



# Democracy Day 2017

The IDC Student Union and the Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy & Strategy hold their annual conference under the banner of “Shared Israeliness.”

For the 11th time, students from the Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy & Strategy together with the IDC Student Union explored and showcased the challenges facing Israeli society at their annual Democracy Day conference.

Politicians and academics delved into core issues on the public agenda and engaged in frank discussions with IDC students.

The conference was held in cooperation with IDC’s “Shared Israeliness” initiative, part of President **Reuven Rivlin**’s “Israeli Hope” project, which he laid out in his much-publicized speech at the 2015 Herzliya Conference. In that address, dubbed the “Four Tribes” speech, Rivlin called for increased cooperation between the secular, religious, ultra-Orthodox and Arab sectors in Israel. That speech led to IDC Herzliya’s creation of the Initiative for an Inclusive Israeli Society (“Shared Israeliness”) under the direction of Prof. **Alex Mintz**.



Conference panel topics included “Start-Up Nation for All,” “Does Where You Come From Determine Where You’re Going?”

“Four Tribes – Four Opinions,” and “Shared Israeliness in the Knesset.”



**“Our common denominator must be a connection through shared fundamental values and a common vision - that’s what makes different tribes into one nation.”**

– MK Tzipi Livni.

A number of Knesset members were at the conference, including IDC alumni **Merav Ben-Ari** (Kulanu) and **Yoel Hasson** (Zionist Union), as well as **Anat Berko** (Likud), **Dov Khenin** (Joint List), **Haim Jelin** (Yesh Atid), **Yaakov Margi** (Shas) and **Tzipi Livni** (Zionist Union).

“It is possible to connect the religious and the secular, the ultra-Orthodox and the national-religious,” said Livni. “We just need to create a common ground that will form the basis on which each tribe can build and live in their own

*Dr. Chaim B. Weizmann, academic advisor and senior subject-matter expert for IDC’s “Shared Israeliness” initiative, moderates a panel of Knesset members (from left): Haim Jelin, Merav Ben-Ari, Yoel Hasson and Dov Khenin.*

uniqueness. This common denominator cannot be technical, that is, Israeli citizenship. We all were born here or came here, but that is not enough. It is also not enough to have the common denominator be based on fear – fear that we have enemies who want to destroy us. Our common denominator must be a connection through shared fundamental values and a common vision – that’s what makes different tribes into one nation.”

Other participants in the conference included CEO of the National Council of Pre-Military Leadership Academies **Dani Zamir**, head of the National Union of Israeli Students **Ram Shefa**, and political commentator **Nechama Douek**.

Addressing the students, Prof. **Uriel Reichman**, president and founder of IDC, said, “True leaders must have the strength to stand up against trends that oppose the values of society. A leader who rides the wave of populism, even when it is rising against our basic values, is not actually a leader at all but rather someone who gets dragged along. My hope is for you to become true leaders when you leave IDC, with the inner strength to stand up for this country’s values.” ★

– Ariel Rodal-Spieler