

REPORT

Antisemitism and Radical Anti-Israel Bias on the Political Left in Europe



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Introduction

Antisemitism is global and multifaceted. One area in which ADL has seen a growth of antisemitism is within elements of the political left. This often takes the form of anti-Zionism, a movement that rejects the Jewish right to self-determination and of Israel to exist as a Jewish state, and frequently employs antisemitic tropes to attack Israel and its supporters. It also manifests through the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, a campaign that promotes diplomatic, financial, professional, academic and cultural isolation of Israel, Israeli individuals, Israeli institutions, and Jews who support Israel's right to exist.

Political actors and advocacy movements associated with some left-wing political organizations have engaged in such antisemitism both in the U.S. and in Europe. While antisemitism from individuals associated with left-leaning political organizations is generally less violent than right-wing antisemitism, its penetration

into the political mainstream is cause for concern and has in some cases alienated Jews and other supporters of Israel. Concerns are both political and physical. As described in this report, Jews and Jewish institutions have been targeted and have suffered violent attacks, associated with anti-Zionism, often in the wake of fighting between Israel and the Palestinians, most recently in 2021.

The challenges facing Jewish communities in Europe can be a bellwether for what is to come for the U.S. Jewish community, as evidenced for example by the recent rise in violent antisemitism in the U.S., which has plagued European Jewish communities for many years, and the increase in anti-Zionism in U.S. progressive spaces, something that has existed in Europe for some time. To better understand this phenomenon in Europe, ADL asked partners in the UK, France, Germany and Spain to describe some of the expressions of left-wing political antisemitism and anti-Israel bias in their countries. The individual contributors are responsible for the content of those chapters and their positions may differ with standard ADL practice and/or policy.

Our British partner, the Community Security Trust, is the British Jewish community's security agency, which monitors, reports on, and educates about antisemitism among other vital tasks for the safety and security of the Jewish community.

Our French partner, the politics and culture magazine "K., The Jews, Europe, the 21st Century," reports on contemporary challenges and opportunities for Jewish life in France and elsewhere in Europe.

Our German partner, Amadeu Antonio Foundation, is one of Germany's foremost independent non-governmental organizations working to strengthen democratic civil society and eliminate extremism, antisemitism, racism and other forms of bigotry and hate.

Our Spanish partner, ACOM, is a non-denominational and independent organization that strengthens the relationship between Spain and Israel, and whose work is

inspired by the defense of human rights, democratic societies, civil liberties and the rule of law.

Those European contributions comprise the first sections of this report. Based on those essays, in the subsequent chapter, ADL analyzed common themes and notable differences among the four countries.

The final section adds ADL's perspective on left-wing antisemitism in the political and advocacy spheres in the U.S. and provides suggested actions that can be taken to address antisemitism. To be sure, while not all antisemitism that has manifested in some elements of the political left in the U.S. is imported from Europe, lessons can be learned from this transatlantic phenomenon to protect against the mainstreaming of such antisemitism in U.S. politics.

United Kingdom



Community Security Trust

Political Parties and Leaders

It would be impossible to write about antisemitism on the left in British politics without writing about the Labour Party, particularly during the tenure of Jeremy Corbyn as its leader. Corbyn's leadership lasted from September 2015 until he was replaced by Keir Starmer in April 2020. Though reports of antisemitism in the Labour Party did not begin with Corbyn's ascent to the leadership, they increased markedly during his period as leader. This antisemitism was mainly, though not exclusively, concerned with attacks on "Zionists" and/or perceived supporters of Israel, although

it was not limited to anti-Zionist discourse and often involved traditional antisemitic motifs. Such attacks included bullying and harassment of mainly Jewish Labour Party members at all levels of the party.

This antisemitism manifested in various ways. One example is former Labour Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Woking, Vicki Kirby. She tweeted in 2014 that “we invented Israel when saving them from Hitler who now seems to be their teacher” and “Who is the Zionist God? I’m starting to think it might be Hitler. #FreePalestine.” Kirby was deselected from running for Parliament and suspended by the party, but returned to her local branch in 2016 where she was elected vice chair of Woking Constituency Labour Party. Kirby was suspended again after the media reported on the story.

Another case which prompted specific concerns that Labour’s antisemitism problems were institutionally embedded involved a party member called Alan Bull. He was an activist in his local Labour Party in Peterborough, who had been selected to be one of their candidates for election to the local authority. A complaint was made that he had posted a link on Facebook to an article denying the Holocaust. Bull was suspended while the complaint meandered its way through the Labour Party complaints process until the head of Labour’s disputes panel, Christine Shawcroft, emailed her colleagues on the Labour National Executive Committee saying:

“I am concerned that party disciplinary procedures are being used in the pursuit of partisan disputes in local parties, wasting a great deal of staff time in the process,” adding “I think we should reinstate his [Bull’s] membership and allow him to contest the ward for which he has been selected.”

The emails in which Shawcroft made these assertions were leaked to *The Times* newspaper, leading to her resignation (Shawcroft later said that she had not seen the alleged Holocaust denial). The incident served to highlight the institutional failings of a Labour Party that appeared incapable of taking action even in a clearcut case. Only

once the issue was in the public domain was Bull prevented from standing as a council candidate and his membership of the Labour Party rescinded.

Antisemitic discourse was found in social media posts published by Labour Party members at every level of the party hierarchy. Ordinary members, local councillors, candidates selected to stand for Parliament and sitting Labour Members of Parliament were all found to have posted antisemitic discourse. The mounting evidence of antisemitism in the party led the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), Britain's statutory human rights agency, to find that the Labour Party had broken the law by discriminating against Jewish members:

“The Party is responsible for three breaches of the Equality Act (2010) relating to; political interference in antisemitism complaints, failure to provide adequate training to those handling antisemitism complaints, harassment.” The equality body's analysis points to a culture within the Party which, at best, did not do enough to prevent antisemitism and, at worst, could be seen to accept it.

The situation at the time of writing is somewhat different to that which existed while the Labour Party was under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn. This is largely due to the efforts made by the current Labour leadership to comply with the demands set forth by the EHRC following their investigation.

In the wake of the publication of the EHRC report, the new Labour leadership took steps to introduce a new disciplinary process, education about antisemitism for party officers and members, and to rebuild the confidence of Jewish party members. This change involved the party proscribing some small organisations that had been involved in spreading antisemitic discourse in the party (meaning Labour Party members could not also be members or supporters of these groups). Crucially, in line with the EHRC report, the party began to treat denial of the existence of antisemitism, or allegations that such complaints were a deliberate smear, as itself evidence of antisemitism.

In taking this action, Labour signalled to thousands of members, mainly from the far left of the party, that their views were unwelcome.

An example of a group proscribed by the Labour Party involved a small organisation called Labour Against the Witchhunt (LAW). The premise of this group was that antisemitism was a pretence, or witch hunt, being used to attack Jeremy Corbyn and his supporters. Now disgraced Professor David Miller was a frequent contributor to their online meetings, as was the U.S. academic Norman Finkelstein. The Community Security Trust [highlighted](#) one of their meetings in July 2020 at which Finkelstein claimed the Holocaust denier David Irving was “a very good historian”. At the same event Miller claimed that “The Zionist movement and the Israeli govt are the enemy of the left, the enemy of world peace and they must be directly targeted.” He also called the British government “the enemy.” Miller was no longer a Labour Party member at this time, but his views were indicative of broader attitudes in groups like LAW.

Pro-Palestine activism

There is a strong crossover between the pro-Palestine movement, the far left of the Labour Party and other left-wing groups including some Trades Unions. Labour Party Members of Parliament and union officials often speak at demonstrations and events organised by Palestinian groups, placing them in a difficult position when antisemitism in some of these spaces is exposed. For example, in May 2021 Labour MP Naz Shah spoke at a demonstration where, during a different speech, protestors chanted “God, lift the curse of the Jews off the Muslims in Palestine.” Shah later condemned the comments, saying they “are not remarks I’d ever make.” Geraint Davies, Labour MP for Swansea West found himself [standing among a crowd](#) chanting “Khayber Khayber Ya Yahud Jaish al Mohammad Sa Yaud” (The Arabic phrase refers to the 7th Century Battle of Khybar, when Muslim armies expelled Jews from an area in the north-western Arabian Peninsula). This chant was ubiquitous across the UK at demonstrations held against Israel during that month. After the demonstration Davies tweeted that “I called in Swansea for an end to the killings of

civilians in Palestine and Israel, peace and reconciliation, a two-state solution and adherence to international law. I therefore do not support any chanting in Arabic that followed that called for the opposite.”

