

# Are there any “red lines” for the French “anti-Zionist” left and far left?

(10 October 2023)

The expression "red line" was used twice by the left-wing journalist Dominique Vidal<sup>1</sup>, in a program on "Le Média" (a TV channel linked to the "La France Insoumise", a left-wing national-populist movement) entitled "ISRAEL-PALESTINE: HOW DID WE GET THERE?"<sup>2</sup> and in a program on "Regards" (a YouTube channel and publication linked to the French CP) entitled "Israel-Palestine: "Inhumanity and war crimes are red lines"<sup>3</sup>.

Journalists and commentators obviously have to take into account the difficulty of knowing, today 10 October, the exact scale and circumstances of the murders of civilians committed by Hamas on 7 October (although the many videos shot and propagated by the murderers are incriminating...). So we can understand the caution of Dominique Vidal, Xavier Guignard<sup>4</sup> and their interviewers at "Le Media" and "Regards", who don't have all the necessary information to express their opinion. We can also understand, as Dominique Vidal said, that it is pointless to add fuel to the fire – at least if we sincerely want to achieve a just peace for the Palestinian and Israeli peoples.

But the meaning of the word "red lines" as used by Dominique Vidal in these two programs, with the agreement of his left-wing interviewees, is quite astonishing. **For him, Xavier Guignard and the two journalists who interviewed them, the red line has not yet been crossed on 7 October. It will only be crossed IF Hamas executes the hostages in the coming days or months.**

This incredible prudishness in the face of the massacre committed by Hamas on 7 October shows how difficult, if not impossible, it is for the left<sup>5</sup>, or the far left, to clearly denounce Hamas as a far-right, anti-working-class, pro-capitalist movement that has nothing to do with defending the basic interests of the Palestinians.

The imprisonment or liquidation of Hamas's political opponents in Gaza; this movement's delirious anti-Semitic rhetoric and its anti-communist conspiracy charter (belatedly and partially amended) ; Hamas's repeated suicide operations in Israel – none of this is a red line for these "anti-Zionists"?

**No, as far as they're concerned, they need to wait for more individual or collective murders of civilians to find out whether or not Hamas is a respectable national liberation movement or... what?**

This cowardice on the part of the left and far left on the question of "red lines" **is exactly the same** as their cowardice on the murders, in France, of Ilan Halimi (2006), Sarah Halimi (2017) and Muriel Knoll (2018), the attacks on the Ozar Hatorah school in Toulouse<sup>6</sup> (2012) and the

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<sup>1</sup> Dominique Vidal is a left-wing journalist and author who worked for the CP press during 20 years and is presently the director of *Le Monde diplomatique* (a successful monthly which combines Gaullist and “leftist”-third worldist views).

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eP7C\\_o2OCfE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eP7C_o2OCfE)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8Wn4f1JkYA>

<sup>4</sup> Xavier Guignard is a university teacher who taught in 2014 at Al-Quds Bard Honors College (Abu Dis, Palestine) and has become trendy in leftwing media since the 7 October.

<sup>5</sup> I'm not interested in people on the right or far right, because they've never cared (and never will) about Jews, Israelis or Palestinians.

<sup>6</sup> See my article: «Will the French Far Left learn from Toulouse murders?» (2012, <https://nfnf.eu/spip.php?article618> ) and more generally “How to identify the sources of Left anti-Semitism in order to fight it” <https://nfnf.eu/spip.php?article619>

Hypercacher (2015). Each time, the left and the far left squirm, uncomfortable and embarrassed, wondering whether or not these attacks and murders are really anti-Semitic, or whether they are the work of "lone wolves", "madmen" or just vile "news stories".

As Dominique Vidal rightly says: "**Inhumanity and war crimes are red lines**", and on both sides of the Israelo-Palestinian conflict. Unfortunately he doesn't apply this maxim to French reality : he has always played down anti-Semitism in France, and, this week, he was even going to take part in a debate entitled "Antisemitism: fighting fire with the arsonist? Or how Israel exploits anti-Semitism <sup>7</sup>"...

