

# The Perfect Antisemitic Storm

by [Ardie Goldman](#) (September 2024)



Pro-Palestinian Protestors, New York, October, 2023

At six-thirty in the morning, Saturday, October 7, 2023, coinciding with the Jewish festival of Simchat Torah, an estimated 3,000 Hamas armed terrorists broke through Israel's security fence at a number of points along the northern and eastern edges of the Gaza Strip. They streamed out of the Palestinian enclave in pick-up trucks, cars, on motorcycles, and on foot. Other terrorists, armed paragliders, flew down from the sky. They attacked and massacred at over 360 young celebrants at the Supernova Sukkot Gathering, an open-air music festival situated near Kibbutz Re'im.

Following behind were more Gazans, young and old, individuals and families. The immediate target of these invaders was the communities in what is known as the southern "Gaza envelope," mostly kibbutzim, that lay in closest proximity to the Israel-

Gaza border; some just one kilometer distance. The invaders' objective was to slaughter, rape and pillage; those following in the rear came to scavenge and plunder the possessions of the Jewish victims. The terrorists succeeded in murdering some 1,200 civilians, Israelis, foreigners, Jews and non-Jews. Many, as planned, returned to Gaza with hostages, including some 250 men, women, young children and elderly. Some had already had been shot, stabbed, beaten or otherwise injured, some already dead. As has since often been pointed out, October 7<sup>th</sup> was the bloodiest day in Jewish history since the Holocaust.

Within less than twenty-four hours, with hundreds of terrorists still at large within Israel's borders hiding from IDF troops, yet still seeking victims, giant outdoor celebrations erupted in a number of American cities and around the world. The revelers had two messages: (1) support for the Hamas terrorists' invasion of Israel and (2) protest against Israel's first efforts at self-defense and retaliation. The chants "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free," meaning the dismantling of Israel and its replacement by a Palestinian state, and "Intifada, Intifada," a call for havoc and bedlam, were the two dominant rallying cries at these demonstrations. But together with the condemnation of Israel and Zionism were chants and placards that were unabashedly antisemitic, including "Jews to the ovens," "Jews back to Poland" and "Fuck the Jews."

News articles and op-eds portraying Israel in a negative light had long become a staple of mainstream and social media. Mainly, they purported to expose claims by Palestinians of oppressive treatment under Israeli occupation. But criticism of Israel, American Jews told themselves, had little personal implication, especially as over time many had distanced themselves from the Jewish state. In any event, anti-Zionism, they rationalized, was not antisemitism, so Jews were still OK in America. But since October 7<sup>th</sup>, this sanguinity has become

harder to maintain. The unfolding of events renders inarguable that antisemitism and anti-Zionism are, in fact, inextricably linked, if not two sides of the same coin.

The Jews of America were shocked by the immediacy of, the numbers involved, and the outpouring of hostility at the seemingly ubiquitous anti-Israel demonstrations. Their shock was compounded with other emotions, by disappointment, by dismay, even anger, upon discovering soon that non-Jews with whom they study, work and even socialize, chose silence in response to the news of the atrocities in Israel. Worse, some went further by finding reason to criticize Israel within but a day or two of the slaughter. Israel's reaction to Hamas's attack, they opined, was overly aggressive, "disproportionate." Israel's army, they claimed, was inflicting unnecessary carnage upon Gaza's innocent residents. Gazans, they argued, are not Hamas.

Jewish communal organizations that had partnered for years with other sectarian groups to advance common domestic interests felt betrayed when the latter, who they had considered allies, refused to speak out. Even more appalling, some of these organizations sought to justify the Hamas attack as legitimate resistance since, in their words, it was the outcome of decades of illegal occupation and the suffering Israel had visited upon Palestinians.

In the following weeks and months public condemnation of Israel continued to grow in response to on-screen images from Gaza showing the physical destruction and the families displaced due to Israel's retaliation. The emotions elicited by these scenes were compounded by daily reports based on misinformation provided by the Hamas-operated Gazan Health Ministry. Journalists reported a humanitarian crisis in Gaza; starvation, rampant disease and most damning, a constantly rising number of civilian deaths and injuries, mostly said to be women and children. These reports fueled the calumny that Israel was committing genocide in Gaza. These unverified and

libelous claims spread quickly across social media. Hamas is infamous for presenting lies to the media to promote the image of Palestinians as victims and to implicate Israel for perpetrating war crimes. In spite of Hamas's reputation for fabrication, no objective third party has ever undertaken its own monitoring of Gaza's casualties. And for good reason. This would not be possible as it is understood by all media outlets and international NGOs working in Gaza that any challenge to the veracity of Hamas's claims would result in their representatives' expulsion, and possibly worse.

