

This is Guns and Butter.

In fact, what he said is, "We're going to take over student government. That's how AIPAC operates, that's how it operated in Congress, that's now how it's going to operate on student campuses." We have the video on our website. It's really quite interesting to see. So now it is. The Israel lobby is extremely present on college campuses around the country.

I'm Bonnie Faulkner. Today on Guns and Butter, Alison Weir. Today's show: **The Global Campaign to Criminalize Criticism of Israel**. Alison Weir is a journalist, author and public speaker. She is the author of *Against Our Better Judgment – The Hidden History of How the U.S. Was Used to Create Israel*. She is founder and executive director of *If Americans Knew*, a non-profit dedicated to accurately informing Americans. She is president of *The Council for the National Interest*, and has authored a pamphlet, *The International Campaign to Criminalize Criticism of Israel*. As a result, advocacy for Palestinian rights is on the way to being curtailed and even criminalized as "hate." Today we discuss the re-definition of anti-Semitism to include criticism of Israel, and the insertion of this definition into the bodies of law of various countries.

BONNIE FAULKNER: Alison Weir, welcome.

ALISON WEIR: Thank you for having me.

BONNIE FAULKNER: You have written a very important and lengthy article that has been published as a glossy pamphlet, *The International Campaign to Criminalize Criticism of Israel*. The cover says, "For two decades Israel advocates have worked to embed a new Israel-focused definition of anti-Semitism in institutions around the world from national governments to campuses. This effort is snowballing rapidly, as a result advocacy for Palestinian rights is on the way to being curtailed and even criminalized as 'hate'." Your article walks us through this entire process. To begin, what is the traditional definition of anti-Semitism?

ALISON WEIR: The traditional definition is very simple. We all know what it means. You can look it up in *Webster's*. On Google it specifically says that anti-Semitism is "hostility to, or prejudice against Jews." That's it.

BONNIE FAULKNER: How did the long-used definition of anti-Semitism begin to change around the turn of the 21st century, that is, around the year 2000, and where did these new definitions originate?

ALISON WEIR: The new definitions, interestingly, originated with an Israeli official name Natan Sharansky. He was the Minister for Diaspora Affairs and chair of the Jewish Agency for Israel. He founded in 2003 what was called the *Global Forum Against Anti-Semitism*, and he said at that time, "The state of Israel has decided to take the gloves off and implement a coordinated counteroffensive against anti-Semitism." But then in 2004 he laid out what was meant by anti-Semitism. It was called – and this is

very famous – it was called the 3-D test of anti-Semitism. It was this formulation that now is being used in creating this new definition of anti-Semitism that is Israeli-centric.

BONNIE FAULKNER: I was about to ask you what the 2003 *Global Forum Against Anti-Semitism*, what its objective was?

ALISON WEIR: Its objective was for the state of Israel to implement a coordinated counteroffensive – coordinated is a very, very accurate word for what happened – against what it called anti-Semitism. But what it was calling anti-Semitism was criticism of Israel, as we see a year later with what happened.

BONNIE FAULKNER: What was Sharansky's 3-D test of anti-Semitism. I believe that he has a three-part definition?

ALISON WEIR: That's right, and it's these three D's that are often referred to, in fact. What they stand for are demonize, delegitimize and double standard. What was meant by those is that if you "demonize" Israel that's anti-Semitism. By demonize, that would be giving negative facts about Israel. For example, the fact of the number of children Israeli forces have killed, the torture that is practiced by the Israeli military and judicial system, the fact that Israel has imprisoned many, many Palestinian children. Really almost anything negative about Israel that's factual would be considered demonizing it, so therefore under the definition it would be anti-Semitism.

The next word, delegitimize. That would be if a Palestinian whose family had been ethnically cleansed by Israel said, "You didn't have the right to push out my family and to create a Jewish-only state." That would be called delegitimizing it. Groups putting on events commemorating what's called the Nakba, the catastrophe, in which the 1948 expulsion of the Palestinian population is commemorated and grieved for, perhaps. That would be delegitimizing. An article that was in the *Christian Science Monitor* about what Israel's so-called right to exist means for Palestinians. It's as though Native Americans said, "People had the right to oppress them," or as though Jews during World War II said, "Well, the Nazis have the right to push us out." Anything of that sort would be called delegitimization and under this definition would supposedly be anti-Semitism, even though neither of these had anything to do with saying Jewish or Jewish individuals, only talked about Israel.