Red lines have been crossed, a long time ago, by the Israeli state, which refuses to accept a fair territorial division between the two peoples, which persecutes Israeli anti-Zionists on its territory, which discriminates against and oppresses Palestinians and Israeli Arabs, and which has prevented any peaceful solution for decades; and red lines have been crossed by the totalitarian, anti-communist and anti-working-class Palestinian organisations, such as Hamas or Islamic Jihad.

But one only has to **listen to the statements of Hamas** <sup>8</sup> : according to the head of political and international relations of Hamas, **this organisation did not kill ANY civilians**, because the people killed on 7 October were all "*soldiers*" or "*settlers*". Since all Israelis do their military service and are reservists up to the age of 40 (and even 54 for certain specialities), and since even Orthodox Jews, who are exempt from carrying weapons, advocate and practise colonisation, all Israelis are legitimate targets for Hamas. As for babies and children, they are future settlers and future soldiers. Why is this totalitarian, anti-Semitic, exterminationist, logic so difficult for the left and the far left to recognise?

And when the politist Xavier Guignard tells us that the leaders of Hamas may have planned a kind of collective "*suicide*" of the movement's leadership (since they know they are condemned to death by Israel) in order to sacrifice themselves in the service of the Palestinian cause, we see that the left is really prepared to say anything to justify its complacency towards the nationalist, totalitarian, anti-communist Hamas!

10 October 2023

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<sup>7</sup> This debate was due to take place on October 14, 2023, at the Université Libre de Bruxelles. It was postponed because its subject was deemed "*out of step*" (*sic*) by its organizers. On the platform: the "usual suspects" who deny the importance of anti-Semitism in Europe, or claim that there has never been a serious link between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism: Dominique Vidal and Alain Gresh of *Le Monde diplomatique*, the Green senator Esther Benbassa, etc. <http://www.institut-liebman.be/index.php/2023/09/06/antisemitisme-combattre-le-feu-avec-le-pyromane-ou-comment-israel-instrumentalise-lantisemitisme-journee-detude-14-octobre-2023-ulb/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Egipqa0ZhUk>

## Is Hamas a mysterious “black hole” for the “left”? (26/10/2023)

As far as Hamas is concerned, it seems to me that there are, roughly speaking, 5 competing interpretations:

1) **Those who think that Hamas is an original national liberation movement, with a secondary religious component**, and which must be an interlocutor in the negotiations with Israël. The former Trotskyist leader Edwy Plenel (now the director of “*Mediapart*”, an online left-wing “independent newspaper,” with 200,000 subscribers) explains, at the same time<sup>9</sup>, that Hamas is generously financed by Qatar and is “*instrumentalized by Israel*” but it is also a “*political movement with a social base*” (?), with “*authoritarian practices*” (?) that is “*one of the components, now dominant, of Palestinian nationalism*<sup>10</sup>”. What a hypocrite !

The proponents of this timid "thesis", who carefully avoid questioning the meaning of the term "Islamic Resistance Movement" (*Harakat a Moukawama al islamiya* or Hamas, whose name does not mention the "*Palestinian nation*"), range from the far left to moderate left-wing intellectuals or "progressive" academics who invoke "*complexity*" and "*context*", two magic words for adopting the attitude of the "great thinker."

In the end, they all share a classic anti-imperialist interpretation (meaning only – or mainly – hostile to American and European imperialism<sup>11</sup>) – or favorable to the “*global South*”, to use the latest fashionable expression. Thus, it ranges from those who idealize Hamas as a “vanguard” in the struggle against Western imperialism, or as part of a wider, nebulous “revolution,” to those who simply want to grant the Palestinians democratic rights in the form of a state, whatever its territorial dimensions. As a result, we are dealing with advocates of both the "one-state solution" and the "two-state solution."

This “left” has another thing in common: **it refuses to update the critique of religions inaugurated by the Enlightenment** and continued by the founding fathers of Marxism and anarchism. This refusal does not apply to Judaism, which the “anti-imperialists” consider particularly pernicious. Admittedly, it spares Christianity (the "Christian left" should not be discouraged), but above all it spares Islam<sup>12</sup> in the name of the struggle against so-called “islamophobia”.

