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Pseudo-Scholarship, Intersectionality, and Blood Libels Against Israel

RICHARD L. CRAVATTS | FEBRUARY 15, 2016, 8:57 AM |

Jews have been accused of harming and murdering non-Jews since the twelfth century in England, when Jewish convert to Catholicism, Theobald of Cambridge, mendaciously announced that European Jews ritually slaughtered Christian children each year and drank their blood during Passover season.

That medieval blood libel, largely abandoned in the contemporary West, does, however, still appear as part of Arab world's vilification of Jews—now transmogrified into a slander against Israel, the Jew of nations. But in the regular chorus of defamation against Israel by a world infected with Palestinianism, a new, more odious trend has shown itself: the blood libel has been revived; however, to position Israel (and by extension Jews) as demonic agents in the community of nations, the primitive fantasies of the blood libel are now masked with a veneer of academic scholarship.

On February 3rd, for example, Jasbir K. Puar, Associate Professor of Women's and Gender Studies at Rutgers University delivered a lecture at Vassar College, "Inhumanist Biopolitics: How Palestine Matters," sponsored, shamefully, not by radical student groups but by the school's American Studies Department and departments of Political Science, Religion, and English, and the programs of Africana Studies, International Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, and Jewish Studies.

The lecture examined "the use of technologies of measure to manufacture a 'remote control' occupation, one that produces a different version of Israeli 'home invasions' through the maiming and stunting of population. If Gaza, for example, is indeed the world's largest 'open air prison' and an experimental lab for Israeli military apparatuses. . . , what kinds of fantasies (about power, about bodies, about resistance, about politics) are driving this project?" In other words, Professor Puar's central thesis was that Israeli military tactics involve the deliberate the "stunting, "maiming," physical disabling, and scientific experimenting with Palestinian lives, an

outrageous resurrection of the classic anti-Semitic trope that Jews purposely, and sadistically, harm and kill non-Jews.

Puar, who writes on “gay and lesbian tourism, queer theory, theories of intersectionality, affect, homonationalism, and pinkwashing” (the perverse theory that Israel trumpets its broad support of LGBT rights to obscure its mistreatment of the Palestinians), is also, unsurprisingly, on the Advisory Board of the U.S. Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, a leading coordinator of Boycott, Divestment and Sanction (BDS) movement on campuses.

More alarming than her open support of the BDS movement, and her vocal support for Vassar’s own ongoing BDS campaign, was Puar’s explicit support for terrorism against Israeli citizens as a corollary aspect of the BDS movement. BDS “is such a minor piece of how Palestine is going to be liberated, [and] we need BDS as part of *organized resistance and armed resistance* in Palestine as well,” she said. “There is no other way the situation is going to change [emphasis added].”

When pro-Palestinian activists and critics of Israel, such as Professor Puar, repeat the claim that Palestinians somehow have an internationally-recognized legal “right” to resist so-called occupation through violent means, they are both legitimizing that terror and helping to insure that its lethal use by Israel’s enemies will continue unabated. Those who lend their moral support to terrorism, and who continually see the existence of “grievance-based violence” as a justifiable tool of the oppressed, have made themselves apologists for radical Islam and terrorism, not to mention questioning Israel’s right to protect its citizens from being slaughtered.

In her speech, Professor Puar also leveled a grotesque, never-proven charge against Israel, namely, that its soldiers harvest organs from Palestinians it has killed, charges that have been made by others, without any substantiation, including after the deadly 2010 earthquake in Haiti where Israeli experts assisted with search and rescue operations and were later accused of harvesting organs from Haitian victims of the natural disaster. “Protests, stabbings, flagrant refusals of IDF control, clashes and revived commitment to a peoples’ rumble,” Puar said, “have resulted in more than 120 deaths by field assassinations of young Palestinian men, largely between the ages of 12 to 16, by IDF soldiers. On January 1st, 2016, the Israeli government returns 17 bodies of these youth that purportedly lay in a morgue in West Jerusalem for two months. No explanation has ever been given for their detention.” And without offering any proof or citing the source of her information, Puar then mendaciously claimed that “Some speculate that the bodies were mined for organs for scientific research.”

Puar continued with spurious charges against the Israeli military, leaving out entirely any context in which Palestinian terrorism, including the reality that the “field assassinations” to which Puar so carelessly refers took place during current “knife Intifada,” in which psychotic Arabs randomly sought to, and were often successful in, murdering Israeli civilians, a jihad that necessitated military intervention by the IDF.

