ACROSS THE AISLE: MY WALK AND TALK WITH A BDS ADVOCATE

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A Member Submission by Jesse Rosenfeld

It’s a fact. BDS supports violence. Unfortunately, some PSFC members are unwittingly climbing on board without knowing this upfront.

After Hamas broke the cease-fire on October 7, committing rape and murder upon Israeli civilians, the first official and public group reaction of PSFC boycott advocates (“PBAs,” my own acronym) was to boycott Israel. With this horrifying mindset, is rational conversation possible again?

For three straight open forums, I’ve held up hard-copies printed out from BDS’s own websites and interviews proving they are not a non-violent movement, that they explicitly support violence and therefore PBAs do also. Finally on April 3, a PBA called my challenge. I’m happy to report that we had a perfectly rational walk-and-talk about my hard proof. Points and rebuttals are paraphrased below.

PBA: BDS only says this violence is what’s happening, not that they are endorsing it.

REBUTTAL: Not true. BDS explicitly condemns Israeli violence while excusing and championing Hamas’ violence.

PBA: BAs may not be completely behind BDS or completely behind Hamas.

REBUTTAL: Not true. “In committing to BDS…” is a quote from the PBA’s own mission statement. Nothing indicates partial support.

PBA: BDS is a loose coalition.

REBUTTAL: At PSFC, BDS supporters use group speak with a unified voice.

REBUTTAL: Not true. BDS stands for a full-on boycott of Israel.

PBA: BDS at the Coop is a targeted boycott of Israeli products, maybe four.

PBA: [BDS founder] Omar Barghouti's quote [where his enemies "have no moral standing to condemn illegal or immoral acts of violence committed by the oppressed"] is just a poor choice of words.

REBUTTAL: Barghouti knows exactly what he's saying.

PBA: "Powerful armed reaction" is definitely a problematic quote from the BDS website.

REBUTTAL: Agreed. No rebuttal.

PBA: Hamas doesn't speak for all Gazans, and Hamas doesn't speak for BDS.

REBUTTAL: Irrelevant. BDS is explicitly pro-violence. PBAs support BDS. Therefore PBAs support violence. You cannot pick and choose what you support when you get into bed with someone politically.

QUESTION FROM AUTHOR: What does "armed reaction" mean in this context?

PBA: Guns.

REBUTTAL: People use guns for violence. And that is something the Coop stands against.

He and I parted amicably. But sadly, my challenger handed back the entire packet without finishing reading it. PBAs should read carefully what they support. Remember, we're entitled to our opinions, but not our own facts. Perhaps PBAs should take time off to review their platform. When confronted with the naked fact that BDS sup-

ports violence, BDS collapses.

Dialogue is possible if both sides use facts that lead to higher learning and solutions, not emotionalism that holds everyone back.