

Scholasticide: Educational Lawfare as a Marker of the End of Civianness

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In February 2019, Riccardo Corradini, a final-year medical student at the University of Siena (Italy), arrived at the Islamic University of Gaza (IUG) to advance his studies in emergency surgery as part of the Erasmus+ Program. As the first exchange student to study in the Gaza Strip, Corradini effectively became an “ambassador” for the initiative, paving the way for four additional Italian universities to apply to the program in Gaza, while three students from Gaza pursued studies in Siena. An exchange program between Italy and Gaza is strikingly significant, given that the Italian government, like other European Union (EU) member states, designates Hamas as a terrorist organization.¹ Erasmus+, however, operates under the auspices of the European Commission, the EU’s primary executive body. This arrangement highlights, on one hand, the complexities of multilevel governance within the EU, where differing perspectives coexist on sensitive issues such as terrorism, and, on the other, the principle of academic autonomy.

Although Corradini had studied in the occupied West Bank two years earlier, his decision to focus on emergency surgery in Gaza was influenced by the region’s exceptional circumstances. These included approximately 100 people undergoing amputations as a result of the Israeli response to the 2018 Gaza border protests.² Reflecting on his experience, Corradini remarked, “coming here, I can see with my own eyes unfortunately how emergency surgery is really.”³ Corradini’s semester in Gaza, including his training as a war surgeon at three hospitals—Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City,

Al-Awda Hospital in Jabalia, and Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis—is chronicled in *Erasmus in Gaza*, an award-winning documentary from 2022 by Chiara Avesani and Matteo Delbò.

During the ongoing Israeli attacks in Gaza, known as the 2023-2024 “Israel-Hamas War,” all three of these hospitals have come under attack. Al-Shifa Hospital was heavily damaged and left in ruins after Israeli forces withdrew on April 1, 2024.⁴ Al-Awda Hospital, which had been working in partnership with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) since 2018, was besieged by Israeli forces for four days in May and was subsequently forced to close.⁵ After Israeli forces withdrew from Nasser Hospital in late April, a mass grave containing nearly 300 bodies—of elderly people, women, and wounded individuals with their hands tied and stripped of clothing—was discovered. “I’ve worked in mass casualties around the world,” reported MSF doctor Javid Abdelmoneim, “and the smell of blood is the same everywhere you are. But here in Gaza, the horror really hits home.”⁶

The 2024 destruction of the three hospitals where Corradini had trained five years earlier, as part of an educational program between the EU and the Occupied Palestinian Territories in cooperation with IUG, underscores the close connection between medicide—the destruction of medical facilities and the targeting of the healthcare community—and scholasticide—the destruction of educational facilities and the targeting of the academic community⁷. In addition to the three hospitals that provided training for IUG students, IUG itself was bombed, and its buildings were destroyed on the night of October 10, 2023. Almost two months later, Professor Sufyan Tayek, the president of IUG and a prominent researcher in physics and applied

mathematics, was killed by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in an airstrike on the Jabalia refugee camp, where he had been born 52 years earlier.

“The world is witnessing the first genocide shown in real time to the world by its victims and unfathomably justified by Israel as compliant with the laws of war,” stated UN Special Rapporteurs Tlaleng Mofokeng and Francesca Albanese on April 3, 2024.

Medicide and scholasticide should be regarded as two critical dimensions of genocide.

Whereas the term medicide has long been used to refer to the termination of life performed by professional medical personnel and has recently evolved to mean “the destruction of a healthcare system in whole or in part with the aim of obliterating or damaging the conditions needed for saving and sustaining the lives of the sick and the wounded” in connection with the ongoing genocide in Gaza, the term scholasticide seems to have emerged exclusively from this context.⁸ Israeli authorities have justified the destruction of Al-Shifa Hospital, Al-Awda Hospital, Nasser Hospital, and IUG, along with numerous other hospitals and universities in Gaza since October 7, 2023, by claiming that they were being used by Hamas as command centers. On November 11, 2023, an Arabic-language Twitter/X account operated by Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs shared a video (Figure 1) purportedly showing a nurse from Al-Shifa Hospital claiming that Hamas had taken over the facility and was stealing morphine and fuel, with explosions heard in the background. The post was later deleted after being exposed by France 24 and other media outlets as false, revealing it to be a product of crisis acting.⁹

[Figure 1 around here]

Figure 1. An image showing a Palestinian nurse at Al-Shifa Hospital who claims that “the world has to know what Hamas is making [*sic*] here.” Source: TRTWorld, November 17, 2023, YouTube.

