

Harvard, Shmarvard



The Harvard Crimson

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by Lev Tsitrin

That you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear has been known for centuries – but Harvard is trying nonetheless. That is, it is trying to turn fools and cowards into future “elites.” As a solid proof, consider the ringing endorsement of anti-Israel boycott movement by the editorial board of Harvard's student-run paper, the *Harvard Crimson* titled “[In Support of Boycott, Divest, Sanctions and a Free Palestine.](#)”

You support “free Palestine,” Harvard students? Very good. I am eager to learn from your piece why isn't Palestine free. After all, Gaza is under Palestinian control, as is Area A of the West bank – some 95% of the Palestinians in total. All that's needed for them to be free is for their rulers – the Hamas and the PA respectively – to allow freedom of speech, and of religion. Yet somehow, they don't want to. The

Palestinian Authority imprisons and beats up the critics of its kleptocratic rule, while Hamas prefers to funnel international aid into making rockets and burrowing tunnels to attack Israel, rather than improving the living conditions of Palestinians under its control. So how exactly will boycotting Israel – which, after all, is a free country – will help freeing Palestinians, who are oppressed by their own rulers, whose only care is to line their pockets by siphoning off international aid, and to try to destroy Israel either through international pressure (which is a method preferred by the PA), or through terrorism and war that are Hamas' preferred *modus operandi*?

Clearly, whoever wrote *Crimson's* editorial is blissfully unaware of who is responsible for the Palestinian lack of freedom. Somehow, the fault is Israel's – though it is not explained how. In fact, the *Crimsonites* seem not to be aware that BDS is aimed at destroying Israel, for there is not even a token disclaimer in their screed like “while we support the Palestinians, we fully support Israel's right to exist” – the right that is threatened by the Palestinians in a variety of ways – by orchestrating international pressure, by terrorism, by war, by BDS.

So how come the students at America's premier college are not just ignorant of facts – but are even ignorant of the fact that facts matter?

How come Harvard students are unwilling to learn before they write? Does Harvard encourage demagoguery in student research papers at the expense of fact-checking? Apparently so – else, the authors of the *Crimson* editorial would have first done some basic research, simply out of the ingrained habit of leaning the facts before speaking. Apparently, such habit is not being encouraged at Harvard. Or may be, Harvard's student body is not prepared, intellectually, for study? If so, what are they doing at college – and not any college, but Harvard of all places?

Or may be, Harvard students are simple cowards, one anti-Israel bigmouth covering the rest of *Crimson's* editorial board into going along with their screed?

Either way – whether Harvard students are intellectually lazy, or are cowardly, they are not the “elites” we envision Harvard students to be. Elites lead, they are not lead. Cowards cannot be elites – at least, they should not be allowed to join the ranks of the elite. Ignoramuses cannot be elites – as leaders, elites should be clear-eyed about the facts, not blinded by ideology.

Crimson's editorial board has – by my rough count – over 80 students; the masthead counts about 100 more. That's a huge, number of ignoramuses and cowards. And that such bad apples are the face of the college leading its paper, is a huge blow to Harvard's reputation – clearly, it admitted a great many students who are no top minds – students who, in fact, can hardly be said to have minds, given their eagerness to surrendering their ability to think so as to go along with loudmouths.

It turns out, after all, that Harvard is no breeding ground for the country's elites. The people attending it are weak-willed, and weak-minded. Harvard is not the brand it used to be. “I'm from Harvard” will, from now on, elicit a response, “so what?” Harvard, Shmarvard – who cares?