She also accused Israel of randomly, and recklessly, targeting medical facilities and other infrastructure as a deadly way “to provide the bare minimum for survival, but minimal enough to attempt to defeat or strip resistance” where . . . “the target here is not just life itself but resistance itself.” Puar’s view that Israel’s military operations are characterized by disproportionality and a disregard for human life—even of its mortal foes—was in fact totally contradicted by a report prepared by The High-Level International Military Group on the Gaza Conflict in 2014, which found that “during Operation Protective Edge . . . Israel not only met a reasonable international standard of observance of the laws of armed conflict, but in many cases significantly exceeded that standard.”

In her speech the central, repellant theme was that Israel is also intent on “Targeting youth, not for death but for stunting” as a “tactic that seeks to render impotent any future resistance.” Even Israel’s attempt to *not* kill Palestinians, but maim them, is given a perverse character by Puar, who contended that “Maiming masquerades as let live when in fact it acts as will not let die,” and that this technique, as part of a sadistic, imperialistic militancy on the part of Israel, “is used to achieve . . . tactical aims of settler colonialism.”

Professor Puar is a feminist and gender studies specialist, and one may wonder why she has invested so much of her academic energy in vilifying Israel. But her obsession with Israel and its various perceived modes of oppression and brutality toward a weak, innocent victim group is consistent with many academics in the humanities and social sciences who increasingly find a linkage as they seek to affirm the rights of the victimized and name the villains responsible for this oppression. The more that seemingly unrelated instances of oppression can be conflated, it is thought, the greater the ability to confront these oppressors and neutralize the negative effect they have on society. This trend has been called “intersectionality,” and it has meant that someone who is a gender studies professor, or queer theorist, or American studies expert can, with no actual knowledge or expertise about the Middle East, readily pontificate on the many social pathologies of Israel, based on its perceived role as a racist, colonial oppressor of an

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The paranoid view of history infects Oberlin

RICHARD L. CRAVATTS | FEBRUARY 29, 2016, 10:15 AM |

“Anti-semitism,” wrote Stephen Eric Bronner, author of the engaging book *A Rumor About The Jews*, “is the stupid answer to a serious question: How does history operate behind our backs?” For a wide range of ideological extremists, anti-Semitism is still the stupid answer for why what goes wrong with the world does go wrong. It is a philosophical world view and interpretation of history that creates conspiracies as a way of explaining the unfolding of historical events; it is a pessimistic and frantic outlook, characterized in 1964 by historian Richard Hofstadter as “the paranoid style” of politics that shifts responsibility from the self to sinister, omnipotent others — typically and historically, the Jews.

Long the thought product of cranks and fringe groups, Hofstadter’s paranoid style of politics has lately entered the mainstream of what would be considered serious, and respectable academic enterprise. Witness, for instance, the Facebook posts of Joy Karega, an assistant professor of Rhetoric and Composition at Oberlin College, who wildly claimed that Jewish bankers control the world economy and have financed every war since Napoleon; that Israelis and Zionists were not only behind the 9/11 attacks in New York, but also orchestrated the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks in Paris; and that Israeli fingerprints could be found in the downing over Ukraine of Malaysian Air Flight 17, and also in the rise of ISIS.

What troubles observers of this type of intellectual incoherence emanating from academia, is that, unlike its intellectually flabby predecessors from right-wing hate groups or left wing cranks, this political analysis comes complete with academic respectability of Oberlin, a trend that Professor Hofstadter had himself originally found noteworthy. “In fact,” he wrote, “the idea of the paranoid style as a force in politics would have little contemporary relevance or historical value if it were applied only to men with profoundly disturbed minds. It is the use of paranoid modes of expression by more or less normal people that makes the phenomenon significant.”

For Karega, the archetypal malevolent Jew is found in the person of Jacob Rothschild, whose photograph she posted in December 2014, along with text, allegedly from him, stating that “We own nearly every central bank in the world. We financed both sides of every war since Napoleon. We own your news, the media, your oil and your government” — oft-repeated tropes

about Jewish domination of media and banking that suggest to Karega and like-minded conspiracists that Jewish wealth and influence enable Jews — and by extension Zionists and Israelis — to get away with various predations and political manipulations. She raises the specter of the Jewish banker in a later Facebook post when she blames Israel, “the same people behind the massacre in Gaza,” of shooting down the Malaysian airliner over Ukraine. “With this false flag,” Karega rants, “the Rothschild-led banksters [sic], exposed and hated and out of economic options to stave off the coming global deflationary depression, are implementing the World War III option.”

