

The New Imposters; the J Street PAC

Contributed by Moshe Kempinski

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Throughout Jewish history the embittered people of Israel have developed conditions and neuroses very similar to victims of abuse. At times, they have begun to blame themselves for the hatred that they have experienced hurled against them. At other times they have begun to assume that if they would adopt more universal ideals and become more connected to the greater whole, they would cease to be persecuted. As a result of such a desire they have eschewed uniqueness and national identity for the safe anonymity of "sameness". There is nothing inherently wrong for looking for commonality and initiating bridge building. In fact the building of bridges of understanding between peoples is one of the critical goals of mankind's destiny and purpose. Yet the collapse of identity and the slipping into the morass of blandness and anonymity has become a disaster and ever present danger for the Jewish people.

Yet there is an even darker side to the phenomenon. Throughout history, some of the greatest enemies of the Jewish people have been Jews who so wanted to identify with the world that the result was a deep hatred within themselves of Judaism and Jewish destiny. Some of the greatest persecutors of the Jewish people have been people of Jewish descent. We must be wary that Jewish people like Rahm Emanuel, and David Axelrod, Obama's advisers, don't fall into that trap .

The road into such lethal and dangerous thinking can even begin with well meaning and pure thinking. It usually begins with the desire to ensure that the Jewish people remain within the constraints of safe political correctness. Such groups in the past have taken it upon themselves in the name of the Jewish people to represent views and opinions that were in line with the interests of the ruling monarchy, even if they were antithetical to the needs of their people. These Jewish individuals called Shtadlanim or Court Jews as a general rule acted seemingly on behalf of the Jewish people but were truly more interested in enhancing their positions of power and wealth within the political rulership of their day.

It is usually easy to spot them. They use Jewish concepts and ideals liberally while show no connection to any of these ideals in their private lives. They will usually speak on behalf of the Jewish people as a group and yet as individuals have very little to do with their local Jewish community. They will declare ideas and beliefs that will endear them to their politically correct environment but will deny the unique character and survival needs of their own people. In our days they will demand full rights for all Arabs living inside Israel while denying them for Jews living in areas of biblical and historic import. .They exhibit great concern for Arab pain and suffering while barely offering lip service for Jewish pain . They will advocate Israeli territorial concessions regardless of the danger to security needs such withdrawals have produced in the past. They will argue that any serious criticism of the preaching and teaching of hatred towards the Jews of Israel and the world by Arab preachers and teachers in Arab schools and mosques is somehow disloyal to American interests. Support for Israel 's security needs is viewed as tantamount to a betrayal of American concerns.

According to many , J Street Political Action Committee lobby founded in 2008 seems to be walking this very dangerous and self destructive path.

During the Gaza strip war the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz wrote that while "The left-wing Meretz party on Thursday issued a rare call for military action against Hamas in order to bring an end to cross-border attacks on Israel by Gaza militants" , the J Street on the other hand called for superpower intervention to restrain Israel.

Reform Rabbi Eric Yoffie ,the president of the URJ , whose own views mirror the views of the left in the Israeli political spectrum, complained that " the group (J Street lobby) could find no moral difference between the actions of Hamas and other Palestinian militants, …., and the long-delayed response of Israel, which finally lost patience and responded to the pleas of its battered citizens in the south.

J Street hit again this week. President Barak Obama who truly believes that the magic of the spoken word can assuage any wound and cross over any chasm of disagreement invited Jewish leaders for a talk .The President invited over 16 leaders but excluded the strongly pro Israel National Council of Young Israel (YI) and Zionist Organization of America (ZOA).

After the meeting Obama's greatest admirers, the J Street lobby, declared;

" J Street commends President Barack Obama on restating today his commitment to a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and his serious intent to pursue a viable and sustainable resolution to the broader Arab-Israeli conflict.....President Obama should know that the majority of American Jews support the direction he outlined and his commitment to actively pursue peace and security. "

Is J Street truly speaking for the majority of American Jewry?!?

In a Newsweek article (may 27th 2008) highlighting the newly formed group, columnist Dan Efron asked the lobby the following question.

Ephron; You're suggesting actually withholding aid?

J Street ; No, I'm not saying that. I want to be really clear. I'm saying that when the U.S. president closes the door with the Israeli prime minister, the U.S. president has a lot more chips to play than any other person who closes that door. …..And it's time for the president to know that there's a group of people here who recognize that that is not only in Israel's best interests, it's in the U.S.'s best interests. We've got to step up and start to make this a more serious, meaningful policy.

Ephron; But my question is might J Street find itself in a situation where it would be lobbying on an issue that would be counter to what the Israeli government is doing?

J. Street: Oh, absolutely. We have absolutely no problem taking a position that says the actions and policies of the Israeli government are counterproductive and not in the best interests in our opinion of either Israel or the United States . …

Ephron ; You'll have to face, I imagine, Israelis who will say, 'wait a second, you don't live here, you don't send your children to the military here, you don't pay taxes. What right do you have to dictate or even to influence the debate?'

J Street I think that's extremely fair [to argue]. But I think as long as the situation in Israel and Palestine is directly related to recruitment by extremist forces, by Al Qaeda, of the terrorists who then come here, I think it is an issue that has ramifications here.

Is J Street speaking out of concern for the destiny and security of the Jewish people or they suffering from the the pain and wounds of exile. Are they concerned for the constituency that they claim to represent or are they more interested to be accepted by the rulers of our time.

Either way they can quickly become a very dangerous pawn in the war against the people of Israel .