



Are All Pro-Palestinian Protesters Antisemitic?

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Glenn Greenwald (GG): Now, one of the focal points of our journalism since the war began was not on what's happening over there because we're not in Gaza, but instead is what's been happening in the United States, in American political discourse. And of particular concern have been the efforts, including on the part of many conservatives – by no means all, many conservatives have been vocally opposed to this. And prominent ones, too, like Vivek Ramaswamy and Candace Owens, have been standing up and saying, We're not going to engage in cancel culture and censorship over this foreign war. But so many, including politicians, the kind who have been waving the banner of free speech and now suddenly have rediscovered the joys of censorship, have been in all kinds of ways, as we've been reporting almost every day, demanding that people who support the Palestinians or who are critics of Israel be silenced, legally compelled to not express their views. And the way it's justified is the same way people on the liberal left justified their calls for censorship by saying, the people who we want to silence are not really expressing legitimate political views, but instead are inciting hatred. It's hate speech, they say. And it's designed to incite violence against a marginalised minority group. Only in the case of the conservatives calling for this, the marginalised majority minority group who's being threatened by speech that has to be curtailed are not trans people or Black people or immigrants or women, or Latinos or Native Americans, but they're American Jews. And the premise of the censorship campaign is essentially very explicit. Which is that a pro-Palestinian protest almost by definition is anti-Semitic is one that is urging violence against Jews.

And first of all, it's also a copying of left liberal tactics. If you ask an American liberal or someone on the left why they want to silence certain speech or why they believe that their political enemies are not just political adversaries, but criminals, they also tell you, because they're driven by hate, bigotry, racism, transphobia, misogyny, xenophobia, etc. – you've heard them all many times, I'm sure. And now conservatives are doing the same. Not all, but

many. They're saying anyone who opposes Joe Biden's support for Israel or who questions what the Israelis are doing, is not engaged in dissent but engaged in anti-Semitism: They're calling for genocide against the Jews. They're calling for the murder of Jews, and that's why they need to be silenced. When Ron DeSantis banned a pro-Palestinian group, he justified it on the grounds that this is material support for terrorism; meaning you're not just expressing support for Hamas, but you are engaged in providing them material support. That's a crime under the US Code.

Now, I want to just ask you and I've been speaking for 40 minutes and I've been detailing the case that a lot of pro-Palestinian protesters make, which is that what the Israelis are doing is not just excessive, but creating a humanitarian crisis. Is there anything about any of that sounds pro-Hamas to you? Have I praised Hamas? Have I justified the massacre of civilians they carried out on October 7th in Israel? Have I expressed hostility toward Jews? Jews as a group, I mean. Of course not. Of course not. It's pathetic, that argument. It's pathetic. It's like saying people who oppose immigration aren't really worried about the things they say. They're just white nationalists who don't want non-white people to enter the United States. And is it true of some opponents of immigration that there are white nationalists who don't want people entering the United States who are non-white and that's the reason there? Yes, there are definitely some of those people. You can find them at protests, at the immigration protests. But it's not true of the cause itself or the position itself or most of the people who are concerned about immigration. Same thing with people who support Israel and support this war. Are some of them motivated by hatred of Arab they and I believe that Palestinian life is inferior and that Palestinians deserve to die? For sure. Some of them are motivated by that. We showed you. Pro-Israel protesters in the United States saying, Kill them all. Turn the Gaza Strip into a parking lot. Obliterate a flat Gaza. But I wouldn't ever suggest it because I do not think that the presence of people who think that means that all people who support Israel or who support this war are motivated by a hatred of Gaza. A lot of them are motivated by a belief, I think misguided, that this war is necessary to keep Israel safe from attacks like the one we saw on October 7th. And you can go down the list, every single cause has people who support it, who have extremist or repellent views, even bigoted views, but that doesn't mean you attribute those views to everybody who supports that cause, because it's not true. And so, yes, there have been pro-Palestinian protesters who have praised Hamas and have expressed what I would consider anti-Semitism toward Jews. But by no means is that true of all of them or most of them or the cause itself. That is a tactic for arguing that is about destroying the character of people in lieu of engaging their arguments, which the American right has been saying for years. They detest.