Karega’s assertions that Jews and agents of the Jewish state and high-placed government officials are manipulating current events, fomenting war, profiting from global unrest — secretive, underhanded actions whose end result would not otherwise honestly, fairly, or reasonably be achieved — this language has drawn such immediate and thunderous denunciation of Karega’s various Facebook posts, as first made public with captured Facebook screenshots in the *The Tower*. And it is a particularly incendiary bit of language when discussing Israel, a Jewish state, for it parallels so invidiously the classic anti-Semitic canards, such as the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which purport to reveal the intention of Jews to furtively rule and dominate the globe.

Karega not only attempts to expose the hidden wealth and power of Rothschild, but she further suggests that this wealth is put to nefarious purposes, shooting down a Malaysian civilian aircraft to draw attention away from Israel’s incursion into Gaza, as well as a more deadly agenda based on “the Rothschild’s propensity for whacking scientists who dare interfere with their depopulation agenda” Karega mused, “of which AIDS is a key component,” the oft-cited, but never substantiated, libel, repeated here by Karega, that Jewish scientists introduced AIDS into the black community as an act of genocidal racism.

“The central image,” said Hofstadter, of this defective way of looking at how history works, “is that of a vast and sinister conspiracy, a gigantic and yet subtle machinery of influence set in motion to undermine and destroy a way of life... [The] enemy is clearly delineated,” Hofstadter observed, much in the way the Jew is depicted in the vicious forgery gaining renewed interest of late, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*: “He is a perfect model of malice, a kind of amoral superman: sinister, ubiquitous, powerful, cruel, sensual, luxury-loving.”

As Hofstadter described it, the paranoid scholar sees the manipulator, here Jewish bankers, the Mossad, Prime Minister Netanyahu, as an enemy, one with disproportionate and unreasonable influence. “Unlike the rest of us,” however, he wrote, “the enemy is not caught in the toils of the vast mechanism of history . . . Very often the enemy is held to possess some especially effective source of power: he controls the press; he directs the public mind through ‘managed news’; he has unlimited funds. . . he is gaining a stranglehold,” in this case on world politics. Israel, and the Rothchilds, in Karega’s hallucinatory universe, symbolize Jewish power in the way that classic anti-Semitic depictions of the Jew have always depicted them: they comprise a

shady cabal of omnipotent, money-hungry, unscrupulous moneymen, loyal to no single nation, willing to profit from wars and contagion, the enemies of morality, law, and virtue. Jews are at once a separate race who keep to themselves and never assimilate and adopt the host culture, and manipulative insiders who penetrate host societies from within and undermine mores and economies for their own gain.

In a March 2015 Facebook post, Karega provided what she apparently thought was a helpful link to a crazed speech by Minister Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam, "Muslims for 9/11 Truth: Farrakhan on 9-11: What You Need to Know #False Flag," in which, to no one's great surprise, the enlightened minister ascribed the blame for the 9/11 attacks, not to the homicidal Muslim terrorists who clearly perpetrated them, but to Israel and greedy Jews who realized financial and political gains from the felling of the Twin Towers. "Farrakhan is truth-telling in this video," Karega wrote in her post, and "we need more of us willing to venture into these areas."

Minister Farrakhan, it will be remembered, characterized Judaism as a "gutter religion," deemed Hitler "a great man," and, lest there be any doubt where his sympathies lie regarding Israel, decided that the "plight" of American blacks puts them "in the same position" as the Palestinians. So his view that Israel's fingerprints are all over the 9/11 attacks, and that Jews in fact benefited from the terrorism, is not in variance from his twisted beliefs, nor, apparently, those of Karega.

"Now you know I'm going to be lambasted and called anti-Semitic," he said in a 2012 Chicago speech. "They'll say Farrakhan was up to his old canards; he said Jews control Hollywood. Well, they said it themselves! Jews control the media. They said it themselves! Jews and some gentiles control the banking industry, international banks. They do! In Washington right next to the Holocaust Museum is the Federal Reserve where they print the money. Is that an accident?"

Once Professor Karega's demented posts were made public, Oberlin's president, already reeling from a spate of other anti-Semitic, anti-Jewish incidents on his campus, reacted fecklessly, giving the disingenuous response that the college "respects the right of its faculty, students, staff and alumni to express their personal views," and that "the statements posted on social media by Dr. Joy Karega . . . are hers alone and do not represent the views of Oberlin College." That may well be true, and universities do not necessarily have to take responsibility for the outrageous views expressed publicly by its faculty; but neither do academic leaders have to refrain from denouncing the same speech that a faculty member is perfectly able to utter under the protection of academic free speech, just as they regularly do in those rare instances when slurs are made by faculty aimed at blacks, gays, Muslims, Hispanics, or other perceived victim groups for who such speech is deemed "hurtful," "oppressive," or "hateful."

