

Anti-Zionist Israeli historian Ilan Pappé stopped and interrogated at Detroit airport

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Internationally renowned Israeli historian Ilan Pappé was stopped by federal agents and interrogated for two hours Monday as he entered US territory at Detroit Metropolitan Airport. Pappé was visiting southeast Michigan to speak at public meetings in Detroit and two suburbs, Dearborn and Ferndale.

Agents from the Department of Homeland Security confiscated and copied the contents of his cellphone before returning it to him. They asked him detailed questions about his anti-Zionist political views and who he was in contact with in the United States, before finally admitting him to the country.

In a posting on his Facebook page, Pappé recounted some of the details of this outrageous attack on democratic rights, which gives a glimpse of the police-state methods of the US government towards those it suspects of opposition to American foreign policy.

“The two men team were not abusive or rude, I should say, but their questions were really out of the world!” Pappé wrote.

Am I a Hamas supporter? Do I regard the Israeli actions in Gaza a genocide? What is the solution to the “conflict” (seriously this what they asked!) Who are my Arab and Muslim friends in America... how long do I know them, what kind of relationship I have with them.

In some cases I sent them to my books, and in some cases I answered laconically yes or no... (I was quite exhausted after an 8 hours flight, but this is part of the idea). They had long phone conversation with someone, the Israelis?, and after copying everything on my phone allowed me to enter.

I know many of you have fared far worse

experience, but after France and Germany denied entry to the Rector of Glasgow university for being a Palestinian... God know what will happen next.

The good news is - actions like this by the USA or European countries taken under pressure from the pro-Israeli lobby or Israel itself smell of sheer panic and desperation in reaction to Israel’s becoming very soon a pariah state with all the implications of such a status.

Pappé was formerly a senior lecturer in political science at the University of Haifa, before moving to Britain, where he was a lecturer at Leeds University. He is now professor of Middle Eastern studies at the University of Exeter.

He has written more than 20 books on the history of Israel-Palestine, including *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, which provides a thorough examination of the Nakba, the driving out of 700,000 Palestinians and the seizure of their land in the course of the founding of Israel in 1947-48.

Other works include *The Modern Middle East, A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples* and *Ten Myths about Israel*.

Pappé gave an interview to Al Jazeera May 15 marking the 76th anniversary of the Nakba (although he prefers to refer to it, not as a catastrophe—Nakba in Arabic—but as a crime, since a catastrophe could be a natural one, but this was a crime with a perpetrator, the Zionists, and a victim, the Palestinians).

Based on his great familiarity with the events of 1948, he observed that the current attack on Gaza is “even worse” than those terrible events. “What we see now are massacres which are part of the genocidal

impulse, namely to kill people in order to downsize the number of people living in Gaza,” he said. “Ethnic cleansing is a terrible crime against humanity but genocide is even worse.”

After his interrogation by the DHS, Pappé went on to address the three scheduled public meetings on the topic “Gaza in Context: Past, Present, & Future.” He spoke before large audiences which included many Arab Americans. The Detroit area has the largest population of Arab Americans in the US.

One of his many insights was a detailed explanation of the history of the Gaza Strip, established as a giant refugee camp for Palestinians pushed south by Zionist terrorism in 1948.

The territory was originally a third larger than the present Gaza, but additional land, about 110 square kilometers, was subsequently seized by the state of Israel and handed over for settlement after a campaign by the “left” Zionist party Mapam, which wanted the land to build kibbutzes, because of its fertility.

The kibbutzes attacked on October 7 were among those built on land directly adjacent to Gaza which had been confiscated and its Palestinian population driven into Gaza. Two generations of Palestinian youth learned from their parents and grandparents of the dispossession of its original inhabitants from land which remained within view.



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