

Ben-Dror Yemini

Review of *The Case Against Academic Boycotts of Israel*

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The Institute for National Security Studies held a conference this week that dealt with the boycott movement against Israel. The conference was held to mark the publication of *The Case Against Academic Boycotts of Israel*, a collection of essays edited by Prof. Cary Nelson and Prof. Gabriel Noah Brahm. I thought I knew a lot about the boycott. I was wrong.

With the phenomenon of the boycott becoming far more widespread in the United States, with entire university faculties becoming anti-Israel propaganda departments, with lies and manipulations being aired and spread in the name of "free academic speech," it's good to know there's a distinguished line of academics who have enlisted to expose the folly and oppose the herd.

Anti-Zionism, Nelson explains, just like the demand for equality or opposition to racism, has become a distinct hallmark of the left in Europe, as well as progressive forces in the US. There's a problem here of course, because anti-Zionism, in essence, is not a struggle in support of Palestinian rights, but a struggle instead against Jewish rights.

Anti-Zionism is not a struggle against this or the other injustice caused by Zionism (every national liberation movement has caused injustice), but a struggle whose sole purpose is to create a much greater injustice – the denial of the right to self-determination of one of the world's peoples.

Anti-Zionism is the "politically correct" version of anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism slanders Jews as individuals; anti-Zionism slanders Jews as a collective. In no uncertain terms, anti-Zionism is racism. But it is racism that is becoming legitimate for one reason only: It's directed against Jews, despite the fact that Jews are among the leaders of the anti-Zionist campaign.

The book includes a wide range of essays that expose the biases, the distortions and the manipulations of the supporters of the boycott. Prof. Ilan Troen offers a fascinating review of the history of the boycott. Prof. Martha

Nussbaum, highly regarded in the United States in the field of the field of philosophy of justice, writes in part about a well-known figure, Joseph Bove, a folk hero in France, an anti-globalist and anti-Zionist, who arrived in Ramallah in 2002 to show solidarity with the Palestinians who were busy with a murderous intifada against the Jews. That same year saw the shocking massacre of Muslims in the city of Ahmedabad, as part of a long series of clashes and pogroms in the state of Gujarat in India.

Why, asks Nussbaum, did none of those human rights advocates go to the place where a massacre took place? The answer isn't a mystery. Massacres or genocide aren't their concern; they weren't then and they aren't now. After all, it takes the global Jihad just a few months to murder many more people than the number of victims claimed by Israel's decades-long control over the territories. After all, the protests against the genocide in Darfur were nothing compared to the festival we are witnessing against Israel, which has never perpetrated anything even close to genocide. But these things are of no interest to the anti-Zionist herd. Its struggle is not against injustice; it's against Israel.

In another fascinating essay, Nelson tackles the delusions of one the idols of the anti-Israeli left, Judith Butler. Most of the book's essayists belong to the liberal camp. In Israeli terms, they're considered leftists. Many of them are known human rights activists.

They are not bound by consensus vis-à-vis Israeli policy. They are bound by the profound understanding that the purpose of the boycott is not to affect a change in Israeli policy. The purpose is not an economic or academic boycott either. The purpose is the negation of Israel's right to exist as the nation state of the Jewish people. All the leaders of the boycott, and most of their prominent supporters, declare so explicitly.

The book, therefore, is important from two aspects: First, it presents the full extent of the problem – the boycott campaign is becoming more and more of a serious threat to Israel. And second, the fact that important and high-profile academics have banded together against the boycott clearly indicates that on an intellectual level too, we haven't yet lost hope.