The university campus is *not* the public square, where any idea — no matter how deranged, improbable, inaccurate, libelous, historically unfounded, or damaging — can be spoken and heard, unchallenged, without government interference. But while universities should, and do,

protect the notion of unbridled expression and the ability to express any opinion as part of “scholarly inquiry,” it has never been the intention of academic free speech to protect, or promote, irresponsible, inaccurate, or deranged speech that is clearly outside the parameters of responsible scholarship, research, and factuality.

A professor has every right to contend that the earth is flat, or that the United States is a greater terrorist threat than ISIS, or that the Holocaust never took place, or, as Professor Karega has contended, that Jewish bankers rule the world and enabled Israel to orchestrate 9/11 and the Paris shootings, but the right to express such madness does not insulate an individual from the responsibility of taking ownership of his or her opinions. Nor should university leaders, while granting faculty the right to express such intellectual perversities, hesitate from denouncing them for what they are: in this case, classic anti-Semitic tropes about Jewish power and perfidy dressed up, as is often normally and sadly the case, as mere “criticism” of Israel.

All the concern and intrigue engendered in Karega's Facebook posts show that the obvious, and easy, answers are not the ones the paranoid is likely to accept on face value. She is condemned by her nature to suffer in the labyrinthine schemes she uncovers. “We are all sufferers from history,” Hofstadter concluded, “but the paranoid is a double sufferer, since he is afflicted not only by the real world, with the rest of us, but by his fantasies as well.”

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Women's Studies and the Moral Vacuity of an Academic Boycott Against Israel

RICHARD L. CRAVATTS | DECEMBER 2, 2015, 9:45 PM |

Seeming to give proof to Orwell's observation that some ideas are so stupid they could only have been thought of by intellectuals, yet another academic association—this time the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA)—has followed the lead of the American Studies Association, the American Anthropological Association, the Asian Studies Association, and several others by ignobly voting to approve another academic boycott of Israel.

With the characteristic pseudo-intellectual babble that currently dilutes the scholarly relevance of the social sciences and humanities, the NWSA's recommendation to approve a boycott announced that, "As feminist scholars, activists, teachers, and public intellectuals we recognize the interconnectedness of systemic forms of oppression," that "interconnectedness," no doubt, justifying the singling out of Israeli academics for their particularly odious role in the oppression of women in the Middle East. "In the spirit of this intersectional perspective," these moral termagants continued, "we cannot overlook the injustice and violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, perpetrated against Palestinians and other Arabs in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, within Israel and in the Golan Heights, as well as the colonial displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians during the 1948 Nakba."

Apparently, this rarified "intersectional perspective" has not enabled NWSA members to notice the injustice and violence currently being meted out *against* Israelis, either as a result of the shower of some 12,000 Hamas rockets launched from Gaza since 2005 with the intention of murdering Jewish civilians, or as part of the ongoing "knife Intifada" which has claimed the lives of over 20 Israelis in the past few months who have been murdered by psychopathic Palestinians wielding knives, guns, rocks, and automobiles used as weapons.

But facts and history are not the concern of the morally-elevated professoriate. Based on this politically-charged, biased language, the boycotters expose that they have, with the breathtaking certainty that only the very sanctimonious and intellectually-elite can do, framed the Israeli/Palestinian conflict in such a way that they have determined precisely which side is worthy of opprobrium and which, by virtue of its perennial victimhood, is worthy of complete moral support. Revealingly, the language conjuring up "the colonial displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians during the 1948 Nakba" reveals the victim-centric, oppression-laden worldview of the NWSA, in which the legal creation of the Jewish state is framed as an unjust colonial enterprise during which innocent, indigenous Arabs in a factitious country called Palestine experience a "Nakba," a catastrophe, in which they were either ethnically cleansed from their lands or remained and now live in the oppressive, apartheid, racist state of Israel.