Antisemitism within anti-Israel demonstrations was bad enough to warrant *The Times* newspaper running stories about it for two weeks running on the [23rd](#) and [30th](#) of May 2021.

There are several examples of speakers at pro-Palestine demonstrations during the conflict in Israel and Gaza in May 2021 making statements that caused concern among the Jewish community. One of these was veteran left-wing activist Tariq Ali, who told a crowd of tens of thousands of people that “They have learnt nothing from what happened to them in Europe. Nothing” adding “Every time they bomb Gaza, every time they attack Jerusalem – that is what creates antisemitism. Stop the occupation, stop the bombing and casual antisemitism will soon disappear.”

The Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) is the main pro-Palestine campaign group in the UK that is active on the British left, and allegations of antisemitism regularly surface in relation to some of their activists. For example, a PSC member, Tapesh Abu Shaim, was elected to the National Executive Committee of the PSC in 2015 where he remained for 5 years. It emerged that Abu Shaim had published posts to his social media claiming Israel was behind ISIS and that “9/11 truth could be the answer to the Israel Palestine conflict.” It then [emerged that](#) in 2012 Abu Shaim had been given a personal tour around the Houses of Parliament by Jeremy Corbyn who was and still is a patron of the PSC. After those concerns had been published in the media, Abu Shaim was spotted at Labour Party conference [manning a stall](#) on behalf of the PSC.

In addition, Kareem Denis, a rapper with the stage name ‘Lowkey’ who is a patron of both the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and the Stop the War Coalition, claimed on [Iranian Press TV](#) that “The mainstream media has weaponised the Jewish heritage of Zelenskyy the President of Ukraine to try to stave off these genuine inquiries into

the groups fighting in Ukraine.” By “genuine inquiries” Lowkey was referring to Russian **propaganda** alleging support for Nazis in Ukraine, a **trope** often used to delegitimize Israel and its supporters.

The insistence that antisemitism is not present, when it obviously is, is sometimes farcical. In May 2018 at a **meeting entitled** Corbyn, Antisemitism & Justice for Palestine the Director of PSC said “there are those at the fringes of our movement who wish to articulate the cause for Palestinian rights through antisemitic narratives, through engaging in nonsense about Holocaust denial, or engaging in conspiracies about Israel’s power that draw on anti-Semitic tropes and we need to be clear that there is no place for you within our movement.” At the same event, a second speaker, Jonathan Rosenhead, said that there was “collaboration between the Nazis and the Jews, sorry the Zionists” while claiming that the actions of “Zionists” during World War II had resulted in the deaths of “hundreds of thousands of Jews.” Also sitting on the panel was a representative of the National Union of Teachers. None of them interrupted or disputed this rhetoric about “Zionists.”

Themes in antisemitism on the left

During the Corbyn years, the idea took hold that antisemitism was being used as a weapon to attack the Labour Party to impact its electoral success. This reinforced the long-standing belief on parts of the anti-Zionist left that false allegations of antisemitism are used to deflect criticisms of Israel (a phenomenon labelled ‘The Livingstone Formulation’ by British sociologist David Hirsh). In June 2022 Dr Agnès Callamard, Amnesty International General Secretary, claimed that “the accusations of being antisemitic, it’s really a way of silencing us” at an event in London regarding criticism being levelled against her organisation. At the same meeting, Hagai Elad, the head of Israeli Human Rights organisation B’Tselem, stated that Israel will “weaponise false allegations of antisemitism in order to silence and delegitimise.” Such reasoning has ensured that when antisemitism rears its head in left wing spaces, the person pointing it out is often seen as working on behalf of Israel rather than expressing genuine concerns. The EHRC addressed this in their report looking

into antisemitism in the Labour Party and asserted that “suggesting that complaints of antisemitism were fake or smears” constituted “antisemitic conduct.” Jeremy Corbyn was suspended from the Labour Party and to this day been prevented from sitting in Parliament as a Labour MP for [publishing a statement](#) with the claim that:

“One antisemite is one too many, but the scale of the problem was also dramatically overstated for political reasons by our opponents inside and outside the party, as well as by much of the media. That combination hurt Jewish people and must never be repeated.”

The Power of the Zionist Lobby

The idea of an all-powerful Israeli or Zionist lobby is one that has found swathes of appeal among the British left. It is common for British Jewish organisations or institutions to be referred to as an “pro-Israel lobby group.” By using such a term as a preface to a UK Jewish organisation, the implication is being made that those Jews hold dual loyalty or are working against the interests of their own country. Ironically, it’s on Iranian state broadcaster, Press TV, where former Bristol University professor David Miller and former Labour Member of Parliament Chris Williamson respectively produce and present a series called ‘Palestine Declassified’ almost entirely devoted to trying to prove that British Jewish organisations have a Zionist or Israeli affiliation, thereby (it is claimed) doing the nefarious bidding of the Israeli state.

France



K., The Jews, Europe, the 21st Century.

Today in France, the Jewish community faces not just centuries-old far-right antisemitism and decades-old Islamist antisemitism, but now a rapidly growing left-wing antisemitism that includes both anti-Zionism and traditional antisemitism.

While left-wing antisemitism has existed in France for many years, its mainstreaming is a source of deep concern in the French Jewish community. Since the mid-20th century, the French left had been influenced by the Soviet Communist Party with its anti-Zionism that challenged the legitimacy of Israel's existence, propagated conspiracy theories, and portrayed Israel as a destabilizing factor both regionally and internationally. Soviet propaganda penetrated North Africa as well, including areas where most immigrants to France originated since World War II.

In recent years, this anti-Zionism has combined with anti-imperialism and found fertile ground mainly in successive generations of immigrant communities. In this version, the State of Israel and the Zionists, with whom all Jews are identified, are seen as the last vestiges of Western colonialism. On the basis of a biased and truncated history of Zionism and the creation of the State of Israel, the latter is considered a Western outgrowth in the Middle East and the Palestinians are the last people awaiting national liberation.

Holocaust distortion can also be found on the political left. Anti-Zionists argue that Israel's policies towards the Palestinians are based on Nazi persecution of Jews and even accuse Israel of perpetrating genocide against the Palestinians. But the history of Jewish persecution, and especially the Holocaust, is not only instrumentalized from the anti-Zionist perspective alone. More often than not, it is denounced for its supposed disproportionate place in national memory and in school curricula. This "memory competition" opposes the singularity of the Holocaust and places it alongside slavery and colonization, a position widespread on the political left.

Alongside this memory competition, another trend on the left is to compare pre-WWII antisemitism with the discrimination suffered by Muslims today in France. Edwy Plenel, a left-wing journalist and editor-in-chief of *Mediapart*, one of the country's

leading left-wing publications, has propagated this idea. And Senator Esther Benbassa sparked controversy in 2019 by posing during a [demonstration](#) against "Islamophobia" alongside demonstrators wearing a yellow star with the mention of "Muslims." Similar examples of this false equivalence abound.

At the same time that some on the left promote the false equivalence with the history of Jewish persecution, the same people paradoxically accuse Jews of benefitting from "Jewish privilege." This argument includes antisemitic conspiracy theories and aims to portray Jews as an overprotected group compared to other minorities. One example of this idea of "Jewish privilege" getting into the mainstream involved the French-Senegalese footballer Demba Ba, former striker of the Chelsea club, reacting in 2021 to a rumor of a ban on halal meat in France. He tweeted to his 1.3 million followers: "Dear Muslims, if it's confirmed, get kosher meat instead. For us it's halal and we can be sure that it won't be banned. Bon appetit."



Demba Ba  @dembabafoot · Mar 19, 2021



Chers musulmans , musulmanes , si cela est confirmé , tournez-vous vers le casher. Ça nous est halal et on est sure qu'ils ne l'interdirons pas ça au moins. Bon appétit 🍗🍗



GACI Azzedine @azzedine_gaci · Mar 18, 2021

Bientôt la fin du halal en France?

Communiqué

des Mosquées de Paris, de Lyon et d'Évry

Paris, jeudi 18 mars 2021

Les responsables de la Grande Mosquée de Paris, de la Grande Mosquée de Lyon et de la Grande Mosquée d'Évry, titulaires de l'agrément interministériel les habilitant à délivrer les autorisations de pratique du sacrifice rituel, et assurant la certification halal des viandes et produits destinés à la consommation de la communauté musulmane, se sont réunis le lundi 15 mars 2021 à la Grande Mosquée de Paris pour examiner les voies et moyens de sensibilisation des pouvoirs publics sur la situation dramatique que risquent de vivre les musulmans de France suite à la parution de l'instruction technique DGAL/SDSSA/2020-722 du ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation datée du 23/11/2020.