This confused and unprincipled "anti-imperialist" movement uses a whole arsenal of dubious arguments:

a) no other policy than armed struggle is possible in Palestine and the Occupied Territories;

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<sup>9</sup> «As the same time» is President Macron’s favourite motto.

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/international/221023/israel-palestine-la-question-morale?utm\\_source=SC&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Mailing\\_20231024\\_Partipris\\_Edwy&utm\\_content=&utm\\_term=&xor=EREC-1025-\[SC\]%20&M\\_BT=404186359348](https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/international/221023/israel-palestine-la-question-morale?utm_source=SC&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Mailing_20231024_Partipris_Edwy&utm_content=&utm_term=&xor=EREC-1025-[SC]%20&M_BT=404186359348)

<sup>11</sup> See my short article (in French) on anti-imperialism <https://nfnf.eu/spip.php?article495> .

<sup>12</sup> As far as Islam is concerned, both Sartre and Foucault paved the way long ago, with Sartre declaring in the late 1970s: "*I have no religion, but if I had to choose one, it would be that of Shariati*" (a Muslim philosopher who wanted to fuse Islam, nationalism and socialism, and who influenced both fundamentalist religious theorists and Iranian Marxists); as for Foucault, he wrote that Islam, in 1978, had not been "*the opium of the people, precisely because it has been the spirit of a world without spirit*". Today's political regression of the French left has come a long way.

b) "*the Israelis*" (or "*the Zionists*") pay for their failure to mobilize mass support for the Palestinians and their supposed indifference, or even their "*systemic racism*" and "*white supremacism*" – in other words: "You sow the wind, you shall reap the whirlwind";

c) the Israeli army, an "*outpost of American imperialism*", "*the most formidable militaries in the world*", is waging an "*asymmetrical*" war against the under-armed Hamas militants (note that, after the of 7/8 October pogroms, those making this argument were quick to applaud the sophisticated technological knowledge and military and strategic capabilities of Hamas<sup>13</sup>);

d) Hamas pogroms are the normal, inevitable consequence<sup>14</sup> of the daily and constant violence of the Israeli state and of the religious and extreme right-wing settlers;

e) Hamas is a resistance movement reminiscent of the anti-Nazi resistance<sup>15</sup> ;

f) the West, Europe, or both, are the main culprits behind the Hamas pogroms. The inimitable Varoufakis declared: "*Those who try very hard to get people like me, or the DIEM25 movement, to condemn the attacks by Hamas guerrillas will never get it. And they will never get it for a very simple reason. [...] The criminals here are not Hamas, not even the Israeli settlers who are killing Palestinians. The criminals are Europeans. Us*<sup>16</sup>" ;

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<sup>13</sup> Like Joseph Massad, a well-known anti-Zionist professor at Columbia University in the U.S.: "*The sight of the Palestinian resistance fighters storming Israeli checkpoints separating Gaza from Israel was astounding*" <https://electronicintifada.net/content/just-another-battle-or-palestinian-war-liberation/38661> ) Or like *Socialist Worker*, the weekly paper of the neo-Trotskyist SWP party, which headlined "*Rejoice as Palestinian resistance humiliates racist Israel*" on 9 October.

<sup>14</sup> Thus Norman Finkelstein was able to write: "*Gaza is only playing by the book written by Israel.*" ([https://normanfinkelstein.substack.com/p/hostages-learning-from-israel?utm\\_campaign=post&utm\\_medium=web](https://normanfinkelstein.substack.com/p/hostages-learning-from-israel?utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=web)) joined by 31 student associations at Harvard University who claimed that Israel was "*entirely responsible for all the violence*".

Yet the national liberation struggles of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s (including the Sandinistas) proved otherwise. Although these struggles were sometimes marked by massacres of innocent civilians, their leaders **never theorized or advocated the genocide of colonizers** (or "*infidels*" and "*crusaders*") as do jihado-terrorist movements, from Hamas to ISIS.

