



President's Message

Dear friends and supporters of Partners for Progressive Israel,

We are sending you our current (and longest ever!) edition of Israel Horizons with very mixed feelings. We wish you a happy Passover (*Pesach sameach!*), and are glad that we are celebrating our Holiday of Freedom – and that most Jews are perhaps freer and safer today than ever before in our long history. Nevertheless, we are deeply saddened by the direction being taken by the Jewish State we care for so deeply, a direction unfortunately ratified by the recent election. We accept the democratic verdict, but we believe it makes our work that much more important and urgent.

We hope you enjoy this edition of IH. In addition to two articles analyzing the elections, we include a superb dissection of BDS in a conversation we sponsored between Jeremy Ben-Ami and Lara Friedman, an uplifting article about the Israeli NGO Hagar, and a brief discussion of the importance to each of us of the 2020 World Zionist Congress elections, as well as descriptions of organizations featured in our *Kolot* program.

On behalf of Partners, I want to wish each of you a *susse Pesach* (a sweet Pesach). We hope you will continue supporting us with your contributions, your ideas, your work, and your outreach.

Chag sameach



Paul

Paul Scham is President of Partners for Progressive Israel.

Contents

INSIGHTS

- 02 Where From Here?
by Paul Scham
- 04 Election Wrap-up: Was the 2019 Campaign Meretz's Last?
by Ron Skolnik

KOLOT: VOICES OF HOPE

- 06 Hagar Association: An Oasis of Shared Society in the Negev
by Sam Shube and Karen Abu Adra
- 08 Women Wage Peace
- 08 Other Voice

THE AMERICAN ZIONIST MOVEMENT

- 09 Why Should Progressive American Jews Care?

RECENT EVENTS

- 11 Pre-Election Briefing
- 11 Reinvigorating Israel's Left

CONVERSATIONS

- 12 Beyond Two States: Is Confederation the Solution to the Israel-Palestine Conflict?
- Women Organizing for a Better Israel
- BDS: An In-Depth Conversation

TRANSCRIPTIONS

- 13 BDS: An In-Depth Conversation
- Reinvigorating Israel's Left

SUBSCRIBE TO ISRAEL HORIZONS

Where From Here?

By Paul Scham



The common wisdom on what is sometimes called the “Disappearing Zionist Left” seems to be that Israel is heading rapidly down the path blazed by such luminaries as Orban and Kaczynski, maybe even Erdogan and Putin. [One Ha’aretz columnist says Israel’s already a dictatorship.](#) While I am as dismayed as anyone else on the Left about the results of the April 9 election, I beg to differ with that analysis, at least as far as the next decade or so is concerned. Further than that, my crystal ball is too dim.

There’s little question that this new government will be the most rightwing in Israel’s history, surpassing Bibi’s immediately past coalitions – unless, for some reason, Bibi chooses the ‘national unity’ route, which no one expects. Nevertheless, the fact is that, at least as of this writing, the far Right suffered in this election from a plethora of choices, and thus only one of its three parties made it into the Knesset, the hastily assembled “Union of Right Wing Parties.” While I wouldn’t argue too strenuously that they don’t have fascistic inclinations (itself the vaguest of terms), they will be at most 6 members of a probable 65-member coalition (unless Bennett and Shaked reach the threshold, which seems unlikely). In any case, [they are not the master politicians; Bibi is.](#) And I counter [Yossi Verter, who claims](#) “In no Western country, not even Italy, could a person who is allegedly a serial lawbreaker, on his way to trial and possibly to jail, be elected to the highest office in the land”,

with the fact that I would take Bibi’s moral character over Trump’s any day, and twice on Saturday.

Moreover, while Bibi would not be in the running for Jeffersonian democrat of the decade (I can’t think of any current leader who would, in fact), he has been in office for 10 consecutive years now and no one with either a straight face or historical memory could seriously term his rule dictatorial. Compare Israel today with the benevolent hegemony that Mapai exerted over the country in the 1950s (especially over the Arab sector, under military rule). Or any of the authoritarian regimes and parties now popping up, monthly it seems. Obviously, I am referring only to ‘Green-line Israel’, not to the millions of Palestinians under Israel’s control, who have little say in what is de facto their government.

I don’t dispute that Bibi’s last government, especially, has eroded civil liberties, limited judicial independence, and harassed leftwing NGO’s, among other despicable actions. But exactly while Bibi has been in office, a number of other once democratic countries, particularly in Eastern Europe, have become illiberal democracies or, arguably, illiberal semi-dictatorships. Israel is nowhere near that. Where are the arbitrary arrests on trumped-up charges, newspapers closed down, political parties banned, or even (as in the US, which is still a democracy), significant numbers of citizens denied the right to vote? Not in the Israel of 2019. And my guess is that won’t be part of the Israel of 2029, either.

Bibi, as part of his desperate campaign to corral every vote he could, indeed announced two days before the election he would annex parts of the West Bank. As a ploy to attract rightwing votes, it may well have worked superbly, taking from Bennett and Shaked’s New Right and Feiglin’s Z’hut party the votes necessary to cross the threshold. But we have yet to see whether it was anything more than a ploy. Would anyone: left, right, or center really be surprised if Bibi finds a way to wriggle out of carrying that out, using whatever excuse is near to hand?

We on the Left rightly call Bibi out for his manifold sins of preventing any peace process with the Palestinians. But we are less attuned to those on the settler Right who complain that Bibi has refused to allow new settlements and limited building in existing ones to a trickle of what they’d like to see, let alone annex settlement blocs, a major goal of the Right forever. Bibi has been either praised or damned for his caution, rarely for

Where From Here?

his impulsiveness. This is a man with a lengthy track record of rarely crossing red lines. To our dismay, he played Obama beautifully, never going so far as to create an open break with him, and getting a munificent 10 year memo of understanding that increased the previous military grants substantially.

We also await an “Ultimate Peace Plan” that (presumably) will eventually be unveiled that may ask for some Israeli concessions. [As I’ve discussed elsewhere](#), Bibi is bound to have major difficulties in both complying with Kushner’s peace plan and satisfying his far-right coalition partners. If Bibi is at all true to form, he will preserve the American alliance above almost anything. The Israeli public will not support alienating the US in order to please the most extreme part of the settler lobby.

This is in no way, shape, or form an argument for complacency on the Left. On the contrary, the near-complete decimation of the Israeli Left as a political force shows that neither standing fast on its principles without adjusting to a changing world (a la Meretz) or abandoning them completely (a la Labor) does anything positive for the success of a political party. Rather, the Left must use this defeat as an urgent call to figure out how to get its message across without abandoning everything that makes it Left. I don’t pretend to have the answer, but brainstorming and serious think-tanking must certainly be part of it. This is already going on but should be increased substantially, including American-Israeli cross-fertilization.

