



Vandalism at TBA



Dear Friends,

I am both outraged and saddened to let you know about a recent act of vandalism at TBA. Last week at 1:00am an individual entered our property from Leroy Ave, walked through the woods to the corner where our main sign is, and, using red paint, defaced the two “We stand with Israel, we stand for peace” signs. They also left a stylized Palestinian flag.

We know the details because our security cameras caught most of what happened. The Tarrytown Police responded immediately, and we have given them the footage, along with the defaced signs and flag. The police are taking this seriously, and have stopped by our building every day since to check in. They have also passed the information on to the Westchester DA, who will determine if this should be classified as either a hate crime or hate incident. It's clear that this was a planned incident, not the whim of someone walking by. It occurred not at the Israeli embassy, but at a synagogue, a Jewish house of worship.

At Yom Kippur 5783 I spoke about what I believe is the false distinction some folks want to draw between antisemitism and anti-Zionism. Despite the protestations of some, I continue to believe that most of the loudest voices we hear condemning Israel, denying its right to exist and calling for the “occupying colonizers” to leave the Middle East are, at their core, strongly antisemitic. That Jews alone of all ethnicities in the world should be denied their own nation is not simply anti-Israel; it is, by definition, antisemitic. There are those who say that "From the River to the Sea" can actually include Jews living in Palestine. However, the fact that Hamas denies the validity of any religion but its own and seeks the establishment of a caliphate makes it clear that neither Jews nor Christians would find a home there. "From the River to

the Sea" is a call for a Jew-free zone.

I have no doubt that many of the protestors we see and hear, many of them college students, are largely misinformed about the realities of Hamas and the world view it seeks to impose. What I neither understand nor accept is that these same protestors complain on the one hand that their free speech is being suppressed, on campus and elsewhere, and then immediately turn around and attempt to quash the free speech of Jews. This is what defacing signs on private property amounts to.

We will not be silenced! The signs on the corner of Leroy Ave and Broadway have been replaced and will continue to be replaced if necessary. We have not only the **right**, but the **obligation** as Jews and as Americans to speak up and speak out. We must speak up in dialogue with those who are willing to have conversations with us; debate and disagreement are a sign of a healthy democracy. We must speak out in protest against those who would shout us down, deface our property, threaten our college students, and deny our place among the family of nations.

I said at the top that I am both outraged and saddened. I am of course outraged simply by the act of vandalism. But I am also angry that so many of our erstwhile friends, who are generally silent about international events, find it so important to publicly condemn the Jewish State. And I am heartbroken that many of our own people, including our young people, seem to feel it noble and important to do so as well. On Friday, April 5, at 10:00am I will be speaking at the Shames JCC as part of their "Challenging Times" series. My topic will be "Israel on Campus: Zionism Then and Now." I hope you will be able to join me.

Synagogues are important in moments of rejoicing and moments of sorrow, when times are good and when they are difficult, in sunshine and in rain. I thank you for being part of the TBA family. It's currently a bit damp for the Jewish people; together, we will weather the storm.

L'shalom,



Temple Beth Abraham
25 Leroy Avenue
Tarrytown, NY 10591



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