<sup>15</sup> The neo-Trotskyist academic Gilbert Achcar dared to declare: "*the only reason why such quasi-desperate act of bravery as Hamas's latest operation does not actually happen more frequently is the huge military disproportion between the Palestinian David and the Israeli Goliath. Gaza's latest counter-offensive brings indeed to mind the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising*", equating anti-Nazi Jewish resistance to the Third Reich in 1943 with a massacre of Jewish civilians by Islamists in 2023. Again, the technique of "Holocaust inversion" ([https://gilbert-achcar.net/on-hamas-october-offensive?fbclid=IwAR3GEWJi8Mufz\\_zcg-P99mEjwMxod6HGqffw3c5iRHk2BPgGD48I\\_2IHHs](https://gilbert-achcar.net/on-hamas-october-offensive?fbclid=IwAR3GEWJi8Mufz_zcg-P99mEjwMxod6HGqffw3c5iRHk2BPgGD48I_2IHHs) )

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nfi4k9sKiBU> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nfi4k9sKiBU> . and his explanations here : <https://www.yanisvaroufakis.eu/2023/10/15/why-i-refuse-to-condemn-hamas-or-the-israeli-settlers-but-instead-insist-that-the-culprits-for-the-atrocities-in-israel-palestine-are-us-europeans-and-americans/> . Varoufakis is a former finance minister in the coalition government between Syriza ("left" party) and ANEL, a far-right, nationalist, anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim, homophobic and anti-immigrant party. After resigning from the Greek government, he tried to restore his image by creating the DIEM25 movement "*to democratize Europe and make our Green New Deal a reality*", according to his website. DIEM25 obviously stood in solidarity with Jeremy Corbyn in 2020, as did the social-chauvinist "La France Insoumise". On Corbyn, see this article written by Matthew Bolton: <https://fathomjournal.org/what-corbyns-favourite-sociologists-greg-philo-and-mike-berry-get-wrong-about-contemporary-antisemitism/>

g) Israel is preparing to commit a "*genocide*"<sup>17</sup> in Gaza, a favourite theme of the well-known "Holocaust inversion" technique. This technique consists of describing Israel, the Israelis and the Jews as Nazis, or future Nazis; explaining that "*the Jews*" (or "*the Zionists*") have all gone from being oppressed to being oppressors, that "*the victims have become the executioners*". This "argument" is used by left-wing anti-Zionists as well as far-right, Holocaust denier, anti-Zionists. It is generally used by people who, through ignorance or cynicism, confuse concentration camps, labor camps and death camps during the Second World War. Thus, they take the liberty of comparing Gaza to an "*open-air concentration camp*"<sup>18</sup> (with a strong connotation of an extermination camp); in March-April 2002, they compared the Tsahal attack on the Jenin refugee camp to the Nazi attack on the Warsaw ghetto insurgents ; and, in October 2023, they compared the Hamas genocidal attack on the kibbutz and rave party<sup>19</sup> to the "*Warsaw Ghetto uprising*"<sup>20</sup> . Infamy repeats itself.

These 7 pseudo-"arguments" are part of an "anti-imperialist" interpretation whose distant sources, within the Western Left, go back to the theses of Lenin, the Bolshevik Party and the Communist International, which were defended at the Baku Congress (or First Congress of the Peoples of the Orient) in September 1920. This tradition was continued and expanded after the Second World War by French intellectuals such as Franz Fanon, Jean-Paul Sartre and Michel Foucault, and above all by political leaders such as Ho Chi Minh, Fidel Castro, Amilcar Cabral, Thomas Sankara, Che Guevara and Nelson Mandela, not to mention the Afro-American movement around Malcolm X and the Black Panther Party (Eldridge Cleaver, Huey Newton, Angela Davis). And even more recently by the supporters of Chavez, Lula, Evo Morales and others<sup>21</sup>, or feminist intellectuals such as Judith Butler <sup>22</sup> .