Where do we go from here? The Israeli Left can only envy the ferment going on across the pond in the US. The surprise wipeout of 2016 produced the successes of 2018 and the serious hopes for 2020. One doesn’t have to approve of everything going on in the American Left to hope that some of its fervor and ferment can be exported to Israel. As has been frequently pointed out, there are clear similarities and symmetries connecting Trump and Bibi. Perhaps the antidote to them may benefit from some cross-fertilization as well. ■

Paul Scham is President of Partners for Progressive Israel; Associate Research Professor of Israel Studies at the University of Maryland and Executive Director of its Gildenhorn Institute for Israel Studies.



Help Partners to promote partnership between progressive Americans and Israelis

Donate!

Please select your tax-deductible Donor Circle

- \$1,000 VISIONARY \$50 FRIEND
 \$500 LEADER \$ _____
 \$100 PATRON Other Amount

- Enclosed is my check payable to Partners for Progressive Israel

601 W 26th Street Ste 325—30 - New York, NY 10001

Donate online at www.progressiveisrael.org/support

Name: _____

Address : _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Ph: _____

Email: _____

- I'd like to make monthly, recurring credit card gift of \$18 \$36 or \$ _____

- Please charge my credit card



Card # _____

Card holder name: _____

Exp. date: _____

Signature: _____

Security Code: _____

- My gift is in the memory/honor of _____

Partners for Progressive Israel is a 501(3)(c) nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

Election Wrap-up: Was the 2019 Campaign Meretz's Last?

By Ron Skolnik



The Meretz leadership and their families on election night.

At first glance, Israel's April 9, 2019 Knesset elections seemed to produce little change from the standpoint of Meretz, the party ending the 2019 campaign with four seats (barely missing a fifth). True, that's a drop of one compared to the five it had in the outgoing Knesset, but its losses were trivial compared to the Labor Party's catastrophic 18-seat freefall, which came amid the mass migration of center-left voters to former Chief of Staff Benny Gantz's new Blue and White party (Israel's latest centrist flavor of the month).

What's more, just like last time, Meretz is headed for the opposition benches, where it will do all it can to minimize the ravages of what is shaping up to be another right-wing/religious/Haredi government led by Binyamin Netanyahu. And the faces won't be new, either: Meretz's four incoming Knesset members are all incumbents – Tamar Zandberg, Ilan Gilon, Michal Rozin, and Esawi Freige – back to serve an additional term.

But probe a little deeper, and one can see that the results of this election could be the harbinger of some dramatic shifts, especially with regard to the still-taboo possibility of sweeping Jewish-Arab integration in Israeli politics.

Party leader Zandberg hinted at the possible new direction when she addressed Meretz activists on [election night](#), following the publication of the exit polls: "The future of the Israeli left," she said, "is Jewish-Arab partnership... Unless Israeli politics treats all the country's citizens equally, there's no future." Days later, as the dust settled, Zandberg elaborated on the message, writing

in an [e-blast](#) to supporters that a "new Israeli left ... must include true Jewish-Arab partnership - social, civil, and **political**" [emphasis added]. Soon after that, she was even more explicit, indicating that Meretz was open to a leftist merger that "would need to include Labor, Meretz, and a significant Arab [political] force, such as the [overwhelmingly Arab] Hadash party, or part of it."

Suggesting that this was not just a theoretical possibility, Zandberg stressed that, "we need to start doing this now." She noted that Israel can have snap elections at any time and because of that, "the time is right" for forging such a merger.

The initial reaction from [Hadash](#) has been less than enthusiastic. Speaking on behalf of his party colleagues, MK Yousef Jabareen stated that Hadash is "not considering any merger with Meretz," and that his party plans to be the "leading and largest party among the Arab public."

Labor, too, has its reservations. While senior Labor MK Shelly Yachimovich floated the possibility of a Labor-Meretz merger on [Facebook](#), she stressed that the parties' common denominators were their "left-Zionis[m]" and "patrioti[sm]," and made no mention of including any non-Zionist entity such as Hadash. Alternatively, Yachimovich put forward the idea of Labor merging with Blue and White. Other Labor figures have expressed greater caution, warning that even a merger limited to Labor and Meretz could drive away Labor's "sizable hawkish wing." Certainly a merger involving a major Arab faction would

jettison that wing altogether.

But the time for caution on the Israeli left might be nearing an end. In the past, a traditional argument in favor of Meretz and Hadash running separately was that a joint run could alienate some voters in each party – due to both ‘tribal’ (i.e. identity politics) and ideological considerations. Some Hadash voters, so goes the argument, would be put off by Meretz’s primarily Jewish identity and its associations with Zionism. Some Meretz voters, meanwhile, would object to Hadash’s non-Zionism and be scared off by cooperation with a party that is increasingly being portrayed by rightists as a fifth column and is regarded even by many centrist Israelis as beyond the pale.

A growing number of voices in and around Meretz, however, seem to believe that it’s time to discard the caution of the past. With Israel’s Jewish population now skewing overwhelmingly to the right (polls indicate that just over half of Jewish Israelis now define themselves as right-wing, compared to 15 percent who consider themselves to be on the left), the simple electoral math is that Israel’s center/left has little to no chance of unseating the Likud if it continues to keep Israel’s Arab citizens – 20 percent of its population – at arm’s length and defines the parties that represent them as unfit for participation in a governing coalition (as both Blue and White and Labor did explicitly during the recent campaign).

Beyond electoral considerations is the sense that Israel has reached a tipping point that is making the old norms antiquated. Last year’s Nationality Law, for example, gave unprecedented constitutional preference to Israel’s Jewish population over its Arab one, while pointedly omitting any guarantee of equality for all citizens. And the rhetoric of Netanyahu’s Likud and its allies has become increasingly bellicose in its delegitimization of parties that draw the bulk of their votes from the Arab sector. Keeping the Jewish and Arab left apart – even if due only to tactical considerations – serves to reinforce that pernicious message. On top of that, the distinct possibility that Israel will begin to annex the West Bank – as Netanyahu pledged during the campaign – has increased the likelihood of a one-state future, however that would be configured.

A significant leftwing Jewish-Arab, Zionist/non-Zionist partnership would obviously cause some discomfort on both sides. But Meretz’s platform seems to provide a foundation for potential collaboration, since it can be read as Zionist and non-Zionist at one and the same time. “The State of Israel,” the platform’s opening sentence reads, “is a democracy, the state of the Jewish people/nation (“am Yehudi”) and of all its citizens.”

