

Fear and Loathing at DC's 'Israel Lobby' Conference

by Andrew Harrod



"What stops Israel from launching a similar final solution to the Palestinian people," asked an audience [member](#) while recalling Islamic State [genocide](#) at Washington, DC's recent "Israel Lobby and American Policy" [conference](#) ([videos](#) and [transcripts](#)). Meanwhile, a [9/11 Truther](#) asked about the "possibilities of a 9/11 Mossad op-type strike to propel us into Iran like it did in Iraq." These conspiratorial questions—fielded by conference organizer Delinda Hanley, editor of the [anti-Israel Washington Report on Middle East Affairs](#)—exemplified the fanatical bigotry that drew about 180 people to the National Press Club's main hall.

Accordingly, anti-Israel [conspiracy theorist](#) and William & Mary University Professor Lawrence Wilkerson regurgitated the oft refuted [calumny](#) that Israeli aircraft deliberately attacked the U.S.S. Liberty during the 1967 Six Day War, and that President Lyndon Johnson



“knew the gory details.” Wilkerson described Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman as “a latent version of Joseph Stalin” or an “agent of Vladimir Putin.” Elsewhere, he claimed that [Iran’s Jewish population](#) “lives in Iran in reasonable peace.”

Southern Illinois University-Carbondale Professor [Virginia Tilley](#) delivered an equally vitriolic [presentation](#) denouncing Israeli “apartheid.” She asserted that a supposed Israeli opposition to sexual relations between Arabs and Jews, or “racial mixing,” precluded any future Palestinian state. “When you have people mixing, they make babies,” she proclaimed, a situation that creates the “death-knell for any racial state.”

One of Tilley’s slides complained that descendants of Palestinian refugees from Israel’s 1948 independence war “cannot gain capacity to alter Israeli law,” as if millions of foreigners should have the right to vote in Israel. Another slide rejected Israel’s existence in the former League of Nations Palestine Mandate and demanded a unitary Palestinian state, because “Sustaining Jewish statehood in part of territory [sic] sustains apartheid.” A different slide concluded that “Jewish” should denote “Not a ‘nation’ with a right to self-determination.”



Professor Rabab Abdulhadi

San Francisco State University (SFSU) Professor Rabab Abdulhadi [delivered](#) a characteristically [paranoid](#) presentation. Abdulhadi is the subject of a Middle East Forum/Campus Watch [campaign](#) to [end](#) the Memorandum of Understanding she brokered between SFSU and An-Najah University, a [jihadist hotbed](#) in the West Bank. Consequently, she ranted about an “Israel lobby industry network” that is “attacking Palestine at SFSU” and that “incites Islamophobia.” It is “exactly as McCarthyism in the ‘50s,” she concluded histrionically. As during past encounters with this author, she insisted, unnecessarily, “Next time, do not misquote me.”

Abdulhadi claimed that SFSU “is abandoning its social justice mission” because SFSU President Leslie Wong issued a [statement](#)—in apology for an earlier pronouncement indicating the opposite—that welcomed Zionists to campus. Instead, she

lauded the students who posted “Zionists are not welcome. Zionism is racism” on campus. Straining to reject characterizations of her [illiberal](#) sentiments as anti-Semitic with the assertion that not all Jews are Zionists, she maintained that “‘Israel lobby’ is not a code name for Jewish organizations.”



Introducing Abdulhadi was [Barry Trachtenberg](#), professor of Jewish history at Wake Forest University, who pronounced himself “very proud to be your warm-up act.” He praised her as a “model of scholarly activism,” in contrast to imaginary academic “self-censorship” on Israel. Fittingly, Trachtenberg has been described as harboring a “deeply felt [loathing](#)” for Israel, while his views on Jewish [affairs](#) have been equated with a “Flat Earth Society.”

Trachtenberg condemned American universities’ “strategic partnerships with Israeli universities and businesses,” claiming that Israel only a “marginally democratic system, at least for its Jewish citizens.” He approved of the radical anti-Israel Jewish Voice for Peace ([JVP](#)) opposing Anti-Defamation League facilitation of Israeli-American law enforcement cooperation. Trachtenberg reiterated his astonishing [view](#) that it is “totally, in my mind, illegitimate” to consider as anti-Semitic “comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.” Yet, he claimed pro-Israel groups “have disingenuously portrayed campuses as ever more hostile and dangerous to Jewish students.”

The conference attracted an A-list of Israel-haters from Washington, DC, and beyond, including the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)’s [Mongi Dhaouadi](#), the CATO

Institute's "libertarian for sharia" [Imad-ad-Dean Ahmad](#), Code Pink's [Medea Benjamin](#), and the Institute for Policy Studies' [Phyllis Bennis](#). Also present were Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation founder [Rateb Rabie](#) and Nobel Prize winner [James C. Cobey](#), an organizer of the capital's annual anti-Israel "Voices of the Holy Land" [film series](#). [Norman Finkelstein](#) joined fellow academics [Lawrence Davidson](#) and [Edmund Ghareeb](#). Past Green Party presidential candidate [Ralph Nader](#) gave a television interview during a conference break. Jerusalem Fund Executive Director [Mohamed Mohamed](#) came with staff to support the conference, while [Alison Weir](#)'s rabidly anti-Semitic If Americans Knew ([IAK](#)) and the radical American Muslims for Palestine ([AMP](#)) hosted display tables.

The conference exemplified how over past decades anti-Israel activists have come to dominate Middle East studies and other academic disciplines, left-wing think tanks, and many "acceptable" political advocacy organizations. Their allies include elite journalists, foundation heads, and leading politicians who demand speech codes, twist history to fit dark narratives, and ostracize independent colleagues. Against this reality, these rogues' claims of victimhood at the hands of an all-powerful "Israel lobby" seeking to persecute dissenters appear as absurd and mendacious as their "scholarship."

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