

Alt-Hampshire Gazette

Read Globally, Act Locally

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| ANTI-ZIONIST NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 2026 |

Wednesday, April 8, 2026

Dear friend,

River Valley for Palestine, Jewish Voice for Peace W. MA, and other community organizations have tried to persuade the **Daily Hampshire Gazette** to improve its coverage of the Israeli/U.S. genocide in Gaza and occupation of Palestine but have not succeeded.

Therefore, River Valley for Palestine publishes an (alt)ernative paper containing material we hope you find interesting and helpful as you seek reliable news and opinion about the genocide and occupation, as well as local campaigns for Palestinian liberation and for all people fighting empire, colonization, white supremacy, and fascism at home and abroad.

River Valley for Palestine ~
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* Amazon, which owns Whole Foods, has a \$1.2 billion contract, along with Google, to provide cloud computing services that aid the Israeli military in conducting genocide against the Palestinian people (Project Nimbus).

The following testimony was presented by UMass students on October 25, 2025, at the Western Mass People's Tribunal (westernmasspeopletribunal.com).

During the Tribunal's proceedings, students from UMass Amherst, Smith College, and Hampshire College documented ways in which their schools are supporting the genocide in Gaza. Coverage of the Tribunal can be found online at *The Shoestring*, the *Amherst Indy*, the *Daily Collegian*, the *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, and *The Times of Israel*.

This is the fourth tranche of testimony by UMass students, with the final tranche to appear in the next edition of the *Alt-Hampshire Gazette*. The *Alt-Gazette* reprinted the Smith College Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) Tribunal testimony in earlier editions.

The Case Against UMass Amherst: Repression on Campus

While student agitation against UMass's ties to Raytheon began well before October 7, 2023, the first major crackdown came on October 25, 2023, two years ago to this day. Hundreds of students occupied Whitmore administration building, demanding to meet with Chancellor Javier Reyes to discuss demands of divestment from war profiteers and the cutting of all ties to Israel. When the building closed and Chancellor Reyes was still nowhere to be seen, 57 students opted to remain, and were arrested on charges of trespassing. In a normal academic year, the arrest of 57 peaceful protesters would have been a shocking display of needless repression. Instead, UMass's response to the Gaza solidarity encampment on May 7, 2024, made the response to the Whitmore sit-in seem quaint. To break up the encampment and disperse the protest, the Reyes administration summoned over 200 campus, town, and state police, who arrested 138 students, faculty, staff, and community members.

Over the course of the night, protesters were punched, kicked, knelt on, choked, slammed to the ground, and beaten with batons. On multiple occasions, police charged at protesters in designated "safe zones," and in one case trampled over a bystander, breaking their leg in three different places. Upon being arrested, detainees were denied access to bathrooms and menstrual products, and zip-tied tight enough to cause bleeding.

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EDITORIAL: The Israeli Death Cult Enshrines State-Sanctioned Lynching

Apartheid Israel took its heinous persecution of the Palestinian people a step further on March 30, 2026, when the Knesset passed a death penalty bill institutionalizing execution of Palestinians. The law, which enjoys broad support of the Jewish Israeli public including lawyers and doctors, **will apply to Palestinians only**, and will normalize their execution by hanging. The new law stipulates that the penalty must be carried out within 90 days of sentencing, with no possibility of pardon. It will be imposed by military courts with a 96% conviction rate based largely on "confessions" extracted under torture, where only Palestinians are tried. The death penalty will be the default sentence. Judges will be able to commute it to life imprisonment only in special circumstances. The Israel Prison Service began preparing designated facilities for execution before passage of the bill.

Noting that even apartheid South Africa did not single out one racial group for the death penalty, a general strike protesting the measure occurred in the Occupied West Bank in the days following the Knesset vote. Yuli Novak, Executive Director of B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, said, "Israel is reaching a new low in the dehumanization of Palestinians." In a piece for Al Jazeera, Mariam Barghouti wrote, "Israel's death penalty law is not about executing Palestinians, it is about eliminating Palestinian existence in Palestine." Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and colleagues celebrated passage of the law by wearing gold lapel pins in the shape of nooses and guzzling champagne.

(Jennifer Scarlott, RVP member)

IRAN DOES NOT HAVE NUCLEAR WEAPONS - BUT ISRAEL DOES

By Timmon Wallis

Iran does not have nuclear weapons or a nuclear weapons program. It has not wanted nuclear weapons. Iran's former Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, issued a *fatwa* (religious decree) decades ago against Iran producing a nuclear weapon. And Iran is a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which commits it to remaining free of nuclear weapons and to providing detailed reports on the status of its nuclear materials (which is why we know exactly how much uranium Iran has and how enriched it is). Iran has deliberately kept its stockpile of uranium at 60% enrichment, well below the 90% required for a nuclear weapon. The U.S. and Israel, however, constantly claim Iran is "weeks away" from a nuclear weapon. Israeli PM Netanyahu has claimed this for 40 years, even though there has never been any evidence to suggest that Iran plans to increase its enrichment level.