But Meretz does more than proclaim the equal rights of Arab citizens – it calls for the recognition of “the Arab minority as a national minority with collective rights” that should be able to “express its unique culture, and to operate in its language while maintaining its status as an official language.” Might the Jewish and Arab left be able to unite around such a vision?

Meretz’s list of candidates and the [results](#) of the recent election are further indications that change is coming. For the first time ever, two of the first five candidates on the party’s electoral list were Arab – incumbent MK Esawi Freige and Druze educator Ali Shalalha. Perhaps not coincidentally, Meretz tripled its vote totals among Israel’s Arab citizens – securing 35,000 votes in Arab towns and villages compared to 12,000 in 2015. At the same time, the party saw its Jewish vote decline around 20 percent, from about 150,000 last time to roughly 120,000 in this year’s elections. In other words, Meretz would probably not be in the Knesset except for those Arab voters, who were presumably encouraged by the party’s increasing openness (and possibly disappointed by the record of the Joint List politicians during the last Knesset).

Meanwhile, while Meretz performed relatively well in its largely Ashkenazi central-Israel strongholds (Tel Aviv, at 8.98%, and its satellite cities), it again failed to generate much support in the country’s largely Mizrahi outlying “development” towns, such as Sderot (0.87%), Dimona (0.36%), and Kiryat Shemona (0.72%); or in less affluent mid-sized Jewish cities such as Ashdod (0.52%), Ashkelon (0.66%), or Beersheba (1.27%). After repeated election cycles in which Meretz has sought to win over those voters on the basis of its admirable social justice record – only to be rebuffed due to the party’s image as “part of the Ashkenazi elite” as well as “too soft” on the Palestinians – it now appears that Meretz’s true “growth market” is in the Arab sector, a factor which will certainly be part of its political calculus moving forward.

Clearly Israel’s political map is shifting fundamentally and, if Meretz wants its ideals and policies to be represented in the Knesset after this one, it has some significant decisions to make in the near future. ■

Ron Skolnik is an American-Israeli political columnist and public speaker, whose articles have appeared in a variety of publications, including Haaretz, Al-Monitor, Tikkun, and the Palestine-Israel Journal.



Hagar Association: An Oasis of Shared Society in the Negev

By Sam Shube and Karen Abu Adra



With 60 percent of Israel's land mass and 10 percent of its population, the Negev is on the cutting edge of a new multicultural society in the making. It is home to 422,000 Jews and 250,000 Arabs, but shift the boundary a bit southwards and the population mix is closer to 50/50. Its demographic heartland, the northern Negev, is a region of striking paradoxes, from the greater Beersheva metropolitan area with its shopping centers and hi-tech startups to the infrastructure-starved Bedouin towns of Tel Sheva and Bir Hadaj; from the kibbutzim of the Western Negev with their citrus groves and wheat fields to the dusty, development town streets of Ofakim and Yeruham. And as the growing Bedouin population and the proliferating infrastructure needs of an expanding, postindustrial economy compete for finite land resources, the area has also become a social tinderbox.

The flare-up of violence in Um El Hiran that left a Bedouin teacher and a Jewish policeman dead last year is but a promo for one possible future. But a visit to Beersheva, the economic and administrative nerve center of the northern Negev, points to a very different vision. The pulse of the city is driven by interaction between Arabs and Jews. You see it in the downtown business district where Bedouin law offices with Russian-speaking secretaries stand next to hookah bars and kosher falafel restaurants. You see it in the Arab and Jewish research staff at Ben-Gurion University and ethnically diverse medical teams at Soroka Hospital. The region's signature economic development initiative, the Idan HaNegev industrial park, is a joint venture

between Rahat, the world's largest Bedouin city, and the kibbutzim and moshavim of the Bnei Shimon regional council.

Hagar – Jewish-Arab Education for Equality was founded as the educational platform for this new, multicultural paradigm. A visionary group of Arab and Jewish parents and social activists came together some 12 years ago to plant the seeds of a new, bilingual school system, because they wanted their children to have the opportunity to get to know the 'Other' from a young age and, by learning together, see Arabs and Jews living together as simply the way things are.

Arab-Jewish schools, to be sure, were not new. The Neve Shalom school near Ramle had already been operating for some 20 years by then and Hand in Hand's Jerusalem and Galilee schools for about ten, but Beersheva was largely uncharted territory. With the Negev's more religiously-traditional population – both Jewish and Arab – its right-wing voting patterns, and a less than cooperative municipal leadership, Beersheva was not the likeliest venue for a shared society initiative of this type. But Hagar's founders identified a need others had missed. Starting with a single kindergarten class, the school now serves 350 Jewish and Arab children, from preschool through sixth grade, with a new class opening every year. This year, the school opened a new, state-of-the-art preschool facility – with assistance from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) – the first multi-age bilingual early childhood education center in Israel. And parents are now pressing the city to open an additional pre-K class.

Hagar Association: An Oasis of Shared Society in the Negev

As Hagar grows, people are starting to take notice. In November, Israel's president, Reuven Rivlin, invited Hagar's students to lead the official state ceremony in memory of the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in both Arabic and Hebrew – an historical first. And our students aren't afraid to speak up when they see injustice. When bus stop announcements in Arabic were removed from buses in Beersheva following public complaints, our fifth-graders wrote the mayor about their unhappiness, and were invited to meet with him to discuss their concerns.

On Purim, hundreds of Hagar children, parents, and teachers marched through the neighborhood in festive costumes. The neighborhood (known as *shikun gimel*), mind you, a poor, working-class area of Beersheva, is not a naturally hospitable place for bilingual education. But Hagar has become an integral part of the community. Looking forward, Hagar's deputy director, Karen Abu Adra, envisions the school as an Arab-Jewish community center, open to the general public for cultural activities, language instruction, and youth programs. Meanwhile, preliminary negotiations are underway with the Israel Scouts Movement to establish the world's first bilingual Jewish-Arab Scout troop, in partnership with Hagar.

Having established itself as a legitimate alternative on the city's educational landscape, Hagar has now set its sights on bringing the values of multiculturalism to other schools in the region – and to the country at large. With the help of a grant from the European Union, Hagar has published an outstanding bilingual and multicultural anthology of children's stories, *Sweet Tea With Mint*, about the experiences of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian children and the holidays they celebrate. Written by the country's top authors in the field and tastefully illustrated, each story appears in both Arabic and Hebrew, making it accessible to both Hebrew- and Arabic-speaking schools. A major marketing effort to school principals is now underway, with at least 10 schools expected to sign up over the next year. The first training of teachers from 17 different schools in Jerusalem took place in March.