Throughout nearly six decades the Israeli-Palestinian conflict had never reached the level of international attention it received in the aftermath of October 7<sup>th</sup>. From media footage, apart from those protestors wearing masks, it is possible to discern that many among the throngs demonstrating in North America, Europe, South America and Australia do not appear to be of Middle-Eastern background. It is not probable that these Western demonstrators have a personal connection to the conflict in Gaza. Nevertheless, something succeeded in motivating hundreds of thousands to demonstrate in solidarity with a people and on behalf of a cause of which they know relatively little. It is possible that they were roused by the shocking media images and claims of genocide and starvation. But exactly where these alleged tragedies were transpiring was not clear to all. When queried by journalists about the chant "From the river to the sea, Palestine shall be free," many demonstrators were forced to admit they were unsure about which river and sea were being referenced.

Come spring, the locus of the demonstrations mostly shifted away from the streets and onto university campuses, with the encampment at Columbia University taking pride of place for receiving the most media attention, followed by UCLA. Students demanded (1) a permanent cease-fire in Gaza sans consequences for Hamas, (2) that each university divest from companies doing business with the State of Israel, and that (3) each

school sever all ties with Israeli academic institutions. Protest encampments on university grounds spread across the country, often erected just inside the entrance to or in the center of campus. The protestors not only disrupted academic life, but were responsible for creating an atmosphere hostile to Jewish students and faculty. Students, Jewish or not, attempting to engage in dialogue with protestors were derisively labeled Zionists; they were shunned, harangued and prevented from entering the encampments. At times arguments between the two sides deteriorated into physical altercations of shoving, punching and spitting. Video clips available on YouTube bear witness to the anti-Zionist and antisemitic vitriol that characterized these encampments, in spite of the fact that some of the protestors were themselves Jews. Turmoil ensued when local police were summoned by university authorities to forcibly disband the encampments. This resulted in an estimated 3,000 students being arrested or detained by police across the country by the end of the spring semester. Protest encampments were created at over 130 colleges and universities in the United States, in addition to those in Canada, Europe and Australia. Some stood standing even after the end of the school year.

The war between Israel and Hamas was being played out thousands of miles away in Gaza. Yet, the Jews in America found themselves unwittingly caught up in the conflict, serving anti-Zionists as proxies for Israel. As the fighting in Gaza wore on, reports arose of physical assaults against Jews and vandalism against Jewish homes and businesses. It became evident that the war in the Middle-East had opened up a second front, the Diaspora Jewish community.

This should not have come as a surprise. The belligerent, even violent, response to the massacre that took place in Israel on October 7<sup>th</sup> was but the climax of the crescendo of animus towards Israel that had been rising in America and elsewhere in the West for the past few decades, particularly on college

campuses, among intellectuals and other cultural elites. What was taking place was not, to borrow the infamous statement by U.N. General Secretary Antonio Guterres, "happening in a vacuum." What appeared to be a sudden tsunami of antisemitism was in fact years in the making.

Tens of thousands of Americans did not awake the morning of October 8th suddenly believing Israel is to be an illegitimate, colonialist, apartheid and genocidal state and decide to do something about it. Nor did they suddenly decide that all Jews are Zionists and thus are complicit in Israel's alleged cruelty to Palestinians. The ability of the pro-Palestinian camp to seemingly overnight induce hundreds of thousands of protestors, not only in the United States but in a number of countries, to block major thoroughfares, bridges and airports, and to inspire thousands of students to take control over public areas and buildings on college campuses, was stunning. But it also raises questions. The first question is how pro-Palestinian activists succeeded in manipulating the hearts and minds of so many non-Muslim Americans, drawing out hoards to support a cause so geographically distant and so detached from their own lives? A second concerns the organization behind and funding of these protests that have not fully ceased for over three-quarters of a year; to what extent were these demonstrations planned in advance?

Some observers expressed doubt that all those protesting were truly concerned about the welfare of the people living in Gaza. One explanation for these demonstrations was "they are really an expression of antisemitism." While some of the demonstrators did employ antisemitic themes and images, antisemitism alone does not account for the huge numbers of protestors, nor for their enthusiasm and doggedness. Public antisemitism in America noticeably ebbed following the end of World War II due to what some have labeled "gentile Holocaust guilt." But this trend suffered a reverse in recent decades. Still, in spite of rising levels antisemitism, the independent

array of antisemitic hate groups in America lacks the ability to have organized and directed the massive and widespread protests beginning on October 8th. Something else was afoot. That something else was the amalgamation of a latent antisemitism with a virulent anti-Zionism. This merger was the product of a series of historical developments beginning more half a century ago.

The torrent of antisemitism that burst out following the October 7<sup>th</sup> massacre is attributable to nine historic developments, or factors, that are discussed below. These developments overlap chronologically and are not autonomous. Even an awareness of these developments as each emerged and historically progressed would not have allowed one to predict what would follow October 7<sup>th</sup> in the days, weeks and months to come. However, in hindsight, it is possible to see how collectively they became responsible for the turmoil of this past year.

### **The Resiliency of Antisemitism**

The late Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks described antisemitism as a continuously mutating virus that infects the body politic. In spite of myriad efforts to eliminate it, antisemitism has yet to be eradicated. The United States has never been free of antisemitism, though following World War II and for the last three-quarters of a century, until October 7<sup>th</sup>, it had not been a major concern among America's Jews. The current surge in antisemitism constitutes a revival at a level surpassing even that experienced by Jews in America during the years leading up to the war.