Israel, on the other hand, does have nuclear weapons. Israel is not a party to the NPT and it does not report on the status of its nuclear materials. Israel and the United States continue to pretend that Israel does not have nuclear weapons, using a policy known as "nuclear ambiguity." Most experts, however, believe Israel has about 90 nuclear warheads, with enough

weapon-grade plutonium to make another 200. They believe that 30 nuclear warheads are gravity bombs for delivery by aircraft, that 50 are on Jericho II and III ballistic missiles, and that 10 are on submarines.

The exact number and destructive capacity of Israel's nuclear weapons are closely guarded secrets. But the fact that they exist is public knowledge. This was confirmed by Israeli nuclear technician and whistleblower Mordechai Vanunu in 1986. It was officially acknowledged by the then Speaker of the Israeli Knesset, Avraham Burg, who made Israel's arsenal of nuclear weapons public in 2013 and called the policy of nuclear ambiguity "childish."

"Israel's policy of never formally acknowledging its nuclear arsenal makes its doctrine ambiguous, but the 'Samson Option' is believed to refer to Israel's plans for overwhelming nuclear retaliation against non-nuclear adversaries if the country faces an imminent, existential threat," says Kelsey Davenport, Director for Nonproliferation Policy at the Arms Control Association. "It would likely include deliberate, disproportionate nuclear strikes against non-military targets, such as cities, despite the clear violation of international humanitarian law."

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Nuclear scientist Mordechai Vanunu, upon his 2004 release after 18 years (11 in solitary confinement) in an Israeli prison for revealing Israel's secret nuclear weapons program to the world in 1986. Vanunu was drugged and kidnapped by the Mossad in Italy and forcibly returned to Israel for "trial." (Pavel Wolberg/EPA/REX/Shutterstock)



The Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades, the armed wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), active in both Gaza and the West Bank, commented on the new Israeli execution law in a poster issued April 1, 2026. The poster says: "We are stronger than death and higher than the gallows."

Jewish Voice for Peace W. MA Press Statement, March 28, 2026

Northampton, MA - On Thursday, March 26, 2026, the National Jewish Advocacy Center filed a lawsuit against Northampton seeking to invalidate the **Resolution Calling for the City of Northampton to Divest from Entities Complicit in Human Rights Violations in Israel and Palestine (R-25.314)**, adopted unanimously by City Council last September. The resolution urges the city to divest from companies with a substantial, ongoing, and intentional complicity in violations of international law and human rights in Israel and Palestine.

The National Jewish Advocacy Center's lawsuit asserts that local governments may not invest public funds consistent with residents' social justice concerns. The lawsuit is legally baseless and morally bankrupt. State and local governments - including Northampton - have a long and proud history of foregrounding social justice concerns in the investment of public funds, from South African apartheid to fossil fuels. Managing the city's portfolio responsibly does not require investing in companies complicit in human rights violations.

"I am proud that our elected City Council unanimously took a stand in favor of divesting our funds from companies enabling apartheid in Israel and Palestine," said Ward 3 resident and Jewish Voice for Peace member Eve Glazier. "Groups like the National Jewish Advocacy Center and the Jewish Federation, which supports this suit, are resorting to anti-democratic lawsuits because their reactionary ideologies are losing public support. These organizations represent an increasingly fringe ideology of unconditional support for Israel, which the world's major human rights organizations and the International Court of Justice recognize to be engaged in apartheid and illegal occupation."

The Council's vote responded to overwhelming support for the resolution from Northampton residents seeking to disassociate the city's investments from human rights violations in Israel and Palestine.

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Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) is a national, grassroots organization inspired by Jewish tradition to work for a just and lasting peace according to principles of human rights, equality, and international law for all the people of Israel and Palestine. Jewish Voice for Peace Western Mass is the local JVP chapter; a community of activists inspired by Jewish tradition to work together for peace, social justice, human rights, and a full arms embargo on the state of Israel.

The Case Against UMass Amherst Continued...

And again, this was an entirely peaceful protest. The joint statement of the five largest unions at UMass says it best: “The crime committed by student protesters was the equivalent to jaywalking.”