Bilingual education is a lofty ideal, but making it work on a day-to-day basis is a challenge of epic proportions. It means holding together an educational community of Jews and Arabs who share neither a mother tongue nor a religious tradition, neither national symbols nor historical narratives; communities that read different newspapers, get their news from different TV stations, and rely on different cultural points of reference. And it all takes place in an atmosphere of growing political polarization in Israel and periodic exchanges of rocket and artillery fire with Gaza.

There is no magic formula, but there is an answer with deep roots in Hagar's organizational culture: dialogue. We are all products of our social upbringing and have preconceived ideas of who the other side is. Our diverse staff members therefore undergo

ongoing training that enables them to teach effectively in a multicultural environment. Hagar's dialogue takes place within the hugely popular community activities it organizes, including field trips, picnics, and joint holiday celebrations that bring together hundreds of parents and children. It also takes place as part of the parents' intense involvement in school programming.

When the first Gaza war broke out in 2008, just two years after Hagar had been founded, reactions from our staff and families threatened to shut us down before we even got on our feet. By creating an atmosphere that encouraged open, honest dialogue, we not only survived, we thrived. The Arabs and Jews of Hagar do not aspire to unanimity, consensus, or even compromise on the hot-button issues of national identity that divide them. But they know that, in the end, they can use the citizenship they share to choose between two possible futures – one in which their children flourish together, and another in which they struggle against each other.

Hagar is not just a school. It is a community of over one thousand family members. A community that welcomes all. Many of our families call Hagar a home, a haven from the harshness of society. When a three-year-old Arab girl and her family were told by parents at another preschool that "her kind" was not welcome, Hagar welcomed them. We embraced an LGBTQ couple raising their young children who found more than a school, but a home, made all the more concrete by the outpouring of support when one partner was tragically killed. Hagar's community is diverse, activist, and active. Our community events are planned and carried out by an all-volunteer parent committee that is committed not only to having fun activities but to facilitating true relationship building.

Keeping the project going is also a financial struggle. The whole operation is managed by a part-time skeleton office staff engaged in a Darwinian competition for scarce philanthropic dollars. To stay afloat, Hagar is reaching out to the Negev business community, raising funds and raising awareness of the critical role the school plays in the region's shared-society ecosystem. In the end, however, what sustains Hagar is the knowledge that we are part of something bigger than ourselves: a new, multicultural society in the making.

To learn more about Hagar, visit us at <https://www.hajar.org.il/en/home/> ■



Sam Shube is Executive Director and Karen Abu Adra Deputy Director and Director of Partnerships and Development of Hagar – Jewish-Arab Education for Equality.



Featured Organizations



Women Wage Peace (WWP)

In early March, in honor of International Women’s Day, we featured Women Wage Peace (*Nashim Osot Shalom*). Founded in 2014, following that summer’s Gaza war, it boasts 40,000 members and has quickly become the largest grassroots movement in Israel seeking a negotiated resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The movement is proudly unaffiliated with any political party because WWP leaders believe that, to achieve peace, the issue mustn’t be monopolized by any one particular group. So its membership is diverse: Women from the Israeli right, center, and left; religious and secular; Jews, Arabs, Druze, and Bedouin; women from the center of the country and from outlying areas. Its activities include parlor meetings,

roadside rallies, and mass marches. WWP is also lobbying the Knesset to pass a “Political Alternatives First” law, which would oblige the Cabinet to formally allocate time for discussing political alternatives to war and would earmark budgetary resources for developing such alternatives. Learn more at their [website](#).

Other Voice

In late March, with tensions between Israel and Hamas again running high, and amid a growing chorus of voices in Israel calling for another war in Gaza, we featured the Sderot-based peace organization, Other Voice. Founded in 2008, Other Voice (*Kol Acher*) is a grassroots volunteer movement including both Israelis from communities near the Gaza Strip as well as Palestinians from the Strip. Members seek to end the cycle of violence, and they work together to build good neighborly relationships and dialogue between those on opposite sides of the border fence. Other Voice engages in a variety of activities, including public protests, seminars, petitions, and op-ed writing, all aimed at raising awareness among Israelis and Palestinians and



the international community as to the high toll – physical and psychological – that the violence is exacting from both sides. The movement stresses the need to achieve a non-violent, long-term political solution to the conflict. Learn more at their [website](#).

Why Should Progressive American Jews Care?

THE AMERICAN
ZIONIST MOVEMENT



The American Zionist Movement will hold elections during January 21 - March 11, 2020

I, like many progressive Jews, have made it a point all my life to avoid organizations like the Jewish Community Federations, the World Zionist Organization, the American Zionist Federation (now the American Zionist Movement or AZM), etc. etc., because I wanted to work on progressive Jewish causes for Israel and make a difference. However, as President of Partners for Progressive Israel, I've been learning that these organizations are indeed important in a number of ways.

Especially now, when many of us despairingly feel there is little we can do to influence the Israeli government or Israeli society, we who support both Israel and a progressive agenda have realized that it is essential for us to use our organizational clout and influence to get out a large vote for the Hatikvah slate in the upcoming elections for the World Zionist Organization (WZO). Confusingly, they're held by the AZM.

Hatikvah is a slate composed principally of Partners for Progressive Israel (affiliated with the WZO faction known as the World Union of Meretz) and Ameinu (affiliated with the World Labor Zionists), as well as Hashomer Hatzar (World Union of Meretz) and Habonim Dror (World Labor Zionists).

A vote for the Hatikvah Slate is a vote for the progressive faction of the WZO.

The WZO controls a budget of approximately \$40 million (2015) and also exerts a significant role within the Jewish Agency For Israel (JAFI). JAFI has a budget of \$378 million (2016), which principally is for immigrant absorption and settlement activities. It is essential that the World Union of Meretz have as larger a say as possible over the activities of WZO and JAFI. The number of votes we get in the WZO elections, which are held every five years, determines the degree of that influence.

The size of our vote literally affects how many seats the World Union of Meretz gets at the table, what role they can play in the WZO leadership, and which one (or more) WZO departments will they be able to head.

Without a sizable progressive vote, the Right will dominate the WZO as they are dominating other Israeli institutions. The progressive wing is a barrier against the wasteful and oppressive use of the funds of the Jewish people in more building in the West Bank, discrimination within Israel, and continuation of current policies.

Why Should Progressive American Jews Care?

