

Why Israel Won't Condemn the Shocking Success of Germany's Far right Extremists

After its improper, evasive, even complicit responses to Charlottesville, to Trump and to Hungary's anti-Semitic anti-Soros campaign, it's no surprise that Israel's response to neo-Nazis in the Bundestag is a deafening silence

Shimon Stein and **Moshe Zimmerman** | Sep 25, 2017 5:36 PM

Everybody in Germany got the message: the outcome of last Sunday's elections meant more than just adding another new political faction to the Bundestag. That a radical right-wing party, Alternative fuer Deutschland (AfD), entered the Bundestag is an alarm signal, an unprecedented challenge to post-Nazi Germany. For 68 years the German political system ward off all substantial attempts by right-wing extremists to get into parliament.

That era is over, definitively, and Germany has now joined many other democratic nations in allowing anti-democratic movements to send representatives into their national legislative assemblies. The rise of right-wing populist parties and the new authoritarian tendencies in current politics threaten the democratic system all over the globe and should have been considered a major challenge also for the Jewish state.

In the past, the fight of Jews against anti-Semitism went hand in hand with the fight against ethnocentric nationalism, xenophobia and anti-liberalism. Having this experience in mind, one might have expected the Jewish state to continue to be consistent with this strategy today. Now, when the AfD has entered the Bundestag, it is high time to ask whether Israel is acting up to expectations. Unfortunately, the answer so far is no. The experience of the last few months proves the absence of a clear cut Israeli condemnation of populist parties and tendencies: Netanyahu's cautious reaction to the Charlottesville Nazi demonstrations and to Trump's moral-equivalence response, on the one hand and Netanyahu's approach to the anti-Semitic anti-Soros campaign of Hungary's Prime Minister Orban, on the other hand, are two good examples of official Israel's improper, evasive handling of the problem.

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