

2016: The Year America Noticed Antisemitism
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December 2016

Slandering Trump

The 2016 election was notable in more than a few ways. One of them was a heightened focus on the troubling rise of antisemitism in the United States—a phenomenon that has been evident throughout the Western world for at least the entirety of the twenty-first century. In 2016, however, the antisemites opened a new front. For the first time in decades, overt political antisemitism appeared on the national scene from forces who identified as part of America’s political right. Though small enough to qualify as a potentially troubling curiosity, these forces played a considerable role in the story that the mainstream press wanted to tell. The established media thus chose to downplay the tens of millions of decent, hardworking Americans rallying behind Donald Trump’s candidacy to focus obsessively on a fringe movement—that Trump repeatedly condemned—who took pride and joy in employing antisemitic images, languages, and memes, allegedly on his behalf.

One media darling was the old-school white supremacist David Duke—a man whom the GOP has publicly rejected numerous times over the past few decades, including his moment of peak popularity in the early 1990s. Duke, despite reemerging as a media favorite upon announcing his support for Trump (support that, once again, Trump repeatedly repudiated), ran a dismal seventh in his 2016 bid for a Louisiana Senate seat—suggesting a far greater interest among America’s news editors and producers than among Louisiana’s voters. Another was the younger, more media savvy Richard Spencer, president of the National Policy Institute (NPI), “an independent organization dedicated to the heritage, identity, and future of people of European descent in the United States, and around the world.”¹ Spencer, who had labored in inconsequential anonymity prior to 2016, understood that the path to notoriety was paved with Nazi symbolism—which he dutifully trotted out whenever the cameras were rolling.

The centerpiece of the media’s attempt to slander Trump, however, was the amorphous, poorly understood, “Alt-Right,” an ill-defined presence on the Internet that appears to specialize in composing Holocaust-themed hate mail, directed primarily at Jewish journalists who express opinions with which Alt-Righters disagree. Many such folks cheered Trump’s candidacy, responding gleefully to his evisceration of political correctness and his flouting of selected norms. Though Trump himself repeatedly repudiated these fringe supporters, distanced himself from them, and did nothing explicit to encourage them, their affinity for his candidacy was central to the story that the mainstream media, progressives, and Democrats (but we repeat ourselves) wanted to tell. To them, no amount of repudiation, and no evidence of noted Klansmen, Communists, and apologists for terrorism expressing comparable support for Hillary Clinton, much mattered. The establishment imperative of branding Trump “unacceptable” had to be upheld independent of the evidence, and the ability to cast fringe support truly worthy of

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¹ *The National Policy Institute*, <http://www.npiamerica.org/>.

the term “deplorable” as representative of one-quarter of the country (as Clinton famously did), fed the moral superiority of those in greatest psychological need of declaring themselves morally superior.

As any competent fact-checker could have verified (and many did), Trump’s distaste for white supremacists, David Duke in particular, and hatemongers of all stripes, is hardly of recent vintage. Aside from a lengthy career history of integrating previously segregated facilities as soon as he bought them, Trump expressed his aversion to racial divisiveness and supremacism most clearly during a previous foray into politics. In 2000, after competing briefly for the Presidential nomination of the Reform Party, Trump quit the party because “[t]he Reform Party now includes a Klansman, Mr. Duke, a neo-Nazi, Mr. Buchanan, and a communist, Ms. Fulani.... This is not company I wish to keep.”² Unlike his progressive critics, Trump has thus long correctly seen little difference among the leftist identity-obsession of Lenora Fulani, the paleoconservative antisemitism of Pat Buchanan, and the segregationist white supremacism of David Duke. And there is little indication that Trump’s aversion to these folks or their causes has waned since 2000; notwithstanding myriad press reports describing Trump as heir to the Buchanan wing of the Republican Party, and Buchanan’s own endorsement of Trump, Trump never reversed his earlier assessment of Buchanan—much less of Duke.

