

“I am telling this story publicly to show that I’m not scared. They cannot silence me.”

Pro-Palestinian TikToker Guy Christensen speaks out on Zionist harassment and FBI investigation

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The World Socialist Web Site spoke on Monday with Guy Christensen, a prominent 18-year-old social media activist recognized for his unwavering stance against the ongoing genocide in Gaza. Christensen has amassed a substantial following on platforms like TikTok and Instagram, where he shares clear and concise information, educating a young audience about the US-backed Israeli regime and its crimes against the Palestinian people.

In this conversation with International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) member Andy Thompson, Christensen discusses his political evolution into an anti-war activist, the climate on college campuses, and the intimidation tactics being used to silence him. This includes harassment from Zionists who called the FBI to conduct an investigation into his anti-war activities.

Guy spoke out strongly against the Democratic Party, which he calls “a party of war.” He also drew connections between the war in Ukraine and the repression of protests in the United States. Importantly, he expressed his support to sign the petition calling for the freedom of Bogdan Syrotiuk, an Ukrainian anti-war socialist arrested by the Zelensky regime for opposing the US-NATO war against Russia.

The following is a lightly edited transcript of the interview.

Andy Thompson (AT): Today I’m speaking with Guy Christensen, a pro-Palestinian activist who’s gained millions of followers on TikTok and Instagram for his principled opposition to the genocide in Gaza and his clear and concise videos that have educated many young people about the US backed Israeli regime and the crimes they’ve carried out against the Palestinian people.

We’re now at a point where the genocide in Gaza has gone on for well over one year. The most recent reporting shows that of the over 43,000 killed by Israel since October 2023, the overwhelming majority are children under nine years old. The genocide has gone beyond Gaza, with Israel having invaded southern Lebanon, and the danger of an all-out war with Iran looms on the horizon.

In the US, these events have been met with hundreds of thousands if not millions protesting against the genocide and demanding that the United States stop funding Israel and providing weapons used in the slaughter. These have been particularly prominent among college students. In response, the government and university administrations have criminalized protests, arrested students, and suspended them from their schools.

So Guy, I want to begin by asking you how you became involved in this

fight against the genocide. Can you tell us about how these events radicalized you? What made you feel that you had to speak out and expose the actions of the US and Israeli governments?

Guy Christensen (GC): Sure, so previous to October 7th I had a platform I had been posting on for like 3 or 4 years. I had a few million followers already, and when my feed became flooded with pro-Israel posts about Gaza and Hamas I knew absolutely nothing about Israel or Palestine, I’ll admit that. But suddenly I was seeing all these videos, and I had no idea what they were talking about. I was looking at all of them, and the idea I got was that Hamas was terrible, that the Palestinians were terrible human beings, and it was a little weird to hear this because it was borderline hateful.

Then, I saw a pair of comments on my TikTok, and all they said was “google Nakba” and “google open air prison,” and I did. What I found took me down a path that changed my whole entire life.

Then I did research into the true nature of the Gaza Strip. It is an open air prison. The people there aren’t free. They’re controlled by the state of Israel. Their supplies have been restricted for over a decade, limiting even their calories to keep the Palestinian people on the brink of collapse but just enough to stay alive. Israel has been brutalizing and oppressing the Palestinians.

What I was seeing on my content feed, what I was seeing in the western media, did not match up at all, and I was astonished why nobody was talking about these atrocities that have been occurring in the context of October. I didn’t understand. When I looked at the situation, and because of being raised in the American school system, I drew parallels between the colonization of Palestine and the colonization of America, of the Native Americans. I made a single video talking about how there were all these parallels between these two colonial projects.

Shortly after, I received an email from a Zionist newspaper in Israel offering me \$5,000 to pledge my support to Israel and for Zionism on live stream. I was disgusted.

My morals were not for sale. It really solidified my decision to speak out because in the media I was seeing every single news outlet painting Israel as 100 percent in the right, even after they came in and slaughtered thousands of Palestinians in the weeks following October 7th. I didn’t understand, but I knew somebody needed to say something.

I asked myself, “Why do I have this platform if I don’t try to speak out, if I don’t use it for what I think is good?” So, I began talking about Palestine. Even though I knew basically nothing in the beginning, I’ve

poured thousands of hours into research into it, and with every new video I've learned the further extent of Israeli brutality and oppression of the Palestinian people.

AT: I think a lot of people have gone through a similar kind of experience. They are seeing these events unfold, and they are really shocked that something like this could happen in the modern world. And they are taking up a fight to try to understand: "What is the state of Israel? How did it come into existence?"

So that brings me to another question. More broadly for people that you know, your peers, what is your generation thinking about these issues? I understand you were in high school when it began, and now you're in college. How do you and your peers see these developments? What has the political landscape on campuses become?

