

# Hypocrites All

## What does it mean to be pro-Israel in 2016?

By HOWARD TEICH

First Lady Michele Obama, in her first-night Democratic Convention speech, delivered the thought that should make us all recognize the significance of having

### FIRST PERSON

our Jewish people in Judea and Samaria, as she said, “I wake up every morning in a house that was built by slaves. And I watch my

our homeland, the Land of Israel including Judea and Samaria and the undivided, eternal City of Jerusalem.

In the Book of the Prophet Amos, in the words of God, it is said, “I will restore my People Israel/ They shall rebuild ruined cities and inhabit them/ They shall plant vineyards and drink their wine ... Nevermore to be uprooted/ From the soil I have given them.” And to hear people suggest that the Jews in

people were returning to their homeland.

The pride of these early days need be remembered, not as a time of displacing Arab Palestinians, rather as a time that a dream was becoming a reality, the Jewish people were once again restoring their homeland. It’s not been easy, these many thousands of years, as enemies have massed and been determined to remove the Jewish people from this Promised Land, some-

the Jewish people, with your Administration ending, and a new one about to be elected. And here’s the issue I raise, “What does it mean in 2016 to be pro-Israel?”

Can someone be involved in supporting the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement (BDS) and still consider themselves pro-Israel? Can someone be a member of an organization such as J-Street or B’Tselem, and still be pro-Israel? Can someone call Israel an apartheid country, and still be pro-Israel? Can someone condemn Israel for their actions in the Gaza War in defending themselves as was done in the Goldwasser Report, and still be pro-Israel?

Can someone overlook the hundred thousand missiles facing Israel on all sides, not taking into account the security needs of Israel, and call for a peace treaty in which Israel would have borders that jeopardize the future security of the nation? Can someone overlook, and refuse to criticize the Arab Palestinians, both members of Hamas and now followers of Mahmoud Abbas, who celebrate, and even pay families for the deaths of Israelis at the hands of their own citizens by bombs and by knives? Can that person or organization consider themselves pro-Israel?

As an example, the advocacy organization J-Street is not pro-Israel in my opinion. After years of having watched J-Street mimic and support President Obama and the White House, I received two J-Street emails just prior to the party conventions that really crossed the line. The first email arrived, signed by Representatives Keith Ellison

if not outright opposition.

This first letter was about the Democratic Party Platform, and it started with their comment that they just returned from their trips to Israel and Palestine. It says that all in the Democratic Party agree to the core values, a two-state solution and an end to security concerns for Israel, and an end to the “unjust occupation” of Palestine by the Israelis. Simple to say it that way and it fails to clear any of the

**The pride of these early days need be remembered, not as a time of displacing Arab Palestinians, rather as a time that a dream was becoming a reality, the Jewish people were once again restoring their homeland.**



On the first night of the Democratic National Convention, First Lady Michelle Obama spoke about waking up in a house built by slaves. In Ancient Egypt, Jews also woke up every morning in slavery.

daughters — two beautiful, intelligent, black young women — play with the dog on the White House lawn.”

I say the same, in another place, and in another way, and with another timeframe. I wake up every morning knowing that my people were slaves in Ancient Egypt, and

Israel are colonialists. How outrageous!

I remember reading my Great Uncle Harry’s report on his visit to then Palestine in 1936, when the Jews were still in their early pioneering days of their life in Israel, taking a land largely barren and starting to bring to it a new revival.

times succeeding, and fortunately in recent times with the strength and bravery of the Israeli people, being able to overcome every attempt to “throw the Jewish people into the Sea.”

Wars were started by Arab countries surrounding Israel, and each time Israel defended itself. Each time may have meant the destruction of Israel, and the loss of a significant percentage of the Jewish people living in the world. Few countries stood with Israel, and yet they won each war. And when they won a war that others had started, the world made them withdraw from the land they had secured during the war.

President Obama in early 2010 told a group of Jewish leaders at the White House that they would have to engage in some serious “self-reflection.” I wrote an article, “We Shall Bow Down to No One” soon thereafter, referring to my self-reflecting. Well, Mr. President, I continue to “self-reflect”, for this is a most serious time for Israel and



Keith Ellison meets with the Islamic Relief organization in Gaza, which is listed by the U.S. Treasury Department as a supporter of the terrorist organization Hamas.

and Luis Gutierrez, both members of the Democratic Party Platform Committee with one appointed by Senator Bernie Sanders and the other by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and both known for their relative failure of support for Israel,

attacks against Israelis. Then, he continued with, I suppose he would say in the words of J-Street, his pro-peace, pro-Israel recommendations for the future.

