

Opinion

Why I Won't Be Going to The Salute to Israel Parade (and Urge You To Stay Home also)

On June third, hundreds of shuls within reasonable distance of Manhattan will be renting busses, carpooling and finding other means of transportation to show their love of the Jewish State at the annual Salute to Israel Parade (now called Celebration Israel).

POLITICO TO GO



Jeff Dunetz

This year I have made the difficult decision to stay home, and I urge you to talk to your Rabbis and Synagogue boards to stay home also.

Included in the parade are groups supporting boycotts, divestment, sanctions (BDS) and other ways of de-legitimizing the Jewish State.

It wasn't until after last year's parade that I realized the New Israel Fund (NIF) was allowed to march. Marching with the NIF with their own banners were other anti-Israel

groups B'Tselem and Partners for Progressive Israel.

Parade organizers were asked, and refused to disinvite the group from this year's celebration. By staying home we are condemning the participation of these anti-Israel groups in a parade supposed to celebrate our connection to our spiritual homeland.

The NIF has been approved to march (along with its rogues gallery) in this year's parade, also.

Two cables released in the Wikileaks dump last year show the NIF for what it is: a foreign-funded group dedicated to the de-legitimization of the State of Israel.

The cables summarize meetings between U.S. officials and leaders of the New Israel Fund, B'Tselem, and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) all funded by the NIF.

"In the wake of Operation Cast Lead, these groups were trying to convince the U.S. Government the Israeli legal system is incapable of investigating claims against the Israeli government and military. They were trying to push a prosecution of the IDF and Israeli leaders for war crimes to stymie Israel

from protecting herself in the future:

Jessica Montell, the head of B'Tselem said she wanted the highest level decision-makers held accountable for the decisions they made on how to prosecute the conflict, including Military Advocate General (MAG) Mandelblit...Her aim, she said, was to make Israel weigh world opinion and consider whether it could "afford another operation like this."

In other words she didn't want Israel to defend herself against the 5,000+ rockets sent from Gaza, which led to the Israeli action.

"In another cable Montell estimated her 9 million NIS (\$2.4 million) budget is 95 percent funded from abroad, mostly from European countries, proving the group is simply an arm of the anti-Israel forces that run the EU.

New Israel Fund (NIF) Associate Director in Israel Hedva Radovanitz, who manages grants to 350 NGOs totaling about 18 million dollars per year, [said] that the campaign against the NGOs was due to the "disappearance of the political left wing" in Israel and the lack of domestic constituency for the NGOs. She noted that when she headed ACRI's Tel Aviv office, ACRI had 5,000 members, while today it has less than 800, and it was only able to muster about 5,000 people to its December human rights march by relying on the active staff of the 120 NGOs that participated."

Radovanitz also commented that she believed that in 100 years Israel would be majority Arab and that the disappearance of a Jewish state would not be the tragedy that Israelis fear since it would become more democratic.

Does the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) that organizes the celebration agree with a one (non Jewish) state solution? If it doesn't why are they granting NIF and its partner groups legitimacy within the Jewish community by allowing it to march?

Five grantees of the New Israel Fund (Machsom Watch, Coalition of Women for Peace, Women Against Violence, Social TV, and Mossawa) signed a letter to the Norwegian Government Pension Fund, urging it to divest from Israel. Partners for Progressive Israel prominently displays on its website a list of Israeli products that it wants Jews to boycott. Does the JCRC believe that coun-

tries should divest from Israel and/or boycott her goods?

One of the most recognizable groups marching in the NIF contingent is B'Tselem. Based in Israel, the group's full name is The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories.

Anat Biletzsky, former chairperson of B'Tselem (and still on its board), once wrote that she has been working to end Israel as a Jewish state since the late 1960s. She stated that "Israel [today] is like the Nazis or like Germany in '34" and that life for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza "is something that I do not hesitate to call a concentration camp."

Every year B'Tselem publishes a guide to Israeli and Palestinian Deaths and, while the totals are correct, their classification methods are a bit on the "funky" side. For example, they define as civilian casualties people who were not involved in fighting at the exact time of their death.

Let's say someone launches a rocket at Sderot, then puts the launcher in the truck and hears the call to prayer. He puts down his rug and starts praying. At the same time, the IDF is honing in on where the missile was launched and sends retaliatory fire, killing the terrorists. B'Tselem calls that a civilian casualty because he wasn't launching missiles at the time he was praying.

Another group that gets NIF Shekels and was invited by NIF to march in the parade is Partners for Progressive Israel (also known as Meretz USA). On its website, the group urges, "Boycott these settlement products sold

in the U.S., " with a list of Israeli products that it wants Jews to boycott. These products include Ahava cosmetics, SodaStream products, and wine from nine Israeli vineyards.

One of the great things about the Jews as a people is we try to be inclusive of all people and points of view, it is also one of our downfalls.

"It is incredible what political simpletons Jews are. They shut their eyes to one of the most elementary rules of life, that you must not "meet halfway" those who do not want to meet you. --Ze'ev Jabotinsky, The Iron Wall, November 4, 1923"

Last year's participation by these organizations was a surprise. This year I will not be a party to it. The (JCRC) is supposed to be creating a Salute to Israel Parade, not a boycott Israel festival. Staying home is the only way to show the organizers that it's unacceptable to sanction groups whose purpose is to de-legitimize Israel, or even worse, create a non-Jewish Israel.

I will not participate in a rally for the destruction of the Jewish State. I will be staying home on June third. And urge you to stay home also.

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Jewish American Heritage Month



Photo courtesy of Ezra Friedlander

Democrats and Republicans gathered in the LBJ Room off the Senate floor to acknowledge six Jewish leaders in celebration of Jewish American Heritage Month. President George W. Bush designated May for this commemoration in 2006, recommended by Representative Debbi Wasserman Schultze, recognizing the 360 year history of Jewish contributions to American culture.

Pictured from left: Ari Scharf, Founder and Director of Project Mesorah; Sidney Greenberger, Chairman of the Raoul Wallenberg Centennial Celebration Commission; Phil Friedman, Founder of Computer Generated Solutions (CSG); Stanley Tate, head the Resolution Trust Corporation; Rabbi Simcha Scholar, Executive Vice President of Chai Lifeline; Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL); Rabbi Elie Abadie, founding Rabbi of the Edmond J. Safra Synagogue; Rabbi Abe Friedman, Community Liaison to the New York State Senate on Homeland Security; Ezra Friedlander, CEO of The Friedlander Group; Rabbi Joseph Potasnik, Executive Vice President of the New York Board of Rabbis; Alyza Lewin, ESQ. from Lewin & Lewin, LLP specializing in litigation and government relations; Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL)

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