That historically inaccurate view is not at all surprising, given the ideologues within the NWSA who both crafted the language of the recommendation and pushed through the boycott resolution within the organization. One of these virulent anti-Israel activists, Simona Sharoni, is one of the co-founders of Feminists for Justice in/for Palestine, the ad-hoc group that sponsored NWSA's pro-boycott campaign. Sharoni, a professor of gender and women's studies at the State University of New York at Plattsburgh, is also, not coincidentally, one of the founders of the anti-Israel International Solidarity Movement (ISM)-linked group, Women in Black, an organization that is an apologist for the terrorist group Hamas and works diligently to interfere with Israel's self-defense. In fact, Rachel Corrie, the notorious ISM activist who was killed in 2003 while throwing herself in front of an armored bulldozer to interfere with the IDF as it attempted to destroy a terrorist's home in Rafah, was Sharoni's protégé, making it quite clear where Sharoni stands, ideologically, when it comes to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and how she influenced the NWSA vote.

Another toxic anti-Israel activist who promoted the NWSA boycott vote was Rabab Abdulhadi, ethnic studies professor and Director of the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas Initiative (AMED) at San Francisco State University. Abdulhadi welcomed the shift in NWSA's ideology to an anti-Israel position, observing that the organization previously "went hand in hand with Zionist influence in the women's movement and women's and feminist scholarship." Her enmity toward Israel is so extreme that she not only denounces Zionism and the colonial oppression she believes Israel represents, but extols the virtue of terrorism against Israelis.

Last year, for example, AMED sponsored an event where students could make posters that said, "My Heroes Have Always Killed Colonizers," meaning Jews, along with images of the convicted hijacker and member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Leila Khaled, holding a gun. Abdulhadi has referred to Khaled as "an icon for women's liberation," and has lauded Sheikh Raed Salah, the leader of the northern branch of the Islamic Movement in Israel who has been convicted of funding Hamas. Abdulhadi and a SFSU delegation met with these two repellent individuals on a recent trip.

In 2003, The American Studies Association voted to approve a boycott of Israeli universities, at that time the largest academic group to do so. When asked why, of all the nations on earth, many with abysmal records on human and civil rights and educational opportunities, Israel had been singled out for condemnation, Curtis Marez, ASA's then-president and an associate professor of ethnic studies at the University of California, San Diego, disingenuously answered that "one has to start somewhere." Just as it was very clear what the darker motivations of the ASA were in targeting Israel alone for derision, it is equally clear that the moral narcissists of the NWSA are so blinded by their obsession with the perceived oppression, gender violence, and racism of Israel that the organization could make such a breathtakingly obtuse statement as the allegation that Israel is guilty of "sexual and gender-based violence, perpetrated against Palestinians and other Arabs in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, within Israel and in the Golan Heights."

Perhaps it has escaped the notice of the NWSA experts on gender and sexuality issues that if one wanted to punish any Middle Eastern country for its subjugation and abuse of women, Israel would probably not be the first nation to come under reasonable or justifiable scrutiny for a group dedicated "to principles of human rights, justice and freedom for all, including academic freedom." Totalitarian and despotic regimes throughout the region have created an oppressive group of social pathologies that negatively affect women, including genital mutilation, stoning of adulteresses, "honor" killings by fathers and brothers who have been shamed, cultures of gender apartheid in which women are seen as property with no emotional or physical autonomy, ubiquitous sexual assault, and a general subjugation of women, complete with regulations governing behavior, movement, speech, and even requirements that women be covered by burqa or hijab.

The society of the Palestinian territories, most appropriately, might provide some examples of relevance for feminists trying to identify misogyny and suppression of the human and civil rights women, even though the NWSA saw fit to answer "the 2005 call by Palestinian civil society for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) of economic, military and cultural entities and projects sponsored by the state of Israel," and have not a single negative word to say about the Palestinians and the conditions of Arab women. In fact, according to Palestinian Authority (PA) Minister of Women's Affairs, Haifa Al-Agha, women in this culture are singularly "unique," but not in the way someone with Western values might think; she was quoted in the official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida* as observing "the Palestinian woman's uniqueness, which differentiates her from the women of the world, as [only] she receives the news of her son's martyrdom with cries of joy."

Perhaps mothers embrace this cult of death for their children because of the oppression they experience in their own lives. Zainab Al-Ghneimi, head of the Women's Legal Counseling Center, commented that a Palestinian man "believes he has bought the woman and paid for her, and therefore she has become his property and must obey his orders . . . [Palestinian] laws give him the right of ownership, based on the man being the guardian, and he is the one who

commands and prohibits." This gloomy situation for women was supported by a study discussed in a November 2014 *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida* story which reported that "53% of Palestinian women have been exposed to violence —63.3% of them once—and that 18% of non-married young women have been exposed to physical, psychological and sexual violence." Even more depressing, the newspaper reported in a 2015 article, Palestinian women feel that violence and abuse towards them is justified. The story reported that "41% of the women agreed that violence was justified if the woman leaves home without notifying her husband, while 74% agreed that violence was justified if she neglected her children."