SLATES

Candidates for election as a delegate to the World Zionist Congress on the Hatikvah slate will include representatives from organizations as well as individuals who will work with us to get votes and may, if successful in the election, attend the WZO meeting in Israel. This list must be submitted to the AZM by October 1, 2019. **If you are interested in possibly being on the slate, contact us at the email or number below.**

VOTING

Every adult Jew (above 18) in the United States, who did not vote (as an Israeli citizen) in the 2019 Israeli elections, is entitled to vote in the AZM election. To cover administrative costs, all potential voters must pay \$10 when they register. The election will take place between Jan. 21 and March 11, 2020. Partners for Progressive Israel, and Ameinu will have dedicated staff

members and volunteers working on these elections from about August, 2019 until they are over, to help get out the progressive vote. If you are interested in joining the team, contact us.

In 2015, 56,717 votes were cast of which 3,448 were for Hatikvah that translated into 7 delegates. **That means only 500 votes would mean an extra delegate; 5000 means 10 more!** Those are reachable targets. Please contact Partners, or one of the other organizations mentioned above, to register to vote or help in the campaign. With your help, we can make a difference!

For information or to help in the campaign, contact Dinesh: dinesh.sharma@progressiveisrael.org 212-242-4500

Paul Scham
President

Partners for Progressive Israel

Join us at the 2019 Israel Symposium

NOVEMBER 16-23



For more information, contact us at dinesh.sharma@progressiveisrael.org / (212) 242-4500

Pre-Election Briefing / Reinvigorating Israel's Left



Pre-Election Briefing

On February 26, we hosted political journalist and author Akiva Eldar for an online election campaign briefing entitled “The Race for Knesset – the Struggle for Israel’s Soul.” The briefing took place just days after Binyamin Netanyahu’s shocking endorsement of the overtly racist Jewish Power party and his brokering of a far-right electoral alliance that would bring the disciples of terrorist Meir Kahane into

his next cabinet. The briefing was moderated by photojournalist and actor, Gili Getz.

Eldar noted ruefully that the difference between the Kahanists and Netanyahu’s current government isn’t particularly vast in terms of their plan for the Occupied Territories. Kahanists, he said, would load Palestinians on buses and expel them. The government is making Palestinian lives miserable so that they’ll leave on their own. Eldar also predicted that AIPAC’s statement criticizing the Jewish Power party, in which it notably avoided any mention of Netanyahu’s central role, would prove to be nothing but lip service, a text it issued under momentary duress.

To view the briefing, go to <https://www.progressiveisrael.org/what-we-do/conversations-with-israel-palestine/the-race-for-knesset-the-struggle-for-israels-soul-with-akiva-eldar/>



Reinvigorating Israel's Left

On March 12, we hosted the progressive Israeli organizer, activist, and strategist Bar Gissin at our New York City offices for a live report on “Reinvigorating Israel’s Left.” The event was co-sponsored by T’ruah, J Street, the National Council of Jewish Women, and the New Israel Fund.

Gissin laid out her bottom-up approach for rebuilding the Left, starting by growing support and constituencies on

the local level around winnable progressive issues such as education, affordable housing, and transparency. She also discussed The Movement for Public Journalism (MPJ), a group that some have compared to ProPublica in the US. MPJ, an Israeli NGO which Gissin directs, seeks to create quality journalism that serves only the public, and involves the public as a vital source in news reporting.

Beyond Two States: Is Confederation the Solution to the Israel-Palestine Conflict?

On January 15, Partners for Progressive Israel hosted a webinar entitled “*Beyond Two States: Is Confederation the Solution to the Israel-Palestine Conflict?*” with panelists Galia Golan (Professor Emerita at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) and Thabet Abu Rass (co-CEO at The Abraham Fund Initiatives). The discussion was moderated by Dr. Dahlia Scheindlin, a leading Israeli public opinion expert and political consultant.

The panelists contended that the confederation model should be regarded as an elaboration on (rather than an alternative to) the two-state approach, in which both the Jewish and Palestinian peoples would enjoy national self-determination. The confederation model, however, offers unique solutions to the thorny questions of Jerusalem, West Bank settlements, and refugees by treating the territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean as a *joint homeland of both Jews and Palestinians*, rather than an area to be divided between two hermetically separated states. Confederation would thus allow both Jews and Palestinians to enjoy free movement within their joint homeland between the two states, with people living, traveling, and working wherever they wish regardless of their citizenship. It would also enable the two states to cooperate in the areas that Israelis and Palestinians already share in practice – water, infrastructure, the environment, roads, and economic life overall. They would vote, though, in the state of their citizenship, not where they reside, and obviously both states would make their own laws, in cooperation with the other. It may sound idealistic, but it is perhaps the most realistic form of the two-state solution today.



To view the webinar, go to <https://www.progressiveisrael.org/what-we-do/conversations-with-israel-palestine/beyond-two-states-is-confederation-the-solution-to-the-israel-palestine-conflict/>

Women Organizing for a Better Israel

On March 7, in honor of International Women’s Day, we hosted Zehava Galon, former chair of Meretz, and peace activist Avital Brown of Women Wage Peace for a webinar entitled “*Women Organizing for a Better Israel.*” Rabbi Deborah Waxman, President of Reconstructing Judaism, served as moderator.



Much of the conversation focused on the topics of peace and security through a feminist lens and the perspective of women. “Peace is the most feminist issue. The ability to compromise is the most feminist issue,” Galon said. Brown said that women have the capacity to defy political differences and find common ground, citing peacemaking examples in other trouble-spots around the world: “It was done by women in Northern Ireland. It was done by the women of Liberia.” She noted that UN Security Council resolution 1325 has stressed the importance of having more women participate at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes.

To view the webinar, go to <https://www.progressiveisrael.org/what-we-do/conversations-with-israel-palestine/intl-womens-day-women-organizing-for-a-better-israel/>

BDS: An In-Depth Conversation



Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions

The following is an edited transcript of a webinar on “BDS: An In-Depth Conversation” that Partners for Progressive Israel hosted as a part of the Conversations with Israel and Palestine series on 26 March 2019. A recording of this conversation is available [here](#).

Participants: *Jeremy Ben-Ami*: President, J Street/ *Lara Friedman*: President, Foundation for Middle East Peace / *Todd Gitlin* (moderator): Professor, Columbia University

Todd: I want to ask Lara to start by giving us a summary of some of the so-called anti-BDS legislation, that’s cropped up both on the state level and in Congress.

Lara: Over the past four or five years, we have seen a burst of legislation related to BDS. When I say related to BDS, I want to be clear; a lot of this legislation, if not most of it, in terms of what it actually seeks to do, is more about conflating boycotts of Israel with boycotts of settlements and seeking to stop the second.

