Is Spain a Champion of the “Zionism = Apartheid” Campaign of Durban IV?

April 29, 2021

By Shimon Samuels

The Times of Israel

<https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/is-spain-a-champion-of-the-zionism-apartheid-campaign-of-durban-iv/>

As the only Jew elected to the International Steering Committee (ISC) of the 2001 World Conference Against Racism, I attended several preparatory committee meetings for the Durban conference, backed at the NGO level by COSATU, the South African Trade Union Congress which obsessively referred to ‘Apartheid Israel’

At these meetings, I was often prevented from speaking and, on arrival in Durban, I was expelled from the ISC.

My colleague, Rabbi Abraham Cooper, the Wiesenthal Centre Associate Dean and Director for Global Social Action, and I, experienced Durban as a latter-day pogrom and a scandal to the United Nations. Unforgettable was the demonstration around the Durban synagogue waving banners of Hitler proclaiming, “He never finished the job!”

A few weeks later, in December, I was erroneously invited to the last meeting of the ISC at the UN in Geneva. Once there, I could not be expelled in the presence of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

A blue document at each chair was snatched away, but not before I managed to read the first page: an eight point campaign against the “Zionist = Apartheid State”

1. An educational inculcation campaign through UN agencies on “Apartheid” Israel
2. A legal campaign in the International Criminal Court and countries of universal jurisprudence to arrest Israelis for crimes against humanity
3. Cancellation of the Law of Return for Jews to Israel
4. Its replacement by the “Right of Return” for all Palestinians
5. Reactivation of the dormant economic boycott
6. Cultural, scientific, sports, academic etc., embargoes now known as BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions)
7. Rupture of diplomatic relations rendering Israel a pariah state
8. Penalties for states and NGO’s refusing to comply.

Though the ISC denied paternity, this has, indeed, been the route-map to harm Israel and its supporters over the past 20 years.

Its principal vectors are the anti-globalization NGO’s World Social Forum (WSF), based in Brazil and the UN Committee for the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in New York – both often attended by the Wiesenthal Centre.

But now, we discover also the important presence in the WSF of Podemos – a far-left member party in the current Spanish Government coalition.

The Madrid-based NGO, ACOM (Action and Communication on the Middle East), has charged the Unidas Podemos party as, reportedly, funded by Iran. Its leader, Pablo Iglesias, has, until last month, been Spanish Deputy Prime Minister and is now candidate for the Community of Madrid Presidency.

Iglesias was on the staff of HispanTV, Iran’s mouthpiece to Spanish language viewers across Latin America. He has called Israel. “a criminal state… an illegal country…” and apparently stated, “Wall Street is almost all in the hands of Jews… the Jewish lobby supports initiatives against the peoples of the world.” He is a leading figure in the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) campaign and a close friend of British Labour’s Jeremy Corbyn and Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

Podemos has declared regions of Spain accepting the boycott, as “zones free of Israeli apartheid,” reminiscent of “Judenrein” (cleansed of Jews) areas of the Nazi programme.

Another Podemos leader, Sonia Vivas, claimed at an international aid conference that, “Jews should be held accountable for supporting Israel.”

During the March 2021 session of the Geneva Human Rights Council, the Wiesenthal Centre addressed a letter to European and other democracies that had either voted against or abstained on participating in Durban II and III, both opened by then Iranian President Ahmadinejad, spewing Jew-hatred. We had urged that the recipients boycott the 20th anniversary of the Durban antisemitic hatefest.

Our letter to the Spanish government reached the centre-right opposition Partido Popular (PP), who raised the issue in Parliament. The response of the present left and extreme left government coalition has rendered Spain as a leader of an opposite campaign in Europe and Latin America, calling to support Durban IV at the UN in September.

This represents the ideology of Podemos, which would have likely led the Inquisition and expulsion of the Spanish Jews in 1492… Today, they apparently seek a second expulsion of the Jews, this time, from the Land of Israel.