GC: I feel like a majority of people recognize that Israel is committing, maybe not exactly a genocide, but they definitely realize that Israel is in the wrong. I'm tapped into the pro-Palestinian organizations on my campus, and we all feel like, especially before the election, that the duopoly is not for us. The duopoly is going to continue committing this genocide, and so we were not going to give our support to them. I mean would you try to reelect Hitler?

Two hundred thousand Palestinians have been killed by the Biden-Harris administration's partnership with Israel. They have given them essentially a blank check to kill as many Palestinians as they feel. We've footed the cost of 70 percent of Israel's military costs since October 7th. We [the United States] are massively responsible for this.

So, there was a consensus amongst the political groups I'm a part of that we aren't going to help the reelect the Democrats. They are committing genocide even now as we speak.

AT: I think the response among young people in particular has been very powerful. Since October of last year, I've spoken with many people who, when asked about the role of Biden and the Democratic Party, the first thing they say is, "I could never back them. I could never support them again."

I want to ask a little bit more about the Zionist groups that have targeted you. Including attempts basically to buy you off. But I also understand that now that it is clear that you can't be bought, that there have been attempts to threaten you. I believe there was an attempt to try to get you placed on the no-fly list.

Can you say a little bit more about what has happened here?

GC: Yes, so if they can't buy you, they're going to try to threaten you, and that's what happened. So, I'll go over all the different instances I can think of that Zionists have tried to target me.

I was a senior in high school when October 7th happened, so I was only in high school for a few more months, but I had conversations with my administrators telling me how often and the pure volume of calls they had received over those few last months of my time in high school of Zionists reporting me. Zionists called the school trying to get me kicked out. Trying to stir up the administration against me. Luckily, they didn't act on anything, but that was one of the first instances I can remember.

Over the last year, I've received an uncountable number of hateful DMs and messages and online threats from Zionists. DMs and emails and all of that. Then over the summer a Zionist called my uncle who lives across the country asking for information about me. I think my uncle quoted him [the Zionist] saying, "We need to stop him."

In December, I was sent a photo on Instagram from an Israeli account showing that they had written my name on a bomb. I assume they dropped it on either the West Bank or Gaza.

Alongside other pro-Palestinian activists, they've written countless smear articles about me. They push them up on Google search so when you look up "your favorite guy" or my name, by using SEO tricks they stay at the top of the search results.

There was a Zionist Hasbara site called Words of Iron, and what it was

essentially was a feed. It gave people a feed for Zionists to go and report pro-Palestinian content. It was just an endless feed of existing content, and you were meant to go and report the videos and leave pro-Israel comments. My videos were about half of the videos on that feed.

I actually launched a campaign to reverse that Words of Iron site to have people go on there and actually go share and uplift those pro-Palestinian feeds. It actually worked, and I think they eventually took the site down because it was backfiring, but those are just some examples of how I've been harassed by Zionists.

As for this most recent event that involves the FBI and the no fly list: Halfway through October I was invited by Doctor Butch Ware to speak at a panel on social media and social justice at UCSB in California. It was a three day event called "End of Empire and the Future of Freedom." This was a big opportunity for me, and I was really excited about it because I've never flown by myself before, let alone across the country while I'm in college.

I spent two weeks beforehand preparing. It was a Friday. I woke up and my phone had gone off. This was the day I was supposed to travel. It was a text from my dad saying, "The FBI is at our house. There are three cop cars surrounding our house asking for you. Apparently, someone called the FBI and claimed you had planted bombs across synagogues in Pittsburgh."

So, this was what I woke up to. I'm looking at this text right where I'm sitting now actually, and I'm like "What do I do?"

I called my dad, and he basically told me the same thing. They [the FBI] didn't give him that much information, but he warned me that they were going to come and try to contact me. This is the day I'm supposed to travel. I had to go to the airport in literally like two or three hours, and so that's what I did.

As soon as I walked into the airport, I got a phone call from a detective from the city I'm in asking what I was up to. He was calling me on behalf of the FBI's office who were assigned the case because of the nature of the call that was made into the FBI.

I told him, "FYI I'm at the airport right now" and he asked, "When will you be back?" I told him I would be back next week, and he said that I couldn't leave the airport until he came and interrogated me.

So I waited at the airport, and he pulled up with another detective and a police officer. They interrogated me about the threat that was called in for about 15 minutes. They asked me questions like "Did you make this threat? Who might have called in this threat about you?" All this stuff, and they let me go and told me that I would eventually probably be contacted by the FBI once I was back from my trip.

This made my whole life, I'd say, incredibly stressful. Because now I'm flying out to California knowing in my head that a Zionist had been trying to stop me from flying out.

