

Testimony in Opposition to H.C.R. No. 10
Ohio House of Representatives
Government Accountability and Oversight Committee
November 1, 2017

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde and members of the Committee:

I am Eric Resnick. I am from Canton. I am Jewish. I am very proud to be here today in opposition to H.R.C. No. 10, which politely, is about suppressing and punishing behavior that is protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution-- the right to engage in non-violent protest against a government behaving badly. Hence, despite what you may have heard, H.R.C. No. 10 is neither aligned with the fundamental principles of Judaism, the state of Ohio, nor the United States. However, it is aligned with those who can't defend Israel's behavior on merit, so their solution is to shut down those who want to talk about it, and intimidate those who want to use non-violent protest against it.

Looking at the last paragraph of the resolution, the intent is quite clear: Intimidation; Threats; Abuse of power for the purpose of policing and silencing those on Ohio's college campuses speaking and acting against injustice.

That such a measure is even under consideration is an insult to the Constitution you all swore to protect and defend.

This summer we marked 50 years of Israel's occupation of Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem. That's the 50 years of occupation Israel admits to. Many of us here more accurately put that figure at 69 years.

50 years of indefensible military occupation, with the Ethnic Cleansing, Crimes Against Humanity and Apartheid needed to sustain it can do terrible things to pervert otherwise decent people.

Is this what Zionism and 50 plus years of military occupation have done to you?

American Jews, regardless of political party affiliation, are known to generally support liberal Western values.

Liberal Western values uphold human dignity and basic rights for all, regardless of majority or minority status. Freedom of speech and expression, including politics and religion are critical to liberal Western values.

Perhaps this values system — a point of civic pride for most American Jews — reflects a commitment to Tikun Olam or other rabbinic lessons. Or there is a realization that as a minority, Jews have not fared well in cultures where such a values system is absent.

How is it then, that so many Jews support anti-free speech instruments of Ohio's state government?

When did American Jews decide it is necessary to ask you to shut down those questioning human rights abuses?

When did American Jews decide that freedoms of speech and expression belong only to those who support Israel and its right-wing government?

And more importantly today, why would you agree with them?

Understand something, please.

Judaism is a religion. Israel is a sovereign nation governed by its internal politics and international law. Zionism is a political movement that is violent, criminal, and corrupt. The Israel Lobby is the U.S. lobbying arm of Zionism. You heard from them last week.

Zionism is not Judaism. Real Jews reject Zionism. There is nothing anti-Jewish or Antisemitic about criticizing Israel. Let me say that again; Rejection of Zionism and criticizing Israel's crimes are not anti-Jewish or Antisemitic. Intuitively, you know that. You would laugh anyone out of this room who claimed Boycott, Divestment and Sanction action that brought down Apartheid in South Africa was anti-White. And yet, that's exactly the ruse you are being asked to believe. And you're being asked to believe it because Zionism is a \$3.7 billion per year enterprise in this country. It's the conduit through which most American Jew dollars flow, and as such wants to be sacred.

Zionism is Ethnic Cleansing.

The unanimously adopted 1992 U.N. Security Council Resolution 780 defines ethnic cleansing as "a purposeful policy designed by one ethnic or religious group to remove by violent and terror-inspiring means the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from certain geographic areas."

Zionism is Apartheid.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia issued a report on this about six weeks ago. That report cites the 1973 International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which holds that:

"The crime of apartheid' means inhumane acts ... committed in the context of an Institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime."

The report unequivocally declared Israel an Apartheid state, and anyone honest enough to see it for what it is must agree.

That's why Zionists want you pass resolutions quashing any speech on this matter.

Zionism is also racist.

Jews of color, who come from places other than eastern Europe, called Mizrahi or Sephardic Jews are relegated to second class status in Israel, too.

It is also ironic that people with real records of Antisemitism – anti-Jewish expressions and promotion of policies that would hurt Jews, including Steve Bannon and other members of the alt-right and white nationalists, and Rev. John Hagee of Christians United for Israel (CUFI) are celebrated Zionists. It's more proof that Zionism is not Judaism.

In order to support Israel's imagined national narrative of endless threat and victimhood, Zionists have attempted to change the definition of Antisemitism from violence and actions that deny Jews rights, make Jews feel unwelcome or threatened, or worse, to criticism of Israel. This movement came on full steam starting around 2005.

My forthcoming book titled "Zionist of Jew?" goes into this dynamic in great detail, but hopefully you can see the sham you're being asked to support.

It is also crystal clear that Boycott, Divestment and Sanction (BDS) is very effective, which is the other reason you're being asked to try to shut it down.

Make no mistake, college campuses are the front lines of the battles for and against BDS, and the laboratories for those who want to develop tactics to quash BDS.

Money, Power, Privilege, Influence, and years of Organized Presence play out in these fights.

