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## Deconstructing Oxfam's Israel Hysteria

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### Deconstructing Oxfam's Hysteria

*By Avi Benlolo*

Oxfam is an important international aid organization that aims to alleviate poverty and help the poor and the needy. There are many positive facets to the organization, like its current assistance to Syrian refugees. Unfortunately for Oxfam, its radical approach to Israel falls squarely in line with the new antisemitism which manifests as anti-Israeli hate -- a symbiosis of traditional prejudice against the Jewish people veiled by unjust and relentless criticism of the Jewish state.

Criticism of Israel by organizations like Oxfam has reached a fevered pitch; the unparalleled hysteria is all the more apparent when cross-referenced with truly horrific and tragic world events which fail to garner similar attention. The irrational intent of this anti-Israel mania undermines humanitarian and peacemaking objectives and, more significantly, highlights the effort to demonize, defame and delegitimize the Jewish state. When combined with irrational hysteria, these three "D's" bring an organization closer to ground zero of the new antisemitism.

Surely, of all civil and social conflagrations around the planet including Syria's daily murderous campaigns against civilians, Iran's summary executions or even Russia's ban of homosexuals, how can it be that a little company that manufactures fizzy water in a small town outside of Jerusalem takes center stage for Oxfam -- a multinational humanitarian organization? The answer is that hatred and deep seeded prejudice disables objectivity and fact based evidence, as demonstrated by Oxfam's press release regarding the matter.

According to its Canadian Executive Director, Robert Fox, his organization "does not, and has never, supported a boycott of trade with Israel. Nor do we support the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement, or promote its objectives." Yet Oxfam's scandalous falling out with actress Scarlett Johansson proves the very opposite of Fox's assertion. His claim is utterly deceptive when considered in combination with Ms. Johansson's resignation from Oxfam as a protest against its boycott of SodaStream, an Israeli company that has a manufacturing plant in the disputed territories – a plant that provides jobs to both Palestinians and Israelis. Oxfam's happy acceptance of her resignation clearly shows the organization's official policy is in line with BDS.

This truth becomes all the more apparent as the Oxfam release notes, "Oxfam opposes trade with Israeli settlements in the West Bank because these settlements are illegal under international law." In this case, Oxfam has taken it upon itself to define Israel's borders, even though the final status of the territories have not yet been declared or agreed upon in any binding international or legal document or treaty; peace talks to deal with this very subject are ongoing and not subject to Oxfam's edicts. The settlements Oxfam refers to as being "illegal" are in fact perfectly legal in their reference as "disputed territories" and until such time as a final status agreement is resolved.

Indeed, all legal precedents, particularly Resolution 242 following the 1967 war in which Israel captured the disputed territories in a defensive war (that did not involve the Palestinians), confirm that withdrawal from these territories must be part of a negotiated peace agreement with full diplomatic recognition. It is widely understood that once an agreement has been reached, there will likely be land swaps on both sides that would include Israel's retention of Jewish enclaves. Those "Israeli settlements" cannot be deemed "illegal" as Oxfam claims because a negotiated peace agreement has not been realized by either side.

Oxfam's misguided approach to Israel reaches deep into traditional antisemitic approaches of marginalizing and isolating the Jew. One of Adolph Hitler's first decrees was the identification and boycott of Jewish owned businesses. For decades after the establishment of the modern state of Israel, the Arab League adhered to an economic boycott of the fledgling Jewish nation. Now, Oxfam has adopted the mantle of Arab refusal to allow Jewish self-determination as it "urges the Israeli government to ensure distinct labeling of Israeli products and settlement products so consumers may clearly differentiate between the two."

In other words, Oxfam is practicing economic apartheid against the state of Israel through an integrated and biased economic system of dividing the country through demarcation of its products. Which other nation or people is requested to perform such a ludicrous task?

Oxfam's hysterics are not Oxfam's alone. It belongs to a class of organizations driven by a Palestinian and Arabist agenda which aims to destroy the state of Israel economically, academically, culturally and internationally. The antisemitism now in vogue and in practice in Europe, especially among NGOs and United Nations affiliate agencies, is an alarming manifestation of an historical illness of prejudice and hate passed from generations. But more heroes like Scarlett Johansson rise like the phoenix every day to speak truth and justice and to ensure that this time – we will not go down – and certainly not without a fight.