It was not even hours before they made the call, I had made it public that I was going to be flying to California. The detectives couldn't tell me anything about who made the call. They said that they used a VPN. I was like "The FBI can't figure out who's behind the VPN?"

So, I don't even know if this is a Zionist, an American citizen, an Israeli citizen, someone else, someone from the Israeli government, someone from our own government. I have been left in the dark on this investigation. It is a lot of stress going to California knowing someone's trying to stop me, and I have no idea who it is.

This is what they do to target people who try to help the Palestinians. That's all I've been doing over the past year. Educating people and calling on people to do whatever they can to help the Palestinian people. They're being starved out. They're being ethnically cleansed in northern Gaza. When Zionists see this, they do everything they can to put a stop to it.

I am telling this story publicly to show that I'm not scared. They cannot silence me by trying to get me on a no-fly list and stopping me from going

out to a panel in California where I meet up with a bunch of other activists and build a lot of projects and connections.

I won't hold back my words to tell the world that Zionists target anyone who helps the Palestinians. Even if they're an 18 year old freshman in college. No matter what, they'll do everything they can because they're so deep in their hatred that they do not care who they destroy.

I mean this is a microcosm of what's happening in the Levant right now. Israel went from attacking Gaza to launching an operation in the West Bank and to Lebanon. Now in Syria, bombing Iran, and fighting the Houthis. It doesn't matter to them who they destroy.

AT: It's just somewhat stunning. To think of the drastic actions they're willing to take to try to silence you. What it immediately calls into mind is: What are the opposing sides here? I mean, you have the Israeli government backed by the United States, which has provided billions upon billions of dollars. Not just in weapons and bombs, but certainly also in agents and intelligence support, to try and weed out individuals, to try to create smear campaigns online.

There was a discussion with a US general at some point last year at a meeting of billionaires and military generals and other world leaders (Davos). One of the things he said was that the information war is one of the most crucial components. That if they lose control of the narrative, you know, they won't be able to expand their wars.

GC: Israel manufactures consent using Western media. And I mean, saying that if they lose control of the narrative, then they cannot expand their war is exactly right. The media has served as a tool for consent to bomb hospitals and destroy the healthcare system. What you said about how American intelligence works with Israeli intelligence, and we saw how they shut down the college protests across America.

At one college, I think it was Ohio State, they had they had snipers posted on the roof above the pro-Palestinian demonstration. And, and UCLA, we had an all-out brawl between pro-Israel protesters attacking the encampments. Literally launching an attack on the campus of the pro-Palestinian students. And this is aided and abetted by our government.

I think a majority [of Congress] now have been elected by AIPAC who bragged last week about how they backed 318 candidates in our Congress. And so it's like the question of, was this our government who tried to stop me?

It's very real because they've been helping and participating in the suppression of voices like me, for decades, especially over the last year when they pushed to ban TikTok and they slotted in the bill alongside the massive aid package for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan.

They gave them \$96 billion in total, \$26 billion went to Israel. They stuck in the bill to ban TikTok as part of that aid package and passed it into law. Joe Biden signed it, and then not even I don't think it was even two months later. There was a policy conference in which Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Senator Mitt Romney had a discussion about the push to ban TikTok, and they were discussing why there was a bipartisan push to ban TikTok.

The reason why they got the ban pushed so fast is because TikTok is the most pro-Palestinian platform in America, and our representatives knew that. He says that is the reason they banned it. Exactly that. And so, it's like they manufactured consent. Americans were told that China is the reason to ban TikTok, that there's a security threat to Americans and to our government by having TikTok, you know, legalized in our country. And that completely was not the reason why they banned it.

There are other instances that were warning signs, but the American public did not really get exposure to these instances because they were held in session of Congress, which many Americans don't even watch. But Ted Cruz is recorded in Congress talking about how they need to ban TikTok because it is anti-Israel.

And so it's our representatives who are taking part in the suppression of pro-Palestinian voices and shutting down free speech by manufacturing

consent amongst the American people. If our government is willing to lie to Americans to get the app I used to post banned, are they looking at voices like me? They have to be, right?

At least some of them know who I am. Would they take it to the point of targeting me is the question. So, yeah, I mean, it's a very real concern to be honest.

AT: They have all these resources of the state that they're willing to bring down against us. But I think what is important to keep in mind is that we have the truth.

I think what has been so powerful in this is that they can only proceed with lies, By lying to the population, trying to suppress information. But when someone like yourself, you know, brings forward the real history of the state of Israel, who really exposes what is really happening, it gains a mass hearing.

The genocide in Gaza is not popular by any means. Despite all their attempts, every poll and attempt to get the opinion of the population shows that it's massively opposed.

