

Free From What? Protestors & Palestine Under Hamas

by [Patrick J. McCloskey](#) (May 2024)



Student protestors at Columbia University, October 14, 2023.
(REUTERS/David 'Dee' Delgado © Thomson Reuters)

In the Upper Midwest, there's plenty of snow but no snowflakes—well, some, but nothing compared to viciously insane “protests” at my grad school alma mater, Columbia University, as well as at Harvard and other highly selective institutions. Recently, the neo-Nazi (literally) virus has started spreading to non-elite universities. Hopefully, this academic year will end before the contagion completely ruins higher education.

There are large swaths of sanity in higher education, thankfully, not only between the coasts but even at the Ivies, albeit shouted down by the over-privileged mobs.

Days after the Hamas terror attack on October 7 last year, I saw someone walking away from downtown Fargo carrying a sign that read, "Free Palestine." It was a tiny one-time protest, while much larger pro-Palestinian—and largely pro-Hamas—demonstrations were staged at colleges and universities nationwide, even before any Israeli response. Then, massive, well-coordinated (and well-funded) protests proliferated in major cities throughout the West—and will likely disrupt the Democrat National Convention in August in Chicago.

"From the river to the sea, Palestine must be free!" the protestors scream and chant. But what exactly does Palestine need to be free from?

These and other related questions should carry a sense of urgency in light of the sheer brutality of the Hamas attack. About 1,200 innocent Israelis were slaughtered, and hundreds were taken captive. Atrocities included beheading infants, roasting babies alive, raping and torturing children, women and men—both alive and dead—along with castration and genital mutilation. Entire families were disfigured and slain, often beginning with the children. The terrorists reveled in their savagery, making videos dripping with blood and glee, which they posted on social media.

And what was the response even of many of our supposedly brightest college students at the most "elite" universities? Numerous student groups—including 30 at Harvard and more than 20 at my alma mater, Columbia—immediately posted statements supporting Hamas, as well as staging protests and harassing Jewish students, professors and businesses.

In fact, a Harris poll revealed that 51 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds agreed that Hamas terrorism was justified. Something

is very rotten even far from the state of Denmark.

Certainly, academia carries considerable blame because of the predominate ideology and some professors actually cheered the Hamas attacks, declaring feelings of “exhilaration.” They have yet to be fired. Apparently, cheering for mass murder is the studious way to start your day.

War of Digital Fog

Today’s students are supposedly a digitally savvy generation, blessed with more information, analysis and wisdom available via the internet, mostly for free, than any previous generation. Vast libraries of books have been digitized, almost all publications have online versions, millions of online videos explaining quantum mechanics and most anything are readily available. And access is available for everyone with an internet connection, regardless of formal education.

In fact, *The Complete Harvard Classics* can be downloaded for \$1.99—and alone might provide a better education than four years at Harvard, as pro- Hamas protests and the sorry tale of the moral and intellectual corruption of Harvard’s leadership have demonstrated.

Yes, students grow up in a very confusing avalanche of digital information. Traditional news venues, including print, radio and TV, are all available online, as well as alternative news sites which now outpace legacy media. Social media includes billions of users worldwide communicating with each other and drawing on news sources and countless websites for information. Content producers include individuals, companies, organizations, governments, as well as bots posing as humans, which enemy nation states, criminals and intelligence services employ for various, and often nefarious, ends.

The problem is that so much information online is inaccurate,

if not deliberately misleading propaganda. Mainstream media regularly misreport events and offer bogus analyses. Consider, for example, the New York Times coverage of the bombing of the al-Ahli Hospital on October 17. The Times foolishly reported as fact what a Hamas source claimed—that the Israelis had bombed the facility—without proper verification. Later an investigation proved that a Hamas rocket hit the hospital. But the misbegotten story damaged Israel's reputation and betrayed the newspaper's bias, which is common currency in the legacy media.

Such narratives, blaming Jews and supporting terrorists, are greatly amplified via social media, where similar narratives originate as well. Almost a third of Americans under 30 regularly get their [news from TikTok](#), which is Chinese owned and accountable to the Chinese Communist Party that purged—directly or indirectly—[Israel's name from maps](#) on Baidu's and Alibaba's websites. These are among the world's largest tech companies. YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and other social media sites—also, far from consistently trustworthy—are frequented often, and even at [higher rates](#) among today's 13- to 17-year-olds.