Cette instruction ayant pour objet les « Contrôles officiels relatifs à la protection animale en établissement d'abattage de volailles au moment de leur mise à mort », impose désormais des conditions d'abattage ne permettant pas de répondre aux principes dogmatiques et fondamentaux de l'abattage rituel Halal.

C'est aussi un mauvais message que l'on envoie à la communauté musulmane en cette veille de Ramadhan.

Dans ce cadre, à compter du mois de juillet 2021, l'abattage rituel Halal de volaille en France ne sera plus autorisé.

Les responsables des Grandes Mosquées ont déjà fait part de leurs préoccupations auprès du ministère de l'Intérieur et du ministère de l'Agriculture, sans pour autant parvenir à un résultat satisfaisant, permettant d'assurer le respect des principes de l'abattage rituel Halal tel qu'il était pratiqué jusqu'à présent.

Considérant que ces dispositions sont une grave entrave au libre exercice du culte, ils entendent mener toutes les actions légales pour rétablir ce droit fondamental.

Les responsables soussignés se sont rapprochés des autres responsables religieux, notamment du culte Israélite de France, afin d'échanger avec eux sur cette grave problématique.

Si cette disposition était mise en œuvre, les conditions requises pour permettre aux musulmans de consommer des viandes conformes à leur rite, en vertu du principe fondamental de la liberté du culte, ne seraient plus garanties.

En conséquence, les responsables des Grandes Mosquées demandent au ministre de l'Agriculture de les recevoir en urgence pour les entendre sur cette question.

Signataires :

Grande Mosquée de Paris, M. Chems-eddine HAFIZ, Recteur

Grande Mosquée de Lyon, M. Kamel KABTANE, Recteur

Grande Mosquée d'Évry, M. Khalil MEROUN, Recteur

Major left-wing [media](#) also promote the idea that “Jewish privilege” takes the form of “state philo-Semitism,” whereby antisemitic attacks by Muslim perpetrators are used to justify the state’s discrimination against Muslims. In another form of “Jewish privilege,” the Jew is the non-white who has integrated the norms of “whiteness” and whom whites use as a model to demand that other minorities conform to “whiteness,” willingly or through compulsion. This theory, influential in certain fringes of the left, has created unprecedented animosity on the left towards Jews.

One champion of these theories with a wide audience is the comedian Dieudonné M'Bala M'Bala, who has been convicted for antisemitic hate speech and Holocaust denial many times over. Dieudonné's videos have millions of views on YouTube, despite frequent deletions of his videos by the platform. His audience includes youth in working-class neighborhoods and struggling minorities in the middle class, social circles that traditionally are far from the extreme right-wing circles where antisemitism historically prospers. The virality of his videos guarantees that even the highest left-wing political circles are affected.

Traditional antisemitic conspiracy theories are also prominent on the left. Images of Jews controlling the government have been found on social media accounts of left-wing activists, including some prominent personalities. In 2017, Gérard Filoche, a member of the Socialist Party executive committee, tweeted an image of newly elected President Emmanuel Macron with three prominent French Jews in the shadows behind him. President Macron appears with his arms outstretched over the globe, wearing a Nazi armband on which the swastika has been replaced by a dollar, and American and Israeli flags were in the background. The three Jewish figures representing the Jewish conspiracy are Patrick Drahi, a media magnate with dual French-Israeli nationality, the British politician Jacob Rothschild, and Jacques Attali, a French public intellectual and former advisor to President François Mitterrand. The image text reads, "En Marche [the name of Macron's party, meaning "Moving forward"] towards global chaos." Filoche added, "A terrible guy, soon the French will discover it all together."



Gerard Filoche
@gerardfiloche



un sale type, les français vont le savoir
tous ensemble bientôt



17/11/2017 22:18

A similar [image](#) representing President Macron as Pinocchio, manipulated by Jacques Attali, was drawn by a left-wing graffiti artist in Avignon in June 2022.



The supposed occult power of the Rothschilds is often denounced as a primary cause of the suffering of “the people” with “the Jewish lobby” seen as behind policies abhorred by the left. Such rhetoric was abundant during the Covid 19 crisis, but was also prominent in the *Yellow Vest* movement, which began in November 2018.

While the *Yellow Vest* movement began as a protest against fuel taxes and then the high cost of living in general, it broadened into a protest against elites, gaining explicit support from both the extreme right and part of the left, including the main left-wing political party, *La France Insoumise*. Disturbingly, antisemitism was prevalent among demonstrators who sang antisemitic songs or **displayed** antisemitic symbols popularized by Dieudonné; engaged in Holocaust denial; **insulted** and threw firecrackers at Jews leaving a synagogue in Strasbourg; made antisemitic **insults** against Simone Veil; and physically **attacked** the philosopher Alain

Finkelkraut, while making antisemitic comments. While the attack on Finkelkraut triggered broad political condemnation, some left-wing politicians and intellectuals strove to minimize or justify it. And when *La France Insoumise* was accused of such behavior, it in turn accused other political forces and the media of instrumentalizing that accusation to demonize *La France Insoumise*.

One high profile example is the reaction of *La France Insoumise* leader, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, to the aggression of Alain Finkelkraut, who tweeted, “Aware of the instrumentalization of antisemitism, I also believe that racism can never be ignored. There were also Yellow Vests who wanted to defend Finkelkraut and opposed the attack. I am with them.”



Jean-Luc Mélenchon is frequently criticized for using antisemitic tropes in his rhetoric and for his indifference to the resurgence of antisemitism in France over the past two decades. In 2013, he accused the Minister of Economy, Pierre Moscovici, who comes from a Jewish family, of the “behavior of someone who no longer thinks in French, who thinks in the language of international finance.” In 2018 he [claimed](#) that criticism of Britain’s far-left leader Jeremy Corbyn came from “so-called Jews” and was orchestrated by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The following year, he [wrote](#) that “Corbyn had to endure without help the crude accusation of antisemitism from the Chief Rabbi of England and the various Likud networks of

influence. Instead of fighting back, he spent his time apologizing and giving pledges. (...) I will never give in to it for my part. Point-based retirement plans, German and neoliberal Europe, green capitalism, genuflection in front of the arrogant diktats of the CRIF communitarians: No way.” Mélenchon attacked CRIF – the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions of France – mixing accusations of dominating behavior and instrumentalization of antisemitism with political positions that Mélenchon opposes. Most recently, during the 2022 presidential campaign, Mélenchon **characterized** the xenophobic political positions of Eric Zemmour, a far-right candidate who happened also to be Jewish, as being based on “traditions that are very linked to Judaism.”

Every time Mélenchon is questioned, the most important politician of the French left responds in the same way: antisemitism on the left does not exist; accusations of antisemitism are manipulated to hinder the progress of a left that is approaching power or to prohibit criticism of Israel and, on the contrary, the left in general and he himself in particular are at the forefront of the fight against antisemitism and the greatest defenders of the Jews. This attitude is truly the bane of the left in France: to engage in antisemitic rhetoric, to deny that antisemitism exists on the left, to excuse the antisemitism of those assumed to be political allies, and then to claim that they are the real champions in the fight against antisemitism.

Germany



Amadeu Antonio Foundation

In Germany, Israel-centred antisemitism is a major contributor to the normalisation

of antisemitism, making it difficult to combat the phenomenon in general. Progressive environments in particular are leading the way in propagating Israel-centred antisemitism, which has implications for culture, art, academia, the politics of remembrance and the political left itself. With all these fields coming under pressure to adopt a stance, Jews are left feeling uncomfortable as a result – not to mention threatened and afraid by Israel-centred antisemitism.

Most social circles are quick to denounce traditional forms of antisemitism, but not Israel-centred antisemitism. Among left-leaning political circles in Germany, it is common to hear that Israel is the mastermind behind various conspiratorial actions. Also, there are attempts to compare Israel directly with National Socialism to reverse the state's role from victim to perpetrator, thereby exonerating those guilty of antisemitism. For some on Germany's political left, Israel is always at fault.

The controversies and discussions surrounding Israel-centred antisemitism are having an impact on politics, art and culture, the politics of remembrance, subcultures and the political left. Meanwhile, the discourse surrounding Israel, antisemitism and BDS is now causing anti-racist alliances to fall apart. Some participants in these alliances support Israel, while many left-leaning groups automatically take the side of the perceived underdog and thus put their support behind BDS and other groups that oppose Israel.

