

"Two new weapons for reclaiming Israel's posture on your campus"  
Words spoken at ACF Conference, Feb. 10, 2020  
by Judea Pearl

This title makes me feel like an arms dealer, the most despised profession in our peace-loving century. Relax. The weapons I am about to offer you are not missiles and rockets but rhetorical devices. Devices that I have found to be effective and empowering in light of our experience at UCLA which, as many of you know, went through several hostile incidents, including intimidation, bullying, meeting disruptions, exclusion from student government and other campus activities, and the infamous SJP national conference, November last year.

The two weapons are:

1. The Emancipation of our Identity,
2. The Moralization of our Cause

By "Emancipation of Identity," I mean to stop seeking protection for Jewish students from antisemitism, and demand instead protection for Zionist students from anti-Zionism. By "Moralizing our Cause," I mean moving our fight from the legal to the moral arena.

Both movements may sound heretical given the rise of antisemitism nation-wide, and the fact that antisemitism is enshrined by Law, by Executive Orders and by other institutional instruments.

However, remembering that our goal is to win the support and friendship of students in left-leaning campuses, campuses in which every legal action is seen as infringement on free speech, and every association with the Trump administration as a Republican Party ploy, we must resist the temptation of using the antisemitic card, and appeal instead to the moral dimension, where our case is much stronger.

Moreover, the term anti-Semitism makes us easily dismissible by anyone who wishes to take cover under the slogan "anti-Zionism is not anti-Semitism." "Many of my Jewish friends support BDS," etc., etc. Why make it easy for them?

- Instead, we should demand explicit recognition as "Identity Zionists" – a new minority group, bonded together by a distinct miraculous journey in the past and an inspirational vision for the future.

It makes perfect sense!

- Since Jews are a history-bonded collective, and Israel is the culmination of Jewish history, elementary logic dictates that Zionism is an essential component of Jewish identity.
- Zionist students and faculty should therefore be recognized as distinct and independent contributors to the cultural diversity of the campus.
- I said "Zionist," not "Jewish" which is easy to pay lips service to.
- This means that in all matters concerning code of conduct, Zionism should attain the same protection status as any religion or nationality or identity-distinct

collective, and anti-Zionism should turn as despicable and condemnable as Islamophobia, women inferiority, or white supremacy.

Sounds like a fantasy? Not at all. Such recognition was in fact accepted by California State University in a recent legal settlement of a lawsuit filed by students at San Francisco State. It is now binding, and we should insist that an identical wording be accepted by every campus administration.

"for many Jews, Zionism is an important part of their identity."

It sounds benign, but has far reaching consequences. It means that we are not claiming to speak for JVP, or 'If not Now', not even J-Street and their schizophrenic torment over their Jewish identity. No. We are speaking for ourselves only, the vast majority of Jewish faculty and students who feel strongly about their historical roots, and who now demand IDENTITY STATUS.

We should insist on this status in every meeting with campus officials, relentlessly, incessantly, before we even make an appointment. It is a prerequisite for any discussion of our posture on campus and it is the litmus test for our inclusion or exclusion in/out or the campus family.

[I should add that the administration failure to grant us this recognition is not entirely their fault – no one has asked them to do it. We naively assumed that it is self-evident so, as time passed, they forgot how to spell "Zionism". No more! Zionism has a spelling.]

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- I now address our second weapon: The Moralization of our Cause.

It entails two components: First, we should not beg for safe space but create one, through assertiveness and self-awareness of our just and noble cause. Second, we should demand that the university leadership argues our cause campus-wide

How do we CREATE safe space?

- Again, the word "anti-Semitism" works against us, because it connotes begging for protection. It should be replaced by a fighting word "Ziophobia" – "the irrational denial (and fear) of a homeland for the Jewish people".
- It rhymes with Islamophobia, on purpose, of course.
- When you call someone "A Zionophobe" it means: "If you deny my people's right to a homeland, something is wrong with YOU, regardless of how much strongly you love Jews and how ferociously you fight for Kosher cafeteria on campus. In fact, something very basic is wrong with YOU because you are trampling on

UNIVERSAL principles of human right, the right of a people to freedom, equality and dignity.

Jewish students will regain respect only when "Zionophobia" becomes the ugliest word on campus. It depends on us; if we use it often enough - it WILL become the ugliest.

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## 2.2 How can campus administration help in the process of Moralizing our Cause?

Let me assure you, every University administrator hates what the BDS circus is doing to campus life. Administrators care of TWO things only: funding and ranking, none of which is helped by BDS hostilities. What they don't understand is that they can stop the BDS circus overnight by making it very, very COSTLY to them. HOW?

Let me ask around: What is the thing the BDS fears the most? Anyone cares to guess?

Of course, It is the truth about Israel. Imagine how they would react if, after every one of their Purim Shpiel, the university issues a public statement of how inspiring Israel is to every decent person on this planet.

Blue sky? Far-fetched? Not really! Selective affirmation of norms and values is an Instrument that has been used effectively by campus administrators, even at UCLA. When Milo Yiannopoulos came to speak on campus in 2018, his views were denounced explicitly on moral grounds, and the cultural contributions of Latinos to our city and our country were highlighted proudly by Chancellor Block, and communicated to the entire campus community, through all the horns and media outlets that Chancellors can orchestrate.

Block could have used the same instrument to denounce the National SJP conference and tell the campus community how central Zionism is to the collective identity of students and faculty on campus, and how inspirational Israel is to him, personally, as an American who cares for democracy and human rights.

Block did not do it, but Martha Pollack DID, the President of Cornell. After SJP made their perennial demand to divest from Israel, she issued a public statement from which SJP has not recovered yet.

In addition to the standard arguments of BDS being "non-academic" and "divisive" [as if anyone cares for those], she added: "[BDS] often conflates the policies of the Israeli government with the very right of Israel to exist as a nation, which I find particularly troublesome."

This simple sentence, written in first person, was sufficient for Cornell students to understand that Israel's existence is a moral imperative and opposition to it is morally reprehensible.

Cornell should be the model of what you can and should present to your campus administration.

If there is anything that may stop BDS crusade of intimidation and criminalization it is precisely the fear that, each time they launch one of those funny "resolutions" or "petitions," a university leader will remind the campus who they are, who you are, what they stand for, what you stand for, and why demonizing Israel is a moral deformity.

Cornell is your second weapon – Use it!

Thank you and good luck.