In this discussion, I will focus on the concept of scholasticide in the context of the ongoing genocide in Gaza. While I will not delve into the complexities of the conceptual evolution of medicide, I will begin by examining the emergence of scholasticide and then situate it within the broader framework of cultural genocide. Finally, I will revisit medicide as a reference point to analyze scholasticide as a specific manifestation of lawfare, which I term academic lawfare. My contention is that there is an intimate connection between medicide and scholasticide, as both represent deadly assaults on human rights that seek to ensure the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, aiming for the full development of the human personality. Additionally, teaching hospitals, with their affiliation to academic institutions, encapsulate this connection.¹⁰

SCHOLASTICIDE: THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW CONCEPT

It is rare to pinpoint the exact moment and circumstances of a concept’s emergence.¹¹ Yet, this is the case with scholasticide, which has gained traction in both print and online media. A Google search retrieves 52,300 results, with 24,500 appearing after October 7, 2023. For the same period, a combined search of “scholasticide” and “Gaza” yields 24,400 results. Excluding Gaza or Palestine from the search reveals other locations, notably Great Britain, Haiti, and Tigray (Ethiopia), accounting for the remaining 100

results, listed in no particular order.¹² October 7, 2023, marks the armed incursions by Hamas and other groups from the Gaza Strip into southern Israel's Gaza Envelope, resulting in the deaths of 1,200 people, including 46 Americans, and the capture of approximately 250 Israeli civilians and soldiers, who were taken as hostages to the Gaza Strip.¹³ The so-called "Israel-Hamas War" has been ongoing since October 7, 2023, with this date constructed as a "zero point" to justify the Israeli military's response.¹⁴

The relevance of the media for the ongoing discussion on scholasticide is corroborated when the sources in academic interventions are examined. "Gaza exemplifies in graphic form the deeper reality: 'scholasticide,'" claims Nick Riemer in 2023, a concept which he defines as "the violent suppression of education" by drawing from Sunaima Maira's 2018 book *Boycott! The Academy and Justice for Palestine*.¹⁵ Maira, in turn, refers to scholasticide as the "destruction of the educational environment ... in Palestine" based on a 2015 book chapter by Omar Barghouti, who highlights the recent coinage of the term as seen in Ben Schott's blog for *The New York Times*.¹⁶

"Schott's Vocab: A Miscellany of Modern Words and Phrases" is a repository, closed in 2011, of "unconsidered lexicographical trifles—some serious, others frivolous, some neologized, others newly noteworthy" by the British writer and photographer Ben Schott. In his January 14, 2009 entry, Schott defines scholasticide as "the highly controversial charge that Israel deliberately targeted educational sites in Gaza in an attempt to damage Palestinian identity."¹⁷ In Schott's rendition, the sources for the neologism are found in at least two apparently independent articles in *The Guardian*. The first source is an article dated January 10, 2009, by Ameera Ahmad Harouda and Ed Vulliamy. Ahmad Harouda, a Palestinian journalist and fixer based in Gaza, and Vulliamy, a British journalist and writer known for his coverage of the Balkan wars and the

invasion of and war in Iraq, include quotes from Oxford professor Dr. Karma Nabulsi, one of which explicitly mentions the concept of scholasticide.¹⁸ Schott's second source is nonexistent in itself, as it points to Nabulsi's articles for *The Guardian*, none of which include the term scholasticide.

In Ahmad Harouda and Vulliamy's article, the Palestinian academic and former Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) representative, Nabulsi, claims that "Now in Gaza we see the policy more clearly than ever—this 'scholasticide,'" in reference to the 2008–09 Israeli bombing of educational institutions in Gaza, including the IUG, the Ministry of Education, and the American International School.¹⁹ This marks the furthest point of origin for the conceptual travel of scholasticide that I have been able to trace—a declaration made by a Palestinian scholar to two journalists, linking it to the Israeli government's aim to "annihilate an educated Palestine," approximately fourteen years before the events of October 7, 2023.²⁰

As Mieke Bal has shown, concepts are not static; they evolve as they move from one academic discipline or cultural context to another.²¹ Their dynamism also stems from what I call conceptual battles—the preference for a specific concept over other alternatives that share the same meaning. "Educide" is a concept presented by Wikipedia in English as a synonym for scholasticide. However, its history appears to be longer, originally carrying a completely different meaning: "the institutionalized, self-destructive conflicts between educators and students," a process "similar to the self-destructive act of suicide and the institutionalized destructiveness of genocide."²² In the sense explored here—as the destruction of educational facilities and the targeting of the academic community—Rula Alousi claimed in 2022 that hers is the first "formal definition" of educide, attributing the coinage to the 2010 collective book *Cultural*

Cleansing in Iraq and making the aftermath of the Second Gulf War in Iraq a key case study.²³ That said, the concept itself is not present in the book.

This brief, and undoubtedly incomplete, survey reveals that scholasticide and educide were coined to describe situations perceived as calamitous in occupied territories—specifically, Iraq under the US-led coalition and Gaza under Israeli occupation. The concept of educide is primarily associated with Iraq, while scholasticide is more commonly linked to Gaza—though the former has also been applied to Gaza²⁴—and seems to dominate the semantic field since October 7, 2023.