The impact on politics and the general public

In May 2019, a majority ruling was passed by the German government – with support from all party factions – declaring the BDS movement to be antisemitic. As part of this decision, it recommended that no government institutions should provide financial support for BDS events.

Although the government's decision asserts that the BDS campaign is antisemitic and the BDS movement in Germany has been marginalised, BDS is continuing to gain ground, not least in leftist, anti-racist and post-colonial circles. This is causing debates and alliances to be hijacked by anti-Israel activists. Jewish people are being

coerced into speaking out for or against Israel at a time when synagogues have been subjected to arson attacks and angry mobs have congregated outside of them, shouting “fucking Jews” in protest over Israel.

Within these debates, an assault is being made on the clear, unambiguous positioning of BDS as antisemitic as based on the working definition of antisemitism by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). In Germany in particular – as the country that perpetrated the Shoah – separation of BDS and antisemitism is considered a necessity by BDS proponents to push their cause. Demonstrations of solidarity with BDS are possible only if the campaign is absolved of any hint of antisemitism or if occasional incidents of antisemitism are relativised as a minimal issue in an otherwise worthy fight.

The government’s ruling regarding BDS has yet to bring about an end to these attacks, which are fuelling a climate of uncertainty and anxiety. While the debate in the media has since died down, the general public continues to grapple with the notion that Israel-centred antisemitism should be a matter of dispute. As a result, public sentiment seems to view antisemitism as an incredibly complicated issue where both sides must be considered at all times and the IHRA is a contentious organisation, meaning it is not possible to make a clear-cut distinction between antisemitism against Israel and “criticism of Israel.” Consequently, progress in the fight against antisemitism in Germany is at risk of being reversed.

For example, in 2021 the Jewish Community of Thuringia addressed Israel-centred antisemitism at a commemoration of the liberation of Auschwitz concentration camp. Community Chair Reinhard Schramm stated that this was necessary “because we are so afraid” that Israel-centred antisemitism could end up building a political bridge between right-wing and left-wing groups. Linking the day of remembrance to hatred towards Israel was, as Schramm points out, strongly criticised by representatives “typically seen as left-leaning or Social Democrats.” Schramm went on to say that “this affects us greatly” and he lamented the trivialisation of Israel-centred antisemitism which is “absolutely palpable.”

The lack of engagement with antisemitism and reluctance to come to terms with it are evident in all circles, as exemplified by one of the world's most important art exhibitions in 2022: documenta. The exhibition has taken place in Kassel every five years since 1955, with many international artists in attendance.

Accusations of antisemitism were levied against the current edition of documenta long before it opened in June. An Indonesian curator collective enlisted to guarantee that the 15th edition of documenta would represent the Global South was denounced for having ties to BDS activists. The organisers were combative from the outset and ignored the criticism. After the exhibition opened, the work of one Indonesian art collective, which was exhibited in Kassel's main square, depicted Jews as pigs or greedy capitalists with long side curls and fang-like teeth. The exhibition is also home to other works that compare the situation in Gaza with the period under National Socialism and relativise it.

The impact on remembrance and academia

The political left also engages in Holocaust distortion when it attacks the position that the Shoah was a singular event, without precedent, representing a rupture of civilisation. Post-colonial theorists have argued that it is impossible to come to terms with Germany's colonial past while the Shoah is considered a singular event, and thus an alleged hegemony shaping the politics of remembrance.

This argument is also a calculated move relative to Israel. If the singularity thesis is dismissed and the Shoah is reduced to a mass murder event like many others, then Israel loses its status as a special state, as a place of shelter for Jews worldwide, thereby negating Israel's right to existence. It is no coincidence that antisemitism against Israel is trivialised in these debates. Attacks on the definition of antisemitism as set out by the IHRA are almost exclusively directed towards the notion that the definition will be weaponized to quash freedom of speech with respect to criticism of Israel, even though the IHRA definition explicitly states that "criticism like that levelled against any other nation cannot be considered antisemitic."

The impact on the political left

The debates on the political left are normalising antisemitism and shifting the baseline. What was once considered an extreme position a few years ago is now a centrist opinion in the wider discourse. Today, the anti-Israel scene is calling to “Globalise the Intifada”, which openly glorifies terror tactics. At the traditional May Day demonstrations in Berlin in 2022, antisemitic slogans could be heard from the outset: “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free”, “Apartheid Israel” and one that explicitly trivialises terror: “Stop the war, Intifada until we prevail.” The crowd chanted the motto “Yallah class war”, while posters showed Leila Khaled, member of the terrorist organisation Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which is responsible for numerous attacks against Israeli civilians.

Further instances of Israel-centred antisemitism were in evidence on 19 February 2022, the second anniversary of the right-wing terrorist attack in Hanau. In Berlin, demonstrators shouted the following: “From Hanau to Gaza – Yallah Intifada.” The capital was not alone in seeing events marking the anniversary of the Hanau shootings being weaponised for other purposes, with flags flown bearing the name of “Samidoun,” a virulently anti-Zionist organization that is reported to have ties to PFLP.

The May Day demonstrations and Hanau remembrance events are just two examples among many incidents involving anti-racist alliances – which identify as champions of diversity and equality – that have antisemitic undertones. The rejection of Israel as an allegedly “colonial project” and accusations as to the apartheid, ethnic cleansing and genocide of Palestinians have found support in many anti-racist alliances. They are linking issues that bear no relation to the conflict in the Middle East.

Many of the new breed of activists clearly position themselves as being in opposition to the Jewish state’s existence. A group called Young Struggle believes that “to support Zionist politics and ideologies is to support racism.” This not only prompts

conflicts within leftist and progressive alliances, but pressures Jews to adopt a position on the issue, too. Sascha Tretja attended the demonstration in Berlin and describes her discomfort as follows: “It is at these times when I ask myself where I stand as a Jewish person in a leftist movement – if you want to call it that. In the country where the Shoah took place, the left seems to be unable to reconcile racism and antisemitism. There is much too great a risk of being vilified as a racist or antisemite. People don’t want that, so they avoid the conflict altogether.”

One especially loud voice is the group “Palestine Speaks” [Palästina spricht], which organised a demonstration in Berlin in April 2022 where people were referred to as “dirty Jews” and journalists were attacked and insulted. Meanwhile, “Migrantifa Berlin” was also involved in organising the May Day demonstrations. Groups of the same name have existed since the terrorist attack in Hanau: these are loose alliances whose aim is to promote anti-fascist policies by migrants for migrants. Israel-centred antisemitism also rears its head here, though it is important to emphasise that there is no consensus regarding hostility towards Israel, and that other local groups clearly and unequivocally distance themselves from expressing hatred towards Israel.

New groups such as “Palestine Speaks” do not have any clear goals. They want to be part of the emancipatory and anti-racist alliances: “We need to join them!” said one activist belonging to “Palestine Speaks” during a talk on strategy. “Them” in this case means anti-racist and other “progressive movements, climate movements and so on”. Looked at from a traditional perspective, there are more than enough factors that connect left-leaning movements. Whatever the topic, the primary focus is always on hostility towards Israel and the antisemitism that goes with it. This leads to conflict within the alliances and institutions. The excerpt from this strategy meeting also offers insight into this mentality, with one quote indicating that criticism of antisemitism is not what the group wants: “The people who say such things are racist.”

It is difficult to assess the weight of antisemitic voices on the political left. Time and again, activists are twisting debates in their direction and creating narratives about the supposed racist nature of Zionism, an alleged apartheid, the “settler colonialism” of Israel and other expressions of Israel-centred antisemitism in the ostensible “mainstream of society.” The fact remains that no one in Germany knows whether this is a radical minority wielding a disproportionate amount of power in the debate – or a silent majority.

Fortunately, there are strong voices on the left which do criticise Israel-centred antisemitism, which compares well to other countries in Europe. Moreover, Germany can look to an engaged civil society that – often together with Jewish communities and organisations – not only observes what has been described above with concern, but actively fights back against any and all acts of antisemitism.

Spain



ACOM

In Spain, Israel’s right to exist and the desire to normalize Jewish life have been consensus positions of both Socialist and Conservative governments in democratic Spain. Before today, the existence of Israel as a State had never been questioned and no politician with electoral support had ever used openly hostile terms towards Israel and “the Zionists.” With the entry into government of the neo-Marxist Podemos party and its Communist associates, this post-war European tradition has been disrupted. The current Executive, a coalition of the PSOE (Spanish Socialist Workers Party) and Podemos, includes politicians who openly defend the dissolution of the State of Israel and who are close to its most vicious enemies.