We read you a very wise article and commentary from 2021 where she was saying, the problem is that we've stopped engaging in arguments and instead attack people's character. Instead of having substantive debates, we accuse people of being bigots. She went down the list of everything she said was wrong that many of the Israeli supporters are now doing to justify legal action against pro-Palestinian protesters by claiming that to be pro-Palestinian

protester means that you hate Jews, are bigoted, are engage in hate speech, want Jews dead. And it's just not true. It's just not true. To begin with, many, many, not a few, many of the people who are participating in pro-Palestinian protests or leading them, or organising them, are Jews, are Western Jews and American Jews. And it is preposterous to claim that people who are born Jewish, who are in families that are 100% Jewish, whose grandparents they love and parents they love, and siblings they love, and friends they love and communities they love that are all Jewish, are somehow driven by a hatred for Jews because they also view Palestinian life as valuable. And yet that's the argument that's being fed to everybody, that to be pro-Palestinian, to participate in a pro-Palestinian protest, to criticise Israel, is to be anti-Semitic. It is disgusting. As disgusting as when American liberals just go around accusing everybody of being a racist or transphobic because they disagree with liberal ideology on those issues.

Here from The Guardian, October 19th quote: "Hundreds Arrested as US Jews protest against Israel's Gaza Assault." "Protesters in Washington demand a cease fire marking a rift in community as Anti-Defamation League content condemns demonstrations." Quote: "Leftwing Jewish activists campaigned against Israel's bombardment and blockade of Gaza this week in Washington, culminating in protests that have seen hundreds arrested for civil disobedience outside the White House and Congress. But groups like the ADL have dismissed the actions as unrepresentative of the fellow Jews, signalling a growing rift in the community as the war in the Middle East continues to claim thousands of lives. Police detained about 400 demonstrators on Wednesday after they staged a sit down protest on Capitol Hill inside the Cannon Building, the oldest congressional office building demanding an immediate cease fire in the latest hostilities between Israelis and Palestinians. The arrest followed a similar protest on Monday when 50 activists were detained for blocking the gates of the White House. The events were organised jointly by Jewish Voice for Peace and IfNotNow, two leftist groups campaigning on an avowedly anti-Zionist and pro-Palestinian platform."

It reminds me a lot of when Black conservatives gather and denounce Black Lives Matter or defend the police, or Muslims in the United States gather to oppose the teaching of gender ideology in schools and white American liberals come accuse Black people of being racist, of having internalised white supremacy, or white liberals come and tell those Muslims that they've just internalised white supremacy and that's the reason that they're engaged in these protests. To say that large numbers of Black people who are conservative, or a large number of Muslims who oppose teaching of gender ideology in their school are all in fact white supremacist is pathetic. And I've said that many times, and it's just as pathetic to come and say that a cause that many, many American Jews and Western Jews and Jews in Israel support is an anti-Semitic cause. It takes so much presumptuousness and arrogance and audacity to accuse people like that of being anti-Semitic, but it's just as wrong and bad to accuse non-Jews who support this cause of being anti-Semitic because there's nothing anti-Semitic about this cause the cause of saying pro-Palestinian life is valuable. And people should have

compassion and empathy and should abide by the laws of war and humanitarian precepts when attacking Gaza. That has nothing to do with hating Jews, nothing to do with hating Jews any more than opposing immigration has to do with white nationalism.

Here from The Intercept, today: "The Senate condemned the student groups as backlash to pro-Palestinian speech grows". Do we risk losing our careers over an ephemeral social post that doesn't save a single life in Palestine?" Quote, "On Friday, the US Senate passed a unanimous resolution condemning what it called, quote, 'anti-Israel, pro-Hamas student groups' across the country following a day of walkouts. Hundreds of students led by Students for Justice in Palestine, a Jewish Voice for Peace, walked out of classes at Columbia, Princeton, NYU and dozens of other colleges in what they described as a demand for a ceasefire in Gaza and end to US military support to Israel. The Senate resolution condemned those aid groups for ostensibly supporting Hamas as part of a broader government and corporate pushback on protests over the war."

