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Last week, Israel's Ha'aretz newspaper ran a front page article claiming that "most Israeli Jews support an apartheid regime in the country, if the territories are annexed."

The publication of the piece, promoting the findings of a recent poll, created a firestorm, setting abuzz every antisemitic and jihadist website in the Middle East and even garnering the attention of media overseas, including the Globe and Mail.

Apparently, it seems not to matter that the poll is littered with inconsistencies and pejorative nuances, or that the survey's financiers and promoters are, to understate the matter, of dubious integrity; so long as any propaganda, masquerading under the guise of a "study," provides antisemitic fodder, anti-Israel travellers worldwide will revel in the opportunity to muddy Israel's name.

That those involved in the poll acted in bad faith, and that the article in question is profoundly flawed, is easily deduced through a cursory analysis of Ha'aretz's piece. The first red flag is that, after Israelis are accused of supporting the implementation of 'apartheid' in the headline, the following qualification is buried 16 paragraphs later: "The survey conductors say perhaps the term 'apartheid' was not clear enough to some interviewees."

Accordingly, the newspaper, though obtuse on the applicability of the term 'apartheid,' contends that most Israelis support apartheid, whereas a small majority believes that apartheid is already practised to a degree in the country;

this, despite the acknowledgement of ‘some’ not knowing what apartheid means and thus what it actually entails. If someone is unfamiliar with the institutionalized racism against blacks that existed in South Africa, then obviously they cannot be expected to discern that no such system, process or attitudes shape or inform Israeli society or its mindset.

Significantly, there remains the small matter of the inclusion of the word ‘IF’ in the context of annexing ‘territories,’ itself an ambiguous term which Ha’aretz insinuates to be a reference to the West Bank, also known as the ‘Palestinian territories.’ In fact, respondents were never asked whether they supported the annexation of any predominantly Palestinian areas in the West Bank, containing some 2.5 million Arabs over whom the so-called ‘apartheid regime’ would, presumably, be implemented. (That poll after poll shows a strong majority of Israelis opposing any such move no doubt accounted for the question’s omission.)

Instead, participants were only asked whether they would support the incorporation into Israel of an unspecified number of “settlements,” which cover a fraction of the overall geographical area of the West Bank, are comprised almost entirely of Jews, and which invariably would remain under Israeli sovereignty in any future peace deal forged with the Palestinians. Even this prospect was rejected by a plurality (48%) of those surveyed.

Accordingly, one is hard-pressed to fathom how Ha’aretz arrived at the conclusion that “most Jews would support an apartheid regime...if the territories were annexed,” given that a plurality of respondents rejected annexation of any ‘territories,’ including ‘settlements’ devoid of Palestinians.

To further expose the journalistic disingenuousness of Ha’aretz, it is noteworthy to compare the paper’s use of the vague word ‘territories’ in connection with UN resolution 242, adopted in the aftermath of the 1967 Six Day War. The resolution set as a condition for “the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East...[the] withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict.” Specifically omitted from that text, however, was any reference to

“all” or “the” territories captured by Israel in order, thereby, to recognize under International Law Israel’s right to retain - even in the event a future peace deal calling for limited territorial withdrawals - land vital to preserving its security. In other words, the notoriously anti-Israel UN conscientiously used the undefined term ‘territories’ with a view to conferring legitimate legal rights upon Israelis, whereas Ha’aretz did so in order to slander them.

That media worldwide felt no compunction about uncritically regurgitating Ha’aretz’s libel reaffirms the prevailing anti-Israel bias; that the New Israel Fund (NIF), which in the past proudly has lent its name to initiatives defaming the Jewish state, disassociated itself from the survey reveals the extent of that bias.

On the very same day that Ha’aretz wrote that the poll “was commissioned by the New Israel Fund’s Yisraela Goldblum Fund,” the NIF issued a statement saying the organization “does not stand behind the survey in Ha’aretz and is not related with it in any way.”

That the far-left NIF assumed and publicly asserted such stance confirms a level of partiality in the poll surpassing even the infamous Goldstone Report, formulated in conjunction with and featuring testimony from Israeli NGOs backed by the NIF, which falsely accused Israel of perpetrating “war crimes” during its 2008-2009 incursion into Gaza. (Richard Goldstone, who chaired the UN’s “fact-finding mission” into the Gaza War and after whom the Report was named, repudiated the allegation in a highly publicized Washington Post op-ed in April 2011). The full significance of the organization’s denial is best understood in the context of Wikileaks’ release in 2010 of a confidential US government cable quoting Hedva Radanovitz, the NIF’s Associate Director in Israel, as expressing hope that “in 100 years Israel would be majority Arab and that the disappearance of a Jewish state would not be the tragedy that Israelis fear since it would become more democratic.”

The NIF’s decision likely had something to do with the fact that the Yisraela Goldblum Fund was created by Amiram Goldblum, the more radical leftist founder

of Peace Now, who still runs the foundation named after his late wife Yisraela, herself a former senior official at the NIF.

Goldblum's thoughts on Israel were restated as recently as this past May 5 at a Peace Now event: "Israel's future regarding elections and demography has already been predetermined...in the bedroom of the settlers and the ultra-Orthodox." Goldblum then called on the global left to counter the growing strength of Israel's right by finding a way to impose its agenda on the country through foreign political entities.

Perhaps even the NIF realizes that this kind of racist, seditious rhetoric precludes someone from commissioning an objective poll. In fact, it takes a special type of Israel-hater to disseminate such invective in ignorance of the forgoing.

Enter Gideon Levy. Not only did Ha'aretz's resident anti-Zionist pen the article presenting the findings of the survey, Levy also wrote an accompanying opinion piece, *Apartheid without shame or guilt*. In his op-ed, he waxed hysterically: "We're racists, the Israelis are saying, we practise apartheid and we even want to live in an apartheid state. Yes, this is Israel."

In a moment of charitable willful blindness in his favour, one could attribute to Levy a desire to provide analytical commentary on what he deemed to be a reliable survey - if not for the fact that in May Levy wrote a column entitled, *Israel is the most naive and racist country in the West*. Now ask yourself whether Levy, like Goldblum, is qualified to critique objectively a study alleging Israeli racism, given that he already held the position that "Israel is the most naive and racist country in the West."

As but one example of Levy's bias extending even beyond the parameters of the poll, consider that in his op-ed he wrote: "The majority [of Israelis] doesn't want

Arabs to vote for the Knesset, Arab neighbours at home or Arab students at school. Let our camp be pure - as clean of Arabs as possible and perhaps even more so." Yet, in fact, no plurality of respondents answered in the affirmative any of the questions connected to Levy's assertions - not for banning Arabs from voting for parliament or for the implementation of segregation in apartment buildings and schools.

That the editors of Ha'aretz failed to definitively declare Levy's patent conflict of interest perfectly encapsulates why the newspaper currently is on life-support. In this respect, this episode also reflects a shameless attempt by a gasping newspaper to grasp any straw-man to generate publicity and a few more subscriptions.

On the macro level, the survey is yet another example exposing the depths to which the Israeli left has sunk. First its failed policies were discredited; then it was abandoned by its base; and now it is self-destructing.

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