

The anti-colony

Sanctimoniously and falsely labeling Israel

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A current obsession of “woke” progressives relates to “colonialization,” the new mortal sin. Colonialization is, in the eyes of progressives, the physical manifestation of the evil wrought by White oppressors on the unfortunate oppressed. This simplistic formulation was epitomized by the opening words of the 2024 Democratic Party platform.

Those words formulate an American mea culpa: “The Democratic National Committee wishes to acknowledge that we gather together to state our values on lands that have been stewarded through many centuries by the ancestors and descendants of Tribal Nations who have been here since time immemorial.”

This statement suggests that the entire American enterprise, the very enterprise that has made the system of democracy from which Americans have so benefited and which has made the Democratic Party possible, is a racist and colonialist venture.

The Democratic platform’s statement is just one more attempt to undermine our nation’s legitimacy. It follows a series of other declarations, such as those in the 1619 Project, intended to make the underpinnings of everything that has made this nation strong and prosperous seem immoral. These ideological statements are intended to make liberals feel good, but they are laced with hypocrisy.

The current focus of this obsession with colonialism is Israel. Tagged with the label of the colonial enterprise, Israel has become a scapegoat for those seeking to promote their “woke” agenda. Israel is deemed a Western colony on Arab land, and therefore, Israel is irremediably sinful and must be eradicated from the river to the sea.

Yet the notion that Israel is a colony is contrary to reality.

The most widely accepted definition of a “colony” is that it is a territory seized and controlled by people from another territory, usually involving the displacement of indigenous peoples.

The purpose may be economic or military, but a colony can also be an outpost created for far more benign purposes, such as the desire to freely practice a religion. The landing of the British pilgrims in Massachusetts to escape religious persecution but retain their British ways reflects this.

Of course, even this benign form of colonialization can involve the displacement of indigenous populations.

But Israel is not a colony by any definition. It is the exact opposite. Israel is a nation made up of the descendants of indigenous people who have regained control of land (ancient Judah and Israel) from those (ancient Greeks, then Romans, then Arabs) who took the land by force from their ancestors.

It is not a nation whose founders sought to create an outpost for a distant society. It is assuredly not constituted of a group of people who have sought to settle in a new place; the Jews have returned to their old homeland.

Israel is the antithesis of a colony; it is the anti-colony. While Israelis wish to have good relations with other nations, they do not seek to retain political ties to other countries. On the contrary, the Zionist movement, which prompted the recreation of the Jewish homeland, is predicated on inducing Jews to definitively leave the land of their exile to return to the land of their ancestors.

The colonists in the area “between the river and the sea” are not the Jews but the Arabs who came to the area under cover of Islam’s conquest of Asia and Africa.

More recently, thousands of Arabs who came to the area were actually induced to do so as pawns in an attempt to preempt the return of Jews to their homeland in the early 20th century. Many of the grandparents and great-grandparents of those who today style themselves as Palestinians were born in distant lands. For example, Yasser Arafat was born in Cairo long before there could be any claim that Jews had forced Arabs to leave the Palestine Mandate.

There is a supreme irony in the calls by people residing in the United States for Israel to be dismantled because it is a colonial nation. That irony was made particularly manifest to me last spring when I went to observe the pro-Palestinian (and, frankly, pro-Hamas) encampment at George Washington University.

When I talked with a person near the encampment, the person with whom I spoke went on a diatribe against the “colonists” in Israel. In response to my inquiry about when she came to the United States, however, she cited the year 1967.

Thus, a relatively recent immigrant to the United States was demonstrating against a nation whose founders are people whose ancestors have lived on the same land for over 3,000 years.

It might be more appropriate for pro-Palestinian demonstrators and especially for those at places such as Columbia University to call for the return of the land from the East River to the Hudson River to the Lenape Indians in lieu of clamoring for the “liberation” of the land from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea from its native Jewish inhabitants. Of course, doing so could result in depriving the demonstrators of comfortable and free lives in the United States.

It is much more convenient to sanctimoniously and falsely label Israel a colonial enterprise and to violently advocate the removal of Jews from their homeland while encamping on land that was “stewarded through many centuries by the ancestors and descendants of Tribal Nations.”

Gerard Leval is a partner in the Washington office of a national law firm. He is the author of “Lobbying for Equality: Jacques Godard and the Struggle for Jewish Civil Rights During the French Revolution,” published by HUC Press.