Antisemitism's most recent mutation, anti-Zionism, emerged through an unlikely partnership between the political far Left and Islamism, a relationship known as the Red-Green Alliance.

Adherents of these two ideologies, as much as they differ, nevertheless found common cause in attacking not only Israel, Jews and Judaism, but also America and the West. Islamists look upon a sovereign Jewish nation-state as an affront to their religion. The secular political Left considers Israel an illegitimate, colonialist, white apartheid, racist regime. In addition, both wish to see the demise of the United States and its open and democratic way of life, though it is precisely America's openness that has allowed the adherents of both hostile ideologies to operate on its soil.

Young, liberal Americans, particularly those enrolled in America's elite universities, may be counted upon for their support of an array of social justice causes. With their youth comes an aspiration, which for many fades with age and life experience, to live in a just society where all people are treated equally. They know that people of color are victims of systemic white racism. And they feel virtuous when demonstrating on behalf oppressed groups or populations, currently the Palestinians. But in their zeal to see a Palestinian state become a reality (with or without Israel alongside) they are either unaware of, or choose to ignore, the darker realities of Middle Eastern regimes. These include Muslim Sharia Law, slavery, torture, misogyny, the execution of homosexuals, the glorification of jihad, and the rejection of any of the freedoms inherent in democratic society. Islamists, in spite of their disdain for Western liberal values, nevertheless see in their partnership with the political Left an opportunity to sow chaos within Western society by gaining control of its key institutions, beginning with universities and local government. The Red-Green alliance, as improbable a marriage as this may seem, has, at least until this point, proven beneficial to both partners. It has allowed Islamic ideas to sway the beliefs of many young Western minds and it has succeeded in making Zionism a dirty word and Israel a pariah state within many circles.



Historically, American Jews have focused their fears over antisemitism on the far Right, including neo-Nazis, white supremacists, "skin heads" and such ilk. However, beginning in the late 1960s, following Israel's victory in the Six-Day War, antisemitism in America started to become recognizable on the Left. It emerged initially among radical political activists who championed the cause of dark-skinned peoples worldwide. They were tutored by sources within the Soviet Union in the finer points of propaganda and fomenting civil unrest. At the urging of their mentors, among their targets were Israel and Zionism.

Beginning in 1979, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) began publishing an annual audit of reported antisemitic incidents. The audit divides the agency's annual reports into the categories of harassment, vandalism and assault. The average number of total reported incidents in most years was approximately one-thousand. Numbers rose concomitantly in response to Israel's Gaza conflicts, in 2009, 2012, 2014 and 2021. These were the years of the Tree of Life Synagogue massacre, the Poway synagogue shooting and an unprecedented high number of random physical assaults on Jews, particularly in ultra-Orthodox areas of New York and New Jersey.

By 2022, the number of reported incidents had reached 3,698, a 400% increase within the course of a decade. In the first nine months of 2023, prior to October 7<sup>th</sup>, the ADL figure was nearing four-thousand. It was obvious that the atmosphere in America was changing. However, some Jews chose to disregard the significance of what was occurring, telling themselves that the increasing hostility was due to anti-Zionism, not to antisemitism. Others believed it to be a transient phenomenon that would soon run its course.

The comparatively benign antisemitism of the era in which most adult American Jews alive today grew up was no longer benign; it had become malignant. It had transformed into something

larger, uglier and more dangerous; it had reverted to the more aggressive historic antisemitism most contemporary Western Jews have only read about or seen on film. It was ominous and it was waiting for October 7<sup>th</sup> to happen.

## **The Unsettled Political Status of the 1948 Arabs of British Mandate Palestine**

The pretext for the seemingly interminable Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the issue of statehood, specifically the unsettled political status of most of the Arabs and their descendants who in 1948 resided in British Mandate Palestine. Had Arab leadership agreed to a state in 1947 the circumstances that led to the present war in Gaza would not have existed; there would be no Hamas terrorist group to invade Israel's borders and massacre its citizens. There would be none of the current civil and campus disruptions. This is not to say that if the Arabs of British Mandate Palestine had at the time opted for a state that the Middle-East would currently be free of antisemitism. Nor can it be argued that if a state called Palestine were to be established tomorrow antisemitism would cease to exist. But had the leaders of the Palestinian Arabs accepted any one of the, at least, four offers for a state with which they were presented (1937, 1947, 2000 and 2008), this specific historic grievance would not have been available in October 2023 to serve as the catalyst for the outbreak of pro-Palestinian and antisemitism-infused demonstrations.

## **From Terrorist Group to Cause Celebre: The Rewards of Legitimization**

On June 5, 1968 as Democratic presidential candidate Senator Robert F. Kennedy was passing through the kitchen on the way out of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles at the end of a

boisterous campaign rally, he was fatally shot at close range by Jerusalem-born Sirhan Sirhan. An article about the assassination appearing in the Boston Globe stated that the "slaying gave the US a first taste of Mideast terror: analysts call Robert Kennedy's death a prelude to kidnappings and attacks." For Americans of that era, Sirhan Sirhan was an Arab, not a Palestinian. There were no Palestinians, just as there was no Palestine. However, within the course of just a few years, a young and politically radical Arab activist named Yasser Arafat, born in Cairo, was to change that perception, not only for Americans, but for the world.

