



power that this movement now for Palestine has.

You have participated in many pro-Palestinian protests in the US. Do you have anything to say to Iranian students who are not taking a stand against Israeli crimes in Gaza?

Coleman: I wish I could convince every Iranian student to get out there on the street and march for the cutting off of every kind of aid and trade from the US, Germany, etc. to Israel. If I could get at the students, I would tell them, "Guys, demonstrate against what Israel is doing in Gaza." You know that Israel's coming to kill you after they kill Gaza, right? So, it would not only be for idealistic reasons, not only for the reason that you're crying because of this holocaust but, additionally, for a very practical reason. If you don't stop Israel from committing a holocaust, they're going to keep coming.

Savabieasfahani: And they tell you they're coming. They proudly and loudly are saying, "We will do this to you." They're not hiding it. They're not saying, "We will first kill Palestinians. Then, we will come and kill you Iranians." How can you miss that?

When Iran hit Israel in a very thought-out and very effective way and took out three of their main installations, one of which was a highly protected military base, I was speaking to an Iranian documentary maker. The next day, he apparently went out into the streets and talked to people. He said the majority of people he talked to — which is, of course, a weak sample size — were very happy and proud. They were saying, "See, we can beat them."

Coleman: I would say if you want to emulate Americans, don't emulate Taylor Swift and Olivia Rodrigo. Emulate these thousands of American students who are marching against Israel. Be like these American students and give Israel hell. If these kids in Egypt, Morocco,



Blaine Coleman addresses the Ann Arbor City Council on July 21, 2014, calling for a boycott of all Israeli products, after the regime launched airstrikes and a ground invasion against Gaza. "The death of too many human beings in Gaza is partially on your hands," Coleman told members of the council. **MLIVE**

co, Tunisia, England, and America can do it, you can, too. I don't care if you have political differences inside the campus with some other kids. Put that aside and show the world that you really hate what Israel is doing.

Savabieasfahani: It's bad for Iran if its students are not yelling, "Stop this nonsense." It makes us Iranians look bad. I go to a lot of protests in America a lot, and I'm pretty much the only Iranian there. There are Iranian student associations on campus in Michigan. They don't come, except maybe a few. It's an embarrassment for Iranians to not be standing clearly against Israel right now.

Iranians have been supporting Palestine

in words and in deeds for years, maybe even more than most countries.

Coleman: I know that well. Some Iranian students may think that being against Israel was something that was invented by Iran's late Leader in 1979. Wrong. Iranians have hated the violence that Israel has committed ever since March 18, 1950, when an editorial came out in the newspaper Bakhtar-e Emrooz by Dr. Hossein Fatemi.

Savabieasfahani: Yes, Fatemi was asking why there was a massive rush to recognize Israel. He had been to Lebanon, I think, and he had seen waves of Palestinian refugees coming from Palestine, hungry and barefoot and starved. They had been ethnically cleansed. So, they poured into Lebanon. He saw how poor and desperate they were, and he talked about it.

So, Iranian political minds have been thinking and siding with the people of Palestine since the beginning

of the 1950s.

Fatemi cared for democracy, for human rights, and for freedom. If Shah had not killed him, Fatemi would be a giant. He was the foreign minister of Mossadeq, and he was the brain behind the nationalization of Iranian oil. He was the one who verbalized it, and Mossadeq admittedly picked it up.

Coleman: So, this is not a new thing. Iranian students should understand that they are standing with an old Iranian tradition here. They can emulate Fatemi.

A woman once said to me years ago, "Oh, we Iranians dream about America and we love America." I said, "There is a lot to love about Iran and Iranian history. Read about Dr. Fatemi." This guy was a major newspaper editor, he got a doctoral degree in France, and he came back and used all of his knowledge to build up this country. One of the things that England and America hated the most about Fatemi was that he knew all his facts. Mossaddeq was trying to be friendly and hide a little bit. He didn't want to be immediately killed. But Fatemi said, "I'll give you the facts. Right here. This is why we have to nationalize the oil. This is why the British have been

starving us. Now, pay up." So, this is why they killed Fatemi.

I want to talk about the labeling of these student protesters as anti-Semites. Mr. Coleman, you're clearly a big proponent of the slogan, 'From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free.' By saying such slogans, are you and pro-Palestinian protesters in university campuses across the US implying that the historical land of Palestine should be near-empty of Jews?

Coleman: No, what we're saying is the same thing that they basically said with apartheid South Africa: we want everybody to be equal, we don't want some religion to be the boss, and we want there to be normal elections where everybody gets one vote. Now, this is what the students are saying in America. They're all saying this apartheid state of Israel has to go. When you say the apartheid state has to go, you're saying the state has to go; you're not saying any people have to go.

There were a lot of white supremacists in apartheid South Africa who probably ran away after the apartheid state was dead because they wanted to be boss. They didn't want to be your neighbor. They wanted to be your boss. It will probably be the same thing in Israel when the apartheid state has gone, which will be sooner than anybody thinks. There are going to be a lot of Israelis who want to be boss and they say, "We can't live here if we can't be boss," and they'll go straight to California.

Mozhgan and I are so old that we were part of the divestment from apartheid South Africa movement way into the 1980s. Nobody called us anti-White. That would have been stupid. But now they're trying the same kind of argument against the divestment movement.

The importance of the shirt is the Zionists hate the slogan 'From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,' and they have pretended that it is an anti-Semitic slogan. As I've said, these huge student demonstrations all over the United States have many Muslim, many Jewish, and many Christian students in them. It is crazy to call this thing anti-Semitic. It's their weapon to distract you from what's happening.

What's happening is a real holocaust against the Palestinian people. We're talking about 40,000 Dead Palestinians or even more. There's an Arab-American human rights activist, named Ralph Nader, who is saying that it might be 200,000 dead in Gaza. Since there's been so much destruction, it's possible that more people are buried below rubble who are currently declared missing.



City residents Blaine Coleman (L) and Mozhgan Savabieasfahani speak out at the Ann Arbor City Council meeting on December 16, 2019. **RYAN STANTON/ANN ARBOR NEWS**