First, that the United States should

**[W]e must stand with Israel during these days of turmoil as it tries to preserve a Christian, Muslim and Jewish civilization in Judea and Samaria, and to preserve the historic Jewish attachment to the Temple Mount.**

were led to the Land of Palestine, to have it as their home. Though exiled for 2,000 years, and suffering innumerable untold travesties including the Holocaust where six million were killed, we never gave up hope and determination, we prayed, and today my Jewish people are back in

When I was there in 1963, and was taken on a short tour by legendary opera singer Jan Peerce and his extraordinary wife Alice Peerce (another story and one I will treasure) in their limousine, they talked of how the land was coming to life with a new vibrancy as the Jewish

*continued on page 1*

*continued from page 9*

return to calling settlements “illegal.” Second, that on future United Nations resolutions where settlements are condemned, the United States should not use its veto. Third, that any Israeli extension of existing settlements should be seen as establishing a new settlement in violation of international agreements. Fourth, that enforcement of customs regulations requiring products be labeled from territory over the Green Line (essentially a basis for BDS). And fifth, that there be a report back to the president on tax deductibility of West Bank products.

Nobody will convince me that this letter from J-Street can be interpreted as pro-Israel. It was potentially dangerous to Israel, and was an ominous sign as we headed into the Democratic Convention where J-Street fully intended to have a significant hand in the tone and words for the party’s position on Israel. Fortunately, the Democratic Party Platform clearly recognized the bias, and did not reflect this full positioning in its platform.

Where are our major Jewish organizations and their leadership? This is anecdotal, and yes, it actually happened to me recently. I was stopped at a meeting of a major Jewish organization from saying my opinion, when I commented that I do not think J-Street is supportive of Israel, that it is certainly not pro-Israel as I define it. Yes, stopped, even though someone right before was able to comment on the positive support that J-Street gives to Israel. And this was at a gathering to discuss the danger of the BDS movement, and what we in the Jewish community can do to counter it. Start with our own, I say.

I have watched as major Jewish organizations have missions to Israel for governmental officials and leaders of business who ostensibly are to be given a most positive look at Israel, and will not include in their itineraries any stops or travels in Judea and Samaria. There is an exception. Yes, these leaders are taken over the Green Line to Ramallah to meet with the Palestinian leadership, and in one case that I heard about, an Orthodox Jew was asked to remove his yarmulke because the Palestinian Arabs objected to his wearing it there.

I watch as time and again there is no mention of our Jewish heritage and rights in Judea and Samaria. To think of our history in Shiloh, capital of King David’s kingdom, and Hebron, where our ancestors lived

and faced a pogrom by the Arabs in 1929, and the biblical step-by-step recorded history on that land of Judea and Samaria that is never mentioned, except to say that Israel is an occupier there, and needs to give it up. The American Jewish community needs to voice the significance of Judea and Samaria to the future of

faced, and endured, its own terrorism, which is hardly given attention, and faced, and won a serious war, in which the U.S. government threatened to cut off supplies when they were needed, and even called for the stoppage of all flights to Ben-Gurion Airport. It took an extraordinarily bold commitment of Mayor Michael

the ground. We can never be cowards. The radical Islamists are at war, in a most serious way. Jews were expelled from practically all Arab countries in the mid-20th century after having civilizations there for hundreds and thousands of years. Today, Christians are being decimated in their remaining vil-

our ground in the Land of Israel, for our entire civilization’s future is at stake. Some may say that Mahmoud Abbas and the Arab Palestinians are moderates, and this cleansing will not happen. We watched Gaza as Israel withdrew, and Hamas took over and turned it into a radical Islamic State with Sharia Law and no Jewish people, and we know that Hamas will take over Judea and Samaria if Israel should leave.

So, although I was so hopeful after the Oslo Agreement that we could have a two-state solution, with a demilitarized Palestinian state living prosperously together with a secure Jewish state as peaceful next-door neighbors, that time has passed. That’s no longer the prospect for a Palestinian state, and no longer a possibility for the peaceful future of the region, although a recent creative, bold suggestion for an expanded Gaza with an artificially built island off its coast with an airport and seaport could well be a basis for a future Palestinian state.

I have always felt that our generation, born with the State of Israel, has a greater responsibility than many other generations to carry the torch, and to ensure that it stays lit for posterity. We have been through darkness, and this is the era of light for our people. Clearly, something beyond our day is being written, nearly like a biblical new chapter, with the story of our Jewish people’s return to Israel. Yes, this is our moment.

Certainly, Israel is raising issues that we must face, and that causes many of us consternation. The religious governance in Israel may not be to our liking, as the orthodoxy controls the guidelines for religious observance in Israel, with little room for conservatism and reform views and practices. We are concerned about the treatment of the Arab population in Israel, as we are about the Palestinian Arab population in Judea and Samaria. And we may be concerned with some other practices of the Israeli government and Israeli people.

We do have a choice today, much larger in scope, one that we have not yet accommodated. Perhaps our leadership is thinking too small. Whether out of illiteracy of our Jewish people’s history, their own secular political correctness, their guidance by the power and significance of fundraising, or their relationships to those in power that they are trying to protect, the leadership is thinking only about today, and not yesterday and tomorrow. They take pride in their positioning, and I see hypocrisy in many of them.