Irene Montero, current Minister for Equality, labeled Israel's Government as "genocidal" in July 2014. Also in July 2014, the Communist politician Alberto Garzón, current Minister for Consumer Affairs, declared that "Israel's Government and Police Force employ methods characteristic of Nazism." These are just two examples of Spanish government members resorting to the most despicable antisemitic propaganda: comparing Israel with the Nazis and accusing it of genocide.

Pablo Iglesias, a co-founder of Podemos and former Vice-President of the Government, called Israel "a criminal state" in an interview for the Spanish public broadcasting corporation. He also condemned what he called Israel's "apartheid policy" against Palestinians. Several senior members of this party have worked for years for HispanTV, the Iranian propaganda tool in Spain. The leader himself conducted two TV shows for this network: *Fort Apache* and *Spoilers*. Iglesias thus justified his collaboration with Iran: "Germans had an interest in providing a train for Lenin so that he would destabilize Russia; Iranians have an interest in spreading a leftist discourse in Latin America and Spain because it damages their opponents. Shall we take advantage of it or not?"

Sixty years ago, before the democratic era, antisemitism maintained its classical forms and was clearly a right-wing issue in Spain, as in the rest of Europe. Today, anti-Israel antisemitism of the political left accounts for the overwhelming share of antisemitism, while the Spanish right is almost entirely pro-Israel and guards against antisemitism.

José María Aznar, the founder of the Partido Popular and President of the Spanish Government from 1996 to 2004, promoted and led the Friends of Israel initiative. As for Vox, the second Spanish right-wing party and third parliamentary force, often branded as "far-right" by the media, it must be said that their principal leaders, headed by their President, Santiago Abascal, have repeatedly and explicitly shown their closeness to the Jewish minority as an essential piece of our national identity, as well as openly and frequently expressing their support for Israel.

Inversely, the Socialist left that established our diplomatic relations with Israel has turned progressively cold and ultimately hostile to the Jewish State, as clearly exemplified by the PSOE/Podemos coalition.

While in other parts of Europe the antisemitic spectrum encompasses both the extreme right and the extreme left, sometimes with a decisive electoral weight, in Spain the extreme right is quite marginal and extra parliamentary. Antisemitism in politics is practiced overwhelmingly by Podemos, a radical leftist organization, born under the Iranian and Chavist aegis. Podemos not only currently governs Spain along with the Socialist Party, but it also forms part of several regional and local coalition governments.

The BDS movement and the extreme left are the same thing in Spain. Criminalizing Israel is a tenet of Podemos and its political fellow travelers. The party's ties to the Iranian regime would be enough to prevent Podemos from receiving even non-marginal electoral support in many parts of the world. Yet, in Spain, it is not only part of the governing coalition but even is key to Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez remaining in office.

Another active source of antisemitism in the Spanish political spectrum is to be found in the separatist parties which also provide critical political support to the current Socialist/Podemos government. For example, the Bildu coalition of Basque parties has the same political aspirations as the Basque terrorist group ETA, which has [well-known ties](#) to Palestinian terrorist groups. It is not surprising to find antisemitism there. Hatred of Israel pervades the entire organizational structure of Basque separatism: syndicates and coalitions, like Bildu, enable access to public funding for street gangs, such as the one that attacked supporters of Hapoel Holon, an Israeli basketball team. Galician independentism, embodied by the BNG coalition, has hosted public events for the Palestinian terrorist group, PFLP.

However, as a political phenomenon, the most virulent antisemitism is displayed today by Catalan separatists. ACOM has been denouncing for years the network of

associations that simultaneously promote anti-establishment, secessionist, and Islamist activities. Islamist infiltration in Catalonia, whose Muslim population is one of the largest in Europe, has boosted Salafism in the region and turned it into one of Europe's major [hotbeds of jihadism](#). This mix of local and foreign political factors has already led to an antisemitic fixation in several official initiatives.

While elements of the Catalan independence movement were once close to Israel, they no longer carry much weight, as the June 2022 formal declaration of the Catalan Parliament clearly shows. Controlled by separatists and leftists, the Parliament labeled Israel as an "apartheid state" and denied its right to exist. Such an official onslaught against Israel is unprecedented in contemporary Europe.

This parliamentary declaration is just the tip of the iceberg. Dozens of BDS resolutions have been approved in the area called by separatists "Païses Catalanes" (Catalonia, Valencia, the Balearic Islands), submitting millions of people to discriminatory measures against the Israelis and anyone supporting them.

Such measures and the hate speech attached to them are implemented and spread through a vast patronage network of publicly funded NGOs. The Observatori DESC, whose mandate is to promote economic and social rights, is an illustrating example of these organizations allegedly defending human rights while actually breeding radical left politicians and separatists.

The Spanish Socialist Party was once a model in the fight against antisemitism, maintaining close ties with Israel. Nowadays, while apparently keeping a friendly stance towards the Jewish communities in Spain, it contributes to spreading institutional BDS. Socialist local governments systematically support motions proposed by Podemos. While the Socialist side of the governing coalition ostensibly endorses the IHRA definition of antisemitism (which Podemos rejects), the Government dismissed its endorsement by Parliament, and more importantly, any practical implementation of this agreement aimed to prevent the financing of what it defines as antisemitic activities. Furthermore, the Government itself declared in

Parliament that it had no intention of advancing toward legally binding resolutions against antisemitism.

But the Socialist institutional stance doesn't end here. The Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs employs a perplexing double standard: it hurries to issue urgent press releases condemning Israel anytime construction in the disputed Judean and Samarian territories is announced while keeping silent in the face of issues related to disputed territories far more relevant to Spain, like recent British building development in Gibraltar. We must also keep in mind the government's hostile bias against Israel at the UN.

The Socialist/Podemos government also continues to fund the Palestinian Authority without conditioning that support on ending antisemitic practices, such as ceasing to incite hatred against Jews in Palestinian schools, ending the glorification of terrorism by the Palestinian media, or dismantling the "pay for slay" scheme of the Palestinian Authority, a funding system rewarding terrorists and their families for murdering Israelis.

On the Spanish extreme left, there are non-governmental movements which support the antisemitic BDS campaign. The so-called "Solidarity Network Against the Occupation of Palestine" (RESCOP, in its Spanish acronym), is an umbrella organization coordinating local, regional, and national groups and institutions to promote boycott campaigns against anything Israeli in Spain. RESCOP, close to Podemos and separatists, like many other NGOs discouraging any contact with Israel, has free access to public subsidies for allegedly humanitarian activities. These funds are granted by the Foreign Affairs Ministry, its Spanish Cooperation Agency (AECID), and regional and local governments. Israeli support and funding of groups and activities openly hostile to Spain would be nothing less than unthinkable, as preposterous as it would be that Israel funded Spanish marginal political players the same way Spanish public grants are used to finance NGOs in Israel.

Discrimination against Israeli companies and individuals by left-wing controlled local political authorities is an unquestionable fact. More than one hundred local administrations, including city councils, provincial councils, and regional parliaments, have joined the international antisemitic BDS campaign, declaring themselves “free from Israeli apartheid.”

A long list of resolutions and public statements forbade and penalized any intent of cooperating with Israel in areas like economy, education, commerce, culture, or security. The boycott campaign has impacted Spanish nationals who publicly support the Jewish State, including members of our country's Jewish communities. Due to the blatant antisemitism of such endeavors, ACOM has repeatedly petitioned Spanish courts of law to protect Israeli nationals, the Jewish minority in Spain, and naturally, any Spanish citizen just trying to operate normally and freely with Israel.

ACOM and other organizations have successfully had 84 institutional statements overturned. Each court ruling, including by High Courts, highlighted the infringement of the constitutional non-discrimination principle. These victories have determined that BDS actions are illegal in Spain, setting precedents that have persuaded other institutions from attempting BDS initiatives.

We are envisaging a radical legislative change in the foreseeable future, developing advanced laws to prosecute any form of antisemitism. In this regard, ACOM has been pursuing a broad agenda, including the sensibilization of political leaders (from conservatives to moderate leftists) in regional and local administrations and at the highest parliamentary level. We aim to educate legislators and prompt the legal system to delegitimize funding activities promoting hate and discrimination, singling out the sole Jewish state and its citizens. The Madrid regional parliament has already formally embraced the IHRA definition of antisemitism and submitted to the national parliament a historical legislative initiative: preventing entities involved in discriminatory practices from receiving any public funds or subsidies and contracting with public administrations. Through this initiative, Spain could lead the way in the fight against the new antisemitism, in the guise of anti-Zionism and mixed

with progressivism and humanitarianism. This would be a decisive step toward raising awareness in Europe, pledging the historic and unavoidable commitment to preventing the monster of antisemitism from growing again on the continent of the Holocaust.