The reason for this dominance is clear: there is an inverse relationship between the extent of the geographical area affected and the severity of the calamity. Gaza covers an area of 141 square miles, which is 11.6% of the size of Rhode Island. Despite its smaller size, Gaza has double Rhode Island's population and a similar literacy rate, as well as approximately the same number of universities and colleges. Currently, Israel has bombed all higher education institutions in Gaza: IUG, Al-Azhar University, Al-Quds Open University, University College of Applied Sciences, University of Palestine, Israa University, University of Gaza, Al-Aqsa University, Palestine Technical College, Palestine College of Nursing, and Arab College of Applied Sciences.²⁵ As of November 13, 2024, more than 12,000 students have been killed and 19,000 others injured in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank since October 7, 2023. Of these, 697 university students have been killed and 1,523 wounded in Gaza, while 35 have been killed and 130 wounded in the West Bank. Around 444 school teachers and educational administrators have been killed and 2,491 wounded in Gaza, while 117 university professors and educational have been killed and 1,221 injured. Additionally, 77 schools have been destroyed and 171 severely damaged, including 65 UN schools.²⁶ This level of destruction has affected 625,000

primary and secondary students, as well as 90,000 university students, who are now facing a second year without education.²⁷ According to a report by Librarians and Archivists with Palestine, over 22 archives, museums, and libraries in Gaza were destroyed, damaged or looted by Israeli armed forces between October 2023 and January 2024. This includes the libraries of the aforementioned universities as well as Samir Mansour Bookshop and Library, Diana Tamari Sabbagh Library, Gaza Municipal Library, Enaim Library, Community Library of the Kana'an Educational Development Institute, Lubbud Library, Al-Nahda Library, and Al-Shorouq Al-Daem Library.²⁸

SCHOLASTICIDE AND CULTURAL GENOCIDE

Scholasticide is semantically related to another concept, which has a more egregious history—cultural genocide. It is well known that the definition of genocide adopted by the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide is indebted to the intellectual efforts of the Polish–Jewish lawyer Raphaël (Rafał) Lemkin. In his 1944 book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, Lemkin—who coined the concept of “genocide”²⁹—documented the atrocities committed in Nazi-occupied territories, categorizing them under eight fields of Nazi intent to destroy the target people: (1) political, (2) social, (3) cultural, (4) economic, (5) biological, (6) physical, (7) religious, and (8) moral.³⁰

Two issues stand out here, which may not be known by scholars outside the fields of genocide studies, human right studies, and international criminal law. First, Lemkin detected an intrinsic relationship between genocide and colonialism. In his description of genocide as a process, he envisions two stages, one of “destruction of the

national pattern of the oppressed,” and the other with “the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor.”³¹ Needless to say, this pattern is well known among postcolonial intellectuals and scholars, as well as researchers studying Israeli settler colonialism in the Palestinian Occupied Territories.³² Lemkin planned to devote a section to this connection within his unpublished *Introduction to the Study of Genocide*, not to mention his 1956 collaboration with the UN Arab States Delegation Office to produce an article calling for French officials to be charged with genocide in Algeria.³³ Interestingly, during the working meetings of the UN Genocide Convention drafters, to which Lemkin belonged, discussions were held about whether the mid-1940s events in Palestinian villages by Zionists were constitutive of genocide.³⁴ Second, Lemkin’s conception on the cultural dimension of genocide did not make it into the final version of the UN Genocide Convention.

In *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, Lemkin listed several activities under the cultural dimension of genocide, such as the prohibition of using one’s own language in schools and in printing, exclusion from liberal arts studies, rigid control of all cultural activities, and the destruction of national monuments, libraries, archives, museums, and art galleries. Lemkin singled out the Nazi burning of the library of the Jewish Theological Seminar at Lublin, Poland, as exemplary of the cultural dimension of genocide.³⁵

For us [Nazis] it was a matter of special pride to destroy the Talmudic Academy which was known as the greatest in Poland. ... We threw out of the building the great Talmudic library, and carted it to market. There we set fire to the books. The fire lasted for twenty hours. The Jews of Lublin were assembled around and cried bitterly. Their cries almost silenced us. Then we summoned the military band and the joyful shouts of the soldiers silenced the sound of the Jewish cries.³⁶

Lemkin never used the exact concept of cultural genocide in his 1944 book. The closest to what one may intuitively think cultural genocide means is found in the following passage:

Many authors, instead of using a generic term, use currently terms connoting only some functional aspect of the main generic notion of genocide. Thus, the terms “Germanization,” “Magyarization,” “Italianization,” for example, are used to connote the imposition by one stronger nation (Germany, Hungary, Italy) of its national pattern upon a national group controlled by it. The author believes that these terms are also inadequate because they do not convey the common elements of one generic notion and they treat mainly the cultural, economic, and social aspects of genocide, leaving out the biological aspect, such as causing the physical decline and even destruction of the population involved.³⁷

Genocide, therefore, has a cultural aspect which is even key in Lemkin’s thinking for achieving the destruction of a group of people, but there does not exist a “cultural genocide” as such at this stage of Lemkin’s elaboration. The concept of cultural genocide showed up during the two first drafts of the UN Genocide Convention. The Ad hoc Committee Draft, for example, defines cultural genocide as:

any deliberate act committed with the intent to destroy the language, religion, or culture of a national, racial or religious group on the grounds of the national or racial origin or the religious belief of its members such as:

1. Prohibiting the use of language of the group in daily intercourse or in schools, or the printing and circulation of publications in the language of the group;
2. Destroying or preventing the use of libraries, museums, schools, historical monuments, places of worship or other cultural institutions and objects of the group.³⁸