Throughout the 2016 election campaign, however, Trump made his antipathy for the progressive worldview clear—and the progressives returned it in kind. Because contemporary progressives view themselves as the sole arbiters of virtue, they had to pitch Trump’s disdain as inherently racist. They orchestrated a vicious slander campaign to that effect. They began as soon as Trump declared his candidacy with a scathing criticism of U.S. immigration policy. By now, the lie that Trump called all Mexicans rapists has been repeated so often that it has become progressive gospel. In point of fact, the sole passage incorporating the words “Mexico” and “rapists” was:

When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best. They’re not sending you. They’re not sending you. They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems with us. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists. And some, I assume, are good people. But I speak to border guards and they tell us what we’re getting. And it only makes common sense. It only makes common sense. They’re sending us not the right people.³

² See e.g., Adam Nagourney, “Reform Bid Said to be a No-Go for Trump,” *New York Times*, Feb. 4, 2000, <http://partners.nytimes.com/library/politics/camp/021400wh-ref-trump.html>

³ Ian Schwartz, “Trump: Mexico Not Sending their Best: Criminals, Drug Dealers, and Rapists are Crossing the Border,” *RealClearPolitics*, Jun. 16, 2015, http://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2015/06/16/trump_mexico_not_sending_us_their_best_criminals_drug_dealers_and_rapists_are_crossing_border.html.

Twisting Trump's words, however, could only take them so far. Donald Trump was hardly an unknown quantity. He had been a celebrity for decades before entering politics. He had worked, very publicly and very happily, with—and tangled with—members of every conceivable ethnicity. He moved comfortably in liberal Hollywood, lived in liberal New York City, and fought to drop racial and religious barriers at his Florida resorts. It was one thing to convince people of the racism animating Mitt Romney, a classically soft-spoken, Mormon businessman unknown outside of selected circles. Convincing them of the secret racial animus of an outgoing, gregarious man they'd been watching for decades was another matter entirely. Most Americans saw through the establishment smokescreen. Progressives bought their own fright-night propaganda hook, line, and sinker—and in the process, terrified themselves and their friends.

Enter the Alt-Right

Enter, stage right, the cryptic Alt-Right. For the progressives dominating American media, they have proven a godsend.

Who are they? Even at this late stage of the game, after months of articles and anguished editorials, no one is certain. By all appearances, they are an Internet-only phenomenon; real world sightings have been few and far between. Allum Bokhari and Milo Yiannopoulos presented what is—by far—the best investigative report and analysis on the movement in a March 2016 article for *Breitbart.com*. They described:

an amorphous movement. Some — mostly Establishment types — insist it's little more than a vehicle for the worst dregs of human society: antisemites, white supremacists, and other members of the Stormfront set. They're wrong....the alt-right has a youthful energy and jarring, taboo-defying rhetoric.... It has already triggered a string of fearful op-eds and hit pieces from both Left and Right: Lefties dismiss it as racist, while the conservative press, always desperate to avoid charges of bigotry from the Left, has thrown these young readers and voters to the wolves as well.⁴

They also, however, described a truly dark side:

Anything associated as closely with racism and bigotry as the alternative right will inevitably attract real racists and bigots. Calmer members of the alternative right refer darkly to these people as the "1488ers," and for all their talk of there being "no enemies to the right," it's clear from the many conversations we've had with alt-righters that many would rather the 1488ers didn't exist....These are the people that the alt-right's opponents *wish* constituted the entire movement. They're less concerned with the welfare of their own tribe than their fantasies of

⁴ Allum Bokhari and Milo Yiannopoulos, "An Establishment Conservative's Guide To The Alt-Right," *Breitbart.com*, Mar. 29, 2016, <http://www.breitbart.com/tech/2016/03/29/an-establishment-conservatives-guide-to-the-alt-right/>

destroying others. 1488ers would likely denounce this article as the product of a degenerate homosexual and an ethnic mongrel.⁵

Several months later, Paul Gottfried, the Jewish intellectual credited (very much to his own surprise) as the Godfather of the Alt-Right, provided some deeper insights into the political agenda driving the movement—primarily a strong aversion to neoconservatism and a belief that “modern liberal democracies ha[ve] become dangerously fixated on promoting equality.” He was careful, however, to differentiate between the political and policy objectives of those claiming to be Alt-Right—some but not all of which he shares—and their graphic, hateful messaging, which he berated as “tasteless prankishness and a tendency to say outrageous things just to shock,” and ultimately counterproductive. He noted correctly that the most tasteless of the Alt-Right writers garner the greatest attention, however, because America’s “leftist (indeed Cultural Marxist) media are more interested in embarrassing the entire Right by quoting the nuttiest remarks made by those identified with the Alt-Right than they are in noticing inconvenient truths.”⁶

