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### **Israel-Hamas War-Dealing with Anti-Semitism**

Five years ago today, a gunman entered the Tree of Life synagogue and killed 11 people. He did so because he believed the anti-Semitic conspiracy theory that Jews were the force behind the replacement of white people in America, the false conspiracy that there is a desire to replace white people with people of color in this country. This week protestors across the country gathered against Israel. I have seen people chanting glory to the martyrs of Hamas and calling for Palestine to be free from the river to the Sea. At Cooper Union college in New York City, Jewish students had to barricade themselves inside the library to protect themselves from potential violence from left wing anti-Israel protests. I have seen people holding signs with the Magen David being put into a garbage can. These signs were originally created by Hamas modeled off of anti-Nazi signs. I have seen people holding signs accusing Israel of genocide. What does the white supremacist who killed 11 Jews and these anti-Israel protestors glorifying violence against Jews and threatening Jews all share in common? They are all acts of anti-Semitism and we must call them out and oppose them.

Experts in anti-Semitism call the anti-Israel type of hatred political anti-Semitism. Defining political anti-Semitism is challenging because as with any nation, Israel engages in actions that are deserving of criticism. Reasonable and legitimate criticism of Israel is important and necessary. Natan Sharansky applies what he calls the three “d’s” test to determine if criticism of Israel is reasonable or if it crosses over into anti-Semitism. Any statement that demonizes, delegitimizes or applies double standards to Israel goes beyond what is acceptable. For example, criticizing Israel's government for specific policy choices is completely acceptable and one might say a necessary part of a functioning democracy. Calling for Palestine to be established from the river to the sea is one way of delegitimizing Israel because such a claim calls for the eradication of the state of Israel.

Like other forms of anti-Semitism, political anti-Semitism is distinguished from reasonable forms of criticism because political anti-Semitism also relies on myth and ideology, not rational measured fact based criticism. Political anti-Semitism morphs the conspiratorial myths of other forms of anti-Semitism to posit that there is a global Zionist conspiracy where Israel has hypnotized the world to the evils Israel commits. Political anti-Semitism has adapted previous myths about Jews to fit this new ideology. For example, people on the extreme left have presented the image that Israel is the ultimate settler-colonialist state. One of our local pastors, Bishop Talbert Swan, head of the local NAACP posted on Facebook that Jews were behind the slave trade and now Israel is the ultimate white supremacist nation. Instead of Jews being the victim of white supremacist hate like at Tree of Life, now some on the left have twisted the conspiracy theory of anti-Semitism to make it so that Jews are the ultimate racists.

A major challenge of political anti-Semitism is it often expresses its myths as an act of justice for oppressed Palestinians. The desire for justice for the Palestinian people is admirable. If we are to move towards peace it is important to for each side to recognize the pain that has been caused by the other side. However, this desire for justice crosses the line into anti-Semitism when it applies a standard to Jews and Israel that is not applied to other peoples or nations. Nobody questions the rights of other ethnic communities to have their own state, yet for many it is okay to be an anti-Zionist and to say that Jewish people wanting their own state is racist. As Susan Rice, a former national security advisor to President Obama once said, "No country is immune to criticism, nor should it be. But when that criticism takes the form of singling out just one country, unfairly, bitterly, and relentlessly, over and over and over, that's just wrong-and we all know it." Take for example the accusation that Israel is committing genocide. Israel's actions in no way fit the internationally accepted definition of genocide. In fact the Palestinian population in Gaza and the West Bank is one of the fastest growing populations in the world. The use of the term genocide to describe how Israel acts towards the Palestinians has one purpose-to totally demonize and delegitimize Israel's existence. One of the great tragedies of modern anti-Semitism is that seventy five years after the creation of the state of Israel, we still have to defend the

very notion that Israel has a right to exist.

The anti-Semitic left can do these acts because they have embraced hateful political anti-Semitism which threatens the whole Jewish world. Hateful rhetoric towards minorities created the conditions which led to the Tree of Life shooting as well as a significant increase in anti-Semitic acts across the country in the last five to seven years. What will this political anti-Semitism lead to? We must stand up against this hate and engage with this community to build bridges of understanding on the road to peace.

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From the Atlantic magazine: [The Decolonization Narrative Is Dangerous and False - The Atlantic](#)

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