Incontrovertibly indigenous in Israel

written by David M. Weinberg | 29.12.2024

Over the past 15 years and especially since the atrocities of October 7, annihilationist Palestinianism has become the rave in some "progressive" circles, especially among hard-left rioters on Western campuses. This means dismissal of Jewish/Zionist rootedness in the Land of Israel and adoption of the Palestinian campaign to delegitimize and destroy Israel. "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free."

Palestinianism is an ideology and an identity invented by the KGB and advanced by Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas ever since he rejected John Kerry's 2014 peace initiative. It makes conflict in the Land of Israel a zero-sum game.

It fabricates Palestinian inhabitance of Israel going back to the Canaanites and Philistines of the Bible; it inverts Arab rejection and invasion of young Israel in 1948 and the expulsion of Jews from Arab lands by claiming a Palestinian "Nakba"; it turns the Temple Mount into Haram ash-Sharif, denying any Jewish history in Jerusalem and the Land of Israel; and it converts genocidal assaults on the People of Israel like Hamas' Simchat Torah attack into heroic acts that must be celebrated by all freedom seekers.

In short, Palestinianism is violence against Israeli/Jewish indigenousness in the land of Israel. It savages the core identity of Jews and Israelis. It is an offensive to deny the most basic building blocks of Jewish connection to Jerusalem and Israel. It seeks to strip justice and authenticity from Israel's very existence, and to upend Israel's alliance with the human-rights-supporting, democratic world.

And as we have seen over the past year, it directly leads to violent antisemitic battering of Jews and Jewish institutions around the world.

We got a whiff of what was coming back in 2018 when UNESCO passed, *davka* on Chanukah, a series of nonsensical resolutions (proposed by Abbas), declaring Jerusalem an exclusively Moslem heritage city and criminalizing Israel's custodianship of the holy city.

Most European nations, those great paragons of “peace” and “love” for Jews, went along with that affront, either voting for or abstaining on the denialist resolutions. Then they doubled down on such perfidy by adopting a similar resolution in the UN General Assembly in 2021.

Then-US Ambassador to Israel David Friedman responded to the UN disgrace by tweeting that “More than 2,000 years ago, Jewish patriots (Maccabees) captured Jerusalem, purified the Holy Temple and rededicated it as a house of Jewish worship. The UN can’t vote away the facts: Jerusalem is the ancient and modern capital of Israel. Happy Chanukah from this blessed city!”

Alas, the gangs rampaging today against Jews and Israelis in the streets of Berlin, London, Montreal, and Sydney have swallowed every bit of Abbas’ bile about exclusive Arab rights to Israel. They ignore the fact that Abbas’ gangs have destroyed Joseph’s Tomb in Nablus, sought to destroy Rachel’s Tomb in Bethlehem, have run Christians out of Bethlehem, and have wantonly dug-up and destroyed thousands of years of Jewish archeological treasures on the Temple Mount.

WHAT DO YOU DO in the face of such defamation and betrayal? What do you do when the Big Lie is evident everywhere?

First, you act to introduce realism and truth-telling to the global dynamic by re-asserting the Jewish People’s profound historic and national rights in Israel and Jerusalem. You insist on a narrative that proclaims incontrovertible indigenous Jewish rights in Israel. You push back against anti-Israel denialism by reinforcing Israel’s sovereign hold on all parts of Israel.

This begins with recapturing a sense of outrage about anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish sentiment. After 2,000 years of demonization and persecution, Jews and Zionists in the 21st century no longer have bear body blows on a regular basis! We are no longer powerless. It is time to re-engage in the fight for Israel with passion and conviction, not apologetics or apprehension.

From a *hasbara* (public diplomacy) perspective, it is not enough to explain Israel’s security dilemmas or revisit Israel’s past diplomatic generosity towards the Palestinians. What is needed is a much more basic restatement of Israel’s cause and purpose: Israel as a grand historic reunion of people and land; as the Jewish People’s contribution to science, technology, arts and culture in the modern

world; and Israel as a reliable anchor for democracy in a dangerous part of the world.

I think that Israel wins when you speak about justice and the Jewish nation.

Second, in the face of betrayal and peril, you act with overwhelming military power to reset the regional strategic architecture and reinforce Israeli deterrence. Israel is now doing this across all its borders, and a fierce takedown of Iran is surely next.