By the time that Gottfried shared those observations, however, Twitter users with Jewish-sounding surnames had found themselves tagged—courtesy of a since-banned Google Chrome extension called the “Coincidence Detector”—with the dreaded three parentheses “echo” (i.e., “(((Jewish Name)))”). The media, unsurprisingly, traced the program to “Donald Trump’s Rabid ‘Alt-Right’ supporters,” and blamed Trump for their work.⁷ More disturbingly still, several Jewish journalists had reported vile, hate-filled responses to articles critical (or in some case, merely unflattering) of Trump, his candidacy, or his family. Though no one ever traced any of these attacks to anyone associated with the Trump campaign (and no one ever suggested that the Alt-Right had invented Internet trolling), much of the media—including sources that had cheered various progressive campaigns for deploying social media in the cause of personal destruction—rejoiced in citing them as further evidence that Trump lacked fitness for office.

⁵ *Id.* According to the ADL, “1488 is a combination of two popular white supremacist numeric symbols. The first symbol is 14, which is shorthand for the “14 Words” slogan: “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children.” The second is 88, which stands for “Heil Hitler” (H being the 8th letter of the alphabet). Together, the numbers form a general endorsement of white supremacy and its beliefs.” <http://www.adl.org/combating-hate/hate-on-display/c/1488.html?referrer=https://www.google.com/#.WGGbJ7YrLEY>

⁶ Paul Gottfried, “Some Observations from the Man Who Created the Alt-Right,” *Front Page Magazine*, Aug. 30, 2016, <http://www.frontpagemag.com/fpm/263988/some-observations-man-who-created-alt-right-paul-gottfried>.

⁷ See e.g., Brad Reed, “Anti-Semitic Trump fans built this creepy internet app to mark and stalk Jews online,” *RawStory*, Jun. 3, 2016, <http://www.rawstory.com/2016/06/anti-semitic-trump-fans-built-this-creepy-internet-app-to-mark-and-stalk-jews-online/>.

By this point in the campaign, however, the problem had grown far beyond progressives, or even Democrats, to encompass almost the entire American establishment. Many Republican NeverTrumps—a movement in which Jewish neocons, many of whom had risen to prominence during the Bush Administration, played a prominent role—allowed their antipathy toward Trump to override their experience and their common sense. Rather than pointing out the nonsensical and offensive nature of progressive claims that had found a racist dog whistle embedded in every critique of Obama’s dismal presidency and/or the progressive agenda for nearly a decade, more than a few NeverTrumps instead recanted their longstanding skepticism to insist that racism among the Republican base was the only plausible explanation for Trump’s popularity. With that, the slander of the American public and of Donald Trump gained a bipartisan patina.

Meanwhile, the excellent and informative *Breitbart* article continued to rankle establishment sensibilities. While it was hardly an advertisement for the Alt-Right, it was an objective bit of reporting, shorn of the scathing criticism that the purveyors of antisemitism and racism surely deserve—even if their goals are “only” to shock and offend, rather than to foment violence. In part because of that piece, in part because of an article in which the pro-Trump Jewish intellectual David Horowitz labeled the NeverTrump Jewish intellectual Bill Kristol a “renegade Jew” (ironically, for behavior that Horowitz considered harmful to Jews and to Israel),⁸ in part because of a collection of provocative clickbait articles and headlines designed to make progressive blood boil, and in part because of the tenor that readers set in *Breitbart*’s comment sections, *Breitbart.com* suddenly found itself a central part of the Alt-Right Story.⁹

When Trump hired Steve Bannon—the sole non-Jew among *Breitbart*’s founding troika and the publication’s driving force since Andrew Breitbart’s untimely death in March 2012—to run his campaign, the last piece of the progressive anti-Trump myth fell into place. Leading members of polite society became unable to mention the Republican candidate without reciting their mantra labeling him racist, xenophobic, sexist, misogynistic, antisemitic, homophobic, Islamophobic, and any other insults that seemed to fit their mood of the moment. The Huffington Post went so far as to add the libelous

⁸ David Horowitz, “Bill Kristol: Republican Spoiler, Renegade Jew,” *Breitbart.com* May 15, 2016, <http://www.breitbart.com/2016-presidential-race/2016/05/15/bill-kristol-republican-spoiler-renegade-jew/>.