The third component is double standard. If someone discusses Israeli human rights violations and violations of international law and didn't at the same time name everybody else, supposedly that's a double standard. And yet, of course, we do that all the time. Somebody's focusing on a specific issue and they talk about that issue. So again, it's a very questionable contention, but this is what's being used to consider statements and people supposedly anti-Semitic. Certain criticisms of Israel are now being labeled anti-Semitic, anti-Semitism, under this new formulation created by Sharansky in 2004.

BONNIE FAULKNER: So this is the three-part 3-D definition of the new anti-Semitism, and it includes the demonization of Israel, criticism of Israel being a double standard, and delegitimization. And then delegitimization also includes somebody's criticism of Israel's right to exist as currently constituted, as a Jewish state?

ALISON WEIR: That's correct. That's correct. We don't talk about any other state having a so-called "right to exist." That phrase is never used for any other state. In my lifetime, states have come and gone, have broken into different pieces, borders have changed. So states don't really have the "right to exist." Human beings have the "right to exist."

Maybe one point I should make is that, also, this is always repeated, "Israel's right to exist," But what Israel are they talking about? Israel has never set its borders, so what is Israel? It's never created a constitution, unlike modern nation-states that come into existence. One of the first things they do is write a constitution. Israel does not have one.

BONNIE FAULKNER: That's very interesting. That's very little known.

ALISON WEIR: That's right. It has a set of basic laws. Israel partisans would pop up now and they would say, "Oh, but it has basic laws." These are very different from a constitution. They are easily changed; they are frequently changed. Whereas with a constitution, such as the one we have, it's a major, very difficult, very complex process to amend the constitution. That's not the case with Israel's basic laws.

BONNIE FAULKNER: I see, because you can change a law pretty much just by a vote.

ALISON WEIR: That's right.

BONNIE FAULKNER: A vote of what, the Knesset or parliament?

ALISON WEIR: It would be the Knesset, which is the Israeli parliament, yes. And there have been a number of changes through the years.

BONNIE FAULKNER: Who are some of the well-known people considered guilty of demonizing Israel?

ALISON WEIR: There are so many. Jimmy Carter, who is really known for his humanitarian work and his work against racism, wrote a book called *Peace Not Apartheid* critical of Israel. For that he has been called anti-Semitic frequently. A number of other humanitarians. Human Rights Watch gets called that, Amnesty International. Pretty much anybody that supports human rights, universal human rights, and does not make an exception for Palestinians is called anti-Semitic for their statements.

BONNIE FAULKNER: What is the *European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia* under the Council of the European Union?

ALISON WEIR: It's one of these many, it turns out, entities that are set up in Europe. This one has a very interesting and very significant role in creating this new definition of anti-Semitism. Let's look at the back story, though.

This group, this *Monitoring Centre*, as it's called, *on Racism and Xenophobia* especially focuses on anti-Semitism. That appears to be the main reason that it was created, in fact. It was first created in 1997 by a Frenchman who was the president of the European Jewish Congress. His name was Jean Kahn. When he was elected president of the European Jewish Congress, in fact, he specifically said that that congress now would "coordinate" – again we see that word – coordinate their legislation, outline racism and anti-Semitism. So then in 1997 he was instrumental in creating the *European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia* and then quickly that organization took up the goal as it said of "improving" the definition of anti-Semitism, a definition that was really quite sufficient and had been around for a long time.

So by improving it, what that turned out to mean was adopting the Sharansky 3-D definition, the Israeli-centric definition of anti-Semitism. So anti-Semitism would no longer be what it actually is – hostility or prejudice or bias against Jewish people – it would be criticisms of Israel. So this group now, the *Monitoring Centre*, created what was called the "working definition" of anti-Semitism and half of it now had to do with Israel.

BONNIE FAULKNER: And this adoption by the *European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia*, adopting this new improved definition of anti-Semitism, this was in 1997?

ALISON WEIR: No, that's when that was created, but they actually adopted this new definition in 2005.

BONNIE FAULKNER: Has the "working definition" of anti-Semitism been made official in other countries and agencies?

ALISON WEIR: Yes, it has, in a number of them. Probably the most significant certainly for Americans is that through a process – again, we see these things being achieved step-by-step – but by a process it has been adopted by the State Department. Originally, it was on the State Department website, it linked to the EUMC, the Monitoring Centre's working definition of anti-Semitism.