I hone in on a problem here, because sometimes we weren’t talking about this, we’re talking about the free speech piece of it. Sometimes, we’re talking about the conflation and support of settlements piece of it. These are two problems that coexist, but they’re different. The legislation really

started in earnest (at the) end of 2015 after the EU adopted its differentiation policy, which was this policy which said that, “This is Israel. This is settlements. We support Israel, and we will do everything we can to expand trade with Israel,” yadda, yadda, yadda, but settlements are not part of Israel, (they are) against international law, and everyone should differentiate their treatment of Israel and settlements.

We merely started to see legislation introduced. We saw it at the state level., I think it’s a total now of 26 states.

Virtually, all (such legislation) specifically says, “For the purposes of the law, boycotting Israel includes boycotting settlements.” The way states do this is one kind of legislation that says, we’ll divest from companies that boycott Israel or settlements.

BDS: An In-Depth Conversation

Another kind of legislation is the kind that says, “You cannot enjoy the benefit of a state contract as a business, as an individual contractor, unless you sign away your right to boycott Israel and settlements,” which is almost a textbook definition of an unconstitutional condition. In effect, you’re giving up your constitutional right to compete to these things in order to be able to compete. That’s at the state level.

At the federal level, we have two pieces of legislation (that) do different and equally problematic things. The Israel Anti-Boycott Act seeks to effectively criminalize US businesses boycotting Israel or settlements. The backers of this bill say, “This is nothing new. This is just an extension of the anti-boycott legislation in the ‘70s. BDS is the new Arab League boycott of Israel.”

What that ignores is the fact that the Arab League boycott of Israel was what is called a coercive boycott, a secondary boycott, where the Arab Leagues said, “We boycott Israel, and you can’t do business with us unless you also boycott Israel.” (This) Legislation was written back in the ‘70s to prevent American companies from being forced to join the Arab League army, compelled in order to do business against Israel. BDS isn’t coercive. BDS is a choice. On top of that is the legislation that is pending in Congress, The Israeli-Anti-Boycott act, which hasn’t been reintroduced yet this year but it certainly will be; it actually is aimed at settlements, squarely. It says that US companies will be committing a crime. Initially, it was punishable for up to 20 years in jail and it’s \$20 million in fines, and now it’s just the fines not the jail, but you’re committing a crime if you choose to make this a political choice, to differentiate between Israel and settlements.

The other piece of legislation is the Combating BDS Act, which is legislation that was attached to the first thing they did in the Senate this year. It passed the Senate, very controversial. That is essentially an effort by Congress to give political cover, in a sense a green light, and incentivizes states to pass the laws that two federal courts have already found to be unconstitutional.

Where we are today in the current policy conference, AIPAC has, in my view, made not a retreat but a tactical shift, and is pushing for a very broad anti-BDS, non-binding resolution. Basically, saying to people, “Well, you can’t complain that it hurts free speech, it’s non-binding.”

Once this non-binding resolution is passed with a very, very large majority on both sides, it will then be a hook to say, “Well, if you think BDS is so bad, you’re a hypocrite if you

won’t support binding legislation to stop it.” Also, to say that any member of Congress who supports BDS, any candidate who supports BDS, all of those people are radioactive.



Todd: Lara, what’s the politics of this? Who is promoting these measures and who’s opposing them? Where do we stand?

Lara: The politics are interesting. Starting at the federal level, a lot of folks are seeing this as a purely partisan, Trump-era thing. I think it’s really important to note that this started under Obama. The legislation which was essentially the gateway drug to this addiction was passed under Obama. It was two pieces of major trade legislation; one called the TPA Bill, Trade Promotion Act, and the other one, the Customs Bill. These were two signature pieces that Obama wanted.

Senator Cardin, Senator Portman, AIPAC, and others got into that legislation language which said, “For the purposes of US trade negotiations, it is a top priority to get our trade partners to not discriminate against Israel, which includes boycotts or special trade restrictions.”

That legislation defined boycotts of Israel as applying to Israel and territories under Israel’s control. That became law twice under Obama, in a bipartisan way. Cardin first introduced the IABA, Israel Anti-Boycott Act under Obama.

This has been building for a while. It, obviously, is becoming very partisan now. The pro-Israeli Right, sensing an opportunity, (now see) BDS as the richest vein that can be mined politically to fracture progressive unity and to undermine Democratic candidates. So far, I would say they’re not wrong. Until progressives come up with an answer for that, they’re just going to continue to hemorrhage.

Todd: Jeremy, as you look around the country, you’ve seen BDS coming up in our national politics and local politics,

election campaigns, run-ups to election campaigns, our constituents chiming in on this, one way or the other--what do you see?

Jeremy: BDS itself has become an extraordinarily political issue. What's so fascinating is that the actual Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement is having practically no impact whatsoever, on the actual situation in Israel or the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

When you go to Israel and you experience the vibrant economy and all the growth that's going on, you realize that this movement has had zero actual impact there. Here, it is front and center in the politics of the moment. It's almost as if you're living in another universe, that this is so front and center, and fracturing American politics, when the real discussion that needs to be had by those of us who care about Israel, is about the occupation and is about how to end the occupation, and about what policies are good for the United States. We're being distracted from that by having an argument about BDS.

Yes, it is a very big political issue, but it is not a very relevant one, I believe, to the actual content of the work that matters to groups like J Street, PPI, or The Foundation for Middle East Peace, because we actually are trying to work towards a resolution of the conflict and towards finding a way out of occupation, and we're spending all our time talking about BDS.

Todd: Would you say there's a distraction going on? Who are the distractors?

Jeremy: I think it's placed in the hands of both sides of the poles of the debate. I think for a lot of the more conservative politically organizations, it's very, very helpful to have some form of an adversary or an enemy, or something to be working against. The BDS movement is a very useful tool and useful foil for defense organizations that raise money, and put together large conferences, and gather people to defend Israel from attack. Building up the fear of the BDS movement is a useful tool for organizations on the right.

Of course, for organizations on the left, it's a very, very useful way to get a conversation started about these issues in the United States, particularly if you then get attacked as the right wing is doing to the BDS movement, and your civil liberties are under attack, then liberals say, "Wait a minute. Why are these anti-free speech right wingers attacking people who just want to use boycotts to end oppression? Isn't that what we did with South Africa? Isn't that what we did in the

South to defeat Jim Crow?"

Suddenly, you have a whole influx of support for the BDS movement from well-meaning liberals, who don't really understand what was the BDS charter, and what are the fundamental principles on which it was founded. It's really in the interest of both the left and the right to have the argument be about BDS. I think they are both just feeding off each other, unfortunately.