For decades, international terrorist organizations such as al Qaeda and the Islamic State have utilized social media for recruitment and operations, according to the Center for Strategic and International Studies ([CSIS](#)), as well as to gain support in the West. Hamas and Hezbollah, in contrast, are nationalistic and focus their message more on their own populations via traditional media. Hamas's direct use of social media is limited by Israel's counterterrorism measures.

However, [posts](#) by Hamas supporters on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and other social media sites “are still reaching mass audiences on social networks, spreading gruesome footage and political messages to millions of people.” On Telegram, a well-known messaging app, for example, the number of followers increased from 340,000 to 1.3 million in the week after

Hamas's October 7 attack.

How many protestors would know that, before the attack, Gaza hadn't been occupied by the Israelis since 2004? Occupation of the West Bank continues for security reasons. But how many protestors would know that this occupation would have ended years ago if the Palestinian leaders accepted a two-state solution?

True vs False

The ability to distinguish truth from falsehood has eroded, especially among current and recent students, because so many of educational institutions and think tanks are dominated by an orthodoxy that dictates a grossly oversimplified division of the world into "oppressors" and "oppressed." This originated in Karl Marx's writings, in which history was seen as a power struggle between classes, initially proletariat versus bourgeoisie. When I was studying at Columbia in the late 1990s, a soft form of this was taught as, "It's about class, not race." Since then, much of higher ed has shifted sharply to race, gender and sexual orientation as the metrics of the oppressed-oppressor dichotomy. According to this orthodoxy, white people, especially males, are deemed "oppressors," and Jews are christened as the primary chosen people—that is, the targeted scapegoats. Accordingly, Palestinians are designated as "oppressed," regardless of brutality.

This worldview clearly promotes violence since the oppressed may use "any means necessary," as inscribed on pro-Hamas placards and as [20th-century history](#) tragically shows.

Monstrous Monstrosity & Nabka Lie

Before shouting slogans—especially those calling for genocide either explicitly with variations of “[Gas the Jews!](#)” or implicitly with “From the River to the Sea”—protestors would be best served by first conducting serious research. Otherwise, they cannot support their positions in a debate—thus the shouting and robotic chants—and leave themselves open to manipulation, which seems to be working.

To justify Palestinian terrorism, a “big lie”—referred to as *Nakba*—has been perpetrated since Israel’s founding in 1948, as Sol Stern explains in the interview below. Stern is an acclaimed journalist with more than a half-century of experience and expertise. *Nakba* is central to the view that Israel is solely to blame for the Hamas attack, as Harvard’s student organizations claimed.

In response to the fundamental question—What does Palestine need to be free from?—Prof. Ivan Jankovic’s article “[Monstrous Monstrosity](#),” which I edited for 360 Review, shows that Palestinians primarily need to be liberated from Hamas and their ideology, which motivates all Islamic terrorist organizations and states, especially Iran. Radical Islam comes not from an older, more authentic Islam but from the adoption of the two worst intellectual systems ever devised in the West: Naziism and Marxism.

These were imported into the Middle East beginning in the 1920s and dressed up with misused Islamic notions and verses from the Koran. In short, Islamic terrorism’s war against the West isn’t a clash of civilizations but a moral and intellectual descent into duplicating the deepest hell the West has ever spawned. It is neither genuine nor even vaguely original, but a crude example of cultural appropriation at its worst.

Astonishingly, not only does Hamas attack innocent civilians and seek to exterminate all Jews, they also seek to inflict as many casualties and as much suffering as possible on their own

people, either directly or indirectly. Then Hamas blames the Jews for propaganda purposes, and too many naïve reporters, bloggers, YouTubers et al. swallow the bait uncritically. Digitization amplifies what might otherwise be ripples in the fabric of fact and truth into tsunamis of deception.