Now, a few years ago the *Monitoring Centre* actually went out of business and a successor organization dropped that definition. The State Department website still has the definition; it just no longer links to the *Monitoring Centre*. And there is a back-story to how that was adopted, when and why, that I would be glad to go into.

BONNIE FAULKNER: According to your pamphlet, the United States Congress passed the Global Anti-Semitism Review Act that established a special State Department envoy

and office for monitoring the new anti-Semitism over the objections of the State Department itself, commonly referred to as “the State Department definition.” How did this come about?

ALISON WEIR: They didn’t adopt the definition at that time with the law, but in 2004 they passed that law to establish a special State Department envoy and office to monitor anti-Semitism. As you mentioned, this was over the objections of the State Department, that said this was an unnecessary, bureaucratic office that would, of course, cost money, that it would duplicate and really get in the way of what they were already doing in the State Department. But as usual we see when Israel partisans push something they usually succeed, not always, but they usually do. So this new law was passed in 2004 and was supported with bipartisan support, Hillary Clinton and Democrats as well as Republicans supported it.

In passing that law there were hearings about what this office should investigate, what anti-Semitism was, and one of those, one of the important ones to testify was Natan Sharansky. So at that time he described his 3-D definition of anti-Semitism and urged that that’s what needed to be covered in this new office.

Once the office was legislated as an office and as a special envoy, as they’re called, the first special envoy that was named was a man named Gregg Rickman. He immediately endorsed the working definition of anti-Semitism and said how valuable it was. He was the envoy for several years. When he stepped down he went to work for AIPAC, the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee.

The second envoy was Hannah Rosenthal, another Israel partisan, and she is the one who adopted this new Israel-centric definition in 2010. She was very proud of her achievement. She bragged that they had now increased the amount of so-called anti-Semitism they were finding by 300%, since clearly much of it wasn’t what we would call anti-Semitism but was related to Israel. She used the new definition that she had adopted to train our diplomats, foreign service officers, on anti-Semitism.

So really now what’s going on is people refer to that as “the State Department definition of anti-Semitism,” sounding authoritative, assuming that State Department scholars and officials had adopted it. You would expect there was some sort of real review done on this. In reality, it was adopted by one person in the State Department who was an Israel partisan in an office that had been pushed by Israel partisans, Hannah Rosenthal.

BONNIE FAULKNER: Was the U.S. Global Anti-Semitism Review Act for use overseas only?

ALISON WEIR: Well, theoretically it was, but in reality, we see that now that it has adopted that definition, the definition is being used domestically.

BONNIE FAULKNER: Natan Sharansky said in 2003 that college campuses were, “one of the most important battlefields for Israel.” You write that in 2010 an American-Israel

Public Affairs Committee, AIPAC, leader said, “We’re going to make certain that pro-Israel students take over student government.”

ALISON WEIR: That’s right. In fact, what he said is, “We’re going to take over student government. That’s how AIPAC operates, that’s how it operated in Congress, that’s now how it’s going to operate on student campuses.” We have the video on our website. It’s really quite interesting to see.

So now it is. The Israeli lobby is extremely present on college campuses and some of its members have managed to push through student legislation adopting what’s called “the State Department Definition of Anti-Semitism.” Among the universities that have adopted that already – and this impacts the university very widely if they adopt this new Israel-centric definition. Among the places that have adopted it are UC-Santa Barbara, UCLA, East Carolina University, Indiana University, Capital University that’s in Ohio, Kent State that’s also in Ohio, Orange County’s Chapman University, San Diego State University, and others have now adopted this, probably more by the day.

BONNIE FAULKNER: You write that, “Some analysts say that applying the State Department definition of anti-Semitism to educational institutions constitutes thought-policing.”

ALISON WEIR: Yes, a number of people have pointed that out quite eloquently. One of them was Anthony Fisher, who wrote that the legislation that they are trying to push through at the federal level – it has not yet passed, but it’s on the way. He said that the legislation would give “the federal government the authority to investigate ideas, thoughts and political positions.” He said that “specifically using” this new definition would wade into what he called “thought policing.”

The ACLU has warned against the legislation. Interestingly, even one of the authors of the new definition has said that it should not be used on campuses, and yet we have a federal bill that would apply the new definition to the Education Department of the federal government and, as we see, it’s being used by campuses around the country.

BONNIE FAULKNER: And you say that this bill is currently in Congress?

ALISON WEIR: It was in Congress in 2018. Now it will be reintroduced in the 2019 Congress.