In December 1968, having taken over as the head of the Palestinian terrorist organization Fatah, Yasser Arafat gained widespread international recognition after TIME Magazine printed his visage on its front cover. The magazine hailed him as a "Fedayeen leader." The following year Arafat assumed the chairmanship of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), a loose association of Palestinian terrorist groups. Their leaders recognized that following Israel's victory in the Six-Day War the Jewish state would not be defeated through conventional military means. Inspired by the violent methods of revolutionary movements in Latin America, North Africa and Southeast Asia, Yasser Arafat stepped up Fatah's activities; terrorism became his signature modus operandi. What followed was a decades-long campaign of terrorism responsible for the death and injuries of thousands in Israel and abroad.

In under a decade, by employing a dual strategy of blackmailing Europe's leaders through acts of terror and a worldwide propaganda campaign directed and funded by the Soviet Union, Yasser Arafat brought about an historic transformation. A Palestinian people was born, Palestine could be found on a map, and the terrorist leader was now a freedom fighter. There is a Hebrew expression applicable to Arafat's transformation, "l'hachshir et ha'sheretz," "to make fit the varmint." It is a cynical phrase used when something's or

someone's undesirable traits are ignored and acceptance is conferred for purposes of expediency. In his meetings with world leaders and from the rostrum of their parliaments a now legitimate Yasser Arafat would promulgate the ahistorical narrative that a long-established Palestinian people had been violently dispossessed of their ancient homeland by recently arrived European Jewish colonialists and, as a matter of humanitarian justice, were entitled to return to it. Numerous otherwise educated audiences, national leaders, academics, and laypeople of all backgrounds, accepted this fiction presented as history.

The standard Palestinian narrative incorporates the ploy of Holocaust inversion. Palestinians are cast in the role of the oppressed Jews while Israel is likened to Nazi Germany. The persistent and forceful repetition of this narrative is how an only recently constituted Palestinian national identity came to be embraced by the liberal Left. In fact, long before October 7<sup>th</sup>, Palestine had already become one of the Western world's most popular human rights causes. Thus, by the 7th of October, activists were primed and ready; Palestine needed to be free. Righting the historic wrong, exacting retribution for the long festering injustice committed against the Palestinian people required extreme measures; it required resistance by any means.

### **The Muslim Presence on U.S. Campuses**

Muslim students from throughout the Middle-East, Arabs and Iranians, have cultivated a growing presence on American college campuses since around the middle of the previous century. Those who had come to study in the United States in the years following the Second World War, relatively few in number, were typically supported by their wealthy families, part of the ruling elite. The Muslim Students Association, whose founding members were enrolled at universities in both

the United States and Canada, was established in 1963 on the campus of the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. These earlier cohorts of Muslim students generally were not particularly noticeable (apart, perhaps in some cases, by their attire), nor were most politically outspoken, neither as individuals nor as a group. They busied themselves more with their studies than with the politics of the Middle-East. This relative quiescence ended with the Six-Day War, with Arab students becoming even more politically outspoken following the October 1973 Yom Kippur War.

Throughout the 1970s the number of Middle-Eastern students enrolled in American universities rose dramatically, from approximately 15,000 in 1970 to about 25,000 at the decade's end. With the increase numbers came the intensification of activism. Muslim students' on-campus events were now more political than educational or cultural and in time would become even more so. Tales of Palestinian oppression resonated among liberal and progressive students who, attuned to the post-60s Zeitgeist, were drawn to, as they understood it, a Third-World liberation movement.

For example, in 1975, two years after the Yom Kippur War, a group of students at the University of Michigan, not all Muslims, disrupted a speech by Israel's president Ephraim Katzir in protest over Israel's presence in Judea and Samaria. Other national and international political and social issues of that era overshadowed the Arab-Israeli conflict, specifically the war in Vietnam, apartheid in South Africa, racism in America, the movement for women's rights, gay rights, and the movement for protecting the environment. However, the consistently promoted account of the Palestinian struggle for social justice and independence never disappeared from the Left's political agenda. The intention of pro-Palestinian activists was to slowly but surely cultivate this cause on campuses across America.

Over the next decades, enrollment of Middle-Eastern students

in American universities, particularly in the country's elite institutions, increased three and fourfold. Some foreign students worked surreptitiously on behalf of their governments in return for tuition and living expenses. It was understood that following their university years these students would return home and apply the knowledge and skills they had acquired in the sciences and technology, as well as any personal connections they had made, to advancing their country's interests. But while still students their mission remained clear, study well, but propagate the Palestinian narrative. This dual agenda was followed by foreign Muslim students for many years.