Nor would NWSA members have difficulty looking for the oppression of women in some of Israel's neighboring countries, nations with dreadful records of protecting the rights, lives, and bodies of women. A 2015 Thomson Reuters Foundation poll, for example, "assessed 22 Arab states on violence against women, reproductive rights, treatment of women within the family, their integration into society and attitudes towards a woman's role in politics and the economy," and raised serious concerns about the status of women in those countries—all of which seemed to slipped off the moral radar screens of the NWSA.

Egypt, which was the worst offender for providing a safe haven for women, was rampant with "sexual violence, harassment and trafficking combined with a breakdown of security, high rates of female genital mutilation and a rollback of freedoms since the 2011 revolution." The country's anarchy and political instability have meant that women have also become sexual prey, with 99.3 percent of women and girls likely to be sexually harassed and "27.2 million women and girls—or 91 percent of the female population" becoming victims of female genital mutilation.

Iraq appears second in the rankings, many of the problems affecting women the result of "a dramatic deterioration in conditions for women since the 2003 U.S.-led invasion," as well as "mass displacement [that] has made women vulnerable to trafficking and sexual violence." "The Iraqi penal code," the study found, also "allows men who kill their wives to serve a maximum of three years in prison rather than a life sentence."

In Saudi Arabia, as yet another example, women are considered to be the virtual property of men, cannot go out in public unaccompanied, and "are banned from driving and need a guardian's permission to travel, enroll in education, marry or undergo healthcare procedures." The male-dominated culture means that "marital rape is not recognized and rape victims risk being charged with adultery."

Syria, which has imploded from internecine warfare and murderous carnage, resulting in the death of more than 250,000 Syrians, has become even more dangerous for women, the Thomson report found, so that in the fog of civil war "Girls as young as 12 have been married in refugee camps," and "more than 4,000 cases of rape and sexual mutilation have been reported to the Syrian Network for Human Rights," with "reports of government forces and armed militias sexually abusing women and girls during home raids and in detention centres [sic]."

Stoning to death of women, who are most likely to be victims of this form of torture, is still widely practiced throughout the Middle East—for example, in Iran where stoning is a legal punishment and which, according to the Thomson report, “has the world’s highest rate of execution by stoning;” in Nigeria where stoning is a punishment for adultery in the country’s 12 northern states; in Somalia where “stonings happen more regularly . . . than many other Muslim-majority countries, primarily in areas under the control of Islamist groups like al Shabaab and Hizbul Islam;” and Sudan where “stoning is a legal form of punishment for adultery under the 1991 penal code.” Tellingly, Israel is not on the list of countries which have legalized or tolerate stonings, but the NWSA’s high-minded and self-righteous activists still chose to focus on the perceived political and social defects of Israel and wore blinders when faced with the pathologies and cultural misogyny of the repressive nations surrounding the Jewish state.

Like other members of the academic Left, who believe their worldview is correct and virtuous because it seeks to create a world in which social equanimity will be realized by the downtrodden, members of the NWSA, similar to their fellow travelers in other academic associations, are content to support such intellectually dishonest campaigns as academic boycotts because doing so enables them to denounce Israel as an imperialistic, racist, militaristic oppressor. “Moral narcissists,” observed legal commentator Jay B. Gaskill, “have adopted a camouflage strategy to escape the moral disapproval of others [and] . . . they accomplish this camouflage by cloaking their narcissism in the trappings of ‘social justice positioning.’”

The moral narcissist’s reasoning may be defective, ahistorical, counter-intuitive, or just wrong, but he still feels good about himself. But in this worldview there can be only one enemy of justice, and Israel is that enemy.

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The Wesleyan Controversy and a Double Standard for Campus Free Speech

RICHARD L. CRAVATTS | OCTOBER 28, 2015, 7:22 PM |

In what is yet more evidence that universities have become, at least where campus free speech is concerned, “islands of repression in a sea of freedom,” as Chester E. Finn Jr., a former Assistant Secretary of Education has described them, the Wesleyan University community has been undergoing collective apoplexy over an opinion submission in the school’s student newspaper, *The Argus*, which critically examined the Black Lives Matter movement. The thoughtful, relatively-benign op-ed, written by sophomore Bryan Stascavage, a 30-year-old Iraq veteran and self-described “moderate conservative,” questioned if the behavior of some BLM supporters “cheering after [a police] officer is killed, chanting that they want more pigs to fry like bacon” showed a moral and ideological flaw in the movement, leading him to wonder, “is the movement itself actually achieving anything positive? Does it have the potential for positive change?”