⁹ By way of full and fair disclosure, one of us (Bruce Abramson) was a frequent contributor to *Breitbart.com* in 2011/12, and we both have (identifiably Jewish) friends and acquaintances on staff there to this day.

characterization as an “editor’s note” appended to all articles about the Trump campaign.¹⁰

The Scare Campaign

The progressives running the mainstream media had built themselves a truly terrifying monster, slandering Donald Trump, Steve Bannon, and *Breitbart* in the vilest terms possible, treating two decent if blunt men and a successful, credible right-leaning news source as if they were Adolph Hitler, Julius Streicher, and *Der Stürmer*. In so doing, they managed to scare a sizable number of people, including many Jewish Americans—and likely a large majority of their own progressive readers. From the establishment perspective: Mission Accomplished.

The slander campaign continued after the votes were counted. When Trump announced that Bannon would accompany him to the White House as a key strategic advisor, the ADL went on the attack, pillorying Bannon as an antisemite.¹¹ Many other organizations and publications followed the ADL’s lead. The accusations, however, were baseless and offensive. A great many Jews, including readily identifiable practicing Orthodox Jews who had known Bannon over the years, spoke out on his behalf. The sole troubling anecdote that anyone could find about Bannon involved a throwaway line from his ex-wife who claimed that, during a contentious divorce and the consequent debate about their children’s schooling, Bannon had expressed the view that the (Jewish) kids attending the school that his wife had selected were spoiled. (Something he may or may not have said, and that may or may not have been true, but that apparently did not preclude his kids from attending their mother’s preferred nondenominational school rather than following his own preference for a Catholic education). Blistering stuff.

The Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) and its longtime leader Mort Klein, the noted liberal Democrat Alan Dershowitz, and Joel Pollak, an Orthodox Jewish writer for *Breitbart*, all spoke out publicly on Bannon’s behalf. The ADL, whose new leader, Jonathan Greenblatt, has proven consistently unable to differentiate his role at the ADL with his previous job as a staunchly partisan Obama staffer, eventually backed down—but not before further terrifying a shaky American Jewish community.¹² After poring

¹⁰ See e.g., Ryan Miller, “Report: Huffington Post to drop editor's note labeling Trump a racist,” *USA Today*, Nov. 9, 2016, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/onpolitics/2016/11/09/report-huffington-post-drop-editors-note-labeling-trump-racist/93527506/>.

¹¹ ADL, “Stephen Bannon: Five things to know,” <http://www.adl.org/sp/stephen-bannon-backgrounder/bannon-backgrounder.html?referrer=https://www.google.com/#.WF2PLKlr11g>.

¹² Hana Levi Julian, “ADL’s Greenblatt Steps Back on Bannon Accusations, Says Anti-Semitism Spiking in America,” *Jewish Press*, Nov. 19, 2016,

over decades of Bannon's and *Breitbart's* work, they had come up utterly empty. Their meticulous search gave them no material that they could even spin to imply that Bannon had ever expressed a single anti-Jewish sentiment.

The mainstream press worked overtime to ratchet the fear factor ever higher. David Duke's good cheer upon the electoral victory of his preferred candidate—a candidate who, as noted, had repeatedly rejected Duke's support—became a major news story.¹³ A handful of Klansmen holding a victory parade in North Carolina provided a perfect follow-up.¹⁴ The mainstream media covered a rash of post-election antisemitic vandalism as the activity of Trump supporters—yet most occurred in Democratic strongholds, and the culprits invariably turned out to be angry progressives, communists, anarchists, or other members of the far left. The media nevertheless brayed that Trump's victory had ushered in a new era of antisemitism and racism—intentionally failing to note that if it did, the Jew hatred was oozing from Trump's opponents rather than his supporters.

But few post-election events brought the media greater joy than the 2016 annual meeting of Richard Spencer's NPI in Washington, DC. Though NPI drew the same insignificant two hundred or so attendees it had attracted for years to little fanfare, its 2016 event also drew an equal number of reporters. The significant media presence helped turn the inconsequential get-together into a major news event, giving Spencer the national exposure and publicity he could never have afforded on his own. Not one to miss his moment in the spotlight—and to the delight of a press corps eager to tar the President-elect as sympathetic to white supremacists—Spencer led the faithful in a rousing round of “Heil, Trump!”¹⁵ For everyone's added viewing pleasure, the NPI confab also featured performances by America's favorite drug-addled Asian Neo-Nazi sex worker, Thien Thanh Thi Nguyen (stage name, Tila Tequila). (Because nothing screams “Anti-Immigrant White Supremacism” louder than a woman born in Singapore to Vietnamese boat people). Noticing the notoriety that the national press had suddenly conferred on Spencer, other hatemongers grabbed for the spotlight. A Neo-Nazi group began issuing threats against the tiny Jewish community of Whitefish,

<http://www.jewishpress.com/news/breaking-news/adls-greenblatt-never-is-now-as-anti-semitism-spikes-in-america/2016/11/18/>.

