

simon wiesenthal center
snider social action institute

SWC GLOBAL ACTION

DONATE



American flags are being burnt and presidential candidates shot: What should Jews do?

by Rabbi Abraham Cooper
SWC Associate Dean & Director, Global Social Action



Burning American Flag with Fire Flames. Generative ai. High quality illustration. Burning American Flag with Fire Flames. Generative ai (photo credit: INGIMAGE)

Holocaust survivor Simon Wiesenthal shared crucial insights during his lifetime, especially the vital link between democracy and safety for Jews globally

I was blessed to know and work with Simon Wiesenthal (OB" M) for 29 years. The famed Holocaust survivor, Nazi hunter, and campaigner for justice was also a noted author. But what sticks with me longest are some of the shortest quotes I heard from him:

"Hope lives when people remember" and "Freedom is not a gift from Heaven. It must be earned every day" are just two of them. But the following two speak directly to the Jewish people in the Diaspora's precarious situation today:

1. "Where democracy is strong, it is good for the Jews; where it is weak, it is bad for the Jews."

2. "History teaches us that it often starts with the Jews. It never ends with the Jews."

While it's too early to tell if the failed assassination would serve as a wakeup call by the candidates, their campaigns, or the media, and whatever one thinks about Donald Trump (almost), no American would have celebrated if the shooter's bullet had pierced his brain instead of glancing off his ear.

But there are plenty of people who, in word and deed, display utter contempt for America and the foundational values upon which our nation was founded.

Witness a now-deleted social media from a rather mellow young Arab American woman who opined on the burning of American flags across the United States on July 4th, including New York, and where the American experiment all started in Philadelphia, July 1776.

"Burning the American flag," she opined, "It's a beautiful sight, but it's not enough. ... We need to burn the US government. ... Down to the f*cking ground!"

"Thank you," she added, almost as an afterthought, "and free Palestine!"

Freedom of speech—paid for with the blood and treasure of (mostly) young Americans over the generations—was there not to be celebrated or protected but leveraged to degrade and destroy. It is small solace that this vile, smug appears to have been removed, but not before the poison had been posted and its unbridled hatred has been given a platform marketers drool over.

There were other highly organized, well-funded American-hating groups that jumped on a July 4th "Shut it Down for Palestine" event.

Here's Code Pink, an extremist group more supportive of North Korea's dictator and Hamas' goals than anything America's Founding Fathers had to say:

Here is the tag on their call to action that day:

"For nine months, we have mobilized and organized for Gaza, for Palestine, and for a better future for all! For nine months, the United States has continued to fund, fuel, and directly facilitate the genocide in Gaza. We say NO MORE! This country's continued support for genocide at

every turn of history does not represent us, the people. This July 4th, join us on the right side of history! We don't celebrate the legacy of genocide, colonialism, and slavery that July 4th symbolizes, but we struggle for true LIBERATION! Together, we can forge a new just future where the US no longer warmongers the world over..."

It is a small wonder that Code Pink sent out online flyers to help them.

A Los Angeles Synagogue in the heart of Los Angeles' largest Jewish community—the Westside's Pico-Robertson area when it dared to announce a community event promoting real estate opportunities in Israel. Adas Torah Synagogue, home to hundreds of religious Jewish families, including some of the city's preeminent Judaic scholars, was suddenly transformed into ground zero for well-trained agitators who came to create a riot by attempting to overwhelm a small police contingent and ensure the pro-Zionist event be thwarted by all means necessary. Only the presence of a small group of highly-trained armed Magen Am volunteers did Code Pink and associates fail in their mission, but not before many of us were sprayed with bear spray.

Looking back at that event, it was clear that Code Pink saw an opportunity to further its real goal of weakening the United States by driving Americans apart. They are adept at hooking their star to any cause—sometimes, Palestinians on an elite campus or outside a synagogue create chaos. If Jews—especially Zionists are roadkill, all the better.

What should we be doing the day after the failed assassination of former President Trump, the week after Adas Torah, and 10 days after the July 4th burning of American flags?

Here's Simon Wiesenthal's advice: "During the Shoah, we Jews were all alone, no allies, no friends. If there is one lesson we must learn going forward—we Jews need new friends and new allies." Sound advice from Mr. Wiesenthal. It is time to roll up our sleeves and build those bridges—before the next crisis may permanently block our way.

Read online here:

[The MediaLine](#)

[Jerusalem Post](#)



Stay Connected



Simon Wiesenthal Center
1399 South Roxbury Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90035
310.553.9036