Publicist Gary Wexler recounts his 1998 meeting with Israel-Arab activist Ameer Makhoul. At the time Makhoul was the Haifa-based executive director of the Arab-Israeli civil rights organization Itijaa. He was later arrested by Israeli authorities for spying on behalf of Syria. At their meeting Makhoul boasted to Wexler: "Just like you were a Zionist campus activist, we will create, over the next years, Palestinian campus activists in America and all over the world. Bigger and better than any Zionist activists. Just like you spent your summers on the kibbutz, we will bring college students to spend their summers in refugee camps and work with our people. Just like you have been part of creating global pro-Israel organizations, we will create global pro-Palestinian organizations. Just like you today help create PR campaigns and events for Israel, so will we, but we will get more coverage than you ever have. You wonder how we will make this happen, how we will pay for this? Not with the money from your liberal Jewish organizations who are now funding us. But from the European Union, Arab and Muslim governments, wealthy Arab people and their organizations. Eventually, we will not take another dollar from the Jews."

Over the last three decades Muslim student activist groups have proliferated on U.S. campuses. Unlike the Muslim

Students' Association, whose founding charter some sixty years ago stated its mission as providing "spiritual and social support" to members, these groups were established with the purposeful objective of gathering support for an independent Palestinian state and at the same time delegitimizing the State of Israel. Due in large part to their efforts the simplistic and emotionally appealing axiom "Palestinians, oppressed-Israel, oppressor," became the lens through which more and more American students came to view the conflict.

Pro-Palestinian student groups such as Within Our Lifetime, Not in Our Name, If Not Now, the Harvard Palestine Solidarity Committee, Penn Students Against the Occupation and Jews for Justice in Palestine are among those that worked assiduously over a period of years to convince students, both non-Jews and Jews, that Israel is an illegitimate apartheid state established by white European colonizers on land stolen from the Palestinian people. To focus attention on the conflict, these groups introduced "Israel Apartheid week" on university campuses. It began at the University of Toronto in 2005 and currently is held in the months of February or March on hundreds of college campuses in a number of countries.

Its organizers introduced various dramatic propaganda tactics, including a mock-up of Israel's "apartheid wall," or Israel's security barrier, forcing students to detour; simulated military "check-points;" "die-ins" complete with red food coloring simulating blood; "occupation eviction notices" delivered to students' dorm rooms; and defacing building walls and sidewalks with anti-Zionist graffiti. These acts intimidated Jewish students and threatened their sense of safety while on campus. Complaints to university administrators either went unanswered or were handled in a minimalist and ineffective manner. The continued lax intervention on the part of university officials enabled the American campus to become ground zero for pro-Palestinian, anti-Zionist and antisemitic activism. This situation led to

Congressional hearings, the resignation of university presidents, and lawsuits against a number of universities.

If the American university had become the main breeding ground for anti-Zionist indoctrination, then Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) has been the central actor in bringing this about. Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) was founded in 1992 at the University of California, by Berkeley professor Hatem Bazian. At present, with a reported over 250 chapters throughout the United States and Canada, SJP is the largest, most active and most controversial of pro-Palestinian campus groups. Its mission is to disseminate pro-Palestinian propaganda, to radicalize American students, and to guide them in organized activities against Israel and the West. Its programming surged in 2002, during the Second Intifada, and SJP has served as a main source of anti-Israel incitement ever since.

Following the founding of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement in 2005, SJP became one of its most active promoters. Students who identified with the Progressive Left were eager to associate with SJP and adopt its full anti-Zionist platform. As for less extreme young liberals or those with no coherent political view, boycotting the State of Israel appeared to be a reasonable, non-violent means of protest against what they came to believe was the Jewish state's oppressive policies. But by supporting BDS these students had taken their first step in condemning Israel. From there the decision to participate in the post October 7<sup>th</sup> marches and demonstrations was not difficult, even if the locations of the noted river and the sea remained unclear.

SJP's success on North American college campuses appears as the fulfillment of Ameer Makhoul's prediction made a quarter of a century earlier. SJP and similar groups, over time, with perseverance and with the aid of significant financial support never fully transparent, have succeeded in popularizing the



green, black, red and white Palestinian flag, the checkered Arab keffiyeh scarf, normalizing disdain for Israel and making the word Zionist a pejorative. Over time, claims against Israel grew in severity from relatively lessor allegations of limiting Palestinians' freedom of movement or diverting local water sources, to the more extreme and malicious accusations of apartheid and genocide. These damning accusations, even though fallacious, helped to fuel a sense of urgency motivating thousands of students across the country to demonstrate and erect protest encampments and declared Israel and Zionism the enemy. In the fervor of the demonstrations some students parroted memes that crossed the line into antisemitism; others uttered these with conviction. This was indeed the type of response engineered by SJP and others.

The years invested in cultivating America's campuses paid off as evidenced by the major role American students played in the protests following October 7<sup>th</sup>. Not since the anti-war demonstrations of the 1960s and early 1970s had American campuses been so roiled by student protestors. By comparison, most of those demonstrations, though intended to disrupt campus life, were peaceful, the killing of four students by Ohio National Guard troops at Kent State University on May 4, 1970 notwithstanding. And while some of the leaders of those demonstrations were undoubtedly associated with radical, anti-establishment organizations of that era such as SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) or SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) that provided training and materials, far more planning, money and organization were behind the massive urban and campus protests following October 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **The Influence of Faculty**

Any student arriving on campus with a paucity of knowledge about the Middle-East was potential prey for faculty members

with an interest in promoting the Palestinian narrative. Such faculty fell into one of two categories. The first were instructors whose themselves originated in the Middle-East, both visiting professors and permanent faculty. As over time Middle-Eastern governments, most notably Qatar and Saudia Arabia, increased their gifts to North American colleges and universities, the percentage of Arab-Muslim faculty in these institutions rose concomitantly.

