

FLAME HOTLINE

Facts & Logic About the Middle East

December 4, 2018



Airbnb: A Despicable Case Study in Corporate Anti-Semitism

Dear Friend of FLAME:

Despicable acts of anti-Semitism are nowadays often cloaked in the garb of "rational" protests against Israel and its policies. But the recent action of Airbnb, the web company that changed the way people find lodging around the world, shows clearly that the unique and exclusive target of such anti-Semitic corporate policies is the Jewish people.

Airbnb recently announced that—among the 192 nations that it serves with rental-housing listings—only Israel's settlements in Judea and Samaria are morally unworthy of inclusion.

On the eve of the usual Human Rights Watch ritual condemnation of Israel and its rule over the disputed territories, Airbnb announced a boycott of only Jewish-owned properties there. If you are a Palestinian in Ramallah: no problem. But, if you are a Jew in eastern Jerusalem: you have violated Airbnb's judenrein diktat.

Oh, and if you happen to be an invading Russian living in the forcibly annexed Crimea who has a spare room: Airbnb has no problem doing business with you.

Or suppose you are a Myanmar army general who just wrapped up the ethnic cleansing of 750,000 of your Rohingya minority: Airbnb is happy to list the vacated apartments you happily now possess in Rakhine province there.

Airbnb—with its ignorance of both Israeli history and world current events—somehow reached the decision that only Jews in the historical Jewish heartland couldn't measure up to their perverse ethical standards.

Roughly half of America's states legally prohibit boycotts of Israel, including the disputed territories. Already, Florida's Governor-elect, Ron DeSantis has denounced the Airbnb policy and vowed to prohibit state employees from using Airbnb-listed facilities on state business, as they often do now. Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner similarly wants his state to take action on the Airbnb outrage. Many other officials in both the public and private sectors should follow DeSantis' and Rauner's lead.

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YOU DESERVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH...

Anti-Zionism Is Racism

Anti-Semitic attacks that kill Jews in a synagogue are fundamentally no different than attacks on Zionism—Israel's right to exist. They're both racist acts of hate.

Anti-Semites call for the annihilation of the Jewish people—whether due to its number or dispersion of the Jewish race. They also call for endangering or attacking any effort, group, or other political right or agreement of nation.

What are the facts?

Zionism is the belief that the Jewish people have a right to self-determination—in the State of Israel in their ancestral homeland. According to the US State Department, anti-Semitism is a form of racism directed at Jewish using stereotypes, prejudicial attitudes or hostile attitudes. The form of anti-Semitism appears in numerous guises—usually anti-Semitism that is not based on race or ethnicity.

The objective of anti-Zionist attacks is to strip the right of the Jewish state, among the world's nations, to exist. Attacks are based in extremist views. This narrative respects a double standard, as well as a lie. No country demonstrates greater Jewish military collaboration of Jews, nor China's recognition of Tibet. Yet Israel is widely accused of colonizing its own ancient homeland.

Jews are the indigenous people of Palestine—remnants of the oldest continuous ethnic group that has survived 5,000 years ago, with continuous residency since then. Indeed, Zionists are an anti-colonial movement, being Jewish Returnees, Columbus, Chinese, British and American immigrants.

Attacks are based on the Palestinian land. The attempt to delegitimize Israel ignores the fact that only one group, Israel's Jewish people, has ever had sovereignty over any territory. Therefore, they do not "erase" public lands or private property of Arabs and Muslims that were Jewish. The territory controlled by Israel today was settled on land that Jews owned or purchased, was public land granted by the British Mandate for Palestine, or was captured when Israel defeated invading Arab armies from Jordan and Syria in 1948—all legal or legitimate under international law, to be resolved by negotiations.

Attacks are based on claims to the Holy Land are religious based. Many oppose the claim by some Jews and Christians that their rights to the Holy Land are based on biblical authority. Yet Zionism is largely a secular movement, and Israel's right to exist is also supported by religious law, historical and human rights. While Israel's state religion is based on Judaism—and the world's only Jewish state—of Jews of other nations, mostly Muslims, that designate a state religion, also including Christians and Hindus. Above all, Israel is a democracy that has, for a number of decades.