The Sixth Committee produced a new draft upon the Ad hoc Committee Draft. This is the version unanimously adopted on December 9, 1948, by the General Assembly and constitutes Resolution 260(A)(III), formally known as the Convention on the

Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, in which any reference to culture is absent:

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.³⁹

Several reasons have been proposed to explain the exclusion of the concept of cultural genocide or references to the cultural dimension of genocide from the final Resolution. A key reason pertains to the interests of states with histories of policies that threaten the cultural survival of minority groups within their own territories or in regions under colonial control.⁴⁰

The absence of the concept of cultural genocide in the UN Genocide Convention does not mean that it has not elicited a rich array of scholarly and political discussions. According to the authoritative definition by Lawrence Davidson, cultural genocide is “the purposeful destructive targeting of out-group cultures so as to destroy or weaken them in the process of conquest or domination.”⁴¹ If the different thematic threads surveyed so far are reunited, one finds that scholasticide, which has garnered great attention in the aftermath of October 7, 2023, in the media and the public sphere, constitutes a key aspect of the cultural dimension that Lemkin and others saw, and still see, as part and parcel of genocide. One may even say that Lemkin had a definition for a nonexistent

concept, namely scholasticide, when talking about the destruction of libraries, museums, schools, and other cultural institutions and objects.

It is no surprise that the scale of destruction of academic institutions and the targeted killings of scholars and students in Gaza (and the West Bank) has elicited a strong response from academic institutions, scholars, and students worldwide. A case in point is Scholars against the War on Palestine (SAWP), a transnational coalition that brings together faculty, researchers, and graduate students in the humanities, social sciences, law, medicine, and STEM to end the war on Palestine. One of SAWP's demands is the defense of the Palestinian right to education, for which it has issued a leaflet dated February 14–29, 2024, devoted to the concept of scholasticide. The leaflet acknowledges that the term was coined by Nabulsi and defines scholasticide as the “systemic destruction, in whole or in part, of the education life of a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group.”⁴² Furthermore, SAWP lists eighteen acts as constitutive of scholasticide:

1. Killings and assassinations of university and school teachers, students, staff, and administrators.
2. Causing bodily or mental harm to university and school teachers, students, staff, and administrators.
3. Arresting, detaining, and incarcerating university and school teachers, students, staff, and administrators.
4. Closing educational institutions and/or disrupting their daily operations.
5. Bombarding and demolishing educational institutions.
6. Restricting faculty, student, and staff access to educational institutions.
7. Systematic harassment, bullying, intimidation of university and school teachers, students, staff, and administrators.
8. Invading educational institutions.
9. Preventing scholarly exchange in all its forms.
10. Destroying and/or looting of teaching and research resources including libraries, archives, and laboratories, as well as facilities supporting the educational process, including playgrounds, sports fields, performance venues, cafeterias, and residence halls.

11. Obstructing the creation of new educational structures.
12. Hindering access to the internet, disrupting the provision of electricity, and preventing free entry of educational supplies including books and laboratory equipment.
13. Blocking the hiring of academic staff and denying them entry to their institutions through visa denial and other restrictions.
14. Impeding the import of essential materials for rebuilding damaged schools and universities.
15. Besieging schools and universities and using them as barracks, logistic bases, operational headquarters, weapons and ammunition caches, detention and interrogation centers.
16. Disrupting international and domestic funding of educational institutions.
17. Revoking residency rights for Palestinian students or academics that may pursue educational opportunities abroad.
18. Denying education to political prisoners including child detainees.⁴³

As of April 18, 2024, scholasticide has made it into the UN lexicon to call attention to the dismantling of the foundations of Palestinian society and the erasure of their history.⁴⁴

Scholasticide, therefore, represents one of the several layers of the cultural dimension of genocide, regardless of whether one advocates for genocide having a cultural dimension among other aspects or considers cultural genocide as a distinct kind of genocide. The social mobilization—mainly through university encampments around the world—around scholasticide highlights a crucial issue in proving genocide, namely *intent*.

SCHOLASTICIDE AS ACADEMIC LAWFARE

Israeli authorities, both civilian and military, have justified their lethal attacks on Gaza's education system by claiming that these institutions are used by Hamas to attack Israel, even when established by the Palestine Liberation Organization, such as Al-Azhar University and Al-Quds Open University.⁴⁵ They have accused members of the academic

community of being either Hamas members or collaborators. As the Israeli army advanced into Gaza, it released photos and videos that, according to the then Israel Defense Forces spokesman Lt. Col. Jonathan Conricus, show “Boy Scout camps that have rocket launchers in them ... ammunition and military facilities within school compounds” (Figure 2).⁴⁶

[Figure 2 around here]

Figure 2. A photo of a UN building in Gaza, which IDF officials claim shows a rocket launch. Source: Israel Defense Forces, October 27, 2023 (see endnote 46).

