

PRINT

Israel-bashing Jews: not in my name!

Thursday, 05 March 2009

Israel's response to thousands of rocket attacks from Gaza brought another wave of vituperous attacks, with more false claims of "war crimes," human rights violations and other spurious allegations of immorality.

The Durban strategy of demonization is moving at top speed, with trade union boycotts, university "apartheid weeks," and legal campaigns to bring Israeli officials to trial in kangaroo courts. In parallel, demonstrators chant slogans in support of Hamas and Hezbollah, which openly proclaim their genocidal goals.

In this rejectionist war that has continued for more than 60 years, a tiny group of anti-Zionist Jews and Israelis play central roles. They are given prominence as columnists and on television, claiming to present an "enlightened" and "independent" Jewish voice that's opposed to the evil "occupation" (erasing a history of genocidal goals and terrorism that began long before 1967) and other terrible Israeli actions. The group includes university professors, journalists and officials of human rights superpowers. Many have giant psychological chips on their shoulders and gain notoriety by being vocally anti-Israel.

These "independent voices" do not speak in my name. With the restoration of Jewish sovereignty, Israelis choose their own leaders, for better or worse, and engage in active policy debates. The age of Diaspora interlocutors and apologists selected by foreign powers is over.

The small number of "independent Jewish voices" speak for themselves and constitute a tiny fraction of the Jewish people. But in an atmosphere of anti-Semitism, they provide imagined shields against claims of anti-Semitism and justify the singling out of Israel. In many cases, this is their only "Jewish" activity – most are not active members in synagogues, play no role in other Jewish institutions and do not contribute to Jewish life or continuity.

A prominent example of this activity is provided by Antony Lerman, who briefly served as director of London's Institute for Jewish Policy Research, and now has a column in the influential Guardian newspaper – one of the leading platforms for the anti-Israel invective pervasive among leftist intellectuals in Britain.

On Feb. 13, in "An open letter on anti-Semitism," addressed to an official addressing a major conference on the topic taking place in the British Parliament. Assuming the ostrich position, Lerman wrote that the way to stop numerous anti-Semitic attacks in Britain was to be louder in criticizing Israel. Lerman also alleges that the anti-Israel obsession in which he participates is not a form of modern anti-Semitism – replacing all of the evidence with sentiment from his fantasy world. He also refers to concerns about this anti-Semitism as "exaggeration" and "hyperbole."

The main reason that Lerman's opinions receive any attention is that he is a prominent Jew and, therefore, useful in the demonization campaign. Lerman has been embraced by J-Street – a U.S.-based organization funded and founded by George Soros – another anti-Israel Diaspora-based "independent" Jewish voice.

Canada's "independent Jewish voices" are less articulate or influential than Lerman or Soros, and no more credible. In a letter to Citizenship and Immigration Minister Jason Kenny, who is a world leader in the battle against anti-Semitism, this group sought to justify the activities of the Canadian Arab Federation, claiming that this controversial organization "has been a consistent and valued supporter of Canadian Jewish individuals and groups, including Independent Jewish Voices (Canada)." This is transparently self-serving propaganda, and nothing more.



Free speech gives all voices – including the most marginal – the right to state their opinions, but in the free marketplace of ideas, the unjustified attention and vacuous claims can be exposed and countered. Jews can always be found for those seeking to justify “wiping Israel off the map,” but they do not speak in my name.

[Close Window](#)