Analysis of Europe

Converging and Diverging Trajectories of Antisemitism and Anti-Israel Bias in Europe

The four case studies examining France, Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom demonstrate that the prevalence of antisemitism within elements of the political left in Western Europe is shaped by post-WWII political trajectory, by individual political leaders, and by left-wing non-governmental groups.

Political Parties

In France, where the left came under substantial Soviet influence during the Cold War, antisemitic conspiracy theories and tropes found a home within both the Socialist Party (PS) and *La France Insoumise* (LFI), with PS executive committee member Gérard Filoche and LFI leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon as current examples. By contrast, Germany's perpetration of the Shoah has made antisemitism taboo among all mainstream parties and a liability even for radical parties and extra-parliamentary political movements. In Spain, meanwhile, the entry into government of Podemos, a radical neo-Marxist Party, and its Communist associates, disrupted the post-war exclusion of antisemitism from mainstream platforms, and antisemitism is now making inroads in the pro-independence Basque and Catalan parties.

The case of the United Kingdom stands apart and demonstrates the significant role political leaders can play in determining the extent of antisemitism in a political party. Under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, the Labour Party welcomed and promoted anti-Israel radicals and consequently became a hotbed of antisemitism. In contrast, his successor, Keir Starmer, demonstrated how antisemitism can be largely driven

out of a political party through principled leadership. In April 2020, the party took steps “to introduce a new disciplinary process, education about antisemitism for party officers and members, and to rebuild the confidence of Jewish party members.” Labour’s signaling to its members that antisemitism was no longer welcome included the proscription of groups with problematic track record, such as Labour Against the Witchhunt (LAW), and the suspension of the parliamentary candidate Vicki Kirby, who had tweeted in 2014, “Who is the Zionist God? I’m starting to think it might be Hitler.” Labour also treated the denial of the existence of antisemitism as evidence of antisemitism.

Such pushback against left-wing antisemitism as an internal party reform was unique to the United Kingdom among the four countries studied. In contrast, the pushback against left-wing antisemitism in Germany took the form of a nonpartisan parliamentary coalition that brought all mainstream political parties together at the national level in May 2019 to declare the BDS movement antisemitic. This decision recommended German governmental institutions not to provide any financial support for BDS events.

In Spain, the vast majority of antisemitism political battles have been occurring at the regional and municipal levels, not the national level. The pushback against left-wing antisemitism included Action and Communication on the Middle East’s (ACOM) many judicial and political initiatives and Madrid’s regional parliament adopting the IHRA definition of antisemitism and submitting a legislative initiative to the national parliament aimed at preventing entities involved in discriminatory activities from receiving any public funds. There were no reported initiatives within radical left-wing political parties to push back against antisemitism rising within their ranks.

In France, pushback against left-wing antisemitism took the form of public condemnations by senior officials, Jewish organizations, and other public figures, often in response to episodes of antisemitic statements or acts, while many within left-wing movements and political parties chose to remain silent.

Non-Governmental Groups

Within radical left-wing movements, some non-governmental organizations and grassroots movements have engaged in antisemitic conspiracy theories, anti-Israel mobilization, and Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) campaigns. At times, these organizations have worked in collaboration with political parties, and antisemitic incidents have led to embarrassing situations for the party.

In the United Kingdom, groups like Labour Against the Witchhunt (LAW) and the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) enjoyed a close working relationship with Corbyn's Labour Party. Labour Members of Parliament and officials frequently spoke at demonstrations and events organized by anti-Israel groups, where antisemitic speech and incidents occurred. Similarly, Tapesh Abu Shaim of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC), whose social media posts accused Israel of being behind the Charlie Hebdo killings, ISIS, and the 9/11 terror attacks, put the Labour Party in a difficult position when he was spotted staffing a PSC stall at a Labour Party conference and receiving a personal tour around the Houses of Parliament by Corbyn. Even in the Starmer era, incidents have occurred. On at least two occasions in May and June 2021, demonstrators chanted antisemitic slogans in the presence of Labour MPs.

To a lesser extent, in France, the Yellow Vest movement received support from Mélenchon's *La France Insoumise*. In Spain, the Solidarity Network Against the Occupation of Palestine (RESCOP), has worked in tandem with Podemos. By contrast, the German declaration of the BDS movement as antisemitic—with support from the mainstream parties—has left groups like Palestine Speaks, Young Struggle, and Migrantifa Berlin without major political backing.

Antisemitic Themes

In all four countries, the two dominant findings were that antisemitism was used in anti-Israel contexts and in anti-capitalist contexts.

In anti-Israel contexts, antisemitic themes included (1) accusations that Jewish cabals control politics and media and prevent either criticism of Israel or support for Palestine; (2) Holocaust trivialization as a means of arguing that Palestinians are no less victims today than Jews were during the Holocaust; (3) equating Israel with the Nazi regime, thus demonizing Israel; (4) accusations of antisemitism are in bad faith and employed to silence criticism of Israel.

In anti-capitalist contexts, antisemitic themes included (1) Jewish control of financial markets; (2) Jewish obsession with money; and (3) Jewish exploitation of workers. The study of these four countries indicates that the future direction of antisemitism and anti-Israel bias in Western Europe will be shaped by the complex interplay of multiple factors, including the political trajectories in each country, the institutional dynamics of political parties and the agency of individual leaders, and the interaction between political parties and political movements. These cases also make clear that concerted action by political parties and civil society, legislative initiatives, and the effective working of intra- or extra-party mechanisms for holding individuals and groups accountable for antisemitism have the potential to reverse the alarming rise in antisemitism and radical anti-Israel bias. The role of leadership, as exemplified by the dramatic reversal in Labour Party from Corbyn's leadership to Starmer's, is an important reminder that individual agency matters and can make a difference.

United States



Lessons for the U.S. from the European Experience

When it comes to antisemitism in the U.S., there is a lot the U.S. Jewish community can learn from the experience of Jewish communities across Europe. This is especially true when it comes to anti-Israel trends and anti-Zionism, where we have

seen a blurring of the lines between attacks on Israel and attacks on Jews and Jewish identity.

Over the past few years, we've seen several examples of this, including how anti-Zionist rhetoric and terminology popular in European left circles, are increasingly utilized by some in U.S. political far left.

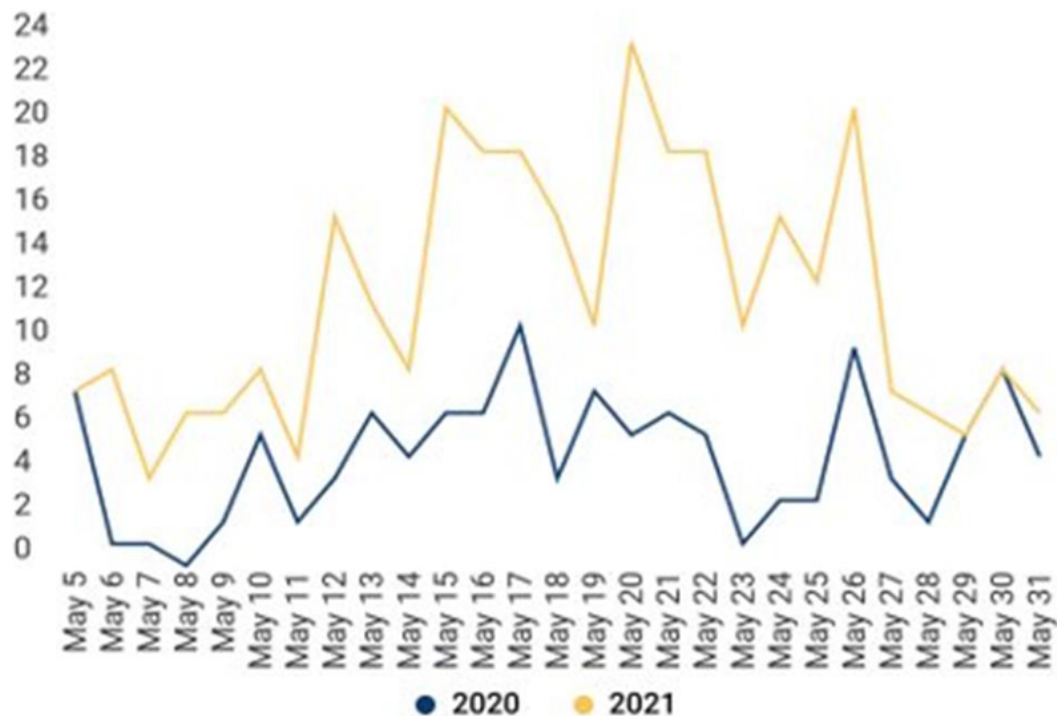
The most striking example of the permeation of anti-Israel trends into American society is what happened during the May 2021 Israel-Hamas conflict when tensions over Israel resulted in incidents of antisemitism directed at Jews and Jewish institutions in the United States.