Just as October 7, 2023, is neither an isolated outbreak of lethal violence by Hamas and other groups nor the starting point of the historical context to which Israel is responding, Israeli accusations of the military use of educational facilities in Gaza—and the strategy of scholasticide—both predate this moment. In a 2014 video on the IDF YouTube channel titled “What Is Hamas Doing to Schools and Hospital in Gaza?” a voice asks what is hidden behind schools in Gaza and responds: weapons, concealed rocket launchers, and booby-trapped houses literally behind schools. The viewers then hear a military officer saying, “All of these explosives have wires attached to them, all of them are activated. This house is near a UN school” (Figure 3). Both previously and later, the voice claims that these illegal uses also occur in hospitals, clinics, rescue services, water sources, and mosques.

[Figure 3 around here]

Figure 3. An image from a video titled “What Is Hamas Doing to Schools and Hospital in Gaza?” showing explosives in a house allegedly located near a UN school. Source: Israel Defense Force, August 6, 2014, YouTube.

In their analysis of this same video, but focusing on health facilities, Nicola Perugini and Neve Gordon argue that the Israeli military resorts to the discourse of medical lawfare to demonstrate that its attacks comply with the principle of distinction, the cornerstone of the laws of war. As the voice in the video puts it, “These buildings are not targets until they’re used to target Israel.”⁴⁷

Lawfare is a term coined by Major General Charles J. Dunlap Jr. to describe “the strategy of using—or misusing—law as a substitute for traditional military means to achieve an operational objective”. Dunlap notes that lawfare can be used both legitimately or illegitimately. Among the latter, he includes “the frequency with which insurgents use mosques as armories.”⁴⁸

In contrast, Perugini and Gordon contend that state militaries are more prone to use lawfare against nonstate actors rather than the reverse, and they single out Israel in this regard. They define medical lawfare as “a strategy adopted by the Israeli military and government to legitimize attacks on lifesaving and sustaining infrastructures by shifting the blame for these attacks onto Palestinians themselves.”⁴⁹

Following the steps of Perugini and Gordon, I define academic lawfare as a strategy adopted by the Israeli military and government to legitimize attacks on educational infrastructures by shifting the blame for these attacks onto Palestinians themselves. For instance, Israeli government spokesman David Mencer declared on September 12, 2024, in relation to the strike of a UN Relief and Works Agency for

Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) school-turned-shelter in the al-Jaouni area of the Nuseirat refugee camp, that it was “no longer a school” and had therefore become “a legitimate target” because Hamas used it to launch attacks.⁵⁰ Eighteen people were killed, including six UNRWA workers, and over 44 were wounded.⁵¹

Medicide is not recognized in the UN Genocide Convention either conceptually or denotatively. The creation of this concept relates, on one hand, to acts listed in the UN Genocide Convention, such as causing serious bodily and mental harm to members of the group and deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part. On the other hand, it brings to the forefront the issue of *genocidal intent*, which is controversial in the theory and practice of proving genocide. When all the medical facilities in an area are destroyed or seriously damaged, patients and injured people cannot escape to another area to receive medical assistance, and medical aid is not allowed to enter the target area, the perpetrators’ *dolus directus* (direct intent) to cause harm becomes evident.

Similarly, scholasticide refers to the destruction of an education system and the harm inflicted on members of the academic community, which may include physical annihilation as well as mental harm—one of the genocidal acts acknowledged by the UN Genocide Convention. The destruction of academic facilities—ranging from classrooms to libraries and archives—and the targeted killings of university and school teachers, students, and staff exemplify the necropolitical governance exercised by Israeli authorities in occupied Gaza (and the West Bank).⁵² “Every school, every mosque, every second house has an access to tunnel and of course ammunition,” declared Israeli Ambassador to the UK Tzipi Hotovely during a televised interview on January 3, 2024, referring to the network of underground tunnels utilized by Hamas and other Palestinian

organizations. When the interviewer remarked, “That’s an argument for destroying the whole of Gaza,” Ambassador Hotovely responded, “Do you have another solution?”⁵³

From this perspective, Gaza’s population is stripped of civilian status, rendering everyone a legitimate military target in accordance with the eliminatory logic of settler colonialism.⁵⁴ In this rhetoric, Gaza is not home to individuals but rather described in dehumanizing terms: Hotovely’s “horrible terror city”, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s reference to it as a “city of evil,” and the then Defense Minister Yoav Gallant’s assertion that it is inhabited by “animals, not people.”

Scholasticide, along with medicide, plays a pivotal role in the de-development, de-civilianization⁵⁵, and dehumanization of the Palestinian people. These strategies are likely to be central when the International Court of Justice examines the genocidal intent of Israeli authorities.⁵⁶ Nearly a year ago, Neve Gordon remarked on the destruction of the education system, stating, “The damage of three months will take 10 to 20 years to recover from.”⁵⁷ Meanwhile, the systematic annihilation of academic spaces—established to uphold the “*unconditional* freedom to question and to assert, or even, going still further, the right to say publicly all that is required by research, knowledge, and thought concerning the *truth*”—has exponentially intensified, perpetuating the prolonged denial of the Palestinian people’s right to narrate their own story.⁵⁸

Notes

¹ For a view on Hamas as an armed resistance group that aims to liberate historic Palestine, see Baconi, *Hamas Contained*. Many Palestinian human rights organizations have also been designated as “terrorist” or “unlawful” entities, a classification made

possible by the discretionary power granted to the Israeli defense minister and military commander under Israeli law (Muhareb and others, *Persecution of Palestinian Civil Society*, 27).