2) **Those who equate Hamas with a fascist or clerical-fascist movement**, drawing on Trotsky's analysis of the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1920s, such as the Alliance for Workers

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. these declarations of «anti-Zionist» jews : <https://www.revolutionpermanente.fr/Tribune-Nous-sommes-juifs-antisionistes-et-nous-voyons-un-genocide-se-derouler-a-Gaza> ; of a leader of the Spanish Podemos movement : [https://www.francetvinfo.fr/replay-radio/le-club-des-correspondants/espagne-la-dirigeante-de-podemos-accuse-israel-de-tentative-de-genocide-dans-gaza-et-exacerbe-les-dissensions-a-gauche\\_6097626.html](https://www.francetvinfo.fr/replay-radio/le-club-des-correspondants/espagne-la-dirigeante-de-podemos-accuse-israel-de-tentative-de-genocide-dans-gaza-et-exacerbe-les-dissensions-a-gauche_6097626.html) ; and the AFPS (a Palestine solidarity association) <https://www.france-palestine.org/Israel-se-prepare-a-commettre-un-genocide>

<sup>18</sup> Coined by the Trotskyist Lutte Ouvrière presidential candidate Nathalie Arthaud, this expression was taken up by the Europe Ecologie Les Verts candidate Eva Joly in the 2012 presidential elections.

<sup>19</sup> This rave party is also used by left-wing commentators against the victims: "Why were they partying three kilometers from Gaza? Those Israelis are so reckless" – the implication being that they've been punished for their supposed indifference to Palestinian oppression.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.chroniquepalestine.com/gaza-2023-notre-soulevement-ghetto-varsovie/>

<sup>21</sup> For a theoretical analysis of anti-imperialism inspired by the Frankfurt School, see Marcel Stoetzler's article: [https://www.social-ecology.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Stoetzler\\_Critical\\_Theory\\_and\\_Anti-imperialism-1.pdf](https://www.social-ecology.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Stoetzler_Critical_Theory_and_Anti-imperialism-1.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> "Yes, understanding Hamas, Hezbollah as social movements that are progressive, that are on the Left, that are part of a global Left, is extremely important." (2006) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amJNlcSNPco&t=357s> . Judith Butler is clearly unaware of what the Palestinian feminists Rama Hammami ["Women, the Hijab and the Intifada"], Manar Hassan ["On fundamentalism in our land"] and Islah Jad ("Women's Activism and Fundamentalist Movements") wrote, already thirty years ago, in 1991.

Liberty<sup>23</sup> (AWL), a small heterodox group; those who have developed their own analysis of Islamism, claiming in particular the heritage of the Italian workers' autonomy, such as "Mouvement Communiste"<sup>24</sup> ; and finally a Trotskyist group such as "Lutte Ouvrière", which has never had any illusions about Islamist currents either, describing them as "*bourgeois reactionaries*"<sup>25</sup> – a rather short analysis but which goes to the essential. It should be noted that LO has so far underestimated anti-Semitism on the left, unlike the two groups mentioned above, which are much more subtle and "awoken" on the subject.

3) **Those who analyze Hamas as a fascist, Nazi, organization and political Islam as a "new fascism" or a "new Nazism", from a right-wing or even extreme right-wing perspective, but also from a social-democratic perspective.** These range from the Republican Party in the United States to the CRIF (Representative Council of Jewish Institutions in France<sup>26</sup>) and "Les Républicains"<sup>27</sup> in France, and include a number of moderate intellectuals from the centre-right and centre-left. These people generally believe in the thesis of the "conflict" or (more often) of the "war of civilizations" – in a more or less open, and more or less extreme form.

4) **Those who consider that Hamas is a "totalitarian" movement without delving too deeply into this notion ; or those who use the same concept of totalitarianism and go further by declaring that everything religious is totalitarian** (classical anarchists and probably many people who can't decide which concept to use).

5) **A tiny minority of very radical activists who think that the national question has been out of date for a century.** So anything that isn't 100% communist is reactionary, with all the negative qualifiers possible, but without really engaging with the issues raised by political Islam.