AEPi Fraternity, Hillel, the Anti-Defamation League, Zionist Organization of America, the AMCHA Institute, and other Zionist fronts raise and spend tens of millions of dollars a year to try to keep BDS off college campuses. Think about that a moment; Organizations who want you to think they are about civil rights actually working to deny others' civil rights!

We all know this game well enough to know that there are political perils for many of you who do not appear to be sufficiently Zionist, especially if you seek higher office, so let's not pretend otherwise.

A couple weeks ago I attended a program at my synagogue on Israel and I wore this t-shirt, which says: "Palestinians should be free."

A congregational luminary approached me, read the shirt and said, ""We should give them freedom -- Heaven."

Unless you are considering a resolution against those who espouse genocide, even though that is also Constitutionally protected speech, don't threaten the free speech of students who want to protest military occupation, Apartheid and Ethnic Cleansing.

Finally, American Jews, including the groups you heard from last week only started opposing BDS as a tactic when Israel became a target.

They were all about BDS when the targets were places like South Africa.

Attached to this testimony as an exhibit is a copy of the BDS resolution adopted in 1987 by the Central Conference of American Rabbis – the Reform Jewish Movement. Other resolutions are online, but I exhibit this one because of its completeness, and its moral clarity.

It calls for the U.S. government to ban South African imports, to boycott firms that do business in South Africa, to reduce the level of diplomatic recognition of South Africa, and for congregations to support those South Africans engaged in non-violent resistance of Apartheid. In other words, a full-throated endorsement and urgent call to BDS.

This hypocrisy is what more than 50 years of military occupation and Zionism has done to proponents of this resolution.

Don't tarnish yourselves with it for whatever they are offering. It's unbecoming of you.

I will gladly answer questions.

EXHIBIT

Resolution Adopted by the CCAR

South Africa

**Adopted by the CCAR at the 98th Annual Convention of
the Central Conference of American Rabbis
1987**

WHEREAS our prophets and rabbis taught that all human beings are created in the image of God and have an equal claim to equity and justice, and

WHEREAS the Jewish religious tradition and historical experience equate racism with ultimate evil, and

WHEREAS Reform Judaism, throughout its history, has spoken with vigor and clarity against racial segregation and discrimination in the United States and the world, and

WHEREAS South Africa is the only country in the modern world that constitutionally establishes white supremacy and racial oppression, and

WHEREAS apartheid is a system that affronts the most profound values of humanity and democracy and violates the teachings of our religion, and the apartheid regime poses a moral challenge to all who cherish liberty and decency, and

WHEREAS in 1976 the Central Conference of American Rabbis protested against racism and police brutality in South Africa and its dealings with Zimbabwe,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the CCAR:

1. Reaffirms its condemnation of apartheid.
2. Calls upon the government of South Africa to release immediately Nelson Mandela and all others imprisoned because of their opposition to apartheid.
3. Calls upon the government of South Africa to enter into negotiations aimed at eliminating apartheid with bona fide representatives of the victims of apartheid.
4. Calls upon the Canadian Parliament and the United States Congress to enact legislation that will ban new business investment and bank loans in South Africa; ban the importation into the United States and Canada of all South African gold coins; ban all sales of U.S. and Canadian equipment with military and police application; ban U.S. and Canadian contributions to South Africa through the International Monetary Fund.
5. Calls upon the governments of the United States and Canada to reduce the level of diplomatic recognition of South Africa.
6. Further calls on the U.S. Congress and the Canadian Parliament, if substantial progress toward the abolition of apartheid does not occur within one year, to enact the following legislation:

divestiture of United States and Canadian assets in South Africa and institution of a trade embargo by the United States and Canada against South Africa.

7. Affirms its fraternal support for the Southern African Union for Progressive Judaism, the Southern African Association of Progressive Rabbis, and the South African Jewish Board of Deputies in their support for fundamental reform of South African life and institutions, their condemnation of violence, and their complete rejection of apartheid.

8. Directs the Executive Board in a manner it deems appropriate and responsible to boycott firms that engage in business in South Africa and have not accepted the Sullivan Principles.

9. Directs the Executive Board to divest the CCAR of all investments in corporations doing business in South Africa.

10. Further recommends that CCAR members urge their congregations and their individual members to cease the purchase of South African gold coins as an immediate, direct, personal and symbolic protest against South Africa's racist and repressive regime.

11. Calls upon the members of the CCAR and their congregations and constituencies to lend moral and substantive support to those in South Africa actually engaged in the non-violent struggle against apartheid:

A. by continuing messages of support and encouragement to individuals such as Beyers Naude, Allan Boesak, Helen Suzmann, Frederick Van Zyl Slabbert, Winnie Mandela, Bishop Desmond Tutu, and others.

B. by establishing a relationship with and contributing to the Legal Resource Center at the University of Wetwatersrand.