

THE NEW ANTISEMITISM AND THE THREE DS



ECHOES & REFLECTIONS

TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST. INSPIRING THE CLASSROOM.

Israel, as a democracy, can and should be receptive to fair and legitimate criticism, whether the criticism is from its own citizens or from members of the larger global community. However, all too often condemnation of Israel crosses the line from valid criticism into denigration that can be considered antisemitic. This type of unfair criticism is an important component of what is called the “new antisemitism,” especially when the complaints against Israel and “Zionists” include controlling the government of the United States, conspiring to take over the world, starting world wars, and other similar ideas.

Natan Sharansky, a former minister in the Israeli government in charge of monitoring antisemitism, developed what he calls the “Three Ds” test, to help distinguish legitimate criticism of Israel from antisemitism.

The following terms are often used (and misused) when discussing attitudes toward Israel and antisemitism. Understanding and applying them correctly can help to reduce misinformation.

- **Anti-Israel bias** is extreme and/or illegitimate criticism of Israel. It can take various forms, including false accusations directed against Israel, often with the aim of delegitimizing the country or questioning its very right to exist.
- **Anti-Zionism** is a prejudice against the Jewish movement for self-determination and the right of the Jewish people to a homeland in the State of Israel. It may be motivated by or result in antisemitism, or it may create a climate in which antisemitism becomes more acceptable. Anti-Zionism can include threats to destroy the State of Israel (or otherwise eliminate its Jewish character), unfounded and inaccurate characterizations of Israel’s power in the world, and language or actions that hold Israel to a different standard than other countries.

THE THREE DS TEST

DEMONIZATION

When Israel and its leaders are made to seem completely evil; when Israel’s actions are blown out of all sensible proportion; when Israel and Israelis are equated with Nazi Germany and Nazis; when Israel is seen as the sole cause for the situation in the Middle East—this is considered antisemitism, not legitimate criticism of Israel.

DOUBLE STANDARDS

When criticism of Israel is applied selectively and in a grossly unfair manner and Israel is singled out when clearly immoral behavior of other nation-states is ignored—for example, when Israel is criticized by the United Nations for human rights abuses while the behavior of known and major abusers, such as China, Iran, Cuba, and Syria, is ignored—this is considered antisemitism.

DELEGITIMIZATION

When Israel’s fundamental right to exist is denied alone among all peoples of the world—this too is considered antisemitism.