BONNIE FAULKNER: What is the *Interparliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism*, the ICCA, which issued a London Declaration on Combating Antisemitism in 2009. This is apparently a very powerful organization.

ALISON WEIR: Again, it’s one of a number of organizations that are multinational. They have many members. Many European countries are members, and then Israel pushes through these definitions by this kind of institution. It’s then taken up in the different member-countries, such as the London Declaration, to then promote this new Israel-

centric definition that then was adopted by a number of member-countries one by one and then used on campuses. Sometimes police agencies use them in evaluating crimes. It's an incremental process that's going on throughout Europe, as we've seen, as well as in the United States, and we see a lot of the same players working in these different institutions.

BONNIE FAULKNER: You write that one of the ICCA's demands is that governments should use domestic hate crime, incitement to hatred, and other legislation to prosecute hate on the Internet where anti-Semitic content is posted, published, and written. And again, what is meant by anti-Semitic content?

ALISON WEIR: That's the problem. Once again, someone putting on an event about maybe the latest Israeli invasion of Gaza would be most likely considered anti-Semitic under this definition. Someone bringing a Palestinian speaker or a member of one of the Israeli human rights organizations documenting Israeli violence and oppression would suddenly be called anti-Semitic and that would therefore be hate speech and would be a problem for the individual.

So, again, it's astounding to see how many such institutions there are and how one by one they have pushed to take up this new definition that focuses on Israel.

One of the things that happened is in 2015 the European Commission created a special position to coordinate work on combating anti-Semitism and appointed an individual who would do that, and that individual then proceeded to promote the 3-D, the Israeli-centric definition of anti-Semitism. So that's what would be investigated as so-called anti-Semitism, would be criticisms of Israel, actions to do with Palestinian human rights.

BONNIE FAULKNER: You write that the Israel-centric definition of anti-Semitism has been formally adopted by the UK, Austria, the European Parliament and Romania, and that Austria has gone so far to as use the new definition to train judges and prosecutors. How severe is the attack on free speech and free thought in Europe?

ALISON WEIR: It's becoming very significant, as some of us are aware. A number of issues relating to Israel have become increasingly criminalized in Europe, for example, scholars that are studying the Nazi holocaust. We see the criminalization of those trying to find out the facts on that but find out facts that Israel doesn't like. So that same kind of evolution, I think, is occurring on what's being called anti-Semitism. People making statements about Israel, fully factual statements, documented statements – I think it's getting closer and closer to the time when they will be imprisoned for doing that. It's not happening yet, but I believe that's the trajectory. It certainly appears that that's where this is leading and could eventually arrive.

BONNIE FAULKNER: You mean the criminalization of historical research. Is that what you mean?

ALISON WEIR: No, at this point I'm talking about the criminalization of discussing ongoing actions in the Palestinian territories, in Gaza and the West Bank and within Israel itself, as well as the history of Israel, too. That would certainly be part of it. But just describing, discussing, working on the treatment of Palestinians, with this new definition being imbedded throughout institutions in Europe and the United States and then taken up by law enforcement agencies to evaluate crimes, we're getting closer and closer to the time that that could be considered – activism on behalf on Palestinian human rights could be considered a crime that would be punishable.

Right now in the U.S. we've seen the international boycott of Israel, BDS, boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement, a non-violent movement to try to pressure Israel to end its human rights violations of Palestinians. There are a number of laws in state legislatures and at the federal level that are trying to criminalize that type of boycott action.

At one point the federal legislation would have had it punishable by 20 years in prison, and I believe it was a million dollars. That particular part I think has maybe been watered down for now, but we're seeing potential criminalization and incarceration of people doing things that many people feel, when they know the full facts, are principled, really morally required activities.

BONNIE FAULKNER: When I was in the state of Texas recently a lawyer friend of mine told me that the state of Texas had just passed legislation not allowing anyone who was involved in the BDS movement to do business with the state of Texas.

ALISON WEIR: That's right. That's what's going on. I think 26 state legislatures, largely under the radar, have been passing laws that criminalize and prohibit certain types of boycotting. Boycotts are recognized as one of our constitutionally protected rights under the Fourth Amendment. Boycotts are used by various groups across the political spectrum. When they feel that something is wrong, then individuals and groups decide to boycott a company or a country or someone. It's one of the things that Americans do. It's part of our freedom, part of our political process, part of our tradition, and yet they're trying to legislate that away.

BONNIE FAULKNER: You know that was part of the movement against Apartheid South Africa, wasn't it?