The attacks you have faced are part of a wave of crackdowns at the beginning of this semester against the protests. Some of these have included an attack on a graduate student at Cornell. International student Momodu Taal who was threatened with being deported. He's now been suspended from Cornell, although his immigration status for the time being is intact. The reasons are just explicitly that he participated in an anti-genocide protest.

There is the case of Maura Finkelstein, an anti-Zionist professor who's been fired, the first tenured professor to be fired for her views. So, what do you think about these cases, where students and educators have been attacked for their views? And what does this say about the state of democratic rights in the US?

GC: In all of these instances, all these attacks are absolutely disgusting, and I condemn them. They're following all the same pattern, obviously, that, people who speak out, they're trying to make them scared because they want everyone else who's pro-Palestinian, who's standing up against genocide, especially to look at these cases and be like, 'I don't want that to happen to me.'

But I'll tell you that it is our human duty to speak out about these things. And it's also our duty to support the people who speak out. The state of democracy is a joke in the United States, our policy decisions are serving the interests of economic elites and special interest groups, not the people, we've seen studies done about this, I think, from Brown University is a big one about how the reins of democracy have been taken out of the hands of the people, and they're using our police forces and federal funding and college administrators and Western outlets to coordinate a campaign against Palestinian voices, anyone who's calling out the genocide and it's spitting in the face of what democracy is supposed to be.

I already talked about the TikTok ban. They literally want to ban one of the most used apps in America, one of the most used apps by young people, especially by pro-Palestinian activists. Just to serve this coordinated campaign to silence these voices. And it is disgusting. And we need to stand together against this coordinated campaign.

AT: I couldn't agree more. I do want to bring up one point that really has been absent from a lot of the analysis and especially in the media.

So, our movement, as socialists, we understand that the genocide in Gaza is part of a rapidly expanding world war. This includes a plan for war against Iran. And also the war in Ukraine, where linked to most of the funds for to support Israel has also been hundreds of billions of dollars to support the US-NATO war against Russia.

This is a war where over half a million young Ukrainians and Russians have already been killed. While the Biden administration in this war has been claiming to wage it on behalf of democracy. Nothing is further from the truth. Ukraine has been turned into a dictatorship. All opposition to the

war has been criminalized.

This actually includes a member of our movement, Bogdan Syrotiuk, a 26 year old Ukrainian socialist who's been arrested for his opposition to the war. The government has explicitly stated that the reason for his arrest is his political views and, in particular, that he is a supporter of the *World Socialist Web Site*. They've explicitly stated that the reason for his arrest is that he has articles published on the WSWS.

Essentially, this means being a socialist opponent of war is illegal in Ukraine. We have been really fighting for and organizing a campaign to demand Bogdan's release. [The call for] His immediate release gained many thousands of signatures, including a call in support from Jill Stein, the candidate of the Green Party for president, for his release.

So I want to ask you about this. Are you aware of the imprisonment of Bogdan on the campaign for his freedom? Would you support the call for his freedom and sign the petition? And then also more broadly, what do you think about the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine? And how do you see this being connected to the genocide in Gaza and the repression of protests in the US?

GC: I support his release. I'll sign that petition. I think targeting journalists is inexcusable under any circumstances. We need to protect our journalists. And, I mean, to relate it to what's going on in Gaza, I believe over 200 or 300 journalists have been directly murdered and targeted by Israel since October 7th, all across the region. And is this linked to capitalism? I think so, I think in this statement, I'm about to say something we need to say more often, which is that the Democratic Party has become a party of war.

They are feeding two massive wars, Ukraine and Israel. That is sucking our funding from our government. Every year, half of our budget is spent on the military. The American people are literally fighting over half of their government. All the other half is being spent killing millions of people and has been for decades. While the military-industrial complex, the military industry and the war industry, actually in the United States, is seeing massive profits. We give them money, Ukraine and Israel and all these other countries, and they spend it on these defense companies and the United States, the American people see none of that money.

I massively oppose this system. And it all kind of goes back to Citizens United, where we introduce big money into politics, corporate lobbying. And, that is the point in which studies say that we began declining in the people's representation in policy decisions. And so could you say that it is capitalism related? I definitely agree with that.

AT: Well, thanks again to Guy Christensen for joining us today. If you're not already, you can follow Guy on TikTok at 'your favorite guy'. And on Instagram as Guy Christensen. And if you want to know more about our movement, the *World Socialist Web Site* and the International Youth of Students for Social Equality, you can go to wsws.org/iysse. If you want to sign the petition to free our comrade Bogdan Syrotiuk, you can go to wsws.org/FreeBogdan. So, thanks again, Guy, for joining us.

GC: Thank you, Andy.



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