

From: Jan Bauman
Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 12:39 PM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: Ethnic studies

I am writing as an American Jew who deplores anti-Semitism but also deplores Israel's over 52 years of occupation and oppression of the Palestinians.

A bit of my background includes the fact that my California born brother-in-law who went to then Palestine in 1947 was an ethnic cleanser. When he came to Los Angeles in 1952 for the marriage of his brother and me he told our family what he had done in 1948.

In May, 1948 as a member of the Palmach he and his well armed comrades went under cover of night to the Arab villages in the north of Israel. They went from house to house and at gunpoint forced every man, woman and child, including the elderly and infirm, from their homes and still at gunpoint made them walk barefoot to their exile in Lebanon. They were barefoot because they weren't given time to put on their shoes or to take any belongings with them. He said that anyone trying to come back to get the family belongings was called an "infiltrator," a term they still use today, and shot on sight. I didn't ask him if he killed anyone. I liked him and just as the "good Germans" who didn't want to know what their people did to the Jews, I as a "good Jew" didn't want to know if he killed anyone.

All of those villages were destroyed. They were among the over 400 villages destroyed by the Israelis after 1948. The land of one of those villages was taken by the kibbutz where my relative and his family lived. New roads on the kibbutz were constructed from the stones of the Arab homes that had been blown up by the Israelis. Before she died two years ago my sister-in-law, a life long Zionist who had gone to Israel from Georgia in 1948 often said that the occupation, the settlements and the settlers were a curse on Israel. How right she was. Not just a curse on Israel but a curse on Jews every where as that occupation has engendered a rise in anti-semitism, something that the people who urged you to change your studies program fails to acknowledge.

In spite of my knowing all this I still supported Israel and did for several years. That support came to an end in 1982 after Israel's heinous attack on Lebanon, an attack that took some 19,000 lives. Israeli bombs destroyed much of southern Lebanon, schools, apartments, businesses, homes, mosques and hospitals. I have an article from the August 2, 1982 Christian Science Monitor reporting that Israel had totally destroyed almost every orphanage in Beirut and the one remaining orphanage had been partially destroyed with children huddling in the rubble.

I know that there has been a major campaign by the organized Jewish community to change the curriculum of your ethnic studies program and to make it concentrate on anti-semitism, BDS etc. While it is true that there is anti-Semitism and has always been anti-semitism the organized Jewish community should understand that opposition to Israel has not been caused by anti-semites. Indeed there are more and more progressive Jews who speak out against Israel and its 52 years of brutal occupation and oppression of the Palestinians who in the West Bank are living under a system that can only be called an apartheid system. I and more and more Jews are supporting BDS just as we supported the boycott of apartheid South Africa.

Perhaps you are unaware of the fact that while most of the world was boycotting the apartheid regime, Israel was not only secretly selling them weapons but also bringing members of the apartheid regime's police and military to Israel to train them in brutal and efficient methods of controlling their black population. I would not at all be surprised to find out that Israeli weapons were used to slaughter the children of Soweto. Surely it is understandable why the present government of South Africa isn't fond of Israel.

If you are interested in finding out about the link between Israel and apartheid South Africa, it was spelled out in a well documented book by Sasha Polakow Suranskly the Jewish American born son of white South Africans who because they opposed apartheid had to flee for their lives to America. The book is entitled The Unspoken Alliance: Israel's Secret Relationship with Apartheid South Africa. <https://www.amazon.com/Unspoken-Alliance-Israels-Relationship-Apartheid/dp/0307388506>

I hope that when you revise your studies program you will make note of the barbarity of the Israeli occupation that has created more anti-Semitism in this country and make note of the growing anti-Muslim activities in this country. Certainly you should know that in the late 1980s and early 1990s the Anti-Defamation League spied on pro-Palestinian and anti-apartheid activists in the Bay Area. The ADL was sued by three of the people on whom they spied and was forced to pay a substantial amount of money to all of them. Their spying on one of the anti-apartheid South Africans who was living in San Francisco likely caused his death. They knew what he was doing and sent information back to the apartheid regime. Within a few days of his return to South Africa he was assassinated by the regime.

Thank you for reading this. I hope that your revision of the ethnic studies program will not neglect the facts of the occupation. I hope that you will not do, as they want, to say that BDS is anti-semitic. It is not. It is anti-a cruel occupation. Were it not for the occupation, BDS would not exist and the people who signed the letters and emails to you should understand that. I support BDS.

Sincerely,

Jan Bauman
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