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The grotesque anti-Semitic turn of David Friedman, Trump's pick for Israel ambassador

President-elect Donald Trump has decided to appoint an anti-Israeli and racist lawyer as ambassador to Israel. That is, of course, his prerogative. With David Friedman's appointment last Thursday, the United States has finally come out of the closet. From now on, it officially supports the establishment of an Israeli apartheid state between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River.

Friedman is not the first Jewish ambassador to Israel – a matter that has always sparked questions of dual loyalty – but he is the first declared friend of the settlements in this position. His predecessor, Dan Shapiro, was also a friend of the settlements, like all the ambassadors before him – representatives of governments that could have stopped the settlement project but did not raise a finger to do so, and even financed it.

But now we have an ambassador who has also contributed to the dispossession from his own pocket.

This innovation means an end to ridiculous statements of denunciation by the U.S. Department of State, at which Israel thumbed its nose. No more black diplomatic cars following the construction of every new balcony in the occupied territories. From now on, we have an ambassador who will feel the pain of the Amona outpost's evacuation and take part in cornerstone-laying ceremonies in every new settlement.

This means the United States will no longer be able to claim that it is an honest broker. It never was one, but now the mask is off. In those terms, Friedman's appointment is right and good. The Palestinians, Europeans and the rest of the world should know: America is for the occupation. No more pretense.

Friedman is anti-Israeli, like anyone else who urges Israel to deepen the occupation. Friedman is a racist, like anyone else who pushes for an apartheid state. He is also antidemocratic and McCarthyist (saying supporters of J Street are "far worse than kapos") – and we have enough of those of our own. Friedman will spur them on, and in that, too, he is patently anti-Israeli.

But Friedman is not a registered member of far-right political party Tekuma, nor, as far as we know, of the anti-assimilationist Lehava movement. Friedman is about to become the representative of the U.S. government in Israel. He owes

us answers to a number of questions – likewise the Senate, which must approve his appointment.

Do the U.S. government and the Senate understand the significance of the new envoy's views? Do they understand that he is in favor of the establishment of an apartheid state supported and financed by the country that is the leader of the free world? Because anyone who, like Friedman, opposes the two-state solution supports the only alternative, which is one state and, in Friedman's case, an apartheid state. Is that the way the United States, even Trump's United States, wants to look?

The right-wing Israelis who support annexation – and there are many – can cloak their plan in thick fog that hides its true significance. But that is not the case for the representative of the most powerful country in the world.

The ambassador-designate owes us explanations. When you say annexation, what do you mean? When you contribute money to the settlement of Beit El, do you know that most of it is built on private lands stolen from the Palestinians? What will the Senate say about this partnership in crime on your part? What will be the fate of the original inhabitants of the occupied territories, who are the last remnant of their stolen land? If you say democracy and equality for all, in the spirit of the U.S. Constitution, we will then have a binational, egalitarian and just state – which, unfortunately, nearly all Israelis oppose.

This is not what you mean, though. Your annexation means perpetuating the status of the overlords and the dispossessed, a regime of separation that the enlightened world calls apartheid.

Your majesty, presumptive ambassador, you owe us answers. Those in Washington who sent you also owe us answers. Do you see the Palestinians as human beings with equal rights who are entitled to what the Jews in the Land of Israel are entitled to? Do you view your client state as one that acts justly? Do you view it as a state that follows international law? Do you think that by pushing it further in a nationalistic direction, you are doing it a favor? Does support for an apartheid state serve American interests? Does it reflect declared American values? In short, are you for us or for our adversaries?

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