And Nikki Haley is calling for censorship on college campuses based on her view. Nikki Haley, the arbiter of antisemitism, condemning Jewish groups and Jewish students for being anti-Semitic because they oppose her policies that enriched her greatly, when she left the Trump administration and was paid millions of dollars by neocon groups and militarist groups and sitting on the board of Boeing and giving speeches to pro-Israel groups. Now, Nikki Haley is the one who gets to go around and say, Who hates Jews? to the point that they are not allowed to speak. Here's her tweet from October 21st: "No more federal money for colleges and universities that allow anti-Semitism to flourish on campus". By which she means people who criticise Israel or who oppose the ideology of Zionism. A brand new ideology that began in the early 20th century that people debated for decades, but according to Nikki Haley, cannot be debated any longer in the United States.

Here's her tweet on October 26th. Quote: "You can't fight anti-Semitism if you can't define it. Joe Biden and the left, refused to call anti-Zionism anti-Semitism". God, imagine trying to claim that Joe Biden is anti-Israel when you can find speeches of his from the 1980s attacking critics on the left of Israel on the grounds that they have no idea what foreign affairs is, how Israel is the greatest investment the United States makes. The only way she can do it is by complaining that Joe Biden wouldn't call anti-Zionism anti-Semitism, even though I'm sure he would have no problem doing that. Quote: "As president", she says, "I will change the official federal definition of anti-Semitism to include denying Israel's right to exist, and I will pull schools tax exemption status if they do not combat anti-Semitism and all of its forms in accordance with federal law. The October 7th massacre and the ensuing weeks have proven what many of us have long known, there is no difference between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism. In order to combat anti-Semitism, we have to define it, and that starts at the top".

So over and over from people like her and Ron DeSantis and the Biden administration and

Josh Hawley and Tim Scott, we're hearing we need more and more restrictions on free speech in the United States as a result of this attack on a foreign country. And the reason they give for this, the framework they're demanding, be accepted, is that to be pro-Palestinian or to criticise the Israeli government or to question its core ideology or to question this war makes you so anti-Semitic that somehow you fall outside the scope of the First Amendment. Just like left liberal censors calling everybody racist and bigot in order to take them outside the scope of the First Amendment.

This is as dangerous as the war itself. This attempt to exploit this new war in a foreign country, to bridge our core constitutional protections. And the reason it's more dangerous, aside from the fact that attempts to limit free speech are always dangerous, especially when done in the name of providing security and keeping us safe, which was one of the lessons of 9/11 or of World War Two when we interned Japanese-Americans in the name of keeping us safe, the reason it's so dangerous now is because there's an extremely destructive war happening in the Middle East. And it's not a war that's distant to you. If you're American, it's a war that is right at your doorstep because your government is playing a crucial role in enabling it. And the people in that region who are furious watching the Israelis do this to Gaza are blaming the United States and not just the United States, but American citizens every bit as much as a lot of people want to hold all Palestinians responsible for what Hamas does. That's the Osama bin Laden theory of eliminating the category of civilian by saying, well, American citizens elect their government and therefore are responsible for when their government enables the bombing of innocent Palestinian families and extinguishing the lives of Palestinian children. Whatever else is true.

I know there are viewers who don't agree with my view on this war, who don't agree with some of my views on this war or all of them. What I've been saying all along is what we be able to unite on is the urgency, the necessity of keeping debate free in the United States. If we have a free debate and the people who believe that the US government is harming its own citizens by giving endless support to Israel, by attaching itself to this war, then so be it. That's democracy. Sometimes you win the argument and sometimes you lose it. But that's not what's happening. Just like Israel has silenced all the people in Gaza by cutting off their communications with the outside world on purpose so we can't see what's going on, many politicians and journalists with a lot of influence in the United states, including many who built their careers over the last seven years, ranting and raving against the evils of censorship, now want to impose censorship to prevent Americans from hearing the full debate. And that is the thing that I hope, regardless of our views, we can unite in denouncing.

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