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Israel and the death of progressivism

by Barry Shaw, Guest Columnist

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In my book "Fighting Hamas, BDS and Anti-Semitism," I detail the discovery of a new strain of anti-Semitism that I noticed in Europe, namely the urge by haters to drive a wedge between the local Jew and the Jewish state. I write of several examples of the modern form of Jew-hatred in the section entitled "The Malmo Symptom."

The section's title reflects the experience suffered by the local Jews of Malmo, Sweden, when their mayor, Ilmar Reepalu, insisted that they must "denounce Israeli violations against the civilian population in Gaza," pointing out that instead of doing so, the Jewish community chose "to hold a [pro-Israel] demonstration in the Grand Square, which could send the wrong signal."

This veiled threat that his Jews must toe his anti-Israel line, at a time when Israeli civilians (some related to the Malmo Jews) were being targeted by intense Hamas rocket bombardments from Gaza, is shockingly revealing.

It was followed by the vandalizing of Malmo's main synagogue and a physical attack on Rabbi Shneur Kesselman as he was walking away from it. A similar attack left Rabbi Binyamin Jacobs as the victim in Holland when anti-Israel thugs targeted him as rockets were falling on Israel in 2014.

In the book, I predict that this Jew-hating virus would jump the Atlantic and metastasize in America. I anticipate this would inevitably happen based on the rapid radicalization that is rampant on American campuses. Added to that, we now have the anarchy of the inner cities and the polarization of the American political system and its control by radical far-left rabble-rousers.

Linking the fate of Jews to Israel in a disparaging anti-Semitic manner is not new. What is sinister is the moral tone taken by Israel haters against Jews, insisting that Jews must decide on which side they stand. This means they must be anti-Israel or their participation in liberal and progressive campaigns they care about will be blocked. This is the pernicious spread of modern-day political anti-Semitism into America.

The intolerance of the anti-Israel, anti-Jewish bias reverses the progressive movement into a regressive radicalism.

This regressive radicalism is epitomized by the anarchist Black Lives Matter group who decided to become joined at the hip with the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement. They have rejected Jewish activists who fail to share their false rhetoric that a "genocide is taking place against the Palestinian people." Rabid propaganda and lies are part of the BLM political platform, and if you stand with Israel you can have no place advocating for better lives for African-Americans in the BLM movement.

Similarly, the National Women's Studies Association's BDS resolution stated explicitly that "BDS is a feminist issue ... that one cannot call themselves a feminist without taking a stand on Palestine."

This makes it difficult for women who love Israel to be members of the NWSA without feeling hypocritical.

As Alan Dershowitz rightly points out, apparently one can call oneself a feminist without taking a stand on Syria, Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia or any other nation that grossly violates women's, gay and human rights, but not if you support Israel or point out Palestinians should follow Israel's shining example when it comes to women's and gay rights.

The sheer hypocrisy and blind anti-Jewish state hatred of the intolerant masters of the so-called progressive movement was demonstrated when BDS activists, together with their Black Lives Matter henchmen, broke up a LGBTQ pride event because it featured a presentation given by an Israeli gay group.

Apparently, you can't be proudly gay if you are a proud supporter of Israel.

Perhaps one of the more hypocritical organizations is PACBI, the Palestinian Academic and Cultural Boycott. This group does not boycott Palestinians. It boycotts Israeli academics and attempts to block cultural or academic participation by Israelis.

This organization, which is firmly based on BDS against Israel for perceived wrongs against Palestinian Arabs, has nothing to say and takes no action against Jordan, a country that is clearly guilty of the most sustained apartheid policies against the Palestinians. In Jordan, millions of Arabs who profess to be Palestinians have been kept in refugee status for 70 years, well into their fifth generation. Could it be that PACBI fails to act because that country is not the Jewish state? PACBI is shedding crocodile tears and is only using the Palestinian cause as a club to beat Israel.

What must be done? Clearly, the first thing that open-minded liberal thinkers can do is to distance themselves from movements whose bias and intolerance are the antithesis of all liberal values.

If hate and bias built on propaganda and lies is the platform of groups, organizations or associations that bar you from pursuing your values or picks on one country and one country only to the exclusion of any other, they should be outlawed, not pandered or supported.

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