¹³ Paige Lavender, “Ex-KKK Leader David Duke Celebrates Donald Trump's Election Night,” *Huffington Post*, Nov. 9, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/david-duke-donald-trump_us_5822b0a6e4b0d9ce6fbfe338.

¹⁴ Daniella Diaz, “North Carolina GOP condemns KKK parade honoring Trump,” *CNN*, Nov. 11, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/11/11/politics/kkk-donald-trump-north-carolina-2016-election/>.

¹⁵ Wilbert Cooper, “‘Heil Trump’: Members of the Alt-Right Are Looking Forward to a Whiter America,” *Vice*, Nov. 21, 2016, https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/heil-trump-this-is-the-alternative-right.

Montana—Spencer’s home town. In response, local police increased surveillance. Spencer’s parents reportedly put their resort property up for sale, distanced themselves from their son’s views, and lamented that his sudden notoriety had hamstrung their business serving a multiethnic clientele.

Jewish anxiety levels shot through the roof. Curiously, however, the anxiety distributed itself unevenly throughout the community. In an unusual but not unprecedented alignment, the less traditional and better integrated Jews were up in arms about incipient antisemitism; the ultra-Orthodox seemed far less perturbed. Why? Perhaps because the story has little to do with either Trump or America’s Jews. The story is almost entirely about the hysterical apoplexy on America’s political left—which an overwhelming majority of non-Orthodox American Jews stubbornly continue to call their political and intellectual home. And it is precisely the progressive/leftist movements that have given birth to the greatest threat to America’s Jewish community in decades. The Jewish hysteria about Trump stems not from a fear of antisemites; it stems from a fear of conservatives and the cognitive dissonance inherent in life as a Jewish progressive.

The Progressive Threats

The threats from the left, which have been visible for years, took on a life of their own during Obama’s second term. They now manifest themselves primarily in three distinct but interrelated ways: hostility to Israel, the implosion of campus life, and the rise of identity politics. These are not uniquely Jewish problems; they are problems plaguing the country at large that include a Jewish angle. Nor, for that matter are these problems new. What has changed in recent years is that these movements have enjoyed the President’s support. President Obama and his team empowered anti-Israel Jews, leading campus activists, and purveyors of identity politics to become genuine threats to Israel’s survival, to our nation’s social fabric, and to Jewish life in America.

The many Jews that adored President Obama typically supported his administration’s contributions to these festering national wounds. In classic Jewish form, however, they split not only on Israel policy but also on the specifically antisemitic elements of both campus activism and identity politics. Some Jewish progressives, arguing that the anti-Zionism and antisemitism spewing forth from their progressive brethren is anomalous, often lament selected misguided statements from people and organizations they consider otherwise well intentioned and honorable. Alan Dershowitz’s critique of Black Lives Matter is an excellent representative example:

It is a real tragedy that Black Lives Matter — which has done so much good in raising awareness of police abuses — has now moved away from its central mission and has declared war against the nation state of the Jewish people.... The genocide paragraph may well have been injected by radicals who are not representative of the mainstream. But now that it has officially been published, all decent supporters of Black Lives Matter — and there are many — must demand its removal.... Until and unless Black Lives Matter removes this blood

libel from its platform and renounces it, no decent person — black, white, or of any other racial or ethnic background — should have anything to do with it.... It would be sad if the good work done by Black Lives Matter were now to be sidetracked by the mendacious and irrelevant accusation of “genocide” and “apartheid” against one foreign democracy — Israel.¹⁶

Critiques of this nature are subtle and cerebral. Dershowitz studiously avoids Occam’s Razor—the observation that the simplest explanation of an apparent anomaly is most likely the correct one—to posit a fine organization led astray by a few radical leaders who blindsided their membership. Such an explanation is certainly possible— notwithstanding the rarity of truly fine organizations accidentally veering into blood libel territory—but it is hardly simple. A far simpler conclusion would be that an organization dedicated to drawing lines between races, railing against those who suggest that “all lives matter,” and condemning police efforts to make dangerous neighborhoods safer, is a racist organization—and as such, it is hardly surprising to learn that it is also antisemitic and anti-Israel.

