



PHOTO: REUTERS

# Youth activism and the Palestinian resistance

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RAFID KHANDAKER

As we witness genocide unfolding on our very screens, it is undeniable we have entered a new era where the internet has democratised information, making it far more difficult to fool the masses, especially young people.

Gen Z is the generation of the internet. It has been our home, our playground, our school - we've practically been raised by it. This is a strength Pro-Palestine denizens have been utilising. Young people have been using their internet knowledge and presence to spread the word about war crimes being committed in Gaza, the lies being spread by the Israeli state and the stories of Palestinians and their families on the ground as reported by young Gazan journalists. Not only that, the "BDS" movement, which calls for the boycott, divestment

and sanction of Israel, has been gaining traction. Major companies that have thrown their support behind Israel have seen their stocks drop in value significantly in the face of these mass boycotts.

However, there has been no shortage of pushback either. Western media outlets have been spreading anti-Palestinian narratives and blatant misinformation constantly. Furthermore, many people who have posted online about Palestine claimed that they are being censored on social media, with posts having abnormally low reach and many posts and prominent accounts being taken down. In light of this, people have started to censor certain words or use code words to evade the algorithm, a testament to how young people's internet knowledge is being put to good use. Many now use the watermelon slice emoji, which has the same colours as the Palestinian flag and

is a symbol of resistance that has been used by Palestinians for a long time, to show their support.

Despite the effectiveness, this is only a temporary solution, and the algorithms are bound to eventually catch on. Therefore, the only way to truly overcome the algorithm is to overwhelm it - post so much that many of them slip through the cracks and escape censorship. Additionally, interacting with pro-Palestine posts will go a long way, even if you have only a few followers, as it will push those posts up in the algorithm and show them to more people.

It is also important that we spot disinformation and propaganda spread through the media, and not allow it to manipulate us. For example, pictures have been circulating of Israel sending boxes labelled "Medical Supplies" and incubators to Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza. However, why would

the boxes be labelled in English, rather than Arabic or even Hebrew? Furthermore, Al-Shifa Hospital has sufficient incubators, but what it doesn't have is fuel to run them, as Israel has cut off electricity in the region. So, what good will more incubators do? This should raise everyone's eyebrows about the true intention behind these actions.

Young people have always been at the forefront of progress. As the vanguard for change, the fires of revolution burn hot in our blood, and these flames are only fanned by young Palestinians who are showing the world what it truly means to be a revolutionary, anti-colonial force fighting relentlessly for liberation. So, let us follow in their footsteps, and fight just as relentlessly for a Palestine free from colonisation, occupation, and genocide.

## Being a bookworm on a busy schedule

SHANUM SARKAR

I remember how I used to devour books back in middle school, flipping page after page until I was done with 300-page reads in just one night. However, last year, as a junior in high school, I barely managed to read fifty pages of a book that wasn't required for academic purposes. The only reason being I had no time - or so I thought.

This year, however, I've been trying a few ways to rekindle the bookworm in me. In the process, I've realised that I don't necessarily have to have my nose in a book in public 24/7 or trade TV time. And if you're in the same boat as me, here are a few tips that might come in handy.

**Read what you actually want to read**

Contrary to what's been ingrained in us, there really is no reason to be elitist about what you read. Reading should not feel like a chore. It should be a relaxing activity you look forward to with intrinsic motivation being key.

If you genuinely like a book, let it simmer in the back of your mind, creating anticipation for the next reading session. Don't feel pressured to read certain books just because they're considered classics. Explore different reading formats like graphic novels, short stories, or poetry - they can be more accessible and could reignite your passion for reading.

As a reader, it's important to recognise that not every book needs to be a literary masterpiece. It's perfectly

fine if Oscar Wilde doesn't resonate with you after a long day of academic challenges. The joy of reading comes from what brings you happiness so dive into genres that make you want to read.

**Do not set reading goals**

Don't let guilt dictate your reading habits. It's okay to have a pile of books that are waiting to be read or a wishlist, but make sure you're in charge of your "goals" and it's not the other way around. The joy of reading lies in the freedom to explore, not in meeting

arbitrary targets.

Setting reading goals can turn enjoyable pastimes into a stressful task. Instead of focusing on the quantity of books you read, concentrate on the quality of the reading experience. Allow yourself the freedom to savour each word, and don't hesitate to immerse yourself in a book for as long as it takes to fully appreciate it.

**Join literary communities**

Fitting in can be a good motivator, especially

if you're otherwise lazy like I am. Read books recommended by friends, join book clubs, follow social media accounts, YouTube channels, blogs, or join Facebook groups.

The beauty of literature is often magnified when shared with others. Joining literary communities not only introduces you to diverse perspectives but also creates a supportive environment for

your reading journey. Engaging in discussions about books, attending events, and sharing your thoughts with fellow enthusiasts adds a social dimension to your reading experience. Book clubs, both online and offline, provide opportunities to explore genres you might not have considered and broaden your literary horizons.

Visit bookstores and libraries with friends, and attend literary events, book fairs, and author signings. Browsing shelves and discovering new titles can reignite the excitement of reading. Share your thoughts, reflections, and recommendations to enhance your experience. Make reading a communal ritual to foster a sense of belonging.

**Tune into e-books and audiobooks**

Audiobooks and e-books provide a flexible solution, allowing you to enjoy literature during various activities. Audiobooks provide a hands-free option, making it convenient to absorb literature while multitasking. To enhance your experience further, pick engaging narrators who make stories come alive.

**Make reading a ritual when you do have time**

Instead of stealing time from other activities all the time, it is worthwhile to set aside dedicated time for reading when you're on vacation or have a weekend with no set plans. Establish a consistent reading routine during this time, whether it's a morning ritual with a cup of tea or a bedtime tradition cosied up in a warm blanket.

When you still approach reading in its ritualistic form every once in a while, it won't feel like you're "making time to read" but simply reading.

ILLUSTRATION:  
ABIR HOSSAIN