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DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- At the beginning of the video, Mr. Prager asks us to, “Imagine a group of people who work to destroy Italy because, they claim, Italy’s origins are illegitimate. Imagine further that these people maintain that of all the countries in the world, only Italy doesn’t deserve to exist. And then imagine that these people vigorously deny they are anti-Italian. Would you believe them? Now substitute ‘Israel’ for ‘Italy,’ and you’ll understand the dishonesty and absurdity of the argument that one can be anti-Zionist—that is, against the existence of a Jewish state—but not anti-Semitic. But that is precisely what anti-Zionists say.” Would you believe an anti-Zionist’s claim that she or he is not anti-Semitic? Why or why not? What makes the anti-Zionist’s assertion of not being anti-Semitic so absurd? Explain. Why do you think that anti-Zionists make such a claim, i.e. what would anti-Zionists have to gain from pretending not to be anti-Semitic? Explain.
- Mr. Prager then goes on to ask, “How can they [the anti-Zionists] make this argument [that they are not anti-Semitic]? First, they change the topic. They say it’s unfair to charge those who merely ‘criticize’ Israel with being anti-Semitic. But criticism of Israel is fine. Denying Israel’s right to exist isn’t. Anti-Zionism isn’t criticism of Israel. Anti-Zionism is opposition to Israel’s existence.” Why do you think that anti-Zionists deceitfully separate their criticism of Israel with their outright will to destroy Israel? Explain. Why do you think that anti-Zionists are fine with being called anti-Zionists, but are offended at being called anti-Semitic? Explain.
- During his explanation of the fallacious rationale that anti-Zionists use to advance their claim of not being anti-Semitic, Mr. Prager points out that, “...anti-Zionists claim that Judaism is only a religion; therefore, Jews are only members of a religion, not a nation. But the Jews are called a ‘nation’ more than a hundred times in the Bible. That is why there can be irreligious, secular and even atheist Jews—because Jews are not only a religion. They are also a people, or a nation. There are no atheist Christians because Christianity is only a religion.” Why do you think the distinction between ‘religion’ and ‘nation’ is so important to the topic of Israel’s right to exist? Explain.
- Mr. Prager shares with us that “Palestinians have rejected offers to found their own state on five separate occasions since 1947. That’s the only reason they don’t have a state. And why have they always rejected building a Palestinian state? Because they have always been more interested in destroying the Jewish state.” Why do you think that the Palestinians keep rejecting the opportunity to found their own state? Do you agree with Mr. Prager’s answer, that the Palestinians are more interested in destroying Israel than with establishing their own state? If no, why not, and what other motive could there be for rejecting the opportunity to have their own state five times? If yes, what evidence do you find compelling to agree with Mr. Prager?
- Later in the video, Mr. Prager notes that “...the anti-Zionists claim that Israel’s origins are illegitimate. Of all the world’s 200-plus countries, the only country anti-Zionists declare illegitimate is also the only Jewish one. That’s pretty much all you need to know about their motives.” Why do you think that the anti-Zionists claim that Israel’s origin is illegitimate? What do you think anti-Zionists’ motives are for exclusively singling out Israel as having an illegitimate creation? Explain.

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: The French Government

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “Bill equating anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism sparks debate in France,” then answer the questions that follow.

- What led a group of lawmakers in the French parliament to propose legislation to criminalize anti-Zionism in France? Who was Theodore Herzl, what did he do, and why? What is anti-Zionism now largely associated with in France? Who is Emmanuel Macron, and what is his view on anti-Zionism? What have Alain Soral and Dieudonné both been convicted for, and what linguistic habit do they both engage in? Who is Sylvain Maillard, and what is his position on the bill to criminalize anti-Zionism and his position on the distinction between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism? What do critics of the anti-Zionism bill say?
- Do you think that France should criminalize being anti-Zionist? Why or why not?
- What makes the anti-Zionists claim to not being anti-Semitic so dishonest? Explain. Do you see any meaningful parallels between the Jewish nation exerting a right to a homeland and an indigenous people’s right to their own land (such as the Cherokee)? Why or why not? Considering that progressives constantly mischaracterize and lie about Israel oppressing and victimizing Palestinians, which then leads to some people wrongly viewing Israel as violent and villainous, do you think that the Left is responsible for the rising amount of anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism around the world and in Europe in particular? Why or why not?



QUIZ

IF YOU HATE ISRAEL, YOU'RE NO FRIEND OF THE JEWS

1. Why was the historic homeland of the Jews named Palestine by the Romans?
 - a. to honor a Roman emperor
 - b. because the Jewish people of the time did not want to live in the past anymore
 - c. because the Romans wanted to live in peace side by side with the Jewish nation
 - d. to remove all memory of the Jewish state they destroyed in the year 70

2. In Israel, Arab Muslims have the same rights as Jewish Israelis.
 - a. True
 - b. False

3. Israel controls the West Bank because _____?
 - a. the United Nations always favors Israel in legal disputes with other countries
 - b. Palestinians and their Arab allies tried to destroy Israel in 1967, and they lost the war.
 - c. the European Union gave it to Israel in exchange for better economic trade conditions
 - d. none of the above

4. Palestinians have rejected offers to found their own state on _____ separate occasions since 1947.
 - a. two
 - b. three
 - c. four
 - d. five

5. Why do anti-Zionists challenge the legitimacy of Israel, but not the legitimacy of Pakistan?
 - a. because so many people died in the creation of Pakistan
 - b. because all anti-Zionists are Pakistani
 - c. because Israel is the one Jewish state
 - d. None of the above.



QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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<https://www.france24.com/en/20190220-france-new-bill-equating-anti-zionism-anti-semitism-illegal>

Bill equating anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism sparks debate in France

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Vincent Kessler, REUTERS | Graves desecrated with swastikas are seen in the Jewish cemetery in Quatzenheim, near Strasbourg, France, February 19, 2019

Text by: Aude MAZOUÉ

A group of French lawmakers proposed a bill on Monday that would make anti-Zionism a criminal offence in the same way that anti-Semitism is illegal in France. But many argue that opposition to Israel is not comparable to anti-Semitism.

Advertising

An ugly scene over the weekend in which vulgar anti-Semitic slurs were hurled at French philosopher Alain Finkielkraut led the Paris prosecutor's office to open an inquiry Sunday into "public insult due to origin, ethnicity, race or religion". The next day, a group of lawmakers from a parliamentary committee against anti-Semitism said they wanted to criminalise anti-Zionism in France.

A resulting debate has raised thorny questions over anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism, with many insisting there is a distinction between being anti-Jewish and being against either the state of Israel or the policies of the Jewish state.

Anti-Semitism is defined by the Oxford dictionary as “hostility to or prejudice against Jews”. Under French law, it is considered a crime like other forms of discrimination, including racism and xenophobia.

Zionism, meanwhile, refers to a political movement founded by Austro-Hungarian writer Theodore Herzl in the late 19th century proposing the creation of a Jewish state on what is now Israeli soil. Herzl was convinced that it was impossible for Jews to assimilate in the countries where they lived as a diaspora as long as anti-Semitism existed.

As a result, anti-Zionism came to be defined as opposition to the creation of a Jewish state. But since Israel was founded in 1948, the concepts of Zionism and anti-Zionism have evolved. In France, anti-Zionism is now largely associated with anger at the state of Israel.

The distinction became further blurred in 2017, when French President Emmanuel Macron made international headlines for condemning anti-Zionism as a “reinvented form of anti-Semitism” during World War II commemorations in Paris.

His comments prompted French journalist Dominique Vidal to speak out against conflating the two issues in an essay entitled, “Anti-Zionism = Anti-Semitism? A response to Emmanuel Macron”.

“If we consider opposition to Theodore Herzl’s theory as anti-Semitic, then we’re saying that the millions of Jews who do not wish to live in Palestine and the occupied territories are anti-Semites,” Vidal told FRANCE 24. “It’s historical illiteracy, or worse, stupidity.”

But confusion over the two issues has only been exacerbated by anti-Semitic rhetoric in France that is at times deftly disguised as anti-Zionism.

“We know that [French comic] Dieudonné and [French far-right author] Alain Soral, both of whom have been convicted for inciting hatred against Jews, have adopted the habit of substituting the word ‘Zionist’ for ‘Jew’ and ‘anti-Zionist’ for ‘anti-Semite’ to avoid legal troubles,” Vidal said.

Recent decisions by Israel’s government, such as adopting a controversial law defining the country as a nation state for the Jewish people, have also contributed to the confusion over the terms.

“[Prime Minister] Benjamin Netanyahu has given his country a bad image by racking up populist alliances as well as having the Knesset vote on issues such as the Jewish nation-state law and annexing the West Bank,” Vidal said. “The confusion between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism allows [Netanyahu], who is concerned about his own image, to silence his opponents. But it is futile, because Israel’s bad image in recent years is directly linked to Israeli policies.”

‘Crimes of opinion’

Sylvain Maillard, one of the French lawmakers behind the proposal to criminalise anti-Zionism, has rejected accusations that his bill conflates the two issues.

“You can criticise the Israeli government, but not question the state’s right to exist,” he said. “No one is questioning the France or Germany’s right to exist.”

Critics of the bill don’t see it that way, warning it could restrict freedom of expression in France.

“This bill will reintroduce crimes of opinion, which have not existed in France since the Algerian War,” Vidal said. “If this measure passes, Zionists will be able to ask for a ban against anti-Zionism, communists can ask for a ban against anti-communism... In short, we’re sliding towards totalitarianism.”

The bill has sparked concerns even at the highest levels of government. Richard Ferrand, president of the national assembly (lower house of parliament), said on Tuesday that the country's existing laws against discrimination were "more than enough" to fight against anti-Semitism, and called for "deep thought before making impulsive announcements".

Macron also spoke out against the measure during a press conference on Tuesday, contradicting his comments from two years ago.

"I don't think that criminalising anti-Zionism is a good solution," he said. "Those who want Israel to disappear are the same people who want to attack Jews."

"I think that once we look at this in detail, criminalising anti-Zionism raises other issues," Macron added.