



NONE SHALL BE AFRAID

FIGHTING ANTI-SEMITISM

Anti-Zionism

To be clear, anti-Zionism is a form of anti-Semitism. It is referenced in the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism.

Zionism is, simply, the belief in and the movement for self-determination of the Jewish people in our ancient homeland, Israel. The State of Israel is the democratic nation-state of the Jewish people that arose from the efforts of the Zionist movement. To be a Zionist is, at base, to believe in the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security. One certainly does not have to be a Jew to be a Zionist, but usually, when someone is rabidly attacking Zionists, they really mean Jews.

Anti-Zionism denies the right of self-determination to the Jewish people, and to no other national group. Anti-Zionism existed long before Israel was re-established in 1948 and it is not about any specific policies by any Israeli government—it is about the negation of the very existence of a democratic and Jewish state.

Anti-Zionism is quite simply a mutation of the virus of anti-Semitism. Instead of attacking Jews as a religious group or a minority community, the attacks are focused on the collective Jew—the Jewish state. Thus, blood libels—wherein a Jew or members of the local Jewish community were falsely accused of a horrific crime of sacrificing non-Jewish children—were transformed to wrongly and maliciously accusing Israel of host of “crimes.” Some of the traditional tactics used by anti-Semites for generations—for instance, boycotts of Jews—have been turned into weapons to be used against Israel, with the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement at the forefront currently. Before that, there was an Arab boycott of companies doing business in Israel.

Like other forms of anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism is a problem that can be found in far-left and far-right circles, as well as in Islamic extremism. Across the spectrum from neo-Nazis and other far-right individuals to left-wing leaders to Islamic extremists, Israel is often attacked with the same absurd tropes that have long been employed by anti-Semites, such as Jewish control of governments, societies and economies. For these groups, “Israel controls the government” is the same as “Jews control the government,” and though interchangeable, often “Israel” is used to mask the true target—“Jews.”

Anti-Semitic rhetoric, boycotts and other measures have usually only been precursors to violence, and anti-Zionism is no different. The genocidal intent of anti-Semitism takes effect in anti-Zionism by calling for the annihilation of the Jewish state, as seen by Palestinian terror groups chanting about destroying Israel and creating a Palestinian state “from the [Jordan] river to the [Mediterranean] sea” or Iranian leaders call for “wiping Israel off the map” while the Iranian regime simultaneously pursues an illicit nuclear weapons program.

B'nai B'rith is committed to fighting against anti-Zionism as we do all other forms of the pernicious virus of anti-Semitism. We will continue to do so at the U.N., EU and other international institutions, online, on campus, and through our offices and units throughout the world.



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