Beyond its active endangerment of students through its invitation of police violence, UMass has also managed to passively endanger its students by neglecting to respond to hate speech and threats of violence. In the wake of October 7, pro-Palestine organizers, particularly Arab and Muslim students, faced threats of physical and sexual violence, which escalated to the point that some students were advised not to go to class. In one particularly egregious example, UMass levied a no-contact order against one of the principal instigators but then failed to enforce its own laws when the individual violated it repeatedly. Similarly, when this Tribunal faced threats of violence from far-right Zionist groups like Betar USA in the spring of 2024, the best that UMass could do was issue a limp statement condemning doxxing and threats of violence, and direct us to the UMass Police for protection.

But while UMass has been completely inept at protecting the legal rights of its students, it has been vociferous in its persecution of them. Last summer, the administration pursued felony riot charges against two student protesters who were not arrested on May 7. It feels a little gratuitous to keep harping on the hypocrisy here, but I’m going to do it anyway. The people who brought hundreds of men with guns to our campus were the ones charging the peaceful anti-war protesters with starting a riot. Thankfully, the charges were dropped following an outburst of anger and pressure from the UMass community, which should serve to make even clearer the necessity of entities like this Tribunal to hold power to account.

In the wake of May 7, UMass has made repeated attempts to save face, not by making amends or issuing apologies to its injured, beaten students, but by shoring up the legal grounds on which it breaks up demonstrations. The Campus Demonstration Policy Task Force, which was created to review and make recommendations on “demonstration-related policies,” firmly upholds the rights of students to freedom of speech, except in the following cases: *They present a danger to the campus; They disrupt campus operations; They promote substantial disorder; They infringe upon the rights of others.*

These exceptions sound reasonable in theory, but practically, they are so broad, arbitrary and nebulously defined that they can be selectively enforced to shut down anything that the administration deems disruptive or disorderly. Some of the recommendations for deescalation are also quite telling. The Task Force suggests requesting demonstrators move to another, less disruptive location, requesting that protesters decrease their volume, or suggest the protest be continued at a later date and time. The message comes through clearly: you are free to protest however you like, as long as nobody has to see or hear you.

PLEASE SUPPORT THE ALT-GAZETTE!

MAKE A CHECK TO ‘NICK MOTTERN’ & MAIL TO: N. MOTTERN, P.O. BOX 743 NORTHAMPTON, MA 01061

CONNECTING WITH PALESTINE IN WESTERN MA

- » See the W MA Coalition for Palestine calendar for local standouts & events: <https://tinyurl.com/4zxjetvc>
- » To sign up to receive weekly newsletters detailing action for Palestine, email to: W MA SURJ: westernmasssurj@gmail.com & JVP W MA: westernmass@jewishvoiceforpeace.com
- » Recommended reading & viewing: The Electronic Intifada, Mondoweiss, Drop Site News, Democracy Now!

Iran Does Not Have Nuclear Weapons Continued...

Why do U.S. regimes pretend that Israel does not have nuclear weapons? One reason is that Congress passed a law in 1977, known as the Glenn Amendment to the Arms Export Control Act, which imposes mandatory sanctions on any country that develops a nuclear weapon beyond the “club” that already possesses them. Another law, the Symington Amendment, requires that all military aid “shall be terminated” to any country in violation of the NPT. If it were admitted that Israel had developed and maintains a stockpile of nuclear weapons, the U.S. would be obliged to terminate military aid to Israel and apply sanctions.

Instead, the U.S. continues to provide billions of dollars in military aid to Israel every year. The U.S. provides enormous amounts of technical support that has enabled Israel to conduct its genocide against the Palestinian population of Gaza and its illegal occupation of the West Bank. The U.S. has continued to use its veto power in the UN Security Council to protect Israel from every effort to hold it accountable for its numerous crimes. Now, of course, the United States is engaged in a war against Iran, directly alongside Israel.

The current U.S./Israeli war against Iran makes it much more likely that Iran may develop nuclear weapons. Firstly, because on the first day of the war Israel assassinated the Ayatollah who

was personally responsible for making sure Iran did not develop a nuclear weapon. And secondly, because military and political leaders in Iran will reason that Israel would not dare attack again if it knew that it could face a barrage of nuclear weapons and not just conventional weapons.

But much more dangerous than the possibility that Iran may now decide to develop nuclear weapons is the possibility that Israel will actually use a nuclear weapon before this war is over. Iran’s nuclear facilities, as well as its ballistic missile launchers, appear to be deeply buried underground and out of reach of conventional weapons. The temptation for Israel to drop nuclear weapons on these facilities grows every day that Iran continues to retaliate.

Nuclear weapons are the most dangerous and destructive weapons ever invented. They have not been used since 1945. We need a government in this country that will hold Israel accountable under the NPT, the Glenn Amendment, and the Symington amendment, and that moves swiftly to rid itself and the entire world of these dangerous weapons before it is too late.

Timmon Wallis is the Executive Director of NuclearBan.US and the National Coordinator of the Warheads to Windmills Coalition, which is campaigning to abolish nuclear weapons and use the resources to address the climate crisis.