² “This bloodbath is the continuation of Israeli’s army’s policy during the last seven weeks: shooting with live ammunition at demonstrators, on the assumption that anyone approaching the separation fence is a legitimate target. Most of the wounded will be condemned to suffer lifelong injuries” (Marie-Elisabeth Ingres, “Violence on Demonstrators in Gaza Is ‘Unacceptable and Inhumane,’” *Médecins Sans Frontières*, May 14, 2018, <https://www.msf.org/palestine-violence-demonstrators-gaza-unacceptable-and-inhuman>). Ingres served as the Head of Mission for Médecins Sans Frontières at the time.

³ Corradini in “Italy Doctor-To-Be Picks Gaza for Semester Abroad,” *The Independent*, March 15, 2019, <https://www.independent.co.uk/italy-doctor-to-be-picks-gaza-for-semester-abroad/>.

⁴ Tlaleng Mofokeng, United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and Francesca Albanese, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, issued a statement on the occasion of the Israeli destruction and killings at Al-Shifa Hospital: “The extent of the atrocity is still unable to be fully documented due to its scale and gravity—and clearly represents the most horrific assault on Gaza’s hospitals” (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “Israel/Gaza: UN Experts Deplore Attacks on Al-Shifa Hospital, Urge States to Stop the Massacre,” April 3, 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/04/israelgaza-un-experts-deplore-attacks-al-shifa-hospital-urge-states>).

See also Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, “Palestine: Statement on Attacks on Medical and Civilian Infrastructure in Gaza and the West Bank,” May 20, 2024, https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/news-stories/news/palestine-statement-attacks-medical-and-civilian-infrastructure-gaza-and-west-bank-2024-05-20_en.

⁵ “MSF Sounds Alarm on Situation at al-Awda Hospital in Northern Gaza,” *Aljazeera*, May 23, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/5/23/israels-war-on-gaza-live-news-full-scale-rafah-invasion-appears-imminent?update=2921327>.

⁶ Javid Abdelmoneim, “A Day in the Life at the Last Remaining Hospital in Southern Gaza,” *Médecins Sans Frontières*, July 19, 2024, <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/day-life-last-remaining-hospital-southern-gaza>. Abdelmoneim was an MSF staff member working in Gaza’s Nasser Hospital at the time.

⁷ Similar to “genocide” (Gk. *genos*, ‘race,’ ‘people’; L. *-caedo*, ‘act of killing’), “medicide” and “scholasticide” follow the morphological pattern of combining the Latin suffix *-caedo* with Greek or, in this case, Latin roots—*mederi* (‘to heal’) and *schola* (‘school’), respectively—to signify an act of killing or destruction.

⁸ For the first definition of “medicide,” see Kevorkian, 202–03, 214. Interestingly, in 1999 Szasz stressed such definition of medicide as nonsensical insofar as it should mean “killing medicine or killing doctors” (Szasz, *Fatal Freedom*, 77). For the second definition, see Perugini and Gordon, “‘Medicide.’”

⁹ “Video of ‘Nurse’ Denouncing Hamas Occupation of Gaza’s Al-Shifa Hospital Is Staged,” France 24, November 15, 2023, <https://www.france24.com/en/tv-shows/truth-or->

fake/20231115-video-of-nurse-denouncing-hamas-occupation-of-al-shifa-hospital-in-gaza-is-fake.

¹⁰ In contrast to the Eurocentric view that academic medical centers first emerged in late medieval and early Renaissance Europe, see Modanlou, “Historical Evidence,” for the role of *Bimarestans* (hospitals) in ancient Persia.

¹¹ Although a search for “scholasticide” in Google Books Ngram Viewer retrieves no results, this does not imply that the concept does not exist. At most, it suggests that “scholasticide” appears in fewer than forty books within Google’s text corpora.

Currently, academic sources are not the most fruitful avenue for locating discussions of this concept. Commonly used databases in the humanities, such as JSTOR, LISTA Library, and MLA International Bibliography, as well as in the social sciences, including Alternativa Press Index, CEPR Discussion Papers Online, ERIC, PQ Psychology Database, PsycInfo, and PTSDpubs, also yield no results for “scholasticide.”

¹² Although a multilingual search for “scholasticide” might yield varied insights, this does not appear to be the case, particularly regarding a fully developed definition. A global and collaborative platform like Wikipedia includes “scholasticide” as an independent entry in only one language—English—created on March 27, 2024. Similarly, the concept of “educide” has a Wikipedia entry created on January 22, 2024, and is presented as synonymous with scholasticide. However, another entry has achieved broader recognition: “Destruction of Cultural Heritage during the 2023 Israeli Invasion of Gaza,” which has been translated into Spanish (“Destrucción del patrimonio cultural palestino durante la invasión israelí de Gaza”) and French (“Destruction du patrimoine culturel lors de l’invasion israélienne de la bande de Gaza”), and has a distinct Arabic entry under a related title—استهداف القطاع الثقافي في غزة (Istihdāf Al-Siqqāt Al-Thaqāfi fī Ghazza;

Targeting the Cultural Sector in Gaza)—though the Arabic version contains different content. As of August 10, 2024, a new Wikipedia entry in English titled “Attacks on Schools during the Israeli Invasion of Gaza” has been created, with corresponding versions available in Arabic, Persian, and Korean.

