

The mainstreaming of Islamic extremism

By Matthew M Hausman

Progressives rationalize tenets that justify atrocities against Jews and destroying a sovereign democratic state, while they cheer Hamas for resisting an “occupation” that only exists in the minds of leftists, terrorists, and Palestinian Arab revisionists. Opinion.

After the horrific events of last year and the war that followed, Hamas was finally recognized as a genocidal terror organization – but only by some and only for a moment. The global community almost immediately cast Hamas in a conciliatory light by contextualizing its brutality as “resistance to occupation,” though Israel withdrew from Gaza nearly twenty years ago.



Many world leaders blamed the victim by (a) criticizing Israel for a blockade designed to prevent the flow of weapons and terrorist materiel (but not the importation of food, health supplies, or essential goods) and (b) falsely portraying Gaza as an “open-air prison” (if anyone prevented Gazans from

leaving, it was Hamas and Egypt) in the “most densely populated” urban area in the world. Though demonstrably wrong on all counts, such propaganda was reinforced through constant repetition by the mainstream media and progressive political establishment, including many prominent Democrats.

Honesty and common sense were thrown out the window by progressives who effectively called for another Holocaust by chanting “from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” and perpetuating the correlative myths of Palestinian Arab indigeneity and Jewish colonialism – in a land where only Jews have a documented presence going back to antiquity. Nevertheless, these and other odious canards were embraced as articles of faith by progressive politicians, leftist academics, identity community activists, and mainline liberal churches, who became standard bearers of the “new antisemitism,” which is merely a reworking of classical stereotypes and calumnies used to malign Jews through the ages.

Antisemitic slurs and tropes are shouted by street mobs, taught in college classrooms, and repeated by journalists, politicians, and celebrities. The world’s oldest hatred is also disseminated by pseudo-scholars who use the gloss of academia to slander Jewish tradition and claim, among other things, that the Temple never stood in Jerusalem and Jews are foreign interlopers descended from non-indigenous peoples who usurped a country – Palestine – that never existed. They are also committed to validating a people – the Palestinian Arabs – who are a modern political creation.

Anti-Jewish hatred is exacerbated by political, media, and academic establishments that provide no counterbalance and instead rewrite history, for example, by denying the Jews’ unbroken connection to their homeland as reflected in the archeological record and whitewashing the persecution of Jews under Islam. They are quick to denounce any perceived affront to Arab or Muslim sensibilities and just as quick to denigrate

any expressions of Jewish pride or Israeli sovereignty.

Indeed, the mainstream generally refuses to acknowledge Muslim antisemitism, the relationship between radical Islam and terrorism, or the history of jihadist colonialism. Liberal pundits instead wax poetic about claims of Islamic tolerance, while rationalizing any antisemitic or anti-western excesses as reactions to Israeli provocations or American imperialism.

Unable to tolerate criticism of their own warped and bigoted views, they invariably claim to be victims of censorship whenever their screeds against Jews and Israel are exposed as antisemitic vitriol (though it seems nobody ever prevents them from speaking). But they remain mute regarding the historical subjugation and negative imagery of Jews under Islam, the influence of this imagery on anti-Israel rejectionism, and the cultural justifications for the murder, rape, and torture of Israelis.

To most progressives, Hamas and Hezbollah are neither extreme nor radical; and in the historical context of Islamist supremacism, they might actually have a point.

Traditionally, life was difficult for non-Muslims under Islam – particularly Jews, who were dispossessed from their land by conquest, relegated to dhimmi status, and generally degraded, abused, and denied human rights. Despite claims of tolerance throughout the Islamic world, the general treatment of Jews was often no better than in Christian Europe.

During the early Islamic period, for example, Jews were forced to wear distinctive badges or metal seals around their necks. Starting in ninth-century Baghdad, they were required to wear yellow badges (a practice that was brought to Europe by returning crusaders) and were often physically branded, while in Egypt they were required to wear bells on their garments. Throughout the Islamic world, Jews were often isolated or confined to ghettos, forbidden from using the same bathhouses

as Muslims, and subjected to pogroms, massacres and forced conversions just as they were in Christian Europe.