The second category comprised American born and raised educators who during their own college years were peaceniks, hippies, and social justice warriors. As adult academics they remained committed to the same progressive, even radical, political views. Consequently, the political opinions of thousands of university students have over time been prejudiced by instructors who expressed their anti-Zionist, sometimes antisemitic, views at demonstrations, in publications, or more damaging, directly to their students in class.

The slow stealthy ideological infiltration by the Progressive Left of America's universities was not haphazard. Referred to as "the long march through the institutions," it was purposeful and planned. American-Israeli political commentator Benjamin Kerstein, on his personal blog "No Delusions No Despair," describes in an extended August essay entitled "The Port Huron Conspiracy," the origins, strategy, personalities, and, most crucially, the successes achieved by this ideological conspiracy intended to turn America from a democratic republic into a progressive socialist dystopia in which the universities served as ground zero. "(The planners) systematically targeted the university for conquest and succeeded beyond their wildest dreams," writes Kerstein.

The Left's steadfast investment reaped dividends when students went on to become high-ranking decision makers in government and the corporate world, or becoming academics themselves, where they now disseminate to the next generation the Leftist

anti-Zionist views they imbibed when younger.

A significant element in this long-standing conspiracy was the degradation of Zionism and the image of the State of Israel. A report on antisemitism recently released by the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy reveals that at Columbia University “prominent faculty members such as (the late) Edward Said, Rashid Khalidi, Joseph Massad, Kayum Ahmed and others have been instrumental in fostering an environment that demonizes Israel and the Jewish people.” The late Professor Ibrahim Abu-Lugod acted similarly during his extended career in the Department of Sociology at Northwestern University.

On most campuses anti-Israel prejudice initially emerged in Middle East Studies departments, then spread to the Social Sciences and Humanities. Incredibly it even found its way into the hard sciences. The authority and prestige of the professoriate, the august surroundings of the university, allowed the bias and misinformation to go unchallenged.

The contribution of faculty to the emergence of a generation of college students who see Israel and Zionism through jaundiced eyes should not be underestimated. The website of NGO Canary Mission features a rogue’s gallery of current college and university faculty who “promote hatred of the USA, Israel and Jews on North American college campuses and beyond.” A review of the extensive photo collection found on the website suggests that the majority of these individuals are not of Middle-Eastern background and, according to their biographies, are themselves alumni of American universities. A small number are likely Jewish.

Constant exposure to the anti-Zionist propaganda of campus groups like Students for Justice in Palestine combined with the messaging of pro-Palestinian professors strongly shaped the beliefs of a student cohort who, when the time came in early October, were eager to take to the streets and to

commandeer their campuses in order to “free Palestine.”

### **Picking Up Where Apartheid Left Off**

In 1938 the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, later known as the “March of Dimes” was established to combat polio. Twenty-years later, with polio nearly eradicated in the United States, rather than disbanding, the March of Dimes redefined its mission as the prevention of birth defects and infant mortality. Something analogous may be seen in the swell of interest that grew around the Palestinian cause during the 1990s. For approximately the previous quarter of a century apartheid in South Africa held title to being the leading international human rights cause. In 1994 the regime in South Africa came to an end and with it the country’s racist practices. This created a vacuum for dogged Western seekers of social justice. The remedy was to elevate a new cause: the Palestinians. The re-directed energies of former anti-Apartheid activists was a boon to the pro-Palestinian camp, especially on college campuses. Within one decade, with the aid of Students for Justice in Palestine, the rolls of pro-Palestinian student activists burgeoned.

In manipulation reminiscent of Holocaust inversion, Palestinians were cast as South Africa’s black population that had been victimized for decades under apartheid. The Palestinians’ white oppressors were the Israelis. To those uneducated the analogy appeared fitting. This ideological sleight of hand was expressed by Black Lives Matter co-founder Patrisse Cullors who declared, “Palestine is our generation’s South Africa.” The emotion laden, but totally baseless, charge of apartheid became part of the basic repertoire within the pro-Palestinian camp in its verbal war against the Jewish state. Anti-apartheid cries were prominent among the cacophony of anti-Zionist chants following October 7<sup>th</sup>. One crime of apartheid, protestors believed, had been replaced by another,

and now it too needed to be dismantled ... and by any means.