¹³ Kamala Harris, “Statement by Vice President Harris Marking One Year Since October 7th Attack,” U.S. Embassy in Egypt, October 7, 2024, <https://eg.usembassy.gov/statement-by-vice-president-harris-marking-one-year-since-the-october-7th-attack/>. A third of the 1,200 people killed on October 7, 2023, were Israeli soldiers, police, or armed guards, while many of the hostages were serving in the Israeli military, as Hamas stormed military bases and the Israeli communities of Be’eri and Kfar Azza (Jonathan Cook, “Israel-Palestine War: Why Is the Media Ignoring Evidence of Israel’s Own Actions on 7 October?” *Middle East Eye*, December 15, 2023, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/israel-palestine-war-media-ignoring-evidence-actions-7-october>). Human Rights Watch has verified four videos from the Hamas-led attacks on October 7, 2023, and concluded that they should be investigated as war crimes (“Israel/Palestine: Videos of Hamas-Led Attacks Verified,” Human Rights Watch, October 18, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/10/18/israel/palestine-videos-amas-led-attacks-verified>).

¹⁴ Arguments against defining October 7, 2023, and its aftermath as an “Israel-Hamas War” include the fact that, while Israel is a nation-state, Hamas is technically a non-state actor though it governs Gaza, along with the status of Gaza as an occupied territory. See Jaber and Bantekas, “The Status of Gaza.”

¹⁵ Riemer, *Boycott Theory*, 21.

¹⁶ Maira, *Boycott!*, 8; Barghouti, “The Academic Boycott,” 60.

¹⁷ [Ben Schott], “Scholasticide,” *The New York Times*, January 14, 2009,

<https://archive.nytimes.com/schott.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/01/14/scholasticide/>.

¹⁸ In her 2011 BA thesis, Lindsey Suha Hennawi is adamant in claiming that Ahmad Harouda and Vulliamy’s article is an interview with Nabulsi; see Hennawi, “Education as Resistance,” 56, 63, 80, 89. However, it is a text by Ahmad Harouda and Vulliamy that includes quotes attributed to Nabulsi, whose origin is never clarified.

¹⁹ Ameera Ahmad [Harouda] and Ed Vulliamy. “In Gaza, the Schools Are Dying Too,” *The Guardian*, January 10, 2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jan/10/gaza-schools>. It is also this quote by Nabulsi in Ahmad Harouda and Vulliamy’s article on which Maya Wind bases her use of “scholasticide”; see Wind, *Towers of Ivory and Steel*, 172.

²⁰ Nabulsi in Ahmad [Harouda] and Vulliamy, “In Gaza, the Schools Are Dying Too.”

²¹ Bal, *Travelling Concepts*.

²² Alschuler, *School Discipline*, 59.

²³ Educide is “the mass destruction of a country or region’s educational infrastructure [which aligns with Nabulsi’s definition of scholasticide] because of war, invasion, conflict, terrorism, or mass killings” (Alousi, “Educide,” 355). Baker, Ismael, and Ismael, *Cultural Cleansing in Iraq*. For an academic publication that conceptually links educide to Iraq, see Adriaensens and others, *Beyond Educide*. The Geneva International Centre for Justice has echoed the definition of educide presented in this book. See H.C. von Sponeck, “Iraq and the Betrayal of a People—Impunity Forever?” *Geneva International Centre for Justice*, February 20, 2013, <https://www.gicj.org/topics/countries/iraq/1952-iraq-and-the-betrayal-of-people-impunity-forever-by-dr-hc-von-sponeck>.

²⁴ For example, Rabaia and Habash, “The Hidden War on Higher Education.”

²⁵ Ghazal Golshiri, “All 12 Universities in Gaza Have Been the Target of Israeli Attacks: ‘It’s a War against Education,’” *Le Monde*, March 7, 2024,

https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/03/07/all-12-universities-in-gaza-have-been-the-target-of-israeli-attacks-it-s-a-war-against-education_6592965_4.html.

²⁶ Scholars Against the War on Palestine, *Tool Kit: International Actions against Scholasticide*, February 14-29, 2024, 13, 14–15, <https://scholarsagainstar.org/toolkit/>;

United Nations. “UN Experts Deeply Concerned over ‘Scholasticide’ in Gaza,” April 18, 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/un-experts-deeply-concerned-over-scholasticide-gaza>;

“Report: Israel Killed More than 12,000 Palestine Students since October 2023,” *MEMO: Middle East Monitor*, November 13, 2024,

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20241113-report-israel-killed-more-than-12000-palestine-students-since-october-2023/>.

²⁷ Madjid Zerrouky, “Gaza’s Students and Children Don’t Have Access to Education,” *Le Monde*, October 8, 2024,

https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/10/08/gaza-s-students-and-children-don-t-have-access-to-education_6728632_4.html.