ALISON WEIR: Exactly.

BONNIE FAULKNER: What is the *Israel Britain Alliance*, the IBA, that began asking candidates for Parliament to sign a pledge, and do you know what the pledge is?

ALISON WEIR: Well, it was a pledge that they would support the new definition. A number of groups objected to it, arguing that the definition "deliberately equates criticism of Israel with hatred of Jews," which, of course, is nonsense. Many people critical of Israel are Jewish, many Israelis – it's a minority but it's a very significant

minority – in Israel are very critical of the government. Some of them are even really what would be called anti-Zionist; they don't believe in the discriminatory nature of the Israeli system. And yet this new pledge would require people to sign and agree to a definition that equates criticism of Israel with hating Jews even though many people signing it would be Jewish.

A number of groups said that after its adoption, when this new definition was adopted, there was an increase in bannings and restrictions imposed on pro-Palestinian activities, especially on campuses. That was a direct result of taking up the new definition.

BONNIE FAULKNER: The OSCE, the *Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe*, which represents all of Europe, Eurasia, the U.S., and Canada was pushed to adopt the new definition of anti-Semitism but was blocked by one country, Russia. Is this still the case?

ALISON WEIR: I believe it is. In my article I wrote about a year ago, I think it was. Since that time, I have a whole list of updates under the article because it keeps expanding – more and more groups are adopting it, more and more countries are adopting it and I'm trying to keep track of those that happen, but I think that situation is still the case right now.

BONNIE FAULKNER: Who are the *Inter-Parliamentary Coalitions*, the ICCA's U.S. representatives?

ALISON WEIR: The *Inter-Parliamentary Coalition* has a six-member steering committee, and two of them are U.S. congress people. One of them is Florida Congressman Ted Deutch whose congressional website discusses how devoted he is to Israel. It goes into great detail about Deutch's lifelong connection to Israel and how he works closely to protect Israel in the Senate. This is a Florida politician who I would think should be devoted to his Florida needs, and yet in his website talks about Israel quite a bit. He talks about being a Zionist as a youth, how he spent his summers at Zionist summer camp, worked as a student activist for Israel in high school and college, served in leadership roles on several local and national Jewish organizations. I believe some of these positions have changed, but I believe he's still the ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Middle East and North Africa subcommittee.

In fact, just recently, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi told an Israeli audience, "Don't worry. All the significant chairpeople will be Israel partisans." She made that in a speech before the Israel-American Council convention, and that's the case. Deutch receives, of course, a lot of funding from the pro-Israel lobby. People can look on the website Open Secrets to learn this type of thing.

Then the other person that's on that steering committee is Republican Chris Smith of New Jersey. Smith is also a senior member on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, so we often find Israel partisans being placed and managing to get placed on committees

and often head up committees that will deal with Israel. They don't really worry about the agriculture committee so much or others, but international relations committees, appropriation committee, that's usually quite openly being given to Israel partisans, and that's the case with Chris Smith. He's brought in Natan Sharansky periodically to educate the Congress on various things.

BONNIE FAULKNER: You write that pro-Israel UK university students are repressing pro-Palestinian activism under the banner of "anti-racism" and even sometimes "anti-fascism". What is the inherent contradiction with this?

ALISON WEIR: It's truly ironic. Some of these actions make me think of Orwell and Newspeak where the meaning of words get changed and sometimes become the opposite of what they originally meant. So that's what we see with the way racism is often perverted by Israel partisans and they will say that, I think – there was, for example, pro-Israel students in the UK introduced the motion entitled "Anti-racism: Challenging racism on campus and in our communities." That's something most of us would be in favor of. We certainly don't want racism. But what they were talking about by racism was support for Palestinian human rights, support for Palestinians to have equal rights in Israel and not to be discriminated against the way it currently is in Israel, the way it always has been in Israel. So a movement against racism, against Israeli racism against Palestinians is being called racist. It's bizarre and Orwellian.

A number of years ago the UN passed a resolution in which they announced that Zionism – Zionism is the movement to create and maintain the Jewish state in Palestine – that Zionism was racist, as it indeed is, with the more expanded version of what we now mean by racism; not just race, we mean discrimination. So that was passed by the world body.

Eventually it was rescinded, but not because anybody didn't feel that was the case, it was just in 1991 the U.S. President George Bush Sr. was trying to push negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians in Madrid, and he tried to bribe Israel to come and negotiate honestly by getting the UN resolution rescinded – a quid pro quo to get Israel to take part in peace negotiations. A number of conferences in South Africa, who should know what racism is, have specifically denounced Zionism as being a racist movement.