## **The Woke, Intersectionality and DEI Zeitgeist**

Another major instigator in the unprecedented unleashing of antisemitism following October 7<sup>th</sup> is the Woke phenomenon. This neo-ideology, based on notions such as Critical Race Theory, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), binary, intersectionality and transgenderism are all post-modern concepts that became popular during the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They have led to an era of rebellion against the Western "Establishment," its structure and many of its values, reminiscent of, but far more noxious than, the "Movement for Peace and Love" of the 1960s. According to Woke thinking, the systemic group oppression of darker-skinned people throughout the world stems from the racist practices and capitalist economic policies of white societies, ergo all oppressed peoples share victimhood through a putative system of intersectionality.

The impact of these progressive ideas were realized in the creation of Departments of DEI on college campuses and corporate workplaces. This recently created employment category has provided jobs for an untold number of DEI officers and supports a huge bureaucracy costing an estimated \$5 billion. The ostensible purpose of this Woke-spirited career is to guarantee the fair treatment of all people, irrespective of race, nationality, religion, gender or gender identity within the institution. But apparently not when it comes to Jews. A study released by the Heritage Foundation in December 2021 concludes that "While criticism of Israel is not necessarily antisemitic, the inordinate amount of attention given to Israel and the excessive criticism directed at that one country (by DEI officers) is evidence of a double-standard with respect to the Jewish state, which is a central feature

of a widely accepted definition of antisemitism.” Antisemitic and anti-Zionist bias within the DEI system has been attested to by Dr. Stanley Goldfarb, a former associate dean and professor at the University of Pennsylvania’s Perelman School of Medicine, by former Harvard President Lawrence Summers, and others. DEI protocol categorizes American Jews as “white” and thus privileged. Accordingly, application by Jews to universities, for employment, grants and other competitive positions are only recognized after consideration has first been given to candidates who represent “people of color.” Whether Jews are white or not remains a separate issue. But this bias denies Jews the fair and equal treatment DEI programs were created to assure. This not only leaves Jews feeling discriminated against, frustrated and alienated, but by making Jews stand apart, it abets antisemitism.

The most prominent engine for social change to emerge out of the Woke era is the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. BLM first emerged in 2013 in response to the shooting death the year before in Sanford, Florida of African-American teen Trayvon Martin. It achieved national prominence following the August 2014 shooting death by a white police officer of African-American [Michael Brown](#), an event that ignited [days-long rioting in Ferguson, Missouri](#). While nothing in the Ferguson episode was related to Israel’s July incursion into the Gaza Strip, which came in response to continuous Hamas missile fire along the country’s western coast, some fast-thinking Palestinian spokespeople recognized an opportunity. According to the Woke code and the principle of intersectionality, Israel’s conflict in Gaza with the Hamas terror group was another example of Western white colonialism and genocide. Israel’s legitimate defensive response to Hamas aggression placed the Jewish nation and Zionism at odds with many within the African-American community.

The principle of intersectionality was exemplified at an event that took place on January 2015 at the University of

California at Santa Cruz marking Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday. Nineteen-sixties' radical and USCS professor emerita Angela Davis delivered a speech entitled "Racism, Militarism, and Poverty from Ferguson to Palestine." In the course of her address, Davis offered two falsehoods. The first was the empty argument of collusion between the timing of Israel's fighting in Gaza and events in Ferguson, implying some sort of coordinated attacks by lighter-skinned against darker-skinned peoples. Davis also spuriously claimed that Israeli security personnel had tutored Ferguson police in applying harsh, military-like techniques used to subdue demonstrators. This second fabrication proved popular and was soon added to the litany of false accusations on the Left charging Israel with racism.

The October 7<sup>th</sup> massacre in Israel was therefore seen as a "call to arms" for Black Lives Matter supporters, African-American or not. A particularly infamous example of BLM support for Hamas was a graphic posted online by the Chicago Black Lives Matter organization depicting a terrorist on a hang glider swooping into Israel to take part in the mass slaughter of celebrants at the music festival. The same anarchistic Woke spirit that helped fuel America's urban riots during the summer of 2020 following the death of George Floyd also energized the demonstrations on the streets and campuses of America in the days, weeks and months following October 7<sup>th</sup>.

## **Social Media**

Social media, its immediacy and its global reach, is recognized for the enabling role it played in the post October 7<sup>th</sup> demonstrations. In addition, social media is recognized as the culprit that helped fuel the general rise in worldwide antisemitism in recent years by serving as a communications superhighway. Tic-Tok, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, along

with another perhaps dozen social media platforms, now instantly transmit information and misinformation across continents used to demonize Jews and the State of Israel. Social media platforms originating in countries throughout the world are necessary in organizing international antisemitic and anti-Zionist groups and promoting their activities.

Just as universities are obligated to limit the right to free speech when it constitutes hate speech, so too social media platforms must be held responsible for sanctioning antisemitic material. Social media platforms have employed a policy that blurs this distinction. Even if a post is scurrilous, as long as its subject is Israel, not Jews nor Judaism, it is not recognized as antisemitic hate speech and stands in compliance with the platform's community standards. This is the policy even for posts that intimidate and threaten the well-being of Jews. These would include, for example, calls to form a picket line across from a synagogue during Shabbat morning prayers or announcing an anti-Israel demonstration to take place at an outdoor Jewish cultural festival. Such events have the potential for turning violent. Increasingly, on the streets of major cities and on college campuses, activism against Israel has been directed at Jews who, protestors take for granted, are natural supporters of Israel and Zionism.

