

# Is antisemitism worse on the right or left?

By Matthew M Hausman

During a recent speaking engagement, I opined that antisemitism is a far greater threat from the left than the right, but an audience member disagreed, arguing that hatred of Jews is primarily a right-wing phenomenon and that the alt-right and neo-Nazis pose a more significant threat. I could not fault him for holding



Antisemitism

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this view because it reflects the preferred narrative of establishment leaders and non-Orthodox rabbis who equate liberal politics with Jewish values and, thus, tend to obfuscate the sins of the progressive left. Indeed, it took a year after October 7th for many to concede that the antisemitic violence that followed on college campuses and elsewhere has been perpetrated mainly by pro-Hamas progressives – possibly with funding from wealthy left-wing boosters. Though Jew-hatred always existed across the

political spectrum, it is more dangerous on the left today precisely because of mainstream reluctance to acknowledge it or recognize that willful ignorance facilitates its spread.

Anyone familiar with eighteenth century political history should understand the ubiquity of progressive Jew-hatred now, considering that many luminaries of the Enlightenment, including Voltaire, Baron d'Holbach, and Diderot, greatly disliked the Jewish people. They may have preached a new political order, but they were nonetheless products of their environment; and just as antisemitism was baked into European culture through church doctrine, ancient ethnic frictions, and tribalistic xenophobia, so too, it instilled a primal hatred of Jews among the enlightened intellectual elite.

Though liberal critics routinely accuse President Trump of antisemitism, they always seem at a loss when asked to provide specific examples; and while there is no doubt that anti-Jewish incitement has skyrocketed in recent years, they are reluctant to blame the radicals, progressives, and Islamists most responsible. Moreover, the indignation of liberals regarding today's antisemitism seems somewhat hypocritical given their relative silence when it surged during the Obama and Biden administrations (especially among woke and minority voting blocs) or when the "Squad" and other progressives spouted hateful rhetoric about Jews and Israel before and after October 7th.

Those who have finally acknowledged the existence of antisemitism on the left are extremely late to the party. And while many resisted admitting the existence of leftist Jew-hatred or used partisan rationalizations to shield progressive allies from culpability, it was permeating America and western society.

Even now, a common reflex when denouncing antisemitism is to allocate blame equally to "all sides" to imply parity of malevolence between right and left. The radical-right, however, has no influence on college campuses, where anti-Jewish violence is rampant; and it is Democrats who have

failed to expel antisemitic, pro-Hamas elements from their party.

The proliferation of Jew-hatred on the left does not absolve the right of its past or present bigotry. But white supremacists are not responsible for the uptick in antisemitic violence today. Rather, most incidents have been perpetrated by progressive radicals or Islamists – including the killing of two Israeli embassy staffers outside a Jewish museum by a pro-Hamas assailant who shouted “Free Palestine” as he was taken into custody, and an incendiary weapon attack by an Egyptian national in Boulder, Colorado against Jews peacefully demonstrating for the release of the hostages.

While the killing of Israelis was promptly condemned by Congressional Democrats, their rebukes were somewhat hollow considering their party’s embrace of anti-Israel progressives, deprecation of Republican-led Congressional hearings into campus antisemitism, and calls for universities to resist Trump’s attempts to root out campus harassment, intimidation, and violence against Jewish students.

Did they honestly believe that coddling leftist hatemongers and characterizing pro-Hamas violence as “free speech” would have no consequences?

Condemnations by Congressional Democrats like Sen. Cory Booker and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez were too little, too late. Moreover, Ocasio-Cortez’s words were galling given her penchant for falsely accusing Israel of human rights abuses, her bogus assertions of genocide in Gaza, and her recent claim that “false accusations of antisemitism are wielded against people of color and women of color by bad-faith political actors, and weaponizing antisemitism is used to divide us.”

These accusations of antisemitism are not false, however; and while liberals typically deflect responsibility by blaming conservatives, the statistics tell another story.

