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# Left, Right spar over Orange controversy and threat of BDS at Herzliya Conference

*Herzog: This is a new intifada • Bennett: Days of attacking Israel without consequence are over*

• By NOA AMOUYAL

While the Right rejoiced over Orange CEO Stephane Richard's apology for his remarks that he would withdraw his company from Israel if he could, Zionist Union head Isaac Herzog warned at the Herzliya Conference on Sunday that it was not a victorious moment for Israel, but rather a sign of defeat.

"It's good that the CEO of Orange went on the defensive. But the totality of this problem – this disease – it's important to understand that we are talking about a new intifada," Herzog

told the audience on the opening day of the conference.

"If I were prime minister, I would have already devised an organized plan to defeat the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement," he said in speech that largely marked what he would do differently had he been elected to the premiership in March.

Speaking from first-hand from visits to UK campuses, Herzog said he saw students who were proof of "disgusting displays of

brainwashing" where they make their decisions based on their inability to understand

the difference between Israeli policies and the existence of Israel itself.

"Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has failed to formulate a strategic plan to combat this struggle. We are seeing boycotts impact every single aspect of our daily life – academia, culture, sports and, of course, business and finance," he said, explaining that BDS poses a dangerous and omnipresent threat.

Meretz chairwoman Zehava Gal-On, also in attendance, agreed that much of the blame for the BDS movement lies at Netanyahu's feet.

"The main reason for the boycott is not anti-Semitism," she said. "It was brought upon us by Prime Minister Netanyahu. The settlements and the denial of freedom of the Palestinians."

Bayit Yehudi Chairman Naftali Bennett, however, appeared vindicated when addressing the audience, citing the debacle with Orange as an example of diplomatic triumph over the movement.

"Let it be known to any company or organization considering boycotting us: We will hit back. We will attack our attackers. We will boycott our

boycotters," he said, calling the conflict with the telecommunications giant a "watershed" moment in which, for the first time Israel and its supporters fought back.

"If you are thinking of boycotting Israel, keep in mind that there are tens of millions of Israel supporters around the world – Jews and non-Jews with buying power and boycott power. Whoever boycotts Israel, will be boycotted... We will no longer remain silent.

"Up until now, it was very easy to attack Israel and not pay a price. Those days are over," he said.



ZIONIST UNION chairman Isaac Herzog addresses the opening day of the Herzliya Conference yesterday. (Erez Harodi/Osim Tzilum)