Twitter Thread by Michael Starr



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Perhaps Btselem was an important element to have in Israeli society. Even when I was a soldier I respected the need for a watch group. However, over time the increasingly moved away from legitimate criticism, in favor of demonization of soldiers, Israelis, and Israel.

Today they have shown that they are no longer a rights group, but a political group that is against the state of Israel and the right of Jewish self-determination itself.

Their newest policy paper is an announcement that they have adopted a antagonistic mindset.

They claim that the entire history of Israel and all the policies and actions that occurred from it have stemmed from a principle of Jewish Supremacy. They of course mean Zionism, and I expect in future statements they will conflate the two.

Jewish Supremacy is a term long used by white supremacist, Neo-Nazi, and Antizionist groups as a talking point. Btselem has fully adopted it. It contends that Jews are racist supremacists seeking to oppress others. This is simply false framing, and is not a position held by many.

The idea that all the Israel does is under a single principle is inane to anyone who has met an Israeli. Firstly, it implies that politicians, different parties, different people, have been acting in accordance to a general plan. Israeli governments barely plan for the year.

But in all seriousness, ascribing a general will to a people is dangerous and harmful. I'm careful not to do the same to the Palestinians, because it is simply false. Even in different organizations, even like Hamas, there are competing ideologies and factions.

Saying there is an evil principle that defines Israelis and all of Israeli actions ignores all the competing factors in society, all the legitimate external and internal challenges, and dumbs it down to a false history of malicious will.

This is the same type of general malicious will that antisemites of all variant ascribe to all the Jewish people, and Btselem successfully taps into that in their final fall into antagonism.

Btselem loves generalizations in its new policy. It sees all of the southern Levant as the same thing so it can get away with sweeping generalizations and otherwise geo-graphically limited statements. It treats Gaza, Israel proper, and the disputed territories as the same.

Btselem blurs away the difference in circumstances, and completely removes the concept of citizenship for a more ambiguous concept. It claims that Gaza is part of Israel, and that it controls all aspects of it, despite that being markedly untrue from any administration standard.

Gaza has long been under control of Hamas. A blockade is not tantamount to administration. It's not even enough to be considered military occupation, in situations where the Israel blinders aren't on.

Saying the disputed territories is the same as a de facto hostile state, and the same as an established state, is simply disingenuous. Yes, it is under militarily administration, of course it operates under different rules, most of them being based heavily on International law.

It is not based on Israeli law. Israeli citizens are still subject to many Israeli laws regardless of where they are in the world. They don't cease to be citizens, and in a place of Israeli administration more so. Israel cannot fully exert its system over these territories.

That would be annexation, and they would be upset if that was done. Moreover, these territories are supposed to be under delayed negotiation. That is the principle under which these territories operate, not some invented malicious will.

They should be advocating for resumption of those negotiations, facilitating talks, promoting policies that bring about final resolutions to the status. Instead they are demonizing. What will come of it? Not negotiating. Not peace talks. Only more polarization and attacks.