Attacks are based on apartheid claims. This attempt to show Israel is like the Apartheid in the South African in the Middle East. Its claims of all race, gender,

religion and religious equity and rights—over 60 million Jews in most of the world's nations. Arab's were in Israeli-occupied territories, the Kuwait, and beyond. They who criticize the Palestinian apartheid demand that all Jews be expelled from their ancestral homelands of Judea and Samaria? Double standard?

Attacks are based on the claim that Jews are a "people" or "nation" who have always been united by a "Jewish religion," the Bible speaks of the Three—the people of Israel—against Hellene who built a synagogue nation, as well as legal, economic and social systems. Jews are also united by the Hebrew language. Contrary to this delegitimation attempt, Jews are a diverse people who also share a religion.

"The whole world must see that Israel... has the right to exist."

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

or any group can express racist hatred or violence toward any people, or any Jews. Jewish self-determination is not a Jewish state, as in Palestine, right to exist is based on the fact and historical recognition of Jews. The fact remains that perpetually targeting Jews—and the world's only national flag for Jews—in a form of racial hate is the new anti-Semitism.

Attempts at delegitimizing Israel—whether in the United Nations, through a boycott or by the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement—are markers of anti-Semitism. Good people will find the "justification" of their rights under Martin Luther King, Jr. "The whole world must see that Israel must exist and the right to exist is one of the great aspects of democracy."

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IF YOU SUPPORT PUBLISHING FLAME'S BOLD PR MESSAGES,

In this week's featured FLAME Hotline article, British columnist Brendan O'Neill further examines the outrage of Airbnb's selective and inherently anti-Semitic corporate policy. It's something you and your friends and colleagues should keep in mind when planning your next family vacation, here or abroad.

I hope you'll also quickly visit FLAME's lively [new Facebook page](#) and review the P.S. immediately below, which describes FLAME's recent *hasbarah* campaign asserting the near-impossibility of distinguishing anti-Zionism from classic, racist anti-Semitism.

Best regards,

Ken Cohen

Editor, Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)

P.S. We may never defeat anti-Semitism or its equally twisted twin, anti-Zionism—but we have an obligation to fight them with every ounce of our being. That's why FLAME has created a new *hasbarah* message called "[Anti-Zionism is Racism](#)." I hope you'll review this hard-hitting paid editorial, which will begin running this month—for the first time in the *New York Times*. It exposes slander of Israel and opposition to Israel's existence by BDS activists, members of Students for Justice in Palestine and even a few politicians as racist calumnies. These lies need to be called out, and FLAME's new position paper does it boldly. In addition to running in mainstream media, this editorial will be sent to every member of the U.S. Congress and President Trump. If you agree that this kind of public relations effort on Israel's behalf is critical, I urge you to support us. Remember: FLAME's powerful ability to influence public opinion—and U.S. support of Israel—comes from individuals like you, one by one. I hope you'll consider giving a donation now, as you're able—with \$500, \$250, \$100, or even \$18. (Remember, your donation to FLAME is tax deductible.) To donate online, just go to [donate now](#). Now, more than ever, we need your support to ensure that the American people, the U.S. Congress and President Trump stay focused on the true obstacle to peace, which is the lack of a credible Palestinian peace partner.

As of today, more than 15,000 Israel supporters receive the FLAME Hotline at no charge every week. If you're not yet a subscriber, won't you join us in receiving these timely updates, so you can more effectively tell the truth about Israel? Just go to [free subscription](#).

Airbnb's ban on Israeli settlements is a shameful example of corporate anti-Semitism

By Brendan O'Neill, UK Spectator, 22 November 2018

So alongside being the only country that pop stars refuse to play in, and the only country whose academics are boycotted on Western campuses, the only country whose dancers and violinists cannot perform in cities like London without gangs of people screaming them down, and the only country whose produce is routinely avoided by

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luvvies and liberals, now Israel is the only country that has been politically punished by holiday app cum conscience of the Twitterati, Airbnb.