The discussion is further complicated by the fact that the notion of political Islam includes many other organizations which may, or may not, use violence, or that are (or have been) in power. On this more general question, we find the same divisions: from those who believe that political Islam is the ideology of peoples oppressed by "the North", or by the West, to those who believe that political Islam is the new fascist and/or totalitarian ideology, from Turkey to Iran, via the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamic State and the jihadist terrorist movements. In between these two positions are those who explain that Ennahda in Tunisia, the FIS in Algeria,

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. the following booklet <https://workersliberty.org/ajs>; articles written by Clive Bradley (<https://www.workersliberty.org/story/2008/07/11/where-does-political-islam-come> ); Sarah Ley (<https://www.workersliberty.org/story/2017-07-26/briefing-islamic-feminism> ) Martin Thomas (<https://www.workersliberty.org/story/2008/09/08/political-islam-clerical-fascism> ) and many others ; and the AWL's October 8 statement (<https://www.workersliberty.org/story/2023-10-08/war-israelpalestine> ) which bizarrely declares that "*Israel has a right to self-defence*" as if the Israeli state needed their permission and as if that were the role of a far-left group!

<sup>24</sup> Cf. [https://mouvement-communiste.com/documents/MC/WorkDocuments/DT%209\\_Islamo%20fascism\\_EN\\_vF\\_papier%20complet.pdf](https://mouvement-communiste.com/documents/MC/WorkDocuments/DT%209_Islamo%20fascism_EN_vF_papier%20complet.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.union-communiste.org/fr/2006-03/la-montee-islamiste-les-fruits-amers-de-la-politique-imperialiste-1958>

<sup>26</sup> The CRIF does not represent more than 20% of the 550 000 Jews living in France.

<sup>27</sup> Former President Sarkozy's neoliberal party with an old Gaullist background.

the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt or the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey are the contemporary equivalent of Christian Democracy in Italy or the late MRP (Christian-Democrat Party) in France. Or, at least, if these parties are not today the equivalent, they could be tomorrow, provided that Western states stop being "Islamophobic"...

None of the positions roughly described above seems satisfactory. None of them manages to **hold together all the dimensions** of the problem, and none of them presents an original analysis of the social and political role of the Muslim religion in all its forms (does it irrevocably confuse the religious and the political dimensions ? – in this case there is no hope before a great religious reform that will take centuries to happen... or not) and the various movements that claim to be part of political Islam. Especially since the Iranian revolution of 1979, the ideological, political and even military competition between the various Sunni and Shiite factions that have emerged on the political scene has become much more complex, as a result of mutual influences. And we should also assess the role of the Salafists, who are presented by some specialists as harmless religious figures, and by others as a breeding ground for the development of jihadist terrorism. Who to believe?

If any analysis of political Islam is reduced to an abstract criticism (however just and justified) of nationalism, totalitarianism, fascism or an unbridled hatred of the West and its "secular and democratic values" (all elements present, in varying degrees, in Hamas and in political Islam), this means that we have not created any new tools for analyzing a phenomenon that is relatively new (in terms of its extent and above all its immediate consequences) and that is taking on unprecedented forms. In the end, if we take only the explanatory schemes mentioned above, we don't even need to analyse Hamas or political Islam in detail to understand and characterize them, since all the possible explanatory hypotheses have **already** been put forward by Marxists, anarchists or defenders of bourgeois democracy for a century.

It is, of course, essential to denounce Hamas and political Islam as enemies of the working class, and there is no need to argue endlessly about the appropriate or inappropriate use of the word "terrorism"; about the legal concepts of "war crimes" or "crimes against humanity"; or even about the massacre of civilians in the name of a certain "resistance"<sup>28</sup>, as a good part of the left and far left have done, in France as in the rest of the world. Similarly, it is essential to

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<sup>28</sup> Pierre Stambul, spokesman for the UJFP (an organization with views close to the American JVP), invoked his father's struggle to lump it together, in a vicious "reasoning", with that of Hamas and qualify the anti-Semitic murderers of October 7 and 8, 2023 as "*Palestinian fighters*": "*My father, deported to Buchenwald, was one of the very few survivors of the Manouchian group, now celebrated in France. Shortly before his death, he told me: 'We knew that if we fought, we were condemned to death, and if we didn't fight, we were condemned to death too. So we chose to fight. This is the state of mind of the Gazans.'*" (<https://ujfp.org/interview-de-pierre-stambul-par-algerie-patriotique/>).