That opinion was apparently more than many of the sensitive fellow Wesleyan students could bear, and the newspaper’s staff was inundated with denunciations of the implicit racism of the offending op-ed and the “white privilege” demonstrated by its author, demands that apologies be issued by the paper’s editors, the widespread theft of *The Argus* around campus, calls for sensitivity/social justice training for staffers, and even a vote to halve the *Argus*’s annual funding to instead subsidize alternate publications, presumably for marginalized students.

The shell-shocked editors even published a front-page apology for having run the piece in the first place, cravenly caving to the sensibilities of the campus crybabies and saying they understood “the frustration, anger, pain, and fear that members of the student body felt in response to the op-ed ‘Why Black Lives Matter Isn’t What You Think.’” More tellingly, they wrote, “in light of the Black Lives Matter op-ed, students of color *may not feel comfortable* [emphasis added] or welcome writing for *The Argus*. Of course, feeling “comfortable,” feeling “safe,” not being offended is now expected as a right on university campuses, where administrators, faculty, and students widely give lip service to the notion that academic free

speech should have no limits, but continue to demonstrate that, in practice, free speech on campus relates only to accepted views by self-identified victim groups and not politically heterodox ideas such as the thesis of Stascavage's op-ed.

When political correctness first began to engulf our campuses, of course, the legacy of Marxist philosopher Herbert Marcuse and his notion of "repressive tolerance" meant that racist or "hateful" speech was attacked as just that: speech which was unacceptable to those "victim" groups who were perceived as needing protection from freely-expressed opinions, —generally members of racial, ethnic, or sexual minorities. College students have therefore taken a new, misguided approach in their attempt to suppress speech whose content they do not approve of, as they seem to have done at Wesleyan. On college campuses, to paraphrase George Orwell, all views are equal, but some are more equal than others.

To illustrate how a double standard exists in the academy as it relates to academic free speech one only has to look at other opinion pieces that have appeared in the self-same *Argus*, such as a March 2015 column written by members of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), a corrosive, anti-Israel group, who published an op-ed with the mendacious title, "Israel's Apartheid State."

In the op-ed, written as the annual anti-Israel hate fest known as Israeli Apartheid Week was about to get underway at Wesleyan and campuses around the country, Israelis, and those Jewish students and other pro-Israel individuals on campus who support Israel, are described by the writers as racists, oppressors, ethnic cleansers, thieves and appropriators of Palestinian land, participants in "state terror," colonial settlers, and aggressive militants who randomly and barbarically initiate "wars against Gaza" while slaughtering innocent Arabs in violation of international law, seemingly without motivation or justification.

While the *Argus* editors, in their extensive apology for the BLM op-ed, claimed that the writer had "twisted the truth" and misrepresented facts in making his argument, and that they felt editorial responsibility for not fact-checking the piece, in fact the op-ed did not wildly distort facts or misrepresent the recent history of the Black Lives Matter movement, at all. Readers who denounced the piece did not like the motives of a victim group being critiqued and deconstructed by someone who questioned the morality of the movement itself, particularly a white writer. But one could just as easily, and perhaps more relevantly, ask why the editors had not employed that same editorial scrutiny when they agreed to publish the libelous piece by the SJP members in March, an opinion piece whose main message was built upon an analysis that was fraught with untruths, distortions of history and fact, libelous assertions about political behavior and military operations, and a view of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict that disingenuously assigns all of the blame on Israel and ignores Arab rejectionism and truculence, not to mention terrorism, in the decades-long assault on the Jewish state.

Specifically, there is no institutionalized apartheid in Israel, as any sentient observer knows, yet both the title and the main thrust of the piece repeatedly assert that Israel is practicing apartheid against the hapless Palestinians, and that, in the writers' view, "apartheid is a useful and accurate term to describe the myriad mechanisms of oppression and separation employed by the Israeli state." As part of that apartheid system, they wrote, "Israel has . . . erected a 30-foot high concrete wall that snakes through the West Bank, annexing more Palestinian land, cutting farmers off from their farmland, and effectively separating the populations based on race," a liberal fantasy that the barrier was constructed to keep "brown" Arabs out of "white" Israeli neighborhoods that attempts to frame this conflict as a conflict between races, and ignores the reality that the barrier was built, not as a way of segregating neighborhoods, but to keep Israeli civilians from being murdered by terrorists.

