The tyranny of strongmen

A timely and enjoyable look at the personality of dictators and the thorny issue of democracy

By Tony Barber

Democracy is on the defensive. Authoritarianism is on the rise. The consequences of the two are being studied in a new book, How to Be a Dictator, by Frank Dikötter. The book is a welcome addition to a small but growing body of work about the nature of dictatorship, one that is all too relevant in the current age.

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On the morning of June 9, 2014, the Jews of the world came together to celebrate the 67th anniversary of the State of Israel. This year, however, the celebration was marked by a wave of anti-Semitism that swept across the globe. The most troubling aspect of this wave of anti-Semitism was the widespread denial of the State of Israel by leaders of some of the world’s most powerful countries. This denial was accompanied by a surge in violent anti-Semitic attacks, both in Israel and in the diaspora.

Of course, Israel's critics are not necessarily anti-Semitic, as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recently argued in a speech to the United Nations General Assembly. The real question is whether these criticisms are motivated by anti-Semitism, or whether they are simply a reflection of a broader debate about Israel's policies and actions.

It is clear that some of Israel's critics are driven by anti-Semitism, while others are simply expressing their opposition to Israel's policies and actions. The challenge for those who seek to combat anti-Semitism is to distinguish between the two.

The solution is not simply to condemn anti-Semitism, but to address the underlying causes of anti-Semitism. This includes addressing the root causes of anti-Semitism, such as economic inequality, political polarization, and ideological extremism. It also includes addressing the broader debate about Israel's policies and actions.

In conclusion, the wave of anti-Semitism that swept across the globe this year is a cause for concern. It is essential that we work together to combat this trend, and to ensure that the Jewish people are able to live in safety and security. The State of Israel is a beacon of light in a world that is often dark and dangerous. Let us all work together to support Israel, and to ensure that it continues to thrive in the years to come.