Intrinsic Worth vs Might

The logical absurdity of promoting terrorism in service of any form of justice should be obvious. The fundamental justification for justice—and indeed for all human rights—is firmly rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition, which birthed Western Civilization's operating principle: that all individuals have intrinsic worth and therefore are entitled to rights. Individuals are not equal by any objective measure, nor are groups. Treating people equally requires accepting a metaphysical principle based on the religious conviction that humanity has a divine origin. Adherence to this principle—the individual's intrinsic worth—doesn't demand fealty to the underlying faith-based assumption, but it certainly requires allegiance to its fruit. The only alternative involves the powerful ruling as ruthlessly as they wish over the powerless.

That is why the Declaration of Independence proclaims the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness as inalienable—meaning, not given by the state nor the King of England. What the government or a dictator (as in Marxism or Naziism) or a monarch gives can also be taken away. Inalienable also, then, are the rights and freedoms of nations.

Even if Hamas's goal was an independent Palestinian state, choosing terror as a means utterly invalidates the quest, since terror denies the intrinsic worth of individuals and therefore of groups, including one's own.

What Hamas is really proclaiming is the right to kill all Jews

in so far as it has power to do so. This implies that Jews in response have the right to kill all Palestinians because they have the power. In short, supporting Hamas entails embracing the proposition that might—and only might—makes right. Sound familiar? Is that the vicious hell we want to spawn?

Censorship & Protest



In February 1968, African American sanitation workers in Memphis, TN, went on strike to protest lousy working conditions and being paid significantly less than their white peers. They carried "I AM A MAN" signs demanding to be treated as individuals rather than as a group. Martin Luther King Jr. travelled there to support the strikers, but on April 4, he was fatally shot on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel. (Photo by Ernest C. Withers, Sr.)

One would think that the world-shaking issues mentioned above would engender vigorous discussion and debate on university campuses. Not so, especially at the Ivies. In fact, many of the most allegedly elite institutions suppress free inquiry

and speech the most. Harvard scored dead last (248th) at “abysmal” in the “2024 College Free Speech Rankings.” The University of Pennsylvania ranked 247th, while Columbia University was rated the worst in the previous year’s ranking.

The right to protest is protected by the First Amendment. But this right comes with a sacred responsibility to seek justice through truth. Protesting against Israeli actions might become a moral obligation, but only if the facts warrant this—not some ideological precept or ill-disguised hatred. Yes, pay attention to how well the Israeli Defense Forces follow international law without falling prey to propaganda. The best defense against lies is to read across the entire viewpoint spectrum, from the Washington Post to the Free Press to City Journal, as examples. And bear in mind that Hamas and other terrorist organizations scorn all humanitarian considerations and ache to kill you, even if you support them.

As Sen. John Fetterman (D-PA) asked, “Why aren’t they protesting, ‘When will we get the hostages back home?’ Why aren’t they protesting Hamas? Why aren’t they protesting systemic rape and torture of Israeli women and children?”

Israel’s Dilemma

The civilian death toll in Gaza is tragically high and cannot be completely avoided in rooting out Hamas—by design. As cowardly terrorists, Hamas uses its women and children as human shields, and its vital infrastructure—including hospitals—as cover, to ensure that most of Gaza must be leveled and tens of thousands perish. As a result, Israel is accused of genocide, which is false. There is no evidence of Israeli intentions to wipe out all Palestinians, let alone all Arabs in the region. In contrast, there is much evidence that the Israeli military strives to avoid civilian casualties, which Hamas does its worst to thwart.

Israeli knows well that any ceasefire will be used by Hamas to rearm. Worse, going forward, the stakes only heighten as Iran, the sponsor of Hamas's terror, approaches nuclear capability. Israel has very limited time to achieve security. It seems possible and perhaps probable that Hamas would deploy a dirty nuclear weapon, for example, if capable.

Hamas is entirely responsible for death and destruction in Gaza, other than possible instances where the Israelis fail to comply with international law and minimize the damage. The inherent difficulty in protesting against such reported incidents, however, is that it would take credible investigations to determine veracity—not news based solely on Hamas input.

It's important to note that, by their actions—in contrast to public protestations—every Arab nation in the region clearly indicates their desire to eradicate Hamas. Not one of them will accept Palestinian refugees to prevent Hamas from spreading. Consider that Egypt is currently building a 16-foot-high concrete wall at the Gaza border.

Still, protestors could legitimately demand that Israel fulfill its humanitarian obligations and march if failures are confirmed.

I shout as loudly as any protestor: Free Palestine—from Hamas!

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