**At Ben-Gurion Airport Prime Minister Netanyahu welcomes former Mayor of New York Michael Bloomberg who broke the U.S. embargo on flights to Israel, showing pro-Israel leadership.**

**This new pro-Israel leadership now recognizes that the future of Israel is not secure, and the two-state solution is not sacred.**

Israel. And it needs to remember, that we liberated our land in the 1967 Six-Day War started by the Arab countries against Israel.

Both the government in Israel and a majority of the people in Israel now recognize Israel’s need for remaining on a significant portion, if not the entirety of Judea and Samaria. I believe that Israel should declare sovereignty over this land, annex it in its entirety, and I have voiced that for years. Now more than ever, though, our organizations and leadership, with the threat of missiles potentially raining down on Israel, with the Hamas leadership bound to take over the future state of Palestine if it were ever formed on the West Bank, with the inherent threat voiced continually by the Palestinian Arabs that they want to take over the entirety of Israel, must redefine their pro-Israel positions.

This should have been a golden period for Israel. Yet, too many of our organizations, and their leadership, have stood quietly while this Obama administration has, to be kind, been disrespectful to Israel and its leadership. In a Middle East that is embroiled in turmoil, death and destruction, Israel has been a shining light of democracy and peace. Realize in recent years that Israel has

Bloomberg to step on a plane and fly into Ben-Gurion Airport, to break the embargo on flights.

New pro-Israel leadership must now be noticed in America. The American leadership for standing with Israel includes a new group of actors, some around a long time and not noticed, and others newly formed who are not limited by their political correctness to the world at large, but led on by their unwavering commitment to the State of Israel. And there are Israeli organizations, with American Friends counterparts, that are now outspoken about Judea and Samaria.

This new pro-Israel leadership now recognizes that the future of Israel is not secure, and the two-state solution is not sacred. The leadership of the Palestinians has shown time and time again that their motive is not peace together with Israel, it is peace in place of Israel. They teach it in their schools where they train their children at the earliest age that it is good to fight Israel and the Jews. They show it when they pay the families of terrorists who stab or shoot and kill Israelis, and celebrate often with parades for the martyrdom of these terrorists.

We must recognize the reality on

lages and towns in the Middle East by today’s Islamic radicals, and their population is dwindling, and their long-standing civilizations are ending.

And we must stand with Israel during these days of turmoil as it tries to preserve a Christian, Muslim and Jewish civilization in Judea and Samaria, and to preserve the historic Jewish attachment to the Temple Mount. The Arab Palestinians have pushed Christians out of Bethlehem, are mandating that all Jews must leave Judea and Samaria

**We have been through darkness, and this is the era of light for our people.**

as part of any proposed peace agreement, and among an increasing radicalized minority of their population, remove all Jews from the entirety of Israel, or as they say, push the Jews into the sea.

As the radical Islamist tyrants now press their beliefs into Europe and Northern Africa, we must stand

*continued on page 2*

*continued from page 1*

There is not a realization that we were in exile from the Land of Israel for two thousand years. There is not a realization of the uniqueness, the extraordinary nature of our people maintaining our spirit and the determination of our cause for all those years. Over the years in exile, and in Diaspora, we made our way very successfully in lands throughout the globe, as we continue to today. And yet, the binding spirit was a return to the land that God had given us, and had guided us to, our Land of Israel.

We have a transcendent responsibility, both to our ancestors and to our future generations, to remain on the Land of Israel that we hold today, including Judea, Samaria and the entirety of Jerusalem. The words written in the letters of J-Street are words of Jewish hypocrites who either out of their being human do not see things clearly at times, or, and this is darker, their words, knowingly, are expressed to be uncaring, perhaps truly harmful to the Jewish people and the State of Israel. In either case, we must take a long look, for if a person or organization by their comments or actions are not worthy of being considered pro-Israel, in a real sense, we must take a strong stand to position them outside of our Jewish mainstream.

With the recent death of Elie Weisel, and the attention during his life that he focused on the Holocaust, I must add one point that we should never forget. In his book, *Mein Kampf*, Hitler had his own understanding of the Jewish people. One of his tenets was that the Jews would never set up a state of their own, that they would always live off others. Clearly, Hitler was wrong! Our Jewish people have had a strength of character, and spirit, and soul that has led us once again, resulting in the return of an extraordinary people to its own land after 2,000 years in exile.

The Israeli people have built a magnificent state, Israel, a leader in democracy in the Middle East, a leader in technology, a strong military power, a dynamic, growing center for human development in culture, the arts, now reaching out to Africa and other regions throughout the world to pass on their skills for the betterment of other peoples. And we must stop our apologizing, our thinking small, and proudly declare the unification of our ancient kingdom, Judea and Samaria with our current State of

Israel, one Israel, a miracle of our time.

There is no occupation, you hypocrites, there is only a continuum that has been created so our Prophet Amos can look down, and know that his words still have meaning and reality today. An early reviewer of this article commented that it sounds like “unadulterated Zionist propaganda.” Well, in response, I said thank you, that I proudly am 100 percent pro-Israel, pro-peace, and thrilled to be an unadulterated Zionist in the year 2016.

*Howard Teich is an attorney and civic and cultural activist.*