

MODERN EXAMPLES OF ANTISEMITISM THAT FIND COMMON CAUSE ON THE EXTREME LEFT

CASE STUDY #1

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Iran, since the Islamic Revolution of 1978-79, has been a prodigious creator and spreader of antisemitic propaganda including Holocaust denial, financial support for terrorist organizations, and calls for violence against Jews worldwide. Its Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, has praised internationally recognized terrorist organizations, including Hamas, for violence committed against Jews and frequently spews antisemitism in speeches and online. The Iranian regime also funds and supports Hamas and other terrorist groups like Hezbollah and the Houthis, who are dedicated to Israel's destruction. In a tactic employed by many antisemites which originated with the propaganda of the Soviet Union, Khamenei and other senior Iranian regime leaders often use the term "Zionist" as a replacement for "Jews" to make his appalling rhetoric more socially acceptable as is made clear in the tweets below from 2022-2024.



CASE STUDY #2

ANTI-ZIONISM AS A VEHICLE TO PROMOTE ANTISEMITISM

Israel, as a democracy, can and should be subject to fair and legitimate criticism, whether the criticism is from its own citizens or from members of the larger global community. However, all too often condemnation of Israel crosses the line from valid criticism into denigration and false accusations that can be considered antisemitic. This type of unfair criticism frequently relies on conspiracy theories and antisemitic myths and tropes.

Anti-Zionism is a prejudice against Zionism, the Jewish movement for self-determination and the right of the Jewish people to a homeland in the State of Israel. It may be motivated by or result in antisemitism, or it may create a climate in which antisemitism becomes more acceptable.

It is also expressed as opposition to Israel's right to exist, which often includes demonization of its people and its leaders. It routinely holds Jews, whether or not they live in Israel, to be responsible for the actions of Israeli authorities.

Since the October 7th attacks and the ongoing war, anti-Zionist protests have devolved into antisemitic attacks on individual Jews, Jewish institutions, and synagogues. This is not a legitimate protest of policy, but antisemitism that has led to real violence as perpetrators have attacked and harmed Jewish people.

THE THREE Ds TEST

DEMONIZATION

When Israel and its leaders are made to seem completely evil; when Israel's actions are blown out of all sensible proportion; when Israel and Israelis are equated with Nazi Germany and Nazis; when Israel is seen as the sole cause for the situation in the Middle East—this is considered antisemitism, not legitimate criticism of Israel.

DOUBLE STANDARDS

When criticism of Israel is applied selectively and in a grossly unfair manner and Israel is singled out when clearly immoral behavior of other nation-states is ignored—for example, when Israel is criticized by the United Nations for human rights abuses while the behavior of known and major abusers, such as China, Iran, Cuba, and Syria, is ignored—this is considered antisemitism.

DELEGITIMIZATION

When Israel's fundamental right to exist is denied alone among all peoples of the world—this too is considered antisemitism.



This image/poster was first seen at a rally in England before being spread on social media in November 2023, in response to the war between Hamas and Israel.

CASE STUDY #3

THE ANTISEMITISM OF BOYCOTTING ISRAEL AND CHARGING IT WITH “APARTHEID”

Since 2005, organized campaigns around the world have promoted the “boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS)” movement against Israel. The predominant drive of the BDS campaign and its leadership is not legitimate criticism of Israeli policies or a productive process to support Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts, but rather the demonization and delegitimization of Israel, blaming Israel alone for the Arab-Israeli conflict and the suffering of Arab people, and by calling for the elimination of Israel as a Jewish state.

Calls for a boycott of the entire State of Israel as opposed to specific businesses or institutions can be seen as a punishment of all Israeli people by isolating them from commercial or social relations with others. This is a standard that is not applied to any other nation, even those with appalling human rights records.

“From the River to the Sea” is a phrase often used in the context of discussions about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It refers to the geographic area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, which encompasses the entirety of Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. While the phrase is used by some who claim to advocate for freedom and peace, it is important to note that the phrase first gained traction with



Students at an anti-Israel protest at the University of California, Irvine, 2006. This image and the antisemitic claim against Israel continues to be seen in protests and on social media today, Mark Boster/ Los Angeles Times via Getty Images.



Harvard College Palestine Solidarity Committee created this art installation for its annual Israeli Apartheid Week, which includes several antisemitic myths and tropes, March 31, 2023, photograph by Addison Y. Liu.

the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in the 1960s when the PLO advocated for the elimination of the State of Israel. Of late, especially in anti-Israel protests after October 7, 2023, it has become a rallying call for the elimination of Israel and its complete replacement with a wholly Palestinian state that does not include the Jewish people. Because it can be seen as promoting the removal or destruction of the State of Israel, it is antisemitic.

False accusations of apartheid, genocide, and settler-colonialism against the State of Israel and actions of the Israeli government have alarmingly become more socially acceptable regardless of their accuracy. Israel is more and more commonly perceived as a powerful oppressor against people of color and other victims of oppression. This dangerous rhetoric is antisemitic, has caused violence against individual Jews and Jewish institutions, and is a threat to a safe and stable democratic society.

COUNTERING THE CLAIM THAT ISRAEL IS AN APARTHEID STATE

It is not uncommon today to see critics of Israel accusing it of being an apartheid state. Whether such a description is being used to describe Israeli policies towards Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, or towards Arab citizens of Israel, the label is inaccurate, offensive, and often used to delegitimize and denigrate Israel as a whole.

Apartheid usually refers to the guiding policy of racial segregation in pre-1990s South Africa. While there is no doubt that Israel, like every country, has tremendous societal challenges and must do better in dealing with issues of institutionalized bias, discrimination, inequity and racism, choosing to apply the apartheid label would seem to question the legitimacy of the world's only Jewish state and its continued existence.

Within Israel, there are safeguards aimed at ensuring the equal treatment of all citizens, Jewish or Arab, and Israeli laws and democratic institutions, including the independent courts and robust free press, assigned to uphold and speak out for these rights. Representing over 20% of Israel's population, Israeli Arab citizens serve as judges, ambassadors, legislators, journalists, professors, artists and play prominent roles in all aspects of Israeli society. And for the first time, as of June 2021, an Islamist Arab political party is a partner in a governing coalition.

Israeli policies in the West Bank and related to the Gaza Strip are still subject to dispute and negotiation by both Israelis and Palestinians. They are complicated, and due to the lack of final agreement, there are indeed policies and restrictions – including limitations on movement and access to certain resources that can impose tremendous hardships on Palestinians. From an Israeli perspective, such policies are justified by security considerations, given the past and ongoing threats posed by Palestinian terrorist organizations targeting Israeli civilians, even within Israel's pre-1967 borders. While Israel's policies and practices can certainly be criticized, it is not factually accurate to say they are akin to a permanent and institutionalized system motivated and designed by racism.

Sources

Anti-Defamation League. (2021, July 8). Allegation: Israel is an Apartheid State. <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/allegation-israel-apartheid-state>

Anti-Defamation League. (2022, May 24). The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions Campaign (BDS). <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/boycott-divestment-and-sanctions-campaign-bds>