Despite the fantasy of equity and prosperity during the Golden Age of Spain, Jews in the Iberian Peninsula often fared little better than their brethren under Christian rule. This reality was illustrated by the experiences of Rambam (Maimonides) and his family, who left their native Cordoba, not because of Christian Jew-hatred, but because the ruling Almohads gave the Jewish community the choice of conversion, exile, or death – centuries before the expulsion from Christian Spain.

The idea that Jewish life in the Islamic world was idyllic until the establishment of modern Israel is preposterous. Antisemitism was ubiquitous after the rise of Islam and ultimately influenced Arab hostility towards the reborn Jewish nation. Those who believe the myth of peaceful coexistence are not typically of Sephardic, Mizrachi or Yemenite Jewish descent. If they were, they would be more likely to know from the experiences of parents and grandparents how precarious Jewish life was in Arab lands and how antisemitism there preceded Israel's rebirth by centuries.

Anti-Jewish sources appear in both written and oral tradition, for example, in Quranic verses accusing the Jews of perverting scripture (e.g., Sura 3:63; 3:71; 4:46), eschatological passages from the Hadith foretelling their ultimate extermination (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 4, Book 56, No. 791), and references in both to the slaughter of the Jews known as Banu Qurayza in Medina. Thus, it is not surprising that Jews in Islamic society were scorned, demeaned, and subjugated; and given the doctrinal basis for this enmity, hostility for the state of Israel was inevitable.

The reality of Muslim antisemitism is ignored by those who believe that obsequious apologetics is necessary to atone for past colonialism. But Islamist Jew-hatred is fully embraced by radical progressives, whose chants of "from the river to the

sea..." are really calls for genocide. The irony is lost on these useful idiots that the fundamentalist ideology they deem politically virtuous rejects the foundation of their woke identities. There are no "Queers for Palestine" or "CODEPINK" feminists who would be welcome in a fundamentalist Islamic state where women are subjugated, and gay people are killed.

What western apologists fail to appreciate is the integral persistence of dogma that divides the world into "dar al-Islam" (house of Islam) and "dar al-Harb" (house of war) and demands the subjugation of infidels. And in the absence of theological reformation, it seems unlikely that pandering dialogue will ever foster sincere acceptance of non-Islamic cultures or true peace with a Jewish state.

The affinity between radical Islamists and the progressive left seems counterintuitive given the left's disdain for religion in its own cultural backyard. But the so-called "red-green alliance" makes perfect sense considering that leftists and Islamists share a common hatred of western democratic values – and of Jews and Israel.

It is this shared hatred that influences progressives to (a) rationalize tenets that justify atrocities against Jews and (b) cheer Hamas for resisting an "occupation" that only exists in the minds of leftists, terrorists, and Palestinian Arab revisionists. The progressive refusal to acknowledge the religious basis of anti-Israel hatred suggests a worldview shaped either by ignorance or a repudiation of history, democratic values, and common decency.

Whatever the motivation, the progressive coddling of Islamists clearly is no path to peace. Nor is pressuring Israel to cease defending herself before achieving her objectives against Iran and its terrorist proxies. The road to peace, moreover, does not require a two-state solution with people who deny Jewish history. Rather, it depends on genuine acceptance of the Jews' sovereignty in their homeland, which necessarily requires a

reformation of thought, ideology, and doctrine.

But what encourages such reformation, and can it be imposed from without?

The traditional peace process always ignored the elephant in the room – i.e., the faith-based foundation of anti-Israel rejectionism – and demanded unilateral concessions by Israel based on revisionist presumptions, e.g., the validity of a Palestinian Arab narrative that denies Jewish history. This was true of Oslo, the Obama-era strategy of bullying Israel and appeasing Iran, and the Biden embrace of anti-Israel and antisemitic progressives.

If anything, October 7th proved the fecklessness of these policies and the two-state concept.

The only deviation from the policy failures of past administrations was the Abraham Accords during President Trump's first term, which sought normalization through shared economic, cultural, and strategic interests. Perhaps this strategy could facilitate the doctrinal change necessary for reformation – and perhaps not. But reinvigorating the accords as a paradigm while simultaneously renewing America's commitment to a strong Israel might pave the way for real ideological change that could significantly influence the geopolitical landscape of the Mideast during a second Trump term.

And why not?

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