During prior periods of Israeli-Palestinian tensions, ADL observed a spike in antisemitic incidents across Europe, including during Israel's conflicts with Hamas during 2012 and 2014. In 2014, dangerously violent incidents [included](#) the firebombing of a synagogue in Germany, firebombings of a Jewish community center and a kosher store in France, attempts to attack and invade synagogues in France, and Jews being attacked in public.

While such violent outbreaks of antisemitism had previously been limited to communities outside the U.S., that changed during the May 2021 conflict.

During that period, ADL recorded 251 incidents across the U.S. from May 11 -- the official start of military action -- through the end of the month, representing an increase of 115 percent over the same period in 2020.

Antisemitic Incidents | U.S. May 5-31 | 2020 vs. 2021



Antisemitic incidents in the U.S. more than doubled during the May 2021 conflict between Israel and Hamas and its immediate aftermath, compared with the same time in 2020.

ADL

Notable incidents included: Jewish diners in Los Angeles attacked by individuals in cars carrying Palestinian flags shouting “You should be ashamed of yourselves” and reportedly making anti-Jewish slurs; a pro-Palestinian convoy in New York City driving through the 47th Street diamond district, an area with a heavy Jewish business presence, throwing firecrackers while shouting antisemitic slogans; a man wearing a kippah in New York going to a pro-Israel demonstration who was attacked by 5 men, one of whom yelled, “dirty Jew;” and in Las Vegas, a Jewish male having a conversation about the Israel-Hamas conflict with a stranger, was told Jews are “baby killers” who “are not going to exist.”

For those who doubted the connection between anti-Zionism and acts of antisemitism, this was proof that not only was there a very real link, but that linkage was no longer only evident outside the U.S.

Each of the four countries examined in this paper provide examples of manifestations of left-wing antisemitism that are not dissimilar to trends we have observed in the U.S. And each offers warnings about how anti-Zionism and antisemitism could further manifest itself within elements of left leaning groups within the U.S. political realm.

Use of Violent Language:

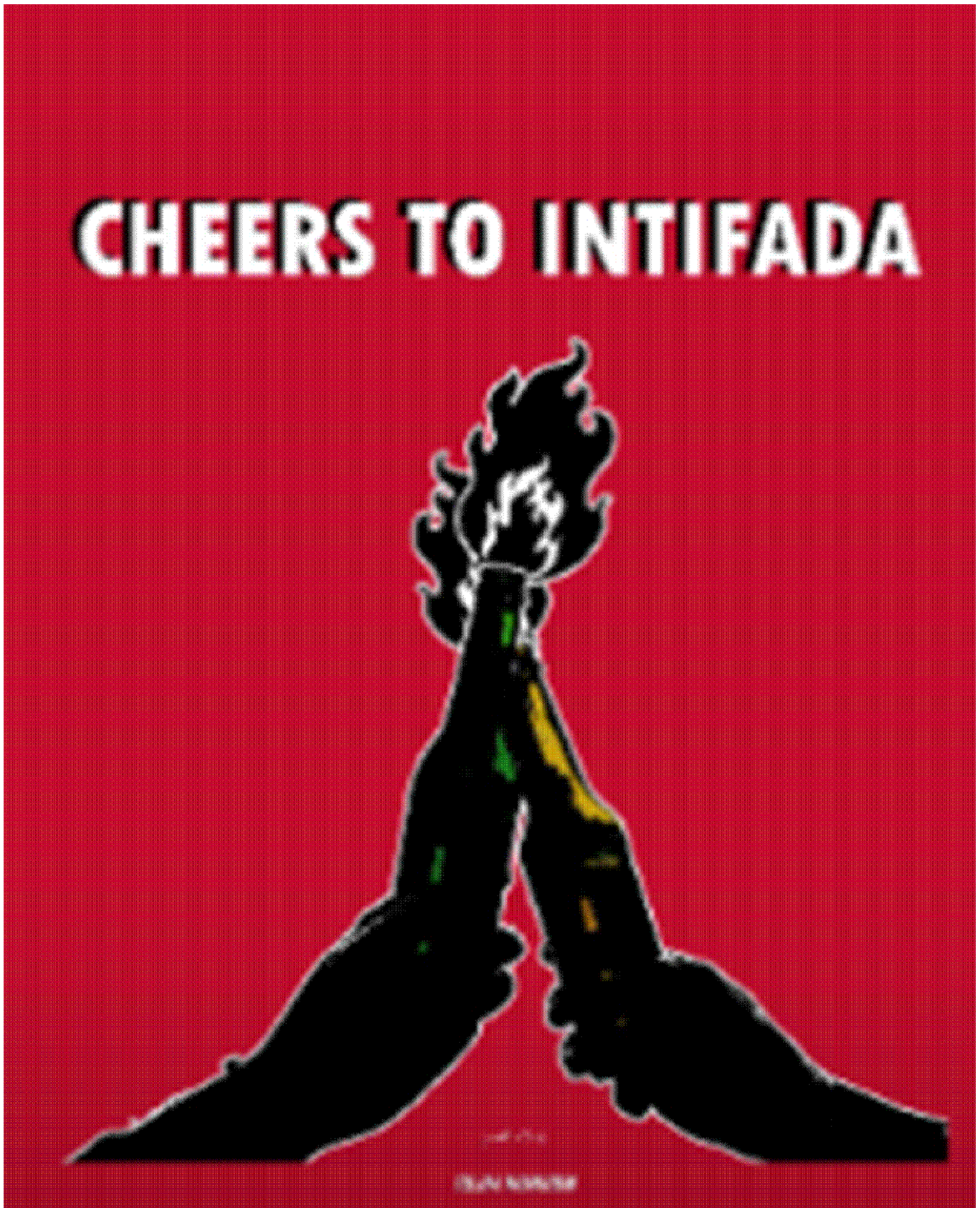
The use of pro-intifada language, like we see in Germany, has entered into social justice circles in the U.S. This is particularly shocking, considering that the two Palestinian intifadas were intense periods of violence. They included suicide bombings, shootings, stabbings and other terror attacks, resulting in over 1,000 Israeli civilians killed and many thousands more injured. Whether or not they are aware, those who chant in support of the intifada are effectively endorsing a renewal of violence against Israeli civilians.

We have seen several examples of how support for the intifada has made it into anti-Israel protests, including on American university campuses. In addition, we have seen social media pages of U.S.-based anti-Israel groups feature expressions of support for a Palestinian intifada against Israel.

Some examples of this include:

- In January 2023, pro-Palestinian students at the University of Michigan, who were protesting a speaking engagement on climate change by Vice President Kamala Harris, [were recorded chanting](#) “There is only solution: intifada revolution!” and “Long live the intifada!”

- In January 2023, Rabab Abdulhadi, a San Francisco State University associate professor who has repeatedly expressing support for Palestinian terrorists, was given an award from the Middle East Studies Association.
- In November 2021, the anti-Israel Students for Justice in Palestine group at University of Chicago released a zine, or student-generated activist pamphlet, with an image depicting two Molotov cocktails and the text, “Cheers to Intifada.”



Use of Conspiracy Theories:

The antisemitic notion of Jewish / pro-Israel lobby control over the government's actions, which we see in the UK and France, is unfortunately a familiar trope in the U.S. Indeed, it is one of the [oldest antisemitic tropes](#), which has infested societies for

hundreds of years, and was prominent in the infamous forgery, the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

The myth of Jewish power has long been espoused by those on the far right, as well as on the far left. However, in recent years, we have seen accusations from more prominent and mainstream figures, who falsely claim that some Jewish and pro-Israel groups are unduly influencing U.S. foreign policy - in governments, academic circles, and elsewhere - in favor of Israel. They often claim that these groups are using their “power” to stifle any criticism of Israeli government policies. Some elected officials have even blamed their failure to get elected or re-elected on the so-called Israel lobby.

