

Can Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism be Eliminated?

by *Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi*

No one is born hating. People are taught to hate.

My father was born in Germany. As a small child he lived in Vienna, Austria. Both of his parents (my grandparents) were medical doctors and he went to a fine school. They spoke many languages and travelled in elite circles.

But there was a tremendous propaganda machine run by Joseph Goebbels. He was so brilliant at public relations that he made it cool to be a Nazi.

My father, only around 5, saw that the “in” kids joined the “brown-shirts” – Nazi youth. He wanted to join too.

The foundation of Auschwitz was not built with bricks, it was built with PR. When people BELIEVED that Jews were less than human, it enabled them to do things that were inhuman to Jews. Six million Jews were killed. We all know this.

Today anti-Semitism has a new name, but it is basically the same thing. It is “Anti-Zionism”.

Dramatic public opinion research shows that while 52% of Americans have a Jewish friend, co-worker or family member, 74% of non-Jewish Americans with a Jewish contact report that not one Jew has spoken with them in support of Israel in the last 12 months. The same research, however, shows that just ONE conversation between a Jew and a non-Jew about Israel can make people dramatically more supportive of Israel. So how can you – in your conversations, speeches, letters to the editor and other forms of outreach - help win hearts and minds for Israel? Here are ten tips to help you get started.

1. Americans Want a Team to Cheer For.

Whether it is the Yankees, Red Socks – whomever – Americans love to have a team to cheer for.

And what one thing, above all else, will cause a broad array of Americans to cheer for Israel? The fact that Israel is a democracy where all citizens - Christians, Moslems and Jews - have freedom of speech, religion, press and a right to vote.

2. Israel wants Peace.

It's up to us to inform the public that Israel has been, and will always be, willing to make peace.

But don't just say that Israel wants peace – PROVE it. Let people know (because many don't) that Israel gave up Sinai for peace with Egypt. Israel has peace with Jordan and unilaterally gave up Gaza for peace. What did they get in return? Rockets and war.

Let people know that Israel offered the Palestinians a state time and again – and Arafat and Abbas rejected it.

Israel is a democracy that is suffering from terrorism, but that still wants peace.

3. It's About the Future, Not the Past.

Americans today are part of the “what have you done for me lately” and “what will you give me in the future” culture. If you say that “Jews have lived in Israel for thousands of years and God promised us the land” many Americans will hear “this is a conflict that has been going on for thousands of years and it will never end. It’s like the Hatfield’s and the McCoy’s. Why should America invest the time and energy of its President and its tax dollars in helping it?” Additionally, secular and liberal audiences who believe in the separation of church and state aren’t interested in supporting someone else’s claim handed down by God.

Americans don’t really care how many wars Israel has fought in self-defence. They worry about things like terrorism and gas prices. They don’t care who is right or wrong in the conflict as much as they want a quick solution. You need to focus on a better future to both Israel AND the Palestinians.

4. SICK – Stop Indoctrinating Children to Kill

Explain that peace cannot come while Palestinian children are raised in a culture of hate and a cult of death. The Palestinians cannot promote peace and terror at the same time.

Peace will happen when Palestinian textbooks and TV shows no longer indoctrinate kids to become terrorists. President Obama knows this and on May 28, 2009 said he told Palestinian leader Abbas *“It was very important to continue to make progress in reducing the incitement and anti-Israel sentiments that are sometimes expressed in schools and mosques and in the public square, because all those things are impediments to peace.”*

5. Remember Moses

Moses was a pretty sharp guy -- and he had the ear of G-d! But even Moses delegated and used teamwork! He had Aaron to help him speak, and countless wise people to help him judge.

When you decide that it is time for you to act, there is no need to try to do everything by yourself. You need to be a part of a team with a clear set of responsibilities and goals, accountability. Find a pro-Israel group to get involved with where you can make a positive difference.

6. Nachshon

Do you remember in the story of Moses? When the Hebrews were leaving Egypt they got to the Red Sea – and they Jews stopped. They were waiting for the sea to part before they made a move. They whined and complained to Moses and to God. But then a guy named Nachson jumped into the water – and the Red Sea parted.

All the complaining Jews did at the Red Sea reminds me a bit of well meaning members of our community who send angry notes to reporters about their coverage about Israel, without having first pitched reporters facts and information about Israel that they needed to do their job well. It doesn’t work since you need to **pitch** stories to journalists, not “you know what” about stories to journalists.

We need to get reporters the facts, visuals and insights they need BEFORE they do their stories about Israel.

For Jews to get to safety, we need to be proactive. We must take a plunge – having faith and vision for a better future.

7. Accountability counts

Beware of “analysis paralysis.” It is a terrible disease that cripples organizations with a thousand meetings and no results. I call it “death by a thousand paper cuts.” In order for a team to succeed, every meeting and task must have specific desired and measurable outcomes.

8. Hatikva

As you know, the Israeli national anthem is Hatikva. Hatikva means hope.

Though it may seem counterintuitive, in order to bring more support to Israel we need to show hope for the Palestinians. And we need to mean it. We need to have hope and efforts for a better life for Palestinian children who have suffered from schools and TV shows that incite hatred and teach them to idolize or become suicide bombers.

We need to have hope for a time when Palestinian soccer stadiums are named after successful Palestinian business leaders –and not terrorists.

We need to have hope that Palestinian will choose leaders who will use American and European aid to create more jobs and better healthcare – and not to make bombs that kill children or to line their pockets.

We need to have hope for a time when there is no need for an anti-terrorism security fence and people will be able move freely for commerce, culture and cooperation.

You can invite people to call you a dreamer or naive. But unless you can help Americans imagine a situation where there is cooperation in place of bloodshed, they will not be excited about our government and tax dollars going into efforts to make the dream of security, peace and prosperity a reality.

9. YOU can make a difference.

Today, many in the Jewish community still view anti-Semitism and anti-Israel images in the press as inevitable – like a tornado barreling down in our path. But the fact is that with good strategic communications, these problems can be reduced by significant levels.

Theodore Herzl said ... *"If you wish it, it is not just a dream."*

Fighting for Israel's image is the battle without bloodshed, in a real war where there has already been too much bloodshed and death.

People in Israel depend on us. Jews around the world depend on us.

And we depend on each other.

Together, we can use communications to make Israel and all Jews safer and more secure.

With Arafat gone, the Palestinians had a chance to choose a democratic leader who will end the terror, the culture of hate and reach out their hand in peace. I hope for their sake, and for the sake of Israel, that Abbas will be this kind of leader and that Hamas will end its control of Gaza soon.

But whether the Palestinians choose a leader who will choose peace or not, it is up each of us to make sure that Israel and the Jewish people are secure.

10. It's not Hanukah now, but we should celebrate its REAL meaning every day

Hanukah is a time when we remember the resilience of our people. But each day, as we support Israel and the Jewish people, we must remember that the important thing is not the candles we light but **being a light unto the world that matters.**

We know that Israel, like America, can make mistakes. But each and every day Israel, a diverse democracy where Christians, Moslems and Jews all have freedoms freedom of religion, speech, press and the right to vote, is working for peace, security and a better life for both Israelis AND Palestinians.

About the author: Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi is the founder & president of The Israel Project (TIP), and organization devoted to improving Israel's image in order to help protect Israel, reduce anti-Semitism and increase pride in Israel. For more information go to www.theisraelproject.org.