

Israel, Anti-Semitism and US Foreign Policy

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Global Research, February 18, 2014

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation, Religion](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

Why is it that any criticism of the actions and policies of the Israeli regime is denounced as anti-Semitism and hate speech, but all sorts of blasphemous insults against the Muslims, their holy book, prophet and other sanctities are vindicated and defended as a matter of freedom of speech?

The hypocritical approach taken by the U.S. government and its allies in Europe, along with the mainstream media and public institutions in these countries toward the concept of freedom of speech is indescribably throbbing and disconcerting.

The customary practice in the Western public sphere in the recent decades, and especially following the beginning of Second Intifada in 2000, was to protect the Israeli regime through vilifying and ostracizing its critics as anti-Semite and unofficially banning and forbidding remarks, statements or actions which could potentially undermine Israel's flimsy and shivering security.

Even the strongest advocates of Israel know well and confess that this regime is so feeble and frail that even a simple op-ed or commentary in a national tabloid can derail and damage its security. Israel has managed to resist international pressures, especially on the side of the Muslim world, with the assistance and patronage of the United States security apparatus and media wing that have offered their unconditional and unwavering support to Tel Aviv in the most critical junctures. This is why the discourse of "anti-Semitism" has emerged and the neo-conservative think tanks have rushed to defend Israel against criticism and prevent it from being held accountable over its war crimes.

Currently, there are several organizations and institutes in the United States which are solely tasked to hold back the criticism of Israel or portray the critics of its bloodthirsty leaders as anti-Jews and anti-Semites. For instance, the Anti-Defamation League which describes itself as an organization which "fights anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry, defends democratic ideals and protects civil rights for all" is mostly in charge of identifying the critics of Israel in the U.S. media and laying the groundwork for banishing them from the outlets they're working with.

The objectives of ADL are utterly racist and tend to propagate this belief that the Israeli citizens are somewhat superior and deserve more respect and veneration than other people. Part of the motto of the Anti-Defamation League is "to stop the defamation of the Jewish people." This motto is entirely hypocritical and duplicitous, firstly because in practice, ADL really doesn't care for the rights of the Jewish people, as it claims, and is simply commissioned to impede any criticism of the leaders of the Israeli regime, and not even its

citizens, and secondly because there's no logical basis for singling out a certain group of people and saying that they need to be guarded against defamation. Of course there's nothing which makes the Israeli people distinct and separable from other peoples and necessitates the existence of an organization to defend them against what's perceived as "defamation."

But regardless of these logical arguments, the state sponsors and benefactors of the Israeli regime, which are interestingly always in minority and always affluent and powerful have shrewdly abused the accusation of anti-Semitism to denigrate and disparage whoever dares to criticize this lawless, bullying occupying power.

A clear example was the 2009 controversy that first emerged in Sweden and then spread internationally after the Swedish tabloid "Aftonbladet" published an investigative report titled "Our sons are being plundered for their organs", revealing that the Israel Defense Forces soldiers take out and harvest the body organs of the Palestinians, and especially the Palestinian children, who die in the Israeli custody. Shocked and astounded, the Israelis immediately set in motion an international campaign of crying wolf, mobilizing their forces across the world to condemn this article as anti-Semitic and a "blood libel"!

The Western hypocrisy on the idea of freedom of speech revealed itself in this case conspicuously. The Swedish ambassador to Israel Elisabet Borsin Bonnier condemned the article as "shocking and appalling" and stated that freedom of speech "carries responsibility." At the time, a survey was conducted among the cultural editors of the major Swedish newspapers by the Svenska Dagbladet daily which indicated that all of them would have refused to publish the article.

The controversy that erupted following the publication of the Aftonbladet's piece by the freelance photojournalist Donald Boström and the international reactions to the article that had simply tried to shed a light on an unseen aspect of the Israeli brutality against the Palestinians was a clear indication of how the West treats the dichotomy of free speech and hate speech insincerely.

Two U.S. Congressmen, Robert Wexler of Florida and Elton Gallegly of California wrote a letter to the Swedish Prime Minister and asked him to reject and condemn the article in the strongest terms: "Given the far-reaching implications for this article, which raises the unfortunate specter of similar blood libels and spurious charges that have been directed at Jews throughout the centuries, it is critical that your government unequivocally repudiate and reject the heinous allegations expressed in this article... It is essential that this vitriolic article not be used by anti-Semites, anti-Israel advocates, and extremists as an excuse to commit acts of violence and terrorism against the Jewish community in Sweden or internationally."

Interestingly, the Congressmen and other Western politicians and officials who angrily reacted to the "anti-Semitic" article paid no attention to the very truth that was divulged and disclosed by the Swedish paper, that is the body organs of the dead Palestinian boys and men were taken out and sold by the Israeli soldiers. They simply closed their eyes and chanted slogans in condemnation of the "anti-Semitism" perceived in the article. Nobody was there to condemn the Israeli soldiers for their barbaric and atrocious act of harvesting the body organs of the Palestinians.

Such hypocrisies have appeared in the past 65 years again and again, and there have been

few heroes who could firmly and audaciously stand against and resist them.

It was in 2004 that the Iranian Sahar TV began premiering a television series called "Zahra's Blue Eyes" which narrated the story of Israeli militiamen and civilians conspiring to steal the eyes of Palestinian children. The series received a positive feedback at home and abroad, but what was the official response to it? The French Broadcasting Authority ordered the French satellite provider Eutelsat to take the Sahar 1 channel off air because the film was considered as having anti-Semitic implications!

Much has been said about the futility and vainness of the anti-Semitism pretext. Anti-Semitism is simply a label assigned to anybody who wakes up to protest the colonial, inhumane, radical and bigoted policies of the Israeli regime. The history of the Israeli crimes against the Palestinian citizens is replete with bitter and painful memories; the systematic ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians, expulsion of Palestinian citizens from their homeland and constructing illegal settlements, criminal occupation of additional Arab territories in the 1967 war, racial discrimination against the non-Jews in the Occupied Territories, the continued siege of the Gaza Strip and the organized collective punishment of 1.5 million citizens living in the densely populated coastal enclave.

When compared to their silence and indifference toward the publication of sacrilegious cartoons and release of blasphemous movies that appear on the TV and cinema screens one after the other to pour scorn on the sacraments of the Muslims and deride their beliefs, the sensitivity of the Western politicians, mass media and think tanks about "anti-Semitism" sounds ludicrous and baseless.

The UK-based Redress Information & Analysis website which covers the developments pertaining to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict once published an article satirizing the remarks made by Abraham Foxman, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League. Somewhere in the article, it noted: "It's official. If you're an American traitor and you're arrested, tried and convicted for treason, but you also happen to be a Jew, then it's not treason, it's anti-Semitism."

Anti-Semitism cannot be used as an excuse to demoralize and dishearten the critics of Israel anymore. The conscientious and awakened people in Europe, Africa, Asia and America have begun realizing that the Israeli state which was founded on colonial grounds and is oriented on racist principles is a state sponsor of terrorism and a rogue state which needs to be punished in order to learn a lesson from the felonies it has been perpetrating for 65 years. That's why the worldwide BDS movement (Boycott/Divestment/Sanctions) has gained such a momentum that is turning into a serious and effective instrument for putting cultural, political and economic pressure on Israel, even on behalf of its close allies in Europe, to force it to abandon its dreadful and brutal policies.

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