Examples of this include:

- After former Human Rights Watch Director Ken Roth, who has been harshly critical of Israel in recent years, was rejected from a fellowship position at Harvard University, a January 2023 article published in the Nation blamed the decision [on conspiracy theories](#) about Jewish control, power and financial influence. (Note: Harvard later reversed its decision and offered Roth the fellowship.)
- In September 2022, anti-Zionist journalist Philip Weiss [wrote](#) “Just how powerful is the Israel lobby? My answer is that the lobby controls U.S. policy with respect to Israeli persecution of Palestinians.”
- Following her 2021 Democratic primary loss, candidate Nina Turner [blamed](#) “evil money” - a reference to the support the winning candidate received from pro-Israel groups – for her failed campaign.
- In a 2019 social media post, Congresswoman Ilhan Omar [suggested](#) that Israel’s allies in American politics were motivated by money rather than principle, tweeting “It’s all about the Benjamins baby” (a reference to \$100 bills). Omar subsequently apologized, following discussions with Democratic colleagues.



Ilhan Omar 
@IlhanMN



It's all about the Benjamins baby 🎵🎵

Glenn Greenwald  @ggreenwald

GOP Leader Kevin McCarthy threatens punishment for @IlhanMN and @RashidaTlaib over their criticisms of Israel. It's stunning how much time US political leaders spend defending a foreign nation even if it means a...

Show this thread

23:58 · 10/02/2019 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

2,284 Retweets **11.7K** Likes

The use of classical antisemitic tropes about Jewish control is not limited to the extreme left nor to discourse about Israel. Indeed, on the extreme right, we have also witnessed nefarious claims that Jewish financiers like George Soros and groups of “Globalists” - often used as code for “Jews” - are working secretly to undermine US interests and control things behind the scenes.

Use of Soviet-era Terminology:

Much like in France, we have seen the adoption in the U.S. of Soviet-era tactics to brand Israel as an extension of colonialism and the label of Zionism as racism. We see this type of language from anti-Israel NGOs and activist groups who seek to put the Zionist movement in the same category as European colonialism by falsely arguing that Jews have no claim to Israel. Some Members of Congress have even started adopting similar rhetoric in their public statements and letters. There are even those who compare the crimes committed against the Native Americans to the experience of Palestinians.

Some examples of this include:

- In a 2021 letter, Democratic Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib and several other Members of Congress, [referred](#) to Israel's policies in the West Bank as "settler colonialism," language that seeks to equate Israel with the colonialist policies of European governments. By labeling the Palestinians as the sole indigenous population, it attempts to cement the notions that Jews have no claim to or history in the land.
- In a 2021 [Facebook post](#), the Jewish Voice for Peace NGO detailed how the infamous 1975 UN Resolution that Zionism = Racism is still applicable today.



- The NDN Collective, a grassroots Indigenous group based in South Dakota that advocates self-determination for Native peoples, [published a position paper](#) arguing that “origins of zionism are firmly rooted in colonial european ideas of ‘civilization’ that we find across our own history in North America.” [sic]

ADL Policy Recommendations

There is no single fix to the alarming trends of antisemitism showcased in this report. In the U.S. context, ADL developed its [COMBAT Plan](#), offering a comprehensive, six-part framework for elected officials and policymakers to take meaningful action to fight antisemitism, including many steps that have global applicability.

ADL urges leaders to:

Condemn Antisemitism

Oppose Hate and Extremism Driven by Antisemitism

Make Communities Safe from Antisemitism

Block Antisemitism Online

Act Against Global Antisemitism

Teach about Antisemitism

Condemn Antisemitism

Public officials and civic leaders – from Presidents and Prime Ministers, to governors, mayors, other civic leaders, and law enforcement authorities – must use their bully pulpits to speak out against antisemitism and all forms of hate and extremism. Regardless of its origins – from the far left to the far right and anywhere in between – leaders must call out antisemitism, including anti-Zionist antisemitism, and rally their communities to action.

- Condemn all forms of antisemitism, and respond to antisemitic incidents, in timely, specific, and direct ways.
- Challenge antisemitism in a whole-of-government National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism.
- Incorporate antisemitism education and training in government, as part of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) efforts and other anti-bias

initiatives.

- Adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism as a legally nonbinding education tool.

Oppose Hate and Extremism Driven by Antisemitism

Fighting hate crime is a critical task, especially now that antisemitism and other forms of hate, racism, and bigotry are at all-time high levels. At a time when communities around the world are feeling increasingly vulnerable to bias-motivated crimes and extremist-fueled attacks, the work to address them and resolve the alarming gaps in data collection and reporting becomes more important to combat hate-motivated violence.

- Support hate crime laws and improve hate crime data collection and reporting.
- Take guidance from the wide-ranging measures to combat all forms of antisemitic extremism, outlined in ADL's [PROTECT](#) plan.

Make Institutions Safe from Antisemitism

Whether the attack Halle synagogue in 2019, verbal assaults in public across Europe, or hate against Jewish students on university campuses, there is an acute threat of antisemitic violence and harassment.

In the U.S. experience, for the past decade, funding assistance from all levels of governments has provided crucial support for security hardening and enhancements for non-profit institutions, including religious institutions. This responds to the continuing targeting by violent extremists of synagogues, mosques, churches, temples, and other houses of worship and religious gathering places.

At a time of increased vulnerability to threats of hate-motivated violence, the Jewish community must be protected from these threats and counter the movements that

produce them.

- Protect the physical security of Jewish community institutions through full funding of non-profit security grant funding programs.
- Safeguard Jewish students in post-secondary institutions.
- Urge state education governing bodies and post-secondary institutions to rigorously enforce existing anti-discrimination policies and ensure that appropriate disciplinary measures are employed against individuals and institutions when appropriate.

Block Antisemitism Online

Governments have an important role in reducing online hate, harassment, and extremism fueled by antisemitism, which have become all too commonplace. The proliferation of online harassment, abuse, and misogyny has resulted in the normalization of this abusive behavior and the degradation of our democracy and public safety, including through the suppression and silencing of diverse voices, and the violent expression of gender-motivated, extremist acts.

- ADL's comprehensive approach to combating online hate, harassment, and extremism, including antisemitism, as delineated in the [REPAIR](#) plan can provide guidance.
- Support online literacy programs, in collaboration with the private sector, to help educate the general public to identify hate speech to avoid unintentional indoctrination.

Act Against Antisemitism Around the Globe

Global antisemitism is on the rise. Cultures of violence, silence, and complacency have helped antisemitism to gain new currency around the world. Without the

requisite proactivity and knowledge to recognize this evil, we are at a disadvantage to stop it. Combating antisemitism around the world is in the best interest of the global community, and there is no way that we can win this fight unless we all work together.

- Strengthen the offices of Special Envoys and Special Representatives tasked to monitor and combat antisemitism.
- Provide greater support for government entities tasked with monitoring and addressing issues related to the Holocaust.
- Amplify intergovernmental cooperation between the foreign governments and the U.S. to fight global antisemitism and specific regional manifestations.
- Counter state-sponsored antisemitism and related terrorism.
- Mobilize against efforts to demonize, delegitimize and isolate Israel in international fora.

Teach About Antisemitism

Eliminating antisemitism and other forms of bigotry requires government and civil society leaders to promote anti-hate, anti-bias, and civics education programs. As intolerance, antisemitism, bigotry, and Holocaust denialism and distortion are on the rise and continuously promoted by hate groups, Holocaust education provides a context in which to learn about the danger of what can happen when hate goes unchallenged and there is indifference in the face of the oppression of others; learning how and why the Holocaust happened is an important component of the education of members of our society. If we do not make sure our children are learning about the Holocaust and antisemitism, history will repeat itself.

- Promote understanding of Jewish people today.

- Include antisemitism in anti-bias education and related training.
- Study Holocaust education efforts nationwide and properly resource Holocaust education.
- Encourage governments to institute age-appropriate Holocaust and antisemitism education as part of their curricula and provide the means for schools and educational institutions to deliver such education.
- Advance international efforts to support Holocaust and antisemitism education and curriculum that fights violence, bigotry, and hate.

Conclusion

The four-country analyses in this report highlight the need for the American Jewish community and supporters of Israel more broadly to pay close attention to the trends happening in elements of the political left in Europe and to remain alert to the potential for them to spread around the world. This is especially true when it comes to anti-Israel trends and anti-Zionism, where we have seen a blurring of the lines between attacks on Israel and attacks on Jews and Jewish identity.

Country borders cannot contain the spread of anti-Israel sentiment and antisemitism. There is a lot we can learn from the experiences of Jewish communities across Europe, which can help us better understand and anticipate these dangerous trends, and hopefully head them off before they become mainstreamed in our politics and society.

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