BONNIE FAULKNER: And, of course, in addition to the banner of anti-racism, UK university students are also repressing pro-Palestinian activism under the banner of anti-fascism. This is also a contradiction, isn't it?

ALISON WEIR: It is. It is. The anti-fascist movement, antifa movement, I think it's pronounced, is a very mixed and to me a very questionable movement. Again, I think in many cases there are people with good motivations that take part in things and don't quite know what they're taking part in. But if you look into this movement, as I did a number of years ago when I first became aware of it, quite a while ago, I saw the symbols were violent, fists, holding guns, very violent, the opposite of the peace

movement kind of images I'm used to from the anti-war, anti-Vietnam War days, for example. So this movement, that is sometimes portrayed as a pro-justice or kind of progressive movement, uses fascistic images and fascistic tactics.

I went to a meeting a number of years ago in Oregon where it was very hierarchical, quite clearly. Even though it was portrayed as anarchistic, it was a very hierarchical meeting, and the feeling there was a little bit of a brown-shirt meeting, Mussolini or something akin to a fascistic meeting. So I think many of us, many people are very disturbed at the antifa tactics, the violence and the often destruction, and the opposition to fundamental principles that are quite often embodied by that group.

And in some cases the group will appear to be pro-Palestinian, but not always. In some cases they're quite actively pro-Israeli and, again, it's a strange international movement. I'm not quite sure where it suddenly came from and how it spread so quickly and if there's some funding behind it. I just don't know.

BONNIE FAULKNER: People are generally aware of the *American-Israel Public Affairs Committee*, or AIPAC, but the Israeli lobby actually includes many, many more groups. Isn't that correct? How many Israel lobby organizations are there, do you think?

ALISON WEIR: I've tried to look into that. I started researching that and listing them a number of years ago. I would look at a variety of groups and if they on their website said that they worked for Israel or advocate for Israel or have programs regarding Israel, I would include that organization. So the list that I've put together that's on our *If Americans Knew* website includes both the many groups – many, many groups – who work full-time on Israel or a majority of their time, something like 600 groups.

But it also includes other groups that don't work on it full-time, but it's one of the missions that they state on their website, such as the *Anti-Defamation League*. Many people think of the *Anti-Defamation League* as an anti-bigotry organization, a beneficial organization and a benign and important organization. That's how I used to view it. But many of us now have learned – and on its website this is very obvious, too – it's an organization that advocates for Israel. That's, I think, maybe the majority of what it does. It's certainly a very large focus of the ADL. It defames people, such as myself, who believe in human rights for Palestinians and give factual information about Israel. It even has a number of projects – you can find this on their website – telling students how to block events about Palestine, how to put out a strategy paper with an Israeli institution, about how to counter the pro-Palestine movement, how to counter BDS, different strategies to use, some of them a bit underhanded.

So there are hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of organizations in the United States that are operating to advocate for Israel. They're embedded in every state in the union, in many cities and towns, and on almost every campus.

This wasn't investigative reporting. It's all right out there in the open, but again, many of us just don't notice it and it's very rarely talked about. The minute somebody talks about

it they are shut down. There's a decent chance they'll lose their office if they are a government official. If they are another person there's a good chance they will lose their job, possibly their livelihood.

Nevertheless, many people are starting to speak out about it. I think it's something that we can and should do. I think that together all of us of different faiths, ethnicities, races, political backgrounds should always work for a just nation, fairness to all people, and against all types of oppression. So that movement is starting to grow, but it's being opposed by a lobby that has billions of dollars at its command. Five of the billionaires that openly advocate for Israel and that donate to political candidates and various institutions on behalf of Israel have a combined net worth of \$115 billion. These are just five individuals, pro-Israel individuals in the United States. It's pretty significant.

BONNIE FAULKNER: Who are these five individuals?

ALISON WEIR: The most public one that people are now finally aware of, I think, is Sheldon Adelson and his wife Miriam – actually, that would make it six. By the way, Adelson donates to Republicans. He gave \$123 million to Republican candidates in the last midterm elections. That wasn't even a presidential election. Then giving to Democrats specifically is Haim Saban. These two often work together. They're often on panels together, for example. So he's another one the billionaires, pro-Israel. They're very openly pro-Israel. The donations are made on behalf of Israel.