Of course, this presents a heightened hasbara challenge for advocates for Israel –which must be met defiantly and unwaveringly.

For Zionists and advocates of Israel there is no choice but to own-up to Israel's strength. They must affirm it and articulate how that strength is justifiably and wisely being used to fight Iran, Islamic jihadism, and annihilationist-against-Israel Palestinianism.

Remember David Ben-Gurion's famous adage about the messianic era when the lion will lie down with the lamb, as per Isaiah? "That will be great," said Ben-Gurion, "as long as Israel is the lion"!

So, supporters of Israel cannot apologize; cannot be shy about Israeli military prowess. They must articulate the reasons why Israel must be the "lion" and use crushing force to deter enemies and defend its homeland.

I have found that forthright talk has a salutary impact. Without being nasty or unfeeling regarding Israel's adversaries, one can convey a deep sense of sincerity by articulating core Zionist commitments and clarifying Israeli red lines. People are forced to respect that, even if they may not impute to Israel spectacular charity.

Better shock-and-awe than shrink-and-whimper.

WHEN SEEKING SOLACE and affirmation in these trying times, I also draw inspiration from intelligent and courageous non-Jewish allies. They should be acknowledged and encouraged.

The Emiratis are an excellent example of far-sightedness and friendship. The Emiratis do not bemoan colonialism in their past. They do not wail about anti-

Arab discrimination, wallow in negativity, or seek scapegoats. They believe in hard work and in using one's riches (be they intellectual riches or oil riches) for the betterment of one's own people. From this perspective, cooperation with Israel is a win-win situation for the Emiratis, and they honorably have abided by their peace treaty with Israel despite global and regional assaults on Israel.

Indeed, in repeat visits to Dubai and Abu Dhabi, I have found that Emiratis respect Israelis for their faithfulness to Jewish tradition, for their belief in the power of Jewish history, for their loyalty to ancient heritage and unique national identity. Believe it or not, the Emiratis seem to understand – perhaps better than we do ourselves, sometimes – that these anchors of identity are the greatest source of strength and authenticity.

Another shining example of intellectual honesty towards Israel and courage is the Lebanese-Syrian activist Rawan Osman, who features in the jaw-dropping new documentary film "Tragic Awakening: A New Look at the Oldest Hatred." Osman details her journey from Jew-hater to Jewish believer and supporter of Israel, on the background of an intellectual investigation into the roots of ancient and modern antisemitism.

Brilliantly produced by my friends (and former fellow Canadians) rabbis Raphael Shore of OpenDor Media and Shalom Schwartz of the Aseret Movement, the film offers a bold answer to the question: Why the Jews? Their answer is a classic Jewish answer, the Talmudic answer: *Sinah* (hatred) of Jews stems from Sinai, meaning that Jewish morals and teachings sourced in the Torah are an "affront" to some in the world. Jew-haters hate Judaism's empowering, soaring, disruptive message. (That certainly was the case for Adolf Hitler).

Run and see the film, and/or read Rabbi Shore's provocative new book on which it is based, *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Jews? Learning to Love the Lessons of Jew-Hatred*. He argues that the best response to those who hate Jews is to embrace Judaism, appreciate its grandeur, and benefit from it. As the late Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks taught: Non-Jews most respect Jews who are self-respecting.

In any case, it is wonderful that deep-thinking and brave figures like Rawan Osman can rise beyond the decrepit teachings fed to her during her Arab adolescent years.

I take inspiration also from Indigenous activists like Nova Peris of Australia. A

double-gold Olympic champion and former Member of Parliament who is lionized and recognized by everyone Down Under, she has become one of Israel's most outspoken defenders.

Nova electrifies listeners with her discourse on proud Aboriginal identity and Indigenous claims to ancestral lands, making an explicit comparison between the struggle of her First Nations communities and the struggle of the Jewish People for respect and for reclamation of its ancient homeland, Israel.

"The history of the Jewish People reminds me that strength comes not just from right but from purpose, faith, and resilience," says Nova.

Yes, indeed, in these darks days there are smart, good people who unapologetically stand with Israel. We must take heart and determine to win all our wars unapologetically and smartly too, Maccabean style, *ka-yamim hahem bazman hazeh*, as in the days of old in these very times.

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