

## **DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL FRONTRUNNER BERNIE SANDERS'S PROBLEMATIC ATTITUDE TOWARDS ISRAEL**

**In 2016 Bernie Sanders Pushed the Democrats on Israel. Is He Now Mainstream?: Ben Sales, Times of Israel, Feb. 20, 2019 — This may be hard to remember, but three years ago it was a big deal when Bernie Sanders criticized Israel in public. Sanders Fills Ranks With Anti-Israel Advocates Tied to Antisemitism Scandal: Adam Kredo, The Washington Free Beacon, Mar. 6, 2019 — Two of Sen. Bernie Sanders's (I., Vt.) top advisers have deep ties to the anti-Israel community and were chastised several years ago for their involvement in an antisemitism scandal that gripped a prominent Washington, D.C., think-tank.**

**Bernie Sanders and the Jews: A Sad Paradox: David Rubin, Arutz Sheva, Feb. 22, 2019 — Senator Bernie Sanders is running again. Most observers consider him to immediately be one of the early front runners, but in a political party seemingly obsessed with identity politics, and ostensibly respectful of ethnic/religious roots, it's certainly reasonable to explore the roots and connections of this Jewish-American who is now a leading candidate for President of the United States. Trump's Love Affair with Israel and the Jewish People: Shmueli Boteach, Algemeiner, Apr. 8, 2019 — As a Jew who travels extensively, I have found that being open about my Jewishness can be lonely.**

### **On Topic Links**

**A Conversation with Faiz Shakir About Anti-Semitism and BDS: The ACLU Political Director Engages With a Critic: Liel Leibovitz, Tablet, August 10, 2017 — Earlier this week, I wrote a story about the ACLU's role in opposing the anti-BDS legislation currently discussed in the Senate and about Faiz Shakir, the organization's national political director.**

**A Confederacy of Dusses: Adam Kredo, The Washington Free Beacon, Aug. 15, 2013 — The recent publication in a blog post of Nazi-era propaganda posters by Center for American Progress (CAP) policy analyst Matt Duss has cast a spotlight on the writer's controversial views of Israel.**

**Bernie Sanders Press Aide Apologizes After Asking About American Jews' 'Allegiance' to Israel:**

**Gregory Krieg, CNN, March 13, 2019 — A new press aide on Sen. Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign has apologized for comments online questioning whether American Jews held a "dual allegiance" with Israel.**

**Admiring Judaism Through the Eyes of a Christian: Paul Socken, Algemeiner, Mar.**

29, 2019 — Devout, practicing Christian friends have told me over the years that they respect much about the Jewish faith. I decided recently to ask them what, in particular, they admired.

## **IN 2016 BERNIE SANDERS PUSHED THE DEMOCRATS ON ISRAEL: IS HE NOW MAINSTREAM?**

**Ben Sales**

**Times of Israel, Feb. 20, 2019**

This may be hard to remember, but three years ago it was a big deal when Bernie Sanders criticized Israel in public. During a debate in New York City with Hillary Clinton, Sanders generated headlines when he said the United States should care about Palestinian rights. Sometimes, he added, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was wrong. “In the long run, if we are ever going to bring peace to that region, we are going to have to treat the Palestinian people with respect and dignity,” the long-time Vermont senator said at the April 14 Democratic presidential primary debate. “There comes a time when we pursue justice and peace that we will have to say Netanyahu is not right all the time.”

During the campaign, Sanders also described himself as “100 percent pro-Israel.” He spoke about living on an Israeli kibbutz when he was younger and defended Israel’s right to self-defense. But he also broke norms on Israel. Sanders was the only major candidate not to speak at the annual convention of AIPAC, the pro-Israel lobby (he offered to appear on video, but AIPAC said its doesn’t do that). For a hot second, his director of Jewish outreach was a co-founder of IfNotNow, a millennial Jewish group that is deeply critical of Israeli actions (and takes no “unified stance” on Zionism, the boycott Israel movement or the “question of statehood”). He said Israel’s actions were “disproportionate” during the 2014 Gaza war and overstated the number of Palestinians who were killed.

Now, as Sanders announces another presidential run, he looks less like an outlier on Israel. Observers say he has helped make it kosher to criticize Israel within the party. And the landscape has changed as well in ways that make Sanders look more like a centrist. Two freshman congresswomen have endorsed the movement to boycott Israel, which Sanders opposes. Netanyahu has a steadfast bromance with President Donald Trump, whom Democrats detest. Polls show weakening Democratic sympathies with Israel versus the Palestinians.