Then there is Paul Singer, another man named Norman Braman, Larry Ellison, the founder of Oracle, I believe is the fifth one of the main five, and there are others. Again, it's easy to determine this. Their net worth is publically available and is \$115 billion.

BONNIE FAULKNER: What role has the Anti-Defamation League, the ADL, played in supporting the new working definition of anti-Semitism?

ALISON WEIR: The ADL itself considers criticisms of Israel anti-Semitism. All these groups will have a disclaimer – oh, it's okay to criticize Israel; just some of it steps over the line. But much of it appears to step over the line, in their view. Pretty much anything that they don't like being said about Israel that's factual is considered stepping over the line.

The ADL also props up the support for Israel in this country by its constant reports claiming that there's a rise in anti-Semitism. It's really unclear to me that these are accurate claims. Several years ago, I'm sure many people remember, there were many threats against Jewish institutions, community centers, synagogues etc. around the country. There were bomb threats – against other people, too, but those weren't reported as widely. It turned out that these were not anti-Semitism; these were hoaxes by an Israeli making money for doing that. He was eventually caught. He had called in something like 2,000 bomb threats. Fortunately, all of them were hoaxes, and he was eventually found guilty of doing that. Nevertheless, the ADL continued to include those

2,000 hoaxes as “anti-Semitism.” A number of groups really objected to this, but the ADL continued it all the same.

At the same time there were a number of cases – and, again, this often gets headlines in U.S. media – as Jewish cemeteries being vandalized. Well, again, I found that in many of those cases it came out later that it wasn’t anti-Semitism. It was in some cases neglect; the headstones had fallen over through neglect. In one case it was somebody else blaming somebody for it because of a dispute with his girlfriend. So there’s a real question about that, too, but even once that comes out most people don’t know about it and it’s still continued as one of these supposedly many anti-Semitic incidents.

Some years ago I asked the ADL for their spreadsheet of all the anti-Semitic incidents around the country so I could really see what are these incidents that we’re hearing about, and they won’t provide it to people. So we don’t know how many of these are hoaxes, how many of them later turned out to have been like one student on a college campus who was Jewish, was, it turned out that she was the one scrawling swastikas on her door, I think to get sympathy or something. So in a number of cases these are not real incidents. So I wanted to see what exactly the incidents were that they were counting. Also, how many of the things they were counting as anti-Semitism really had to do with Palestinian rights and Israeli violence, but they don’t turn it over.

Plus, one individual told me on the phone from the ADL, he said, “Well, this isn’t really a scientific study. We’re just getting a feel for how people are.” And yet we see the media every day – just about every day there’s a report about “rising anti-Semitism in the United States.”

When you look at the reports themselves, even within what they give to the public, it often turns out that violent incidents have gone down. That’s something that’s really tangible and those have gone down. They often also blame the anti-Semitism – they say the largest cohort of anti-Semitism is among African Americans; this is what’s being claimed by the ADL. So I think the ADL – again, some people site the ADL as if it’s a public institution with accountability. Its not. It’s a private institution and it has no accountability.

BONNIE FAULKNER: With regard to the new definition of anti-Semitism, the three-part definition, demonization of Israel, criticism of Israel as a double standard, and the delegitimization of Israel, does this new working definition of anti-Semitism leave any room at all for any legitimate criticism of Israel? This 3-D definition seems to cover pretty much everything.

ALISON WEIR: It really does; it largely does. It’s fraudulent to claim that, ‘no, it’s okay to criticize Israel but only certain things are not okay.’ That’s just not how it works.

BONNIE FAULKNER: You write that “*Ha’aretz* published an article that described Israel’s month-long imprisonment of a 12-year-old Palestinian boy, one of over 200 Palestinian children taken by Israeli forces in a little over three months. The boy,

accused of throwing stones against Israeli soldiers, would have been released from incarceration earlier except that his impoverished family didn't have enough money to pay the fine. Amira Hass reported that the boy's father said that his son, 'Wasn't how he used to be before he was arrested. He used to joke,' the father said, 'and he stopped doing that. He talked a lot and now he is silent.' " This was heartbreaking to read about.

ALISON WEIR: It is. There are so many heartbreaking stories every day. There are just heartbreaking stories of what's being done to children, to their parents, throughout Gaza and the West Bank, sometimes within Israel itself. Some of this, fortunately I guess for those of us who feel we need to know the truth, because we give Israel – American taxpayers, through our politicians, give Israel over \$10 million per day. This is a massive amount of money. We've given more to Israel than any other country on Earth. The amount is about to go up to \$38 billion over the next ten years. This is the largest military aid program in U.S. history, and yet the media haven't even talked about it. It works out to about \$23,000 per Jewish Israeli family of four.

