

Statement on Dr. Angela Davis

New York, January 13, 2019

Partners for Progressive Israel strongly condemns the actions of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute in rescinding its Fred Shuttlesworth Award to Dr. Angela Davis, apparently on the grounds that she is an avowed supporter of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement and an advocate of Palestinian causes. While it is not our business whom the Institute chooses to honor, it is very much our business that BDS is increasingly being portrayed as inherently antisemitic, and is increasingly used to tar numerous organizations and individuals who are exercising their constitutionally protected rights.

Partners for Progressive Israel itself opposes BDS and supports the State of Israel. However, it is clear that most BDS proponents are opposed to Israel's policies, not its existence, and that of those who are in fact anti-Zionist, few are in any way antisemitic. Partners opposes the dangerous and misleading attempts, all too common nowadays, to use those phrases interchangeably. Not only do such attempts inhibit basic First Amendment freedoms, they serve to create animosity towards Jews and Israel and misleadingly magnify the extent of opposition to Israel's existence, thus exacerbating fear and hatred among Jews and in American society generally.

Partners for Progressive Israel calls on all those, whether Jewish or not, and especially on lawmakers, to cease making BDS and Israel a political football. Both pro- and anti-BDS statements are fully protected under the US Constitution—and should be treated as legitimate policy statements. Hurling epithets and slurs at those who take one position or another on BDS, or penalizing them in whatever manner, takes us down a dangerous path away from a civil and workable democracy.



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