An equally simple conclusion, of course, would be that Black Lives Matter is a fine organization whose views on Israel are as righteous as its views on race relations and policing. A conclusion of this sort represents the second approach popular among Jewish progressives. Members of this camp contend that statements that look, sound, feel, and smell like progressive antisemitism are little more than a noble progressive willingness to oppose an oppressive power structure, even when the oppressor is Jewish. They have developed handy concepts like Progressive Except on Palestine (PEP), “a condition in which victims are liberal on every issue except the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,”¹⁷ to describe analyses of the sort that Dershowitz applied to Black Lives Matter.

To some extent, it is easy to say that these Jewish progressives are simply progressives who find their Jewishness irrelevant to their politics, but such a characterization would underplay the depths of the problem. Progressive antisemitism, in the guise of anti-Zionism, is so extreme that it condemns any expression of support for the State of Israel. Michael Lerner, the founder of *Tikkun* Magazine and one of America’s leading leftist Jews, discovered the depths of this animosity in 2003, when he was refused a speaking role at a rally in opposition to the Iraq war. Lerner fell victim to their venom because he was stuck in the old mode of paying lip service to Israel’s right to exist while harshly

¹⁶ Alan Dershowitz, “Black Lives Matter must rescind anti-Israel declaration, *Boston Globe*, Aug. 12, 2016, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/columns/2016/08/12/black-lives-matter-must-rescind-anti-israel-declaration/EHDYV3gNLwrTTwfp0JA8QN/story.html>.

¹⁷ Katie Halper, “Get tested! Are you a PEP? (Progressive Except on Palestine?),” *RawStory*, Jul. 30, 2104, <http://www.rawstory.com/2014/07/get-tested-are-you-a-pep-progressive-except-on-palestine/>.

criticizing most Israeli policies designed to preserve that existence.¹⁸ Large parts of the left permitted such transgressions in the late twentieth century, but the progressive ascendance in the twenty-first has emboldened them to insist upon greater purity. Lerner, as a high-profile Jewish member of the hard left, was among the first to run afoul of the new rules. With the encouragement of the progressive Obama Administration, however, enforcement has since become increasingly widespread.

Lerner was among the first to discover that Jewish progressives are *presumptively* PEP, a presumption that renders their progressive bona fides inherently suspect. Jewish progressives thus often feel compelled to assume an ever more aggressive leadership role in anti-Israel activities as a price of remaining progressives of good standing. Rabbi Alissa Wise, founding co-chair of the Jewish Voices for Peace (JVP) Rabbinical Council and the co-founder of its Nakba Education Project, for example, brought her message to the Friends of Sabeel, a Jerusalem-based radical anti-Israel liberation theology organization:

In the US we are up against attempts to codify redefinitions of antisemitism that would encompass advocacy to hold Israel accountable for its violations of Palestinian human rights. This represents a scary and dangerous development and if successful, formidable obstacle in our nonviolent activism to ensure Palestinian human rights.... In light of these efforts, it is all the more critically important to speak out. For those of us who are Jewish in the movement, we strongly feel the obligation – strategically and morally – to speak out when false charges of antisemitism are used to tar the movement.... As Jews we often find ourselves in a position of privilege in this realm. Partially this is because Jews can be the most effective at rebutting the accusations of antisemitism which can paralyze BDS efforts, and partially because our overall place in society, and our perceived connection to Israel, gives us greater credibility by society at large than Muslim, Arab, or Palestinian people.... We will be held accountable should we stay silent as the land theft, home demolitions, restrictions on movement, economic strangling, and other human rights abuses that are the daily realities of life under occupation for Palestinians.¹⁹

Over the past eight years—and throughout the foreseeable future—the progressive assault on the Jews manifesting as campus activism and identity politics have become real and significant threats to America’s Jews.²⁰ Campus activism is a broad problem

¹⁸ See Michael Lerner, “The Anti-War Anti-Semites,” *Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 12, 2003, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB1045015016383156423>.