In the analysis by the SJP members, of course, there was never any blame on the Palestinian side, characteristic of those who exonerate Third-world victims of imperialism of any blame for the terror and aggression that animates the Palestinian cause. Israel, they write, "continues its inhumane blockade on the Gaza strip [which] has prevented everyday necessities from entering and Palestinians from leaving," completing ignoring the fact that every Israeli left Gaza in 2005 so the Palestinians could start their state building, and that, instead, Hamas turned Gaza into a launching pad for rockets and mortars, some 12,000 of which have rained down on southern Israeli towns from terrorists wishing to kill Jews in homes, schools, and cafes. There is no mention in the op-ed of these deadly attacks on Israel by Hamas, nor the fact that each rocket launched against Israel amounts to a war crime; and the writers' statement that "from time to time, guised as counter-terrorism, the Israeli government launches wars against the population of Gaza" describes with absolutely no context the reason why Israel's incursions into Gaza were necessary in the first place—not, as the writers would have you believe, because Israel capriciously "launches wars," but as part of a defensive campaign to suppress deadly rocket from Gaza aimed at murdering Israeli citizens.

Another equally disingenuous SJP October 19th op-ed in *The Argus*, "Occupation Breeds Violence, Free Palestine," written as Palestinian murderers were stabbing, shooting, and driving over Israeli citizens in a month-long wave of terror, remarkably assigned the blame for the recent carnage, not on the psychopaths who are perpetrating it, but on its victims, asserting that "SJP not only condemns terror, we go further by condemning the primary engine of the 'recent surge in violence': Israel's illegal military occupation of the West Bank." More ridiculously, they claim, not the terrorists who slaughter civilians but the so-called occupation is the cause of the current violence, and "the occupation is the ultimate terrorist infrastructure," establishing a false moral equivalence between terrorists and Israeli forces trying to protect its citizenry from being killed. Even more Orwellian is their assertion in the piece that even if Israel seeks a negotiated peace, that effort is disingenuous and is aimed at neutralizing the Palestinian's right to conduct an Intifada. "Peace . . . is a concept," they ridiculously asserted, "often invoked by the powerful and wielded against the powerless to suppress resistance," suggesting that Israel would rather oppress Palestinians than live with them, side by side in peace.

The late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan once quipped that “everyone is entitled to his opinion, but not to his own facts,” and the lesson here is that if the *Argus* editors are serious about excluding opinion pieces that “twist the facts” or distort truth in an effort to make a point, then these pieces by the SJP members would fail that editorial test as surely as the Stascavage op-ed was accused of doing when discussing Black Lives Matter. The SJP pieces were replete with distortions, libels, untruths, and a misreading of history and politics, yet no Jewish students came forward to denounce the editors for having published such an egregiously biased, erroneous piece, no Israel supporters called for defunding the paper for running blatantly propagandistic articles, and no champions of free speech demanded sensitivity training for newspapers staffers so that they could better understand how vilification of the Jewish state and holding it to a standard not demanded on any other nation on earth can rise to the level of anti-Semitism.

None of those actions were launched against the *Argus* precisely because it would be inappropriate to suppress the opinions of the SJP writers—no matter how virulent, incorrect, and misguided—both because it is the legitimate and intended function of the opinion section of a newspaper to run varied, even controversial, ideas, and because it violates the idea of free expression to have one group of self-identified victims dictate what can, and should, be said about matters relevant to them.

So while campus free speech is enshrined as one of the university’s chief principles, the current *Argus* controversy shows us that it rarely occurs as free speech for everyone, only for a certain few. But if we want speech to be truly free, to paraphrase Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., then we have to embrace not only speech with which we agree, but also that speech with which we disagree, the speech that we hate.

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3:17 PM

SodaStream fires last Palestinian workers after permit row

SodaStream, the drinks firm hit by boycott calls two years ago, made redundant its last Palestinian workers Monday after Israeli authorities refused to grant them work permits, the company said. The 74 Palestinian staff, many of whom had worked at...

BY AFP |

FEBRUARY 29, 2016
1:15 PM

Netanyahu to visit Africa, first Israeli PM to do so in 50 years

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday announced his intention to travel to Africa this summer, in what would mark the first visit by an Israeli leader to the continent in 50 years. "I received an invitation from the president of...

BY RAPHAEL AHREN |

FEBRUARY 29, 2016
1:06 PM

Israel's top banks laugh all the way to more profits