Airbnb has taken the extraordinary decision to stop advertising homes for rent in Jewish settlements in the West Bank. It is extraordinary because Airbnb still advertises places to stay in Tibet, a place many Tibetans consider to be unjustly dominated by China. And in Crimea, recently annexed by Russia. And in Northern Cyprus, a Turkish-ruled statelet since the mid-1970s, which only Turkey recognises as a legitimate state, and to which Turkey has sent huge numbers of settlers in recent decades. Why are Turkish settlers less offensive to the Western conscience than Jewish ones? Why is it OK to rent a holiday apartment in Turkish-settled Northern Cyprus but not in Israeli-settled parts of the West Bank? Anyone?

What's more, you can still get Airbnb places in countries which in recent years have executed far worse acts of war and militarism than Israel has. Saudi Arabia, for example, which has plunged Yemen into one of the most barbaric crises of humanity of recent decades: no Airbnb pangs of conscience about doing business in Saudi. And in Turkey, whose recent treatment of Kurds in Syria, and in Turkey itself of course, has been bloody and chilling. But never mind all that—roll up, roll up, get yourself an Airbnb hangout in the state that has repressed and murdered huge numbers of Kurds!

It is only Israeli-claimed territory that is singled out. It is only Jewish settlements that are punished. It is only apartments being offered for rent by Jewish people who believe in the idea of Greater Israel that are delisted. Only those people. But we shouldn't be surprised. It is always only those people. Israel is always singled out. It is treated by right-on Westerners as being more wicked, more toxic, more evil and more destructive than any other state on Earth. That is why they boycott it, rage about it and take to the streets about it in a way they never do about Turkey, Saudi Arabia or anywhere else. They hate Israel more than any other place. The question is: why?

Their attempts to answer this question of why are spectacularly unconvincing. 'Our governments support Israel, so we have a special responsibility to kick up a fuss about this', they say. Our governments support the Turks and Saudis too. 'The Israeli conflict is an old and bloody one and deserves our attention', they insist. The Turk-Kurd conflict is old and bloody too. 'Palestinians are asking us to take these kinds of actions against Israel', they protest. The Kurds would also like some solidarity, only you can't hear them over the din of your obsessive, myopic loathing of Israel above every other state. Their attempts to explain why—why they loathe Israel so much—only makes the whole thing more mysterious.

And then they wonder why some people think there is a whiff of anti-Semitism to this peculiarly passionate contempt for Israel and for every piece of fruit, piece of art and piece of academic literature it produces. They wonder why some people think the line between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism is an increasingly thin one and that perhaps the special hatred for Israel might have echoes of the older special hatred for Those People.

'It is not anti-Semitic to criticise Israel!', they say. And they are absolutely right. Every single nation and government should be up for debate, ridicule, protest. But we aren't talking about straightforward criticism of Israel here. We are talking about the singling out of Israel above all nations for a ceaseless and intense programme of boycotting,

protesting and hysterical accusations, primarily that Israel is 'genocidal', 'apartheid', 'racist'. Show me the gathering of 100,000 people in London who said those things about Saudi Arabia and then I'll buy the idea that Israel is just being criticised as all other states are criticised.

It is becoming so clear: hating Israel is now second nature in certain Western political circles and this is unquestionably stoking up prejudice. If you treat the Jewish State as nastier and more insane than any other state, then please do not feign surprise when anti-Jewish sentiment increases. If the Jewish State and Jewish settlers horrify you infinitely more than, say, the Turkish state and Turkish settlers, then please don't cry crocodile tears over the return of anti-Semitism to Europe and elsewhere. If the militarism of the Jewish State gets you on to the streets but the militarism of the Turkish state doesn't, then please do not wonder why so many people seem to have a particular problem with Jews and Jewish things these days.

It looks increasingly ridiculous to deny that respectable Westerners' singling out of the Jewish State for special punishment is stoking racist Westerners' singling out of the Jewish people for special hatred.

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