

Combating antisemitism without apology

written by David M. Weinberg | 30.03.2025

The international conference on combating antisemitism that took place in Jerusalem this week under the auspices of Diaspora Affairs Minister Amichai Chikli has come under criticism because some far-right European political figures and fundamentalist Christian leaders were invited.

Some authorities savaged Chikli for associating with the leaders of France's Rassemblement National, Hungary's Fidesz Party, and Spain's Vox Party - even though the latter have mostly become partners in the fight against antisemitism and have forcefully stood up for Israel against Hamas and poisonous Palestinianism. (If US Sen. Bernie Sanders had repented and begun to defend Israel, would he not have been enthusiastically embraced by American Jewish and Israeli leaders?)

Lost in the controversy was the value of the conference that Chikli convened - a conference that finally began to tackle the toxic antisemitism of the intersectional and woke Left around the world.

Chikli's conference initiated hard discussions on how to confront the progressivism that has fallen captive to antisemitism and how to curtail the radical Islam that fuels antisemitism in placid Western countries.

Experts offered prescriptions for pushing back against antisemitism in academia and public schools, in international institutions, and in corrupted international legal forums.

And yes, Chikli's conference highlighted the role that religion can and must increasingly play - including evangelical Christians - in support of Israel.

The topics broached by Chikli had been taboo at international conferences on antisemitism over the past 30 years. (And as the former founding coordinator of the Israeli government's Global Forum Against Antisemitism, chaired by Natan Sharansky, I am familiar with all of the conferences.) This is because confronting antisemitism on the Left runs up against politically correct liberal sensibilities.

The Left prefers to believe that the most dangerous antisemitism comes from the far Right. Indeed, it did for most of the 19th and 20th centuries, but the pendulum of antisemitic sourcing has since swung wildly and violently in the opposite direction.

So, kudos to Chikli for showing leadership in this regard. He dared to point a finger at the virulent antisemitism and anti-Zionism (which are much the same) of the far Left while also taking on the woke Right, which includes ugly antisemitic and anti-Israel segments of the MAGA movement.

Chikli also did the right thing (not just a right-wing thing) by honoring non-Jewish heroes of the past 18 months – people like Erin Molan of Australia, Richard Kemp of Britain, Luai Ahmed of Sweden (Yemeni born), John Spencer of the US, and Ayaan Hirsi Ali of the US (Somali-born Dutch-American) – all of whom attended the conference.

These people have bravely stood up and spoken out in the war against Palestinian denialism and the global demonization of Israel.

A SERIES OF disturbing trends in global antisemitism were analyzed at the conference, among them the following:

False equations: Even when condemning antisemitism, Western politicians and intellectuals feel the need to simultaneously condemn “Islamophobia and all forms of racism” in the same sentence. This is a politically correct refusal to recognize the uniqueness of antisemitism beyond all other forms of hatred, and it itself illustrates precisely that Jew-hatred. People cannot admit the uniqueness of antisemitism because they can’t stand the uniqueness of the Jewish people.

Mainstreaming of antisemitism: Even when Rashida Tlaib and some of her “Squad” colleagues in the US Congress regurgitate the “dual loyalty” charge against pro-Israel Senators – a classic antisemitic trope – national Democratic leadership has found it hard to condemn them outright or explicitly without wrapping rejection of the slur in the bland blanket of rejecting “all racist” language.

This is because, again, the American Left has stumbled into the bottomless rage of identity politics. It has embraced the new racial-gender taxonomy, which recasts thousands of years of Jewish history into a “wokified diorama,” as Peter

Savodnik has written.

As a result, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is seen only through this false, flattening prism, with Israel playing the role of the white, colonial settler and the Palestinian that of the settler's dark-skinned, indigenous victim.

And by transforming the Jewish state into a force for evil, the "progressives" separate the Jew from America and legitimize violence against the Jew for defending the indefensible: Israel's alleged apartheid, colonialism, white supremacy, ethnic cleansing, and genocide.

Academic abdication

The most virulently antisemitic and destructive groups today, like Students for Justice in Palestine, have had free rein on American campuses to terrorize students and faculty, not just Jewish students and faculty. They force everybody to distance themselves from the "sins" of "white privilege" not only by declaring themselves to be allies of "minoritized" non-white populations but also by condemning other, less "woke" people, especially Jews and Zionists.

Unfortunately, some Jewish leaders and teachers cannot withstand the malice, malevolence, and cruelty of campus terrorists and, consequently, are afraid to back US President Donald Trump's recent bold moves to defund, arrest, and deport the evildoers. Being so uncritically and superciliously upholding of "free speech," they cannot see the radical campus rioters coming to hang every one of them.

Israel's role in the struggle against antisemitism

As raw antisemitism around the world has risen and morphed into virulent anti-Israel sentiment - making the two phenomena almost indistinguishable - the State of Israel has moved from indifference to active involvement in the struggle against such hate. Yet not all Diaspora Jewish leaders are comfortable with Israeli leadership in this regard.

Remember, Israel has not always seen the struggle against global antisemitism as its fight. For the first 25 years of Israel's existence, the unspoken attitude in

Jerusalem was that if Jews abroad had a problem with antisemites, they could always immigrate to Israel. Immersed in the business of building and defending the Jewish state, Israel's leaders had no time for the "troubles of the Diaspora."

Israeli attitudes began to change after the Yom Kippur War; after the infamous 1975 "Zionism is Racism" resolution at the UN; after the 1980 Rue Copernic synagogue bombing in Paris and other terror attacks; following the 1993 wave of neo-Nazi violence that swept Germany; and especially after the notorious 2001 World Conference against Racism (under UN auspices) known as Durban I - which was a watershed moment.

Sharansky, then-minister for Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs, introduced a benchmark for distinguishing legitimate criticism of Israel from antisemitism - by scrutinizing criticism of Israel for demonization, double standards, and delegitimization.

This became known as the "3D test" for antisemitic expression and intent, and it later was codified by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance into a working definition of antisemitism.

More than 40 countries around the world have endorsed the IHRA definition, but many "human rights" NGOs (such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the World Council of Churches) and left-wing Israeli academics explicitly reject the IHRA framework, claiming that it has a "chilling effect" on free speech in criticizing Israel.

And so, the battle for adoption of the IHRA definition continues - led by Israel (including Gideon Saar's Foreign Ministry).

This is critical to stemming the surge in global antisemitism and to blocking the transformation of Israel into a "criminal" state that is a key target of the so-called "woke" world.

Consensus

There was a remarkable consensus about one matter at Chikli's conference this week. There is only one explanation for the explosion of antisemitism around the world on October 7, 2023 - the day Hamas raped, tortured, murdered, and kidnapped Israelis in the Gaza envelope: Jews everywhere are grudgingly

respected and relatively safe when Israel is strong but despised and vulnerable when Israel is weak.

The corollary lesson here is that the safety and security of Jews around the world depends on Israel winning – on regaining its strength, self-confidence, and deterrent power. This, in turn, will re-empower Diaspora Jews to defend Israel and themselves.

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