

Tackling Racism: a submission to the Human Rights Commission as part of the Government's national action plan on Racism

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Submitted in my personal capacity

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Antisemitism: the most recent permutations of a very nasty type of racism

Summary

Here in New Zealand, as elsewhere, there are troubling new manifestations of a particular nasty form of racism, Antisemitism.

This Antisemitism is:

- Sometimes Explicit
- Sometimes by Euphemism
- Sometimes by hyper-criticism of Israel, the nation state of the Jewish People (when the same criticisms are not made towards any other nation, and therefore, are a double-standard)

Any consideration of racism in New Zealand should explicitly expose these different forms of Antisemitism.

Explicit

Antisemitism includes ascribing vile characteristics to the Jewish People as a whole.

In New Zealand, for the time being at least, home-grown Explicit forms of such Antisemitism tend to be isolated.

Rather, the Explicit utterances are usually made off-shore, then re-published and circulated here in New Zealand.

Earlier this year, Ayatollah Alireza Ebadi, representative of the Iranian Supreme Leader in a province in Iran, said that the Jews are humanity's greatest problem. He went on to say, "Consider the most difficult problem for Islam and humanity as a whole. This is corroborated by documents. The most difficult problem has been the Jews They are more evil than Satan" (public address aired on Iran's Khorasan province Jonoobi TV, 7 May 2021).

In 2009, an Egyptian cleric, Mohammed Hussein Yaqoup said, "If the Jews left Palestine to us, would we start loving them? Of course not ... They would have been enemies even if they did not occupy a thing ... we will fight, defeat, and annihilate them until not a single Jew remains on the face of the earth" (Melanie Phillips, The Invisible victims of Jihadi Violence. JNS. 30 July 2021).

It should be noted that Explicit threats like these in the 1930s and 1940s preceded the systematic murder of six million Jews.

In the Charter of Hamas it says, "For our struggle against the Jews is extremely wide-ranging and grave, so much so that it will need all the loyal efforts we can yield ..."

The Charter continues ... "The enemies have been scheming for a long time, and they have consolidated their schemes, in order to achieve what they have achieved. They took advantage of key-elements in unfolding events, and accumulated a huge and influential material wealth which they put to the service of implementing their dream. This wealth [permitted them to] take over control of the world media such as news agencies, the press, publication houses, broadcasting and the like. [They also used this] wealth to stir revolutions in various parts of the globe in order to fulfill their interests and pick the fruits. They stood behind the French and Communist Revolutions and behind most of the revolutions we hear about here and there".

This is the language of Jihad.

In short, Explicit utterances of Antisemitism, whether from individuals, organisations, or wrapped up in religious motifs must be identified and called out.

This includes when such utterances are made off-shore, but promulgated and re-published in New Zealand.

World history is stained with examples of such threats preceding the bloody and deadly actions explicitly set out in those very threats.

Euphemism

There is a more subtle form of Antisemitism present here in New Zealand. But just as toxic. It is more nuanced and subversive. It is Antisemitism by Euphemism - using certain words to allude to something else. Messages are conveyed by sub-text, imagery, metaphors, and for this reason it is very insidious. It by-passes the provisions of the Human Rights legislation which deals to Explicit Antisemitism.

Such language is harder to pin down, but emboldens the actions of Antisemites.

Here in New Zealand, at a rally in Queen Street, in May this year, there was a chant ... "Intifada, Intifada ... globalise the Intifada". The use of the word 'Intifada' is a reference to the campaign of terror and suicide bombings perpetrated in Israel against Jews and other Israelis.

This chant amounts to an incitement to kill Jews... to kill Jews everywhere. This will of course be denied by the leaders of the chant. But this is how Euphemisms work. Due to the absence of the explicit words 'kill Jews' there is an element of deniability about the real intention behind the chant.

The use of Antisemitic Euphemisms is increasing in New Zealand. They must be exposed for what they are, and the people who utter and promulgate them must be called out.

Double standards when criticising Israel, the nation state of the Jewish People.

The use of double standards to criticise Israel, the nation state of the Jewish People, is a form of Antisemitism which goes hand-in-hand with the euphemisms described above.

It criticises Israel for purported actions, but they do not make similar charges against other nations. This is a double standard.

This double standard is very evident at the United Nations.

In 2020 Israel received 73.9% of all condemnations by the UN General Assembly for that year.

Since 2015 the UN General Assembly has not issued a condemnation of Pakistan, China, Venezuela, Libya, Cuba, Turkey or Zimbabwe.

It has issued a condemnation of Russia 12 times, North Korea 6 , United States 7 and Syria 8 times.

But in the case of Israel it has issued condemnations, for the same period, One Hundred and Twelve times – 112. (UNWatch 2021)

One commentator has identified the three limbs of this manifestation of Antisemitism:

1. Delegitimisation: The denial of the Jewish People's right to self-determination and claims that the existence of the State of Israel is a racist endeavor. This discriminates against Jews by singling them out as ineligible for the basic right of self-determination at international law;
2. Demonisation: The portrayal of Jews as the enemy of humanity and referring to Israel as the Little Satan, and the like. This can be both Explicit or by Euphemism;
3. Double Standard: As mentioned above, this is when a person or organisation criticises Israel and only Israel on certain issues, but chooses to ignore similar situations conducted by other countries. Such protagonists are using double standards against Israel (Natan Sharansky 2005).

Such double standards can be levelled at proponents of the so-called Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) grouping. Many view the BDS claims as baseless, but it is an example of this limb of the Antisemitism test. This is because BDS ignores the situation in other countries such as Syria and Iran.

As one commentator said, "Criticizing Israel is not anti-Semitic, and saying so is vile. But singling out Israel for opprobrium and international sanctions – out of all proportion to any other party in the Middle East – it is anti-Semitic, and not saying so is dishonest" (Thomas Friedman).

Another commentator says that "the singling out of Israel for differential and discriminating treatment in the international arena" is a new anti-Semitic act (Irwin Cotter) [Dershowitz - Case for Israel 2003].

This form of Antisemitism is becoming more pervasive in New Zealand. The double standards of individuals, groups, organisations, and of policies and programmes, when discussing Israel must be called out and understood through this matrix.

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