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When a New York Times Correction Needs Correcting

BY **PESACH BENSON** - OCTOBER 16, 2017



Talk about a bungled correction. The [New York Times](#) recently picked up on a controversy at the American Jewish Historical Society, in which the Manhattan-based group cancelled the reading of a play and a separate panel discussion on the Balfour Declaration organized by Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP).

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Right-wing groups pressured the AJHS to cancel the events, citing, among other things, [JVP's support](#) for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign against Israel. The JVP has an [odious reputation](#) for disrupting events on campuses organized by pro-Israel students and celebrating Palestinian terrorists, among other things.

More ominously, the [Anti-Defamation League reports](#) that JVP “uses its Jewish identity to shield the anti-Israel movement from allegations of anti-Semitism and to provide the movement with a veneer of legitimacy” and “also intentionally exploits Jewish culture and rituals to reassure its supporters that opposition to Israel does not contradict Jewish values.”

The play in question is *Rubble Rubble* by Dan Fishback, a member of JVP. Earlier this year, Fishback signed [a letter](#) calling on the Lincoln Center to cancel “Brand Israel” theater performances, which the Israeli government was a co-sponsor. ([The show went on](#) as scheduled.)



Daniel Fishback

So after trying to silence Israeli theater, Fishback now hypocritically [presents himself](#) as a free speech martyr.

Describing *Rubble Rubble*, the Times [originally wrote](#):

“ *Mr. Fishback’s play, which was to get its first full public reading at the historical society on Dec. 14, tells the dual stories of a settler family in modern day Israel and a Jewish family caught up in revolutionary politics in early-20th-century Russia.*

That wording implies that Israelis living inside the Green Line — whether Tel Aviv, Tiberias or Taibeh — are settlers, so of course, a correction was called for. The Times revised the article, but also added a problematic editor’s note at the bottom of the page. First the revision, which doesn’t raise my hackles:

“ *Mr. Fishback’s play, which was to get its first full public reading at the historical society on Dec. 14, tells the dual stories of a modern-day settler family in the West Bank and a Jewish family caught up in revolutionary politics in early-20th-century Russia.*

But the editor’s note?

The article also referred incorrectly to a fictional family in Dan Fishback’s

“ play “Rubble Rubble.” The modern-day Jewish settlers live in the West Bank; they do not live in Israel.

If the Times were to call the West Bank *disputed*, I wouldn't bat an eye. Israelis and the Palestinians have been trying to negotiate peace, including borders, in fits and starts for nearly a quarter century now.



Moreover, the editor's note's categorical insistence that the West Bank is not part of Israel in any way demonstrates the paper's prejudice, fueling the BDS campaign that Jewish Voice for Peace and Fishback support.

At best, the New York Times was simply sloppy. But at worst, this was inappropriate editorializing. The editors struck the wrong note.

Image of Fishback via [YouTube/Dan Fishback](#);

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