So we need to know how our money is being used and whether we want it to continue to go to Israel in the massive amounts that it's going. And a number of Israeli journalists write every week about another very sad story. The two that do that most frequently are Amira Hass, the journalist you just mentioned, and Gideon Levy who writes excellent, very powerful reports.

Amira Hass, in the report that you just mentioned, had based some of her numbers on UNICEF. UNICEF had issued a report four years ago that Israel was "extensively and systematically abusing detained Palestinian children and youth." She wrote that the stories of physical violence and naked body searches remain almost identical. This has been going on for decades. The first person I'm aware of to document Israeli torture was an American journalist named Grace Halsell, a wonderful, wonderful journalist and writer, and she reported it in the late 1970s, very grotesque cases of Israeli torture of Palestinians. Another person reported it in the U.S. in *Foreign Service Journal*. She documented the Israeli torture of American citizens in Israel. Jerri Bird wrote this article in *Foreign Service Journal*, and yet this information is repeatedly buried, and most people don't even know about it.

BONNIE FAULKNER: Can you bring us up to date with the new anti-Semitism? Is there anything going on in Congress presently that we should know about?

ALISON WEIR: Yes, a bill I believe was just passed that now upgraded the anti-Semitism office and envoy to an even higher rank. This was just passed with a bipartisan vote so that now the anti-Semitism envoy – this is a position, a specific rank in the State Department, a high rank, but now it's going to be even higher. It's going to be a special ambassador, and that means that all presidents have to name a special anti-Semitism ambassador within 90 days of taking office. This was done because the Trump administration, interestingly, had not named a special envoy yet. The State Department, I believe, once again found it unnecessary. The administration was cutting back, as we know, a number of programs, and they didn't name an envoy. So Israel

partisans and pro-Israel groups in the United States have been, since Trump took office, complaining that Trump was “anti-Semitic” because he had not filled this position.

Since that time Trump just recently did fill the position with a man named Elan Carr whose mother is Israeli. I don’t know if he also has Israeli citizenship; it’s very possible, almost probable, but maybe not. So now we do have someone in that position, but that wasn’t enough. They still passed this legislation, now making it a higher rank, giving it more power, probably more money, and making it a requirement for every president, even if presidents are cutting back, even if we have need to, we’re all cutting back maybe our personal spending, there’s financial hardship, it’s still now going to be law that that person be appointed.

BONNIE FAULKNER: Appointed with the rank of ambassador, right?

ALISON WEIR: That’s correct.

BONNIE FAULKNER: And is there anything else going on in Congress that you’re aware of?

ALISON WEIR: You have to monitor Congress all the time to know what’s going on, because the media almost never report these bills. As I mentioned, the first bill of 2019 in the Senate, S.1, the very first bill, was to give Israel \$38 billion minimum over the next ten years. Also, there are a number of other components to that bill, and yet that \$38 billion wasn’t even mentioned to the American public.

I was looking into this recently to try to see all of the bills. Here it is February, in the second month of the year, and already I believe it was 17 bills have been introduced into Congress on behalf of Israel – 17 bills are focused on Israel. That doesn’t include the additional bills that have portions of them dedicated to Israel.

For example, there was a lot of reporting and attention to the spending bill that was just passed. None of the reports mentioned that within that spending bill were a number of components focused on Israel – I believe another \$200 million to give to Israel, a requirement that we give money to Israel to help with “refugee resettlement,” even though Israel is quite a wealthy nation. So the bills and the resolutions and the letters in Congress just keep coming and coming and coming.

BONNIE FAULKNER: Alison Weir, thank you very much.

ALISON WEIR: Thank you.

I’ve been speaking with Alison Weir. Today’s show has been: **The Global Campaign to Criminalize Criticism of Israel**. Alison Weir is a journalist, author and public speaker. She is the author of *Against Our Better Judgment – The Hidden History of How the U.S. Was Used to Create Israel*. She founded and is executive director of *If Americans*

Knew, a non-profit dedicated to accurately informing Americans. She is president of *The Council for the National Interest*, and has authored a pamphlet, *The International Campaign to Criminalize Criticism of Israel*. Visit her website at ifamericansknew.org. Also visit the *If Americans Knew Blog* at israelpalestineneews.org.

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