

I attended the 2026 ADL Never Is Now Summit in NYC last week. Overall, the conference was a well produced event with great speakers and showcased unity and bridge building with allies and other communities.

There was one session I attended that fell far short of the standard set by the rest of the conference entitled "Accountability Starts Within: Confronting Antisemitism on the Right". The program featured two speakers, Elan Carr of IAC and Michael Doran of the Hudson Institute. When the program began, two more speakers who were not listed on the program or on the general speaker roster joined in: Daniel Flesch of Defense Technology Alliance and Matthew Brooks of the Republican Jewish Coalition (who moderated the panel).

At no point in the 75 minute program was the topic of antisemitism on the right discussed in a serious matter. Tucker Carlson and his rising influence was the only substantial discussion among the panelists. Even then, the moderator Matthew Brooks spent time pondering Tucker's shift to anti-Zionist and antisemitic rhetoric (no one on the panel was able to answer that question) and he expressed remorse because Tucker could have been President Trump's most effective communicator on US/Israel policy.

Mr. Brooks in his opening remarks stated that the mainstream of the Democratic Party and the political left have completely abandoned Israel and the Jewish community. He asserted that the only home for American Jews is with the GOP and the only hope for keeping America as the safe haven for Jews as we know it. He asserted that under his leadership the RJC has adopted a "zero tolerance" policy for antisemitism and anti-Zionism in the Republican party. The majority of the session continued along this theme. There was no data presented on the resurgence of antisemitism on the far right; there were brief mentions of influencers Candance Owens, Nick Fuentes and his Groyper's movement, and more wistful thinking about Tucker Carlson. There were no solutions presented on how the political right can do better to tamp down what the American public has experienced in Charlottesville and Tree of Life. No self-reflection. Each speaker amplified the other's opinions that antisemitism and anti-Zionism were problems of the political left. Matthew Brooks grouped J Street with JVP as Jewish anti-Zionist groups. This is a profoundly wrong statement about J Street, no matter one's opinion of the organization.

The closing allowed for brief Q&A. After reviewing the questions, Matthew Brooks stated there were a number of audience members asking the same question: How to address the record of antisemitism from President Trump. Instead of answering this question, the panelists took turns dismissing this notion altogether and shaming us, the audience members, who dared ask this question in the first place. There was no daylight between the panelists' answers. The four speakers asserted President Trump has been the greatest president in US history for Israel and the Jewish community. That he could not possibly be antisemitic because he has Jewish grandchildren. That this question says more about us in the audience and we should "cease and desist" from further discussion on the subject. That merely asking this question could contribute to antisemitism among non-Jews so we need to be more careful about such public questioning of the president.

I was shocked by this final round of remarks by these leaders in the Jewish community and American political ecosystem. To employ public shaming instead of thoughtful debate is not a Jewish value. To stifle free speech is un-American. The moderator and panelists did not address the topic in any serious way and used their allotted time to openly bash the Democratic Party, the political left and anyone in the Jewish community who dared question their views of President Trump and US/Israel foreign policy. They simply reinforced their own partisan perspectives rather than examining them. ADL leadership should be aware of this when conducting a review of the 2026 Summit. It is a shame that the overall theme of unity and coalition building was gutted by these four intelligent but close-minded speakers. I hope the ADL will look into this matter and do better next time.