Social media being protestors' chief source of news explains their misinformed notions about Israel and Zionism, life in Gaza prior to October 7<sup>th</sup> and the true toll taken by the war. Social media disseminates "fake news" whose source is the Hamas-run Gaza Health Ministry. Since the beginning of the war this has included a fictitious death toll, false allegations of forced starvation, the dishonest claim that Israel has purposely blocked the delivery of humanitarian aid, and most egregiously, that Israel is engaged in genocide. But these defamations, groundless as they are, nevertheless elicit great emotion and strengthen protestors' convictions that "Palestine must be free" and that "Zionist colonialism must end." Add to



these accusations the constant flood of images of dead and injured Gazans, women, children and babies, of lifeless bodies lying alongside the rubble of bombed-out buildings and peoples' angst become supercharged. In any portrayal of war, pictures are more powerful than words, a maxim taken full advantage of by Hamas in its successful propaganda battle against Israel.

Social media is more than a medium of communication, a source for entertainment or of education. It is a powerful weapon in the hands of antisemites and anti-Zionists who have been employing it for years in their campaign of hate against Jews and the State of Israel. Its speed and ubiquity make it possible to spread lies and vitriol to virtually anywhere in the world at an unprecedented rate. It is a tool used to provoke and intensify antisemitism around the globe. The features of social media helped to rapidly organize the massive and wide-spread pro-Palestinian demonstrations that appeared to arise spontaneously beginning on October 8<sup>th</sup>.

## **Funding**

Finally, the role of funding. Almost as soon as the mass demonstrations broke out on October 8<sup>th</sup>, observers took note that many of the protestors' accoutrements, their signs, placards, flags, headbands and masks were nearly identical, suggesting that the immediate availability of all these items had been pre-arranged. A conspicuous number of the pop-up tents erected on the quadrangles of university campuses across the country were of the same few models. This led to a suspicion early on that the funds used to purchase all of these materials, along with the over-sized professionally printed banners, sundry office supplies, food, blankets and porta-toilets, all came from unidentified interest groups, including foreign governments such as Qatar.

Additional costs included the training of protest leaders, creating the content, design and printing of protestors' "tool kits," and an hourly fee paid to non-student outsiders recruited for their presence at the demonstrations. It was reported in the *New York Post* that the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR) "provides up to \$7,800 for its community-based fellows, and between \$2,880 and \$3,660 for its campus-based 'fellows' in return for spending eight hours a week organizing "campaigns led by Palestinian organizations." According to The *Wall Street Journal*, "the political tactics underlying some of the demonstrations were the result of months of training, planning and encouragement by long-time activists and left-wing groups ... [at Columbia University](#), in the weeks and months before police took down encampments at the New York City campus and [removed demonstrators](#) occupying an academic building, student organizers began consulting with groups such as the National Students for Justice in Palestine, veterans of campus protests and former Black Panthers."

The organization, execution and maintenance of the demonstrations and encampments would have been impossible without significant funding. Since their beginning there has been great speculation, but few, if any, smoking guns to unequivocally confirm their sources of financial support. Among those suspected are George Soros via his Open Society Foundations, the Tides Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, certain members of the Pritzker family, the Westchester People's Action Coalition (WESPAC), Americans for Justice in Palestine, the Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network and the Iran-connected Alavi Foundation. The financial support required to organize, to facilitate and to maintain the urban protests and university encampments amounts to millions of dollars. Without this support these events, at the level witnessed, could not have taken place, or at least would have abated after a short amount of time. They continued in their intensity for months. Some protests continue to this day.

## Summary

But it wasn't only the funding that enabled the post-October 7th mayhem. Absent any of these developments the large-scale disturbances that followed could not have transpired, certainly not on their scale. These nine factors collectively account for the *raison d'être* of the protests, their organization and their funding. They developed independently over time and place but their joint impact was sudden and massive. Did the events of October 7<sup>th</sup> let the antisemitism genie escape from the bottle? For this it is still too early to tell. Relative to the size of America's population, 330,000,000, the hordes of demonstrators were small. But constantly highlighted by the media, their impact has been disproportional. Did the street demonstrations and campus protests, some still lingering, portend a long-term, possibly permanent revival of open antisemitism in the United States? Were all protestors, both in city and on campus, antisemitic, or were most just showing support for what appeared to be a legitimate human rights cause? Or, were most nothing other than people demonstrating loyalty to their peers? Are these pro-Palestinian rallies, as has been suggested, also a wedge to instigate rebellion against America, its capitalist economy and its system of government? Are Jews once again, the canary in the mine? These poignant questions are currently unanswerable. Answers, some unwelcome, may yet emerge, but only when the conflict between Israel and the terrorist groups it is now fighting comes to, at least, a formal end.

**Ardie Goldman** is a writer and public speaker who lives in Efrat, Israel. His articles on Jewish life and Israel and book reviews have appeared in the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, the *Journal*

*of Jewish Communal Studies, the Jerusalem Post and The Times of Israel.*

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