¹⁹ Alissa Wise, “There for Each Other: On Anti-Semitism, Christian Privilege and Palestine Solidarity,” *The Palestinian Talmud*, Jun. 9, 2015, <https://paltalmud.com/2015/06/09/rabbi-alissa-wise-at-friends-of-sabeel-na-conference/>.

²⁰ See e.g., Ruth Wisse, “Anti-Semitism Goes to School,” *Mosaic*, May, 2015, <https://mosaicmagazine.com/essay/2015/05/anti-semitism-goes-to-school/>; David Horowitz,

that is killing higher education in America—and has already eviscerated the concept of a liberal arts education. In academia today, viewpoint diversity is minimal, and opinions disfavored by the recognized academic arbiters of Truth are degraded and attacked wherever voiced. Students self-segregate and demand safe spaces. Political graffiti as benign as “Trump” written in chalk on the sidewalk can motivate University-wide memoranda from College Presidents, complete with offers of free counseling. Faculty mollified students unable to concentrate on midterms following Clinton’s loss. Free speech is disdained, excellent speakers are disinvited and dishonored, and due process is a dim memory. Oft-cited statistics about campus rape imply that young women are safer entering most war zones than most American college campuses—an implication that absolutely no one believes. Critical thinking has been devalued, self-reflection capable of promoting “disturbing” thought has been purged, victimhood is worshipped, and bands of America’s best and brightest youth spread out in search of barely perceptible microaggressions. No wonder progressive dogma has come to embrace “free and universal” college education; academia has become an indoctrination, socialization, and propaganda tool of the radical left.

The beating heart of campus activism is an ill-defined, constantly changing, yet unassailable sense of progressive social justice that stands in judgment of all actors and actions. In the eyes of these Social Justice Warriors (SJW), Israel is always culpable as an apartheid state, and global Jewry is always culpable for enabling Israel’s crimes against humanity. It is hardly surprising that college campuses have given the greatest life to the movement to boycott, divest from, and sanction Israel, Israeli businesses, and companies that do business with Israel (BDS). Nor is it surprising that more than one in four current Jewish college students reports a personal encounter with antisemitism on campus—often physical, intrusive, invasive, and violent.

The identity politics that feeds much campus activism is, if anything, even more dangerous off campus. Less than a decade ago, many of the non-progressives who flocked to Barack Obama’s candidacy did so because they had fallen in love with the man who had proclaimed “There is not a Black America and a White America and Latino America and Asian America—there’s the United States of America.”²¹ They wanted to see Obama as a genuinely post-racial candidate, a man with the moral authority to further our process of racial healing—a process that began with the Emancipation Proclamation and the post-Civil War Amendments, stumbled badly with Jim Crow, then picked up steam with the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. By the twenty-first century, an overwhelming majority of Americans were ready for the next step

“Identity Politics are Anti-American,” *Front Page Mag*, Dec. 16, 2016, <http://www.frontpagemag.com/fpm/265154/identity-politics-are-anti-american-david-horowitz>.

²¹ Barack Obama, “Keynote: Democratic National Convention,” Jul. 27, 2004, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A19751-2004Jul27.html>.

forward—the end of racial categorizations, racial data collection, and differentiated standards. Many Americans wanted further movement towards a nation consonant with Martin Luther King’s dream state where a man is judged “by the content of his character rather than the color of his skin.”²² Unfortunately, neither Obama’s progressive base nor the man himself belonged to this American majority—as his performance in office showed.

There may be no area in which Obama disappointed as many people outside his progressive base as completely. His Presidential statements about racial grievance and racial healing were uneven—alternating between sympathy for race baiters and sympathy for their victims. The behavior of those he appointed to high office, was more consistently disturbing. His two Attorneys General—Eric Holder and Loretta Lynch—and his first Supreme Court appointee, Sonia Sotomayor, were obsessed with racial agitation. They encouraged Americans to share their obsession and their discriminatory views.

Early in his tenure at the Justice Department, Attorney General Holder gave his instantly famous “Nation of Cowards” speech:

Though this nation has proudly thought of itself as an ethnic melting pot, in things racial we have always been and continue to be, in too many ways, essentially a nation of cowards....Through its work and through its example this Department of Justice, as long as I am here, must - and will - lead the nation to the "new birth of freedom" so long ago promised by our greatest President....²³

Several years later, on his way out of office, Holder provided a representative example of that leadership, accusing the police department in Ferguson, Missouri of “implicit and explicit racial bias,” and condoning the media circus and race riots that destroyed that city in the wake of what turned out to be a clean police shooting with tragic consequences.²⁴ His successor, Attorney General Lynch, was clear in voicing her sympathy for protestors in Charlotte and Baltimore rather than those they attacked, claiming that it was only a few agitators whose

²² Martin Luther King, “I Have a Dream...,” Aug. 28, 1963, <https://www.archives.gov/files/press/exhibits/dream-speech.pdf>.

