

Op-Ed submitted to The Boston Globe on Dec. 28, 2019.

We here, in Durham, North Carolina, read with keen interest your story on protests against anti-terrorism seminars in Israel (Protesters call on Boston Police to Withdraw from Israel Trip, December 23, 2019).

That's because, as Jews, we are suffering fallout from the same dirty campaign. Durham city officials last year passed the nation's first resolution to boycott the renowned program. The Israel-boycott resolution was cooked up by Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), an international anti-Israel organization that promotes the Boycott, Divest, Sanction Israel movement.

The campaign, which they've dubbed "Deadly Exchange," outrageously tries to draw a connection between the Israeli program and policing problems here, in the United States. Their accusations rely on anti-Semitic canards to sow hatred of Israel in general, and Jews in particular.

The resolution in Durham opened the floodgates to Jew-hate in the area. A few weeks after its passage, anti-Semitic posters echoing the JVP ideology appeared in downtown Durham. Numerous other incidents have followed. As recently as Dec. 13, doors in a residence hall at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, were defaced with anti-Semitic graffiti.

What's more, the resolution broke trust between communities of color and Jewish Durhamites, who suddenly found themselves in the horrific and surreal position of having to explain to their neighbors that Jews weren't out to get them via police.

Our ongoing pleas to retract the toxic boycott and mend our community have fallen on deaf ears at Durham City Hall. Consequently, our lawsuit over the resolution is now wending its way through the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals.

JVP is the same group that lionizes Rasmeh Odeh, an unrepentant terrorist sentenced to life in prison for a bomb attack in a Jerusalem grocery store that killed two university students. Released from Israel in a prisoner exchange, Odeh was the keynote speaker at the JVP National Membership Meeting in Chicago in 2017.

No surprise that a group that glorifies terrorists should fight so hard against effective anti-terrorism training.

Boston deserves the best training possible to help thwart attacks like the Al Qaeda-inspired bombs at the 2013 Boston Marathon. We urge you not to bow to pressure from these anti-Israel zealots.

It turns out that targeting Jews doesn't just hurt just one group. It hurts us all.

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