If, for all Gazans, as Stambul claims, "fighting" Israel and the occupation means killing every old person, woman, child and baby because they're Jewish (as well as Thai and Nepalese kibbutz workers) they can get their hands on, it's not clear what the word "peace" means in the acronym of the "French Jewish Union for Peace" (UJFP in French), unless it's the peace of... cemeteries!

Six days later, the same "Algérie patriotique" media published a fifteen-minute interview with the anti-Semitic Holocaust denier and stand-up comedian Dieudonné: <https://www.algeriepatriotique.com/2023/10/21/dieudonne-a-algeriepatriotique-israel-est-la-nation-du-racisme-du-mensonge-et-de-la-domination-2/> .

denounce Muslim anti-Judaism (linked to certain very old theological interpretations of the Koran) and the anti-Semitism of political Islam, which goes as far as neo-Nazi Holocaust denial and exterminationism. But that's not enough: we need to put forward arguments based on concrete knowledge, but above all on new concepts.

Just one small example: on 10 October 2023, during a program on "Le Média", the Vidal-Guignard<sup>29</sup> tandem claimed that Hamas had changed and modified its charter. But a few days after this program, on 16 October 2023, "Mediapart" published an article quoting a statement by Khaled Mechaal, the leader of Hamas, which completely contradicted the argument of authority put forward by the Vidal-Guignard duo:

"*The 1988 charter is not, however, obsolete*', Khaled Mechaal, one of the founding members of Hamas, told to the researcher Leila Seurat<sup>30</sup>: *'Hamas refuses to submit to the wishes of other states. Its political thinking is never the result of external pressure. **Our principle is not to change the Document** [he alludes to the 'Principles and General Policy Document' published in 2017, Y.C.] **Hamas has not forgotten its past**<sup>31</sup>. Nevertheless, our charter illustrates the period of the 1980s and the Document illustrates our policy in 2017. Each era has its own texts. This evolution should not be understood as a departure from the original principles, but rather as a derivation (ichtiqaq) of thought and tools to best serve the cause at its current stage*<sup>32</sup>."

If we don't have reliable information on a simple question (has Hamas's anti-Semitic, conspiratorial and genocidal charter been repealed... or not ? – and how?), or if certain left-wing intellectuals, or academic radicals, deliberately or not, ignore the facts, it's not surprising that we are lost when it comes to analyzing the nature of Hamas.

Incidentally, the sociologist Leila Seurat, who wrote the article from which the Hamas leader's previous statement was taken, wrote on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2017: "*Hamas is not ready for a new armed confrontation with Israel after its three successive military operations since 2009*<sup>33</sup> ."

Far be it from me to criticize Leila Seurat for her erroneous prognosis, since I have neither her knowledge of the subject nor the ability to develop an alternative theoretical analysis to the most popular interpretations of political Islam in general, and Hamas in particular. But isn't this monumental error linked to a lack of understanding (or, at least, a very inadequate understanding) of the profoundly reactionary, anti-working-class, anti-communist, pro-capitalist and genocidal nature of this organization?

There is still an enormous amount of thinking to be done. Until now, Marxist and anarchist schemes have left us unable to carry out this task, beyond a few timeless slogans, sometimes right (Down with war!) or completely out of tune (Long live class war!) but hopelessly inadequate to effectively help those who fall every day under the bombs and bullets in the Middle East.

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<sup>29</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eP7C\\_o2OCfE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eP7C_o2OCfE)

<sup>30</sup> Leila Seurat is the daughter of the sociologist Michel Seurat, kidnapped in 1985 by Hezbollah. As he was ill, he died in the hands of this "*liberation movement*" in 1986 and his body was "discovered" in 2000 in Beyrouth, thanks to a macabre staging organized by Hezbollah.