In its recent report on antisemitism in 2024, the Antisemitism Research Center (“ARC”) of the Combat Antisemitism Movement (“CAM”) found global Jew-hatred increasing more on the left than the right over the previous year. As detailed on CAM’s website, the report found that, “[i]n 2024, the most prominent characteristic of antisemitic incidents was the overwhelming dominance of far-left ideology. This represented a decisive shift from 2023, when antisemitic incidents from far-left and far-right sources were roughly at parity.” (<https://combatantisemitism.org/studies-reports/global-antisemitism-incidents-rise-107-7-in-2024-fueled-by-far-left-surge-cam-annual-data-study-reveals/>)

The report also found a 324.8% jump in far-left antisemitic incidents over 2023, noting that “[r]adicalized social movements, media disinformation campaigns, and efforts to target Jewish communities under the guise of anti-Israel activism have primarily fueled this increase.” Of all incidents reported in 2024, some 68.4% were associated with the far-left, while episodes linked to the far-right fell by 54.8% from the previous year. From these data, it was concluded that “while the extreme right remains a threat, it has been eclipsed by the radicalization of leftist movements.” Significantly, of 6,326 antisemitic incidents reported in 2024, only 7.3% reflected extreme-right ideology.

This is not to say that the far-right has become less antisemitic or the far-left was ever pro-Jewish. Neither premise is correct. However, the current wave of attacks on Jewish businesses and institutions, assaults against Jewish college students, and murder of Israelis, is primarily the work of progressive extremists or Islamists – not neo-Nazis or white supremacists.

In many ways, antisemitism is similar on both the right and left in its reliance on classical stereotypes and conspiracy theories, historical revisionism, and dehumanization. The difference, however, is that right-wing antisemitism always

comes from the outside whereas left-wing hatred is sometimes rationalized from within. In fact, many on the Jewish left oppose Israel's existence, elevate Palestinian mythology over Jewish history, and equate radical Islamic terrorism with Israel's sovereign right of self-defense.

Still others invoke their Jewish identity while excusing the actions of progressive radicals, often from a skewed perspective that conflates Jewish values with progressive ideologies (which disparage traditional Judaism and the Jewish State).

How else to understand those liberal organizations, including Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist rabbinical groups, that have publicly opposed Trump's imposition of sanctions against Harvard and other universities, where pro-Hamas violence occurs on campus and Jewish students have been targeted, harassed, and assaulted? These sanctions include the withholding of federal funds for research and education and the deportation of foreign students who commit or incite acts of violence against Jewish students and others.

Such organizations rationalize their opposition by claiming that penalties against offending institutions will subject foreign students to deportation without due process. They also claim the administration is politicizing antisemitism to undermine democracy, subvert the rule of law, and restrict speech and "peaceful" protests in violation of the First Amendment.

Considering the prevalence of antisemitic violence on campus, however, it is unclear what rule of law or peaceful protests are being undermined and, given the existence of university codes governing expulsions (which go largely unenforced) and federal laws dictating deportation procedures, whether adequate due process is truly being denied. Moreover, democratic principles do not include the right to incite or commit acts of criminal violence. The opposition of liberal

clergy to administration policies is clearly meant to impose their vision of clerical morality, but the claim that antisemitism is being politicized would seem to discount legitimate government concerns over documented incidents of anti-Jewish violence on campuses across America.

It is legitimate to question what motivates liberal concern for the rights of campus radicals who attack Jewish students and call for “global intifada” and the destruction of Israel. And to the extent these same radicals embrace Hamas and its covenant calling for extermination of the Jewish people, it is likewise reasonable to ask whether defending their rights for any reason suggests moral complacency. These are fair questions, particularly in light of the undeniable history of progressive hostility against traditional Judaism and the State of Israel.

Is it acceptable to defend the rights of radicals who threaten Jews and hate Israel? Can one draw a distinction between odious conduct and the perceived need to protect the rights of bad actors for a higher societal good? Or do progressives engage in such apologetics because they identify with a political agenda more than traditional Jewish values?

It is impossible to know what truly lies in the hearts of others, but Jewishness should never be conflated with secular politics or imbued with relevance through value revisionism or moral equivalency. Indeed, the sanctification of political ideologies that disparage traditional values and promote hatred of Israel only increases the likelihood of existential malaise.

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