“Before the last presidential campaign, it was an article of faith that no candidate of any serious stature would go near Israel-Palestine,” said Lara Friedman,

director of the Foundation for Middle East Peace. Sanders showed, she said, that “you can engage politically on this issue in a way that differs from the orthodoxy that has defined where politicians can go. Not only does it not hurt you, it makes you stronger as a candidate.”

Since 2016, Sanders has continued to be outspoken on Israel. As Israel clashed with protesters on the Gaza border last year, his team released videos on the coastal strip’s humanitarian crisis, party blaming Israel for the situation. He spoke out recently against a bill that protected states’ rights to outlaw boycotts of Israel. Sanders still says you can be pro-Israel while opposing Israel’s current right-wing government and supporting Palestinian rights. “As someone who believes absolutely and unequivocally in Israel’s right to exist and to exist in peace and security, as someone who as a young man lived in Israel for a number of months and is very proud of his Jewish heritage ... we must say loudly and clearly that to oppose the reactionary policies of Prime Minister Netanyahu does not make us anti-Israel,” he said last year to a standing ovation at the annual conference of J Street, the liberal Israel policy group.

Daniel Shapiro, President Barack Obama’s ambassador to Israel, said that Sanders’ policies on Israel were still pretty mainstream. He said that like all of the major Democratic presidential candidates, Sanders supports Israel’s right to exist and favors a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict... [To read the full article, click the following LINK - Ed.]

## **SANDERS FILLS RANKS WITH ANTI-ISRAEL ADVOCATES TIED TO ANTISEMITISM SCANDAL**

**Adam Kredo**

**The Washington Free Beacon, Mar. 6, 2019**

Two of Sen. Bernie Sanders’s (I., Vt.) top advisers have deep ties to the anti-Israel community and were chastised several years ago for their involvement in an antisemitism scandal that gripped a prominent Washington, D.C., think-tank.

Sanders, a self-proclaimed Democratic-socialist who has once again thrown his hat into the ring for a 2020 presidential bid, has begun to rely in recent months on two staffers: Foreign policy adviser Matt Duss and campaign manager Faiz Shakir, both of whom faced charges of promoting antisemitic conspiracy theories during their time at the Center for American Progress, or CAP, a liberal think-tank.

**Sanders's dependence on Duss and Shakir has been making waves in the pro-Israel and Jewish community in recent months, given the duo's prominent role in CAP's 2012 antisemitism row, which saw several staffers at the organization's Think Progress blog rebuked for invoking age-old canards about Jewish control of money and politics. Duss has faced additional scrutiny in the subsequent years for publishing Nazi-era propaganda posters and steadfastly standing against the U.S.-Israel alliance**

**As the matter of anti-Jewish bias in prominent D.C. political circles makes its way back into the news following a series of antisemitic comments by freshman Rep. Ilhan Omar (D., Minn.), many in the pro-Israel community are beginning to raise questions about Sanders' choice to fill his ranks with individuals closely tied to some of the most prominent anti-Israel causes.**

**In 2012, Duss was CAP's Middle East director, while Shakir served as editor-in-chief of the group's Think Progress blog, which has since become regarded as a hotbed for anti-Israel activism. During their tenure at CAP, Duss and Shakir emerged at the forefront of a scandal involving several Think Progress bloggers who accused pro-Israel Jews and members of Congress of being "Israel firsters," a term implying that those who support the Jewish state have dual loyalties.**

**The scandal rocked CAP for several months and drew condemnation across the board, including from the Obama administration, which distanced itself from Duss, Shakir, and the rest of Think Progress's former staff. Shakir—who initially remained silent as controversy swirled around Think Progress's use of antisemitic language—later said in a leaked internal email that his employees used "terrible, antisemitic language" when invoking the "Israel firster" term. Duss also stood on the sidelines at the time, declining to condemn the antisemitic language. Numerous articles penned by Duss and other CAP Action Fund bloggers were said "to be infected with Jew-hatred and discriminatory policy positions toward Israel," according to the Simon Wiesenthal Center, which combats antisemitism.**

**Duss, who was recently hailed as the "progressive" foreign policy mind behind Sanders, has for the better part of the last decade been a driving force behind the far left's anti-Israel activism. Oftentimes, this criticism waded into antisemitic waters.**

**In 2013, for instance, after the "Israel firster" scandal ended with the firing and departure of several Think Progress bloggers, Duss again was charged with**