²⁸ Librarians and Archivists with Palestine, “Israeli Damage to Archives, Libraries, and Museums in Gaza, October 2023–January 2024: A Preliminary Report,” February 1, 2024, <https://librarianswithpalestine.org/gaza-report-2024/>.

²⁹ “New conceptions require new terms. By ‘genocide’ we mean the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group. This new word, coined by the author to denote an old practice in its modern development, is made from the ancient Greek word *genos* (race, tribe) and the Latin *cide* (killing), thus corresponding in its formation to such words as tyrannicide, homicide, infanticide, etc.” in Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, 79.

³⁰ Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, 79–90.

³¹ Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, 79. “Lemkin thus interpreted the genocide perpetrated by Nazi Germany as a colonial project of transforming the demographics of Germany and the newly conquered regions of occupied Europe” (Irvin-Erickson, “Raphaël Lemkin,” 29).

³² See Said, *The Question of Palestine*; Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*; Halper, *Decolonizing Israel, Liberating Palestine*; Khalidi, *The Hundred Years’ War on Palestine*; Sa’di and Masalha, *Decolonizing the Study of Palestine*; Kirsch, *On Settler Colonialism*.

³³ “The economic and political expectations which were attached to the annihilation of a group worked always as a generating force of genocide. Also colonialism cannot be left without blame” (Jacobs, *Lemkin*, 5).

³⁴ Irvin-Erickson, *Raphaël Lemkin*, 185–86, 217.

³⁵ Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, 84–85.

³⁶ Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, 85.

³⁷ Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, 80.

³⁸ Bachman, “An Historical Perspective,” 47.

³⁹ United Nations, A/RES/260(III), Art. II.

⁴⁰ Bachman, “An Historical Perspective,” 57.

⁴¹ Davidson, *Cultural Genocide*, 1.

⁴² Scholars Against the War on Palestine, *Tool Kit*, 4,
<https://scholarsagainstwar.org/toolkit/>.

⁴³ Scholars Against the War, *Tool Kit*, 4–8.

⁴⁴ United Nations, “UN Experts Deeply Concerned.”

⁴⁵ Jean-Pierre Filiu, “The Ravages Inflicted on Higher Education in Gaza Can Only Favor Hamas,” *Le Monde*, May 27, 2024,

https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/05/27/the-ravages-inflicted-on-higher-education-in-gaza-can-only-favor-hamas_6672757_4.html.

⁴⁶ Pamela Falk, "Israel Says These Photos Show How Hamas Places Weapons in and Near U.N. Facilities in Gaza, Including Schools," CBS News, November 8, 2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/israel-photos-hamas-gaza-weapons-un-facilities-including-schools/>.

⁴⁷ IDF, "What Is Hamas Doing to Schools and Hospital in Gaza?," August 6, 2014, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8bwiour-iM&list=UUawNWlihdgaycQpO3zi-jYg>.

⁴⁸ Dunlap, "Lawfare Today," 146, 149.

⁴⁹ Perugini and Gordon, "Medical Lawfare," 74, 70.

⁵⁰ "Deadly Israeli Attack on UN-Run School-Turned-Shelter Sparks Global Outrage," Aljazeera, September 12, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/9/12/deadly-israeli-attack-on-un-run-school-turned-shelter-sparks-global-outrage>.

⁵¹ "Israeli Airstrike on Gaza School Sheltering Displaced People Kills at Least 18, Including UN Staff, Palestinian Officials Say," CNN World, September 13, 2024, <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/09/11/world/israeli-airstrike-un-nuseirat-intl-latam/index.html>.

⁵² "The ultimate expression of sovereignty largely resides in the power and capacity to dictate who is able to live and who must die. To kill or to let live thus constitutes sovereignty's limits, its principal attributes" (Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, 66).

⁵³ "Israeli Ambassador to the UK: 'Everything Turned to Be This Horrible Terror City,'" London Broadcasting Company, January 3, 2024, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/5v5qSZBR0Zg>.

⁵⁴ Semerdjian, “A World Without Civilians”; Daniele, Perugini, and Albanese, *Humanitarian Camouflage*, 7.

⁵⁵ “Israeli attacks on Palestinian civil society must be understood in epistemic terms, as measures to undermine Palestinian knowledge production, particularly efforts to expose Israel’s regime of apartheid and settler colonialism over the Palestinian people” (Muhareb and others, *Persecution of Palestinian Civil Society*, 4).

⁵⁶ In January 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) deemed it plausible that Israel’s actions in the Gaza Strip could constitute genocide, as indicated in the ICJ’s January 26 Order. Additionally, as of November 21, 2024, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant alongside Hamas leader Mohammed Deif, for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity related to the ongoing so-called “Israel–Hamas War.”

⁵⁷ Patrick Jack, “Academia in Gaza ‘Has Been Destroyed’ by Israeli ‘Educide,’” *Times Higher Education*, January 29, 2024, <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/academia-gaza-has-been-destroyed-israeli-educide>.

⁵⁸ Derrida, “The University,” 202; Said, “Permission to Narrate.”

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