A new international Flotilla to break Israel's blockade of Gaza and deliver humanitarian aid is underway. 20 boats departed on April 4 and 70 more will sail on April 12, eventually reaching a total of 100 boats from Mediterranean ports. River Valley for Palestine requested that Congressman Jim McGovern join the Fall '25 and Spring '26 Flotillas as the first-ever U.S. parliamentarian to participate, but he refused both requests.

DONATE TO THE GLOBAL FLOTILLA TO GAZA:



In 1905, Mark Twain wrote a short story called “The War Prayer” in which he critiqued war and the blind patriotism that often accompanies it. The story was not published until after Twain’s death due to concerns about its “sacrilegious” content. In the passage below, Twain points out that all who pray for victory for their own military forces are also, without having the honesty to admit it, praying for certain horror for their opponents...

“Lord our Father, our young patriots, idols of our hearts, go forth into battle—be Thou near them! With them—in spirit—we also go forth from the sweet peace of our beloved firesides to smite the foe. O Lord our God, help us tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief; help us to turn them out roofless with their little children to wander unfriended in the wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, sports of the sun flames in summer and the icy winds of winter; broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it—

For our sakes who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears, stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet!

We ask it, in the spirit of love, of Him Who is the Source of Love, and Who is the ever-faithful refuge and friend of all that are sore beset and seek His aid with humble and contrite hearts. Amen.”

Below, please find a letter to the editor of the Daily Hampshire Gazette by Veronica Darmon, followed by a response submitted by River Valley for Palestine member Jennifer Scarlott. Darmon’s letter was published by the DHG. Scarlott’s response was not.

Hatred of Israel and of Jews are the Same, March 13, 2026

The recent attack on Temple Israel in West Bloomfield, Michigan, where a suspect rammed a truck into a building housing 140 children, is a chilling reminder that the line between “political criticism” and violent antisemitism has vanished.

The FBI has classified this as a targeted act of violence against the Jewish community. While some argue that the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism “conflates” criticism of Israel with hatred of Jews, this attack proves that the perpetrators make no such distinction. The children in that school weren’t targeted for their personal political views or their stance on foreign policy; they were targeted because they were Jews.

When attackers strike a synagogue in response to events in the Middle East, they are explicitly linking the global Jewish community to the actions of the Israeli state. This is exactly why the IHRA definition is so vital: it recognizes that modern antisemitism frequently uses Israel as a pretext for terrorizing Jewish neighbors here at home.

We cannot afford the luxury of academic debate while our institutions are under siege. To oppose the right of Israel to exist, or to use Middle East tensions to justify local hostility, is to endanger Jews everywhere. I urge our community to stand with us. Our children deserve to live, learn, and pray without fear.

Veronica Darmon, Northampton

Response to Veronica Darmon, March 20, 2026

In her March 13 letter titled “Hatred of Israel and of Jews are the Same,” Vernoica Darmon says that “to oppose the right of Israel to exist or to use Middle East tensions to justify local hostility, is to endanger Jews everywhere.” Israel has no legal “right to exist.” It is an illegitimate entity founded on colonialism, ethnic cleansing, Zionism, and Jewish supremacy. It should not have been granted legitimacy by the UN. Given that it was accorded UN legitimacy, should it not adhere to all requirements of the UN Charter? Darmon mentions “Middle East tensions.” This is a tragic way of describing the genocidal wars Israel is inflicting on its neighbors. The Iranian man who attacked the Michigan synagogue may have been motivated by Israel’s murder of his family in its recent attacks on Lebanon. This most emphatically does not excuse targeting Jewish people or a Jewish institution. There is no disputing, however, that Israel’s penchant for supremacist and colonial violence is a driver of antisemitic attacks around the world.

Darmon’s equating Israel and Judaism is quintessentially Zionist. It is antisemitic. To say that Israel’s political and military pursuit of hegemony in the Middle East is in any way true to Jewish values or to Judaism is appalling. Zionism is racist. It is a fundamentalist, violent, expansionist, and by definition, colonial ideology. Zionism thrives on antisemitism, using it to excuse its annihilation of others. If we are to restore any semblance of human rights, peace, self-determination of indigenous people of Palestine and the region, the integrity of governments around the world, and increased safety of our Jewish sisters and brothers, the Israeli regime, which is Zionist to its core, must be dismantled. Its war criminals must be brought to justice. Its victims must be compensated. Governments and institutions must be freed from its corruption. Yes, Veronica Darmon, ALL children “deserve to live, learn and pray without fear.” That will be aided through the dismantlement of the Israeli and the U.S. empires. They are blood brothers.

Jennifer Scarlott, Northampton