go to the court but they will never get justice, they have never got justice so out of eight to 10,000 Kashmir disappeared, but they miss it and we'll talk to those open District Court why there's not a single case where the courts have done anything. So what I would say is, to an extent, rule of law can be an ally for Kashmiri than other people. But we have to bear in mind that colonial colonisation was legal. Even I would say Holocaust was illegal when it comes to it what Germany did right, according to them that was law what China does it the Uighurs is legal, So I don't think beyond a point international or domestic law can be the main mechanism through which people can get their own freedom. So what we need to bear in mind, of course, is the basic idea that all people are equal all people have a right to be free. All people have a right to govern themselves as simple as that. And so long as that's not happening. That's not happening, with Palestinians, Kurds, Kashmiris, Uighurs etc. we need to fight for a better word, just world and a more free world. Thank you very much.

Ryvka Barnard 1:30:35

Thank you. Thank you. Yeah. In fact, I think we have two minutes up so I want to give an inch and then if you have just a sort of closing statement and then I just wanted to say something more about how people can continue the discussion. Inshah do you want to start.

Inshah Malik 1:30:54

Yeah, sure. I think I just want to end up with a couple of points that I have in my mind and those are mostly to do with like how you know how we think outside of these colonial colonised geographies is very different from what happens inside of Palestine or Kashmir. When we look at, for instance law again speaking back to what to Dibyesh was saying. When you look at the legal system in India. And of course, the one that was in place before, Aug five, like the court systems and everything. They are increasingly politicised and they are used to the benefit of the oppressor and or to the oppressed, and I think such is also the case with international legal system as well like it can be used it can be, you know, it can be kind of put to the test of how, how much it can yield for the ones who don't have power and I think it's very important for us to also globally, discuss what are the avenues for people who the law has failed in the context that we're talking about. I think that's, that's also part of the earlier point about you know what the left can do in UK and how you think through these difficult situations. Thank you so much.

Ryvka Barnard 1:32:18

That's a really great point to end on Thanks, Ben I'm going to give you the floor, as the last commentator of the session.

Ben Jamal 1:32:29

Okay, thank you. I'll just finished one in one quick comment. I'll concur with what's being said I think about the limitations of law, In particular what Yara said about its international application in Palestine it speaks to certain aspects of the injustices that have been visited on the Palestinian people, but not to all and of course, we also have the problem, which is why people become frustrated with using the lever of international law, about how is it implemented and what are the dynamics of power that exists within the institutions that are there to implement international law, my view on that and I guess is as a broader thing that in our campaigning and how we use international law we need to think strategically and recognise the limitations, but we recognise where it adds weight, and takes on the agenda of justice forward. An example might be a campaign we're running at the moment to ask local government pension schemes to divest, and we want to talk to them about all of the companies they invest in that are complicit, but we recognise that that conversation can begin and have energy when we are focused on those that have been identified by the UN database that's been complicit we don't regard that as anything like an exhaustive list but we know we have leverage there, we know we have such strategic leverage. And my final remark I think on the importance of events like this and maybe it's going back to something Dibyesh said at the beginning of his remarks. You know, we use international law strategically but we are appealing to broader notions to notions of justice to fundamental notions of rights. We recognise the synergy in our, in our causes, and where we can support each other in our struggles we recognise the differences but the fundamental synergy in our struggles is that they are both struggles against unjust systems of power that make appeal to notions of ethno nationalism on the

notion that rights can be allocated to people based on ethnicity, religion, culture or race and we oppose that fundamentally, and we do so from core principles of our common unit humanity and that is what always has to be at the heart of our struggle, and where international law supports that we use it as a leverage that we never lose sight of those core principles.

Ryvka Barnard 1:34:52

Thank you, Ben. Again, a great point to end on. So, we're two minutes over right now but I wanted to thank the, the speakers who are who are still with us here. It's been a really great discussion and I learned a lot and have a lot of thoughts, to go away with for folks that are watching, if you want to continue this discussion, there is a dedicated space on the TWT community forum and I think there's a link in the, in the chat box that shows how you can do that. Or it's actually on the screen there. So that's a way to kind of keep the conversation going. Another way also is to attend other TWT20 events. So please do register for other events they are filling up quickly. And you can attend more events like this one and others, and you can go to the registration box which I think is going to show up also. And lastly, if you enjoyed this session and want to help sustain the work that TWT is doing both in this festival and beyond. Please do consider supporting TWT. Again, the link will be posted but it's theworldtransformed.org/support. It's a really important way to bring us together bring different movements together and have these conversations that we so desperately need during this time. So thanks very much for everyone who's who's been here has been commenting and hope to see you at some more TWT events.