**antisemitism after he published Nazi-era propaganda posters online as part of a campaign to discredit a conservative Israeli advocacy organization. “Given CAP’s disturbing familiarity with, and history of, deploying what leading global antisemitism experts and watchdog organizations identified as actual anti-Semitic language, it is both ironic and troubling to see CAP’s Matt Duss dubiously objecting to imagery that is not being described as such by such experts in his transparent attempt to smear those with whom he disagrees,” one senior Jewish community official told the Washington Free Beacon at the time. A Free Beacon report conducted at that time linked several other members of Duss’s family to vitriolic activism against the Jewish state.**

**Meanwhile, Shakir also returned to the anti-Israel stage after departing from CAP. As national political director for the American Civil Liberties Union, or ACLU, Shakir led the charge to kill a major piece of pro-Israel legislation aimed at thwarting boycotts of Israel. Shakir and a colleague penned a Washington Post editorial in 2017 in which they argued that congressional efforts to impede the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement, or BDS, a global campaign to wage economic warfare on Israel, impeded free speech rights. This argument has been thoroughly debunked by prominent members of Congress and the pro-Israel community as a whole.**

**Multiple sources from across the pro-Israel and Jewish worlds who spoke to the Free Beacon both on the record and only on background emphasized that Sanders’ promotion of both Duss and Shakir is not going unnoticed.... [To read the full article, click the following LINK - Ed.]**

### **BERNIE SANDERS AND THE JEWS: A SAD PARADOX**

**David Rubin**

**Arutz Sheva, Feb. 22, 2019**

**Senator Bernie Sanders is running again. Most observers consider him to immediately be one of the early front runners, but in a political party seemingly obsessed with identity politics, and ostensibly respectful of ethnic/religious roots, it’s certainly reasonable to explore the roots and connections of this Jewish-American who is now a leading candidate for President of the United States.**

**Bernie Sanders, now of Vermont, was born and raised in what has in many ways been the Jewish heart and soul of America - Brooklyn -and has an accent and intonation to match. Sanders was reticent during his previous election campaign**

regarding matters of his Jewish upbringing. He seemed especially reluctant to discuss his time in Israel, where he traveled with his first wife, Deborah Shiling, who also was Jewish (His second and current wife is not Jewish, nor are his children). Young Bernie had the distinction of volunteering for a few months in the mid-1960s in an Israeli kibbutz of the leftist- Zionist Hashomer Hatzair movement.

The 2016 Sanders campaign usually turned away queries about his Israel stay, as well as his Jewish background, preferring to talk about other ethnic groups, like African-Americans and Muslim-Americans.

Despite the numerous Jewish representatives in Congress, located almost entirely on the Democratic side of the aisle, the Jewish narrative is strangely missing.

In a political party that often seems to thrive on racial, ethnic, and/or religious pride when it comes to other groups, the amazing Jewish narrative seems to be missing. The historical story of the Jews includes a miraculous emergence from slavery in ancient Egypt, the receiving of the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai, the thousand-year kingdom of Israel, two-thousand years of national wilderness, combined with incredibly disproportionate success in the world despite great discrimination, persecution, and even mass slaughter. The reestablishment of Israel in 1948, coupled with the simultaneous achievements of Jewish-Americans are a splendid narrative of positive identity politics that the Democrats should be proud to speak about. Despite the numerous Jewish representatives in Congress, located almost entirely on the Democratic side of the aisle, the Jewish narrative is strangely missing.

When it comes to the absent Jewish narrative, Bernie Sanders may be Jewish, but he is no exception to the Democratic rule. In fact, rather than touting the free-market accomplishments of American Jews, attained not through “days of rage”, but entirely through education and hard work, Sanders has promoted vast and expensive social welfare programs that encourage the opposite.

On the foreign policy front, instead of working to strengthen the United States-Israel relationship, a bonding relationship of values that movingly brought Democratic President Harry Truman to tears, Sen. Sanders has criticized Israel for strongly responding to Hamas terrorist rockets fired at Israeli cities, supported the Iran nuclear deal which most Israelis on both the Right and the Left strongly opposed as an existential threat to the Jewish state’s survival, and opposed the moving of the American Embassy to Jerusalem, Israel’s capital for over 3,000 years. At times, he has defended Israel’s need to defend itself, but because of the

increasingly strident anti-Israel stands of most of his far-left supporters, he has been more and more reluctant to side with the Jewish state.