<sup>31</sup> Underlined by me.

<sup>32</sup> <https://orientxxi.info/magazine/revolution-dans-la-revolution-au-hamas,1838>

<sup>33</sup> *Idem*.



While we wait for more solid analyses, we must at least listen to the words of the survivors of the pogrom<sup>34</sup> organized by Hamas rather than those of the "specialists" or politicians; and support those Israeli and Palestinian activists who do not speak in favour of Hamas and try to work together, as their communiqués suggest<sup>35</sup>.

26/10/2023

## **POST-SCRIPTUM : Hamas can warmly thank the sociologist Leila Seurat and geopolitician Bertrand Badie, her academic mentor (29/10/2023)**

Three weeks have passed since the pogrom of 7 and 8 October 2023 perpetrated by Hamas and its allies. The number of Palestinian civilians killed by Tsahal has risen sharply, not to mention the murders committed by Israeli settlers and the inhuman siege of Gaza (a siege is inhuman in any case, but it is worth remembering here in relation to Israel's supposedly "moral" IDF).

Leila Seurat has therefore become bolder and today, on 29 October 2023, she explains in the daily *Le Monde* that

1) we must "*understand the protean [?] nature of this political actor (at once a social movement, an armed group and a government actor)*"<sup>36</sup>; such a deliberately vague characterization places Hamas in the category of classic national liberation movements without openly admitting it;

2) since 2021, "*Hamas no longer mentions its affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood in its 'Principles and General Policy Document' published in 2017*"; as if we could determine the nature of a movement solely on the basis of its texts; from the Nazis to the Rwandan genocide perpetrators via the Khmers Rouges, we have lost count of the public lies told by political movements that conceal their true aims in order to better prepare their massacres;

3) "*In its speeches, Hamas eschews any partisan or even religious identification and speaks on behalf of all Palestinians. Unlike the first two Intifadas of 1987 and 2000, when the resistance was largely Islamic, this one is now Palestinian*". With this kind of argument, the United States intervened in Iraq to defend democracy, and France, with its thousands of soldiers and its bases in Africa, supports governments of exemplary probity.

4) And finally, she writes: "*In both Gaza and the West Bank, Palestinians are unanimous in their support for Hamas and, despite the number of Palestinians killed, welcome what they see as a historic victory over Israel*".

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<sup>34</sup> <https://www.workersliberty.org/story/2023-10-24/listen-israeli-survivors-they-dont-want-revenge-article-orly-noy-972-magazine>

<sup>35</sup> Many useful texts can be found here <https://workersliberty.org/story/2023-10-13/statements-israelpalestine> and here <https://brockley.blogspot.com/2023/10/reading-on-israelgaza-second-edition.html> :

<sup>36</sup> [https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2023/10/29/leila-seurat-politiste-a-gaza-comme-en-cisjordanie-les-palestiniens-sont-unanimes-dans-leur-soutien-au-hamas\\_6197143\\_3232.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2023/10/29/leila-seurat-politiste-a-gaza-comme-en-cisjordanie-les-palestiniens-sont-unanimes-dans-leur-soutien-au-hamas_6197143_3232.html)

And, on the same day, Bertrand Badie<sup>37</sup>, a famous French geopolitical specialist admired by the left, also pretends that Hamas is a group animated by a “*nationalist and emancipatory* [?] *will*” even if it uses “*hideous methods*”<sup>38</sup>.

We have come full circle. Hamas is indebted to Leila Seurat and her academic mentor Bertrand Badie. In this article, she provides arguments for the left and far left, which can now hide behind the lousy analysis of a Middle East specialist to support a reactionary, anti-working-class, anti-communist, pro-capitalist and genocidal movement and present it as an “*emancipatory*” movement !

**Yves Coleman**, 29/10/2023

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<sup>37</sup> Badie directed Leila Seurat’s PhD thesis and prefaced her book about Hamas.

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ktv4FMO2ShQ>