²³ Attorney General Eric Holder at the Department of Justice African American History Month Program United States Wednesday, February 18, 2009, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/speech/attorney-general-eric-holder-department-justice-african-american-history-month-program>.

²⁴ See e.g., Mark Berman, “Holder: Report shows why Michael Brown’s death set off Ferguson like ‘a powder keg,’” *Washington Post*, Mar. 4, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2015/03/04/holder-report-shows-why-michael-browns-death-set-off-ferguson-like-a-powder-keg/?utm_term=.8f6222fc2c44

violence—against both people and property—marred the otherwise justified and peaceful demonstrations.²⁵ President Obama agreed with her broad sentiment.²⁶

Perhaps most disturbing, however, was Justice Sotomayor. Prior to joining the Supreme Court, then-Judge Sotomayor’s “Wise Latina” speech contended that her gender and heritage would lead her to make “better” decisions as a judge.²⁷ When it came time for her confirmation hearings, progressives hailed this view as indicative of the sympathy, wisdom, and diversity she would bring to the Court. Oddly, during the 2016 election, when Donald Trump wondered whether Judge Gonzalo Curiel—like Sotomayor, an Obama appointee of Latino heritage—might inject that heritage when presiding over a lawsuit, the press uniformly pilloried the question as racist. Meanwhile, Sotomayor delivered precisely as her progressive boosters had hoped she would. In a passionate, horrifying dissent embraced across the progressive movement, Sotomayor opined:

The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to speak openly and candidly on the subject of race, and to apply the Constitution with eyes open to the unfortunate effects of centuries of racial discrimination. As members of the judiciary tasked with intervening to carry out the guarantee of equal protection, we ought not sit back and wish away, rather than confront, the racial inequality that exists in our society. It is this view that works harm, by perpetuating the facile notion that what makes race matter is acknowledging the simple truth that race *does* matter.²⁸

This statement was widely—and almost certainly correctly—taken as a direct rebuke of Chief Justice Roberts’ commonsense statement several years earlier: “The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race.”²⁹

To the surprise of no one, progressive opinion disdains Roberts’ desire for an end to discrimination, and cheers Sotomayor’s desire to inject overt racial considerations into all of society’s decisions. But which position is truly racist? Perhaps a reference back to antisemitism is illuminating. Has there ever been a setting in which society’s obsession

²⁵ See e.g., Josh Gerstein, “Loretta Lynch’s limited options,” *Politico*, May 5, 2015, <http://www.politico.com/story/2015/05/loretta-lynch-baltimore-riots-limited-options-117663>; Dan Roberts and David Smith, “Loretta Lynch: violence in Charlotte is ‘drowning out the voices of change,’” *The Guardian*, Sept. 22, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/sep/22/charlotte-protests-loretta-lynch-trump-clinton-police>.

²⁶ See e.g., Charlie Spiering, “Obama: Media Coverage of Charlotte Rioting Lacks Historical Context,” *Breitbart.com*, Sept. 23, 2016, <http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2016/09/23/obama-media-coverage-charlotte-rioting-lacks-historical-context/>.

²⁷ See e.g., Sonia Sotomayor, “A Latina Judge’s Voice,” <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/15/us/politics/15judge.text.html>.

²⁸ *Schuette v. Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action*, 572 U.S. _____ (2014) (Sotomayor, J., dissenting).

²⁹ *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1*, 551 U.S. 701 (2007).

with the Jews served Jewish interests? Has there ever been a broad society that considered an individual's faith as a strictly personal matter in which Jews have failed to thrive? Even most progressive Jews prefer it when American society ignores their Jewishness rather than dwelling on it. Yet when it comes to race, they deny to other minorities the courtesy they would like for themselves—hence their self-destructive penchant for anti-Jewish identity politics.

All told, the Obama Administration promoted and elevated the profile of many officials who favored the application of different rules and standards to people assigned to different racial categories, showed far greater sympathy and support