Most troubling has been the candidate's behavior in responding to the blatantly anti-Semitic statements of Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN), who was symbolically condemned by the Democratic House leadership, which nonetheless, allowed her to remain in her influential membership on the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

As reported in the Daily Beast, Senator Sanders reached out to Rep. Omar by calling her office to offer his support in the face of sharp criticism from both Democrats and Republicans that she trafficked in anti-Semitic tropes on Twitter. According to Jewish Insider, Sanders was asked about Omar's tweets on a conference call hosted by James Zogby, founder of the Arab American Institute and a former member of the Democratic National Committee's executive committee... [To read the full article, click the following LINK - Ed.]

**TRUMP'S LOVE AFFAIR WITH ISRAEL  
AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE**  
Shmuel Boteach  
Algemeiner, Apr. 8, 2019

As a Jew who travels extensively, I have found that being open about my Jewishness can be lonely. Refusing to make compromises on things like wearing a yarmulke in public in countries like France, the UK, Germany, and New Zealand, more and more stares come my way in a world where antisemitism is growing, and Israel is vilified. Even the American Jewish community is feeling more and more isolated as antisemites now openly walk the halls of Congress and parties that have previously been stalwart foes of antisemitism, like the Democrats, cannot muster the moral courage to condemn Jew-hatred specifically and unequivocally.

It was for that reason that I sat in awe this weekend and watched as the president of the United States — and just two hours later the vice president of the United States — spoke at the Republican Jewish Coalition and vowed their unalloyed support of the Jewish people, Israel, and their determination to fight enemies of the Jewish people to the bone.

Hearing the most powerful man on earth acknowledge the rise of Jew-hatred all over the globe and his declaration of war against it helped to greatly assuage Jewish feelings of isolation and abandonment. Trump told us we're not in this fight

**alone. There will be no modern Masada. There is no Fortress Israel. The most powerful nation on earth is by Israel's side.**

**Much has been made of Trump's failure to fully condemn neo-Nazis in Charlottesville. Far less has been mentioned of how the President has made up for it in spades, becoming easily the most pro-Israel president in history and someone who brought the America-Israel relationship to unimaginable heights.**

**Trump fulfilled his campaign promises to pull the United States out of the Iran nuclear deal, to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, and to move our embassy there. Now he has also recognized Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights. Israelis and many Orthodox Jews recognize his contributions to the safety and security of Israel, and yet most American Jews remain hostile toward him. I have seen Jews liken him to Hitler and refer to him as an uncommon racist and an abomination to moral values.**

**These are often the same people who supported President Obama's catastrophic Iranian nuclear deal, by which \$150 billion was given to Ayatollah Khamenei — a real Hitler aspirant — and are so desperate for peace agreements they are prepared to sacrifice Jerusalem to the Palestinians and the Golan Heights to the Syrians.**

**There is little I can say to those who still fail to recognize how disastrous the nuclear deal was given our knowledge of Iran's continued steps toward developing a nuclear bomb, its ongoing sponsorship of terror, its development of ballistic missiles, and its destabilizing actions in the Middle East that threaten the United States and Israel. Obama assured us making a deal with Iran and paying them tens of billions of dollars would suddenly cause the mullahs to reverse their hatred of the West and genocidal intentions toward Israel. Proponents of the agreement still won't admit that Obama's calculations on this issue wouldn't have passed a first-grade math test.**

**Many of these Jews are also mired in the fantasies created by the Oslo agreements that a two-state solution is possible and there is a Palestinian peace partner. Even Yitzhak Rabin was not prepared to give the Palestinians a state and that was at a time when there was still some hope that the Palestinians would agree to a settlement that would recognize the existence of a Jewish state beside a Palestinian one. Now most Israelis recognize this is impossible in the near future, if ever. The never-ending barrage of rockets from Gaza following Israel's**

**evacuation has shown the folly of the land-for-peace formula as well as of those Jewish leaders who humiliated themselves and betrayed Israel by cozying up to Hamas' foremost funder, the Emir of Qatar.**

**But while the world turns virulently against Israel and a tsunami of antisemitism is unleashed around the globe, America has a president who will not feed Palestinian fantasies of dividing Jerusalem. America has a president who has made clear the United States will not subsidize Palestinian terrorism and obstructionism. America has a president who recognizes the route to peace is not one-sided pressure on Israel and that the Palestinians must agree to recognize and live in peace beside the Jewish state. And America has a president who understands that radical Islam is a threat to Western civilization and is unafraid to say so, unlike Obama's comical "violent extremism," which was an affront to both its victims and common sense. The critics of Trump on grounds of character forget that public achievement always trumps private action... [To read the full article, click the following LINK - Ed.]**

**CIJR wishes all our friends and supporters: Shabbat Shalom!**