Todd: You raised the analogy to South Africa, that is to say, you noted that some people say, "Well, it was right to do this boycott with respect to South Africa, not here." What's the difference?

Jeremy: I think that one of the key differences is what we're pointing to this differentiation issue. When people are boycotting an entire regime, as in South Africa, and going after the entirety of the system, that is different from the question here, which is, what is Israel itself doing in the territories? Israel is a functioning democracy. It's imperfect, like so many democracies, including our own, but it is a different problem. You have a military occupation of territory won in a war, and you have the subjugation of people who lived in that territory to military rule for 50 years.

That's a different problem than it was in South Africa. Also, the economies and the economic situations are completely different. The tactical choices that are available for the BDS movement are not able to bring the kind of pressure on the Israeli economy that would actually bring them to start thinking about a different policy. It's tactically inefficient. It's a different system. It's just not a comparable situation.

Todd: Would it be fair to say that the BDS movement is a case of symbolic politics?

Jeremy: It's symbolic, but I think it's really important to note what the BDS movement actually is calling for. I believe very, very deeply in the right of the Jewish people to a national homeland in the land of Israel. I'm a Zionist. I believe in that at my core. The BDS movement doesn't acknowledge the right of the Jewish people to be free in their own land. It recognizes the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people but not of the Jewish people.

I think that this is really important to introduce into the conversation, that when people are engaging in the BDS movement as a way of trying to make some of their policy unhappiness known about what's going on with settlements or what is going on with the occupation more broadly, they're

buying into a movement that is driven by a charter and a set of principles that does not recognize Israel's right to exist, and is not interested in a two-state solution.

It doesn't make the differentiation between the justice of the State of Israel's existence, with all its imperfection, and the injustice of the occupation that happens over the Green Line. What does happen is that notion that, "Boycotts sound like they were effective and other places, so why not try it here?" is attractive to critics of Israeli policy, and people buy in then to a movement that actually, most likely, they wouldn't agree with a lot of its underlying principles.

Todd: One more question about the local reactions, Jeremy. Not so long ago, the Boston Jewish Community Relations Council passed a resolution declaring that any of its member organizations supporting the BDS movement could be expelled. How prevalent do you find this kind of effort to control who gets to count as a Jewish organization?

Jeremy: This is very prevalent. That exact conversation is going on all over the country now. Sometimes it's in a Jewish Community Relations Council and at the city level. Sometimes it might be on a college campus with regard to Hillel and who's welcome at the Hillel. Sometimes synagogues have arguments over who can be brought in as a speaker, and whether rabbi's politics on something are acceptable and their contract deserves to be removed. Over and over again, Jewish film festivals, book festivals, all the rest of it, there's a constant debate about what are the particular viewpoints that put someone outside of the tent. I think this is extraordinarily dangerous.

The Jewish community is a very wide-ranging community. There are folks on the right, who are absolutely, to my mind, off the chart in terms of their viewpoints. Some of them are now, in fact, running for the Knesset and follow Meir Kahane, and talk about expulsion of Arabs from the State of Israel. Then there are folks all over in the left who are anti-Zionist and believe that the concept of Israel was a mistake, but they're all Jews.

As a vibrant, healthy Jewish community, we need to recognize that as repulsive as we might find some of the views on one end of that argument or the other, and anywhere in between, our community will be a lot stronger if we find a way to have a healthy conversation, and a healthy debate and a robust debate, that keeps all of those people in the Jewish communal tent, as opposed to beginning to have a litmus test based on people's views.

Where you see that lead is what I think you saw a lot at the AIPAC conference this week, which is this notion that, if you start to be critical of Israeli policy, not only are you not welcome in the tent, but you then are labeled as anti-Israel because you disagree on a matter of policy with the government of Israel, you're called anti-Israel. Then, it's not a long road from being anti-Israel to being anti-Semitic.

You saw it with President Trump, who in the course of 60 seconds, started talking about how the Democrats are wrong on Israel, then they are anti-Israel, and then by the end of his remarks, he was already calling the Democratic Party anti-Jewish. These are broad brushes, that I think it's a huge mistake for our own Jewish communal leadership and institutions to buy into, conflating people who are highly critical of what's going on in Israel with those who are anti-Israel or even anti-Semitic.

Lara: My experience in this country is that most people are not signing on to the BDS movement, checking the boxes, I agree, but what they're saying is, "I have lost all hope with anything I'm doing influencing this Israeli government. This seems like, at least, a way I can vote with my feet, vote with my wallet, and take a stand."

I don't personally advocate boycotting Israel, but I will start with the distinction between calling for a boycott of Israel and a boycott of settlements. The settlements are a product of the Israeli government, they are supported by Israeli policy, they are funded by the Israeli taxpayer. It's a distinction, which I encourage people to make because I think it's a more effective tactic, if your goal is not simply to vent your spleen and show your anger, and not achieve anything.

If progressives do not understand that they are signing on to an anti-progressive agenda, both on Israel and more broadly on US civil liberties, it's almost too late already. I don't know what it will require for them to realize it. We have a Jewish owner of a newspaper in Arkansas, whose newspaper may go bankrupt, because he's taking a stand and refusing to sign on the dotted line, that he will not ever boycott Israel or boycott settlements, as a condition for doing business with the state. That has led to all sorts of backlash, and it's in court.

At what point do we stand up and say, "This is an abuse of concern for Israel?" This isn't concern for Israel. This is concern for settlements, for greater Israel, for an illiberal agenda, which says, "Political free speech that's critical, things we don't like, we want to ban it." That's not the Jewish progressive values I was raised with.

Todd: Can we talk a bit more about what the Israeli government is doing, vis-à-vis, these initiatives in the US, in the states and in the federal government? To what extent can you see these initiatives drawing inspiration from Israel's own anti-boycott law? Is the Israeli government to your knowledge directly involved in promoting these sorts of legislative initiatives?

Jeremy: Yes. This is very clear strategy that is emanating from the Ministry of Strategic Affairs. They are, I believe, building up the BDS movement in order to have a fight over taking it down.

This is a movement that's having zero actual impact on the world. It's having no impact at all on the ground in Israel. It is exerting no pressure at all on Israel's economy, on the settlements. In fact, wineries are happy on the West Bank to be on the list of settlement products, because then people know who want to support it, where to go, and where to buy.

This is not about the actual impact of the boycotts, it is about creating a fight over enemies of the State of Israel, and turning people who are critics of its policies into anti-Israel "Boogie" people.

If you want to be progressive about Israel, let's not argue about BDS. Let's not argue what the folks who are perpetuating the settlement enterprise want to argue about. They want to argue with BDS. They want to argue about whether its critics are anti-Semites. They want to deflect from what's actually happening on the West Bank. Are Palestinian villages being demolished? Are lands being confiscated? Are the settlements expanding? Is freedom of movement constrained? Is there undrinkable water in Gaza? Is there not enough power?

These are the issues that people don't want to be discussing, so they'd rather be discussing whether or not Airbnb is anti-Israel, or Ilhan Omar is anti-Semitic, but they don't want to be discussing, what does it say about the Jewish people in the state of the Jewish people? Those are just cut off-mark. That is not what the Ministry of Strategic Affairs would like to be discussing, so its strategy is to make BDS the conversation and not the occupation. Progressives should make the conversation about the occupation and not about BDS.

Todd: It would be fair to say that there's a weird alliance between the Netanyahu government and the BDS movement?

Jeremy: Exactly. I think the only people who have a real interest in this being the discussion are the folks on the far right, who need something to distract people to argue about,

and then the people on the left who build up their movement in the BDS world around this argument, but it isn't actually doing anything to move us toward the end of the occupation or the end of the conflict.

Lara: What's happening with the way BDS is being weaponized; you look at the progressive political base and you look at the progressive candidates out there, and this is being weaponized to enormous effect against black and brown candidates, black and brown members of Congress. People say to me, "How did this play in the last election cycle?" It's amazing to me how few people know that Stacey Abrams, in her primary campaign, was up against another house member, very progressive woman. Wonderful, two very good candidates: one a Jewish American, one a Black American.

The issue that was used in that primary to differentiate between them and to attack Stacey Abrams was BDS. Not because she supports BDS but because she voted against one of these state laws because of the free speech issue. We were forced to watch the spectacle of this remarkable candidate, who is a remarkable future leader of the Democratic Party perhaps. She posted an article on Medium before the election essentially laying out her "I love Israel bono" fides, "Please, please, please, please don't hold it against me that I support free speech."

We saw this in Florida where you had a really good candidate for governor there who essentially was attacked, not because he supports BDS or is in any way inclined to say he does, but because he's supported by Dream Defenders, which is a grassroots vibrant movement which does support BDS. It was argued that because he's supported by Dream Defenders, which is now being attacked by rival organizations who are saying that because of its support for BDS, it should be brought up on charges by the Department of Justice.

My point is you're talking about two really good candidates, both of whom are African American, where BDS was the chosen tool to try to undermine them and Jewish progressives by not being able to stand up and say, "Listen, whether we support BDS or not, we will not allow this to happen. There has to be space here to disagree on this and to disagree legitimately". This is peaceful. This is legal. This is something people have used-- Boycotts and calling for boycotts is not new. The idea that it's okay on everything but Israel, progressives are there. They are poisoning the well for candidates and very strongly for candidates who are black and brown. That's unconscionable.

Jeremy: I think the good news is that when you look at the vote in the Senate on S1 and you look at the people who were thinking of running for president, at the end of the day, first of all, the Democratic caucus split 50/50, and we were able to convince half of the Democrats to vote against this legislation basically on these grounds. Of the people running for president, all but one voted against it. The folks who are not in the Senate right now, many of them came out against it as well.

I do think that the understanding that this is the wrong fight to be having and the right place to be as a Democrat, as a progressive on politics generally is to support the right to boycott, even if you disagree with the principles of some of the elements of the movement. I do think we're winning on that fight in the progressive movement.

Todd: How do you perceive the evangelical Christian right support for anti-BDS laws?"

Jeremy: This brings you back to the politics of Israel in the moment. It is very critical to understand that for the Netanyahu world, for the right of center, let's say the David Friedman style of pro-Israel politics, the Evangelical community is the absolute key political base from which to work in the generations to come. Their understanding is correct, which is that there are 60 million Evangelical Christians as opposed to 6 million Jews. 80% to 90% of the evangelicals agree with the right wing, and 70% to 80% of the Jews disagree with the right wing.

They're going to find a better political base in that part of the country, and it is now becoming an issue that is like choice. It is like guns. It is not necessarily a rational policy debate about how do you resolve a conflict. It is more of a question of faith and belief. Are you part of our faith structure and world view or not?

This week the settlers are in town for AIPAC. They're having their big reception at the Evangelical Bible Museum. It's not for nothing that they're having their big reception there. They are more comfortable surrounded by Evangelicals who are praying every day for Jews to die in a pool of fire than they are with progressives who care about Israel being a democratic state.

If you really want to end this conflict and stop the bloodshed and stop the violence and stop the debate about BDS, then let's start talking about how we get to an actual viable end of conflict resolution.

Lara: One of the things that makes me feel it's getting better is I'm finally-- I have been shouting hair on fire for five years about the legislation, about the conflation, and I couldn't get anyone to care. I have articles and tables of data, and it feels like we have reached a tipping point where people are waking up and they're recognizing whether it's because you care about human rights, international law, civil liberties if folks don't wake up now, it's going to be too late. I feel like we actually are having that tipping point, and a conversation like this is a sign of that. That does give me a little bit of optimism, and for that, I thank you.

Jeremy: I think that it is just so vital for pro-Israel advocates to recognize how late in the game we are to save the State of Israel. The notion that the greatest problem that we have as a freshman Muslim woman legislator from Minnesota who has a few ill-advised tweets that that somehow is the thing that we need to be rallying about and around and against when the very core of what it means to be a state of the Jewish people is being eroded in front of our eyes.

I ask people to look in the mirror and ask themselves, what is the true threat to having a vibrant, safe, stable, secure Jewish and democratic Israel that is there for your children and your grandchildren and is accepted around the world. The only way that that is ever going to happen is to end this occupation, to ensure that there is a state for the Palestinian people, and to do everything we can to make sure that state is a success so that the neighborhood can grow and the neighborhood can change.

That's what our agenda has to be. Instead of fighting the silly fight over tweets and a silly fight against a few folks on college campuses and in food co-ops who want to boycott humus and wine. I just think people have to take a real look in the mirror and check their priorities about what's important to fight for. ■

To view the webinar, go to <https://www.progressiveisrael.org/what-we-do/conversations-with-israel-palestine/bds-an-in-depth-conversation/>

Israel *Horizons*

Published by Partners for Progressive Israel

DONATE



601 West 26th Street, Suite 325—30
New York, NY, 10001

Tel: (212) 242 4500 / Fax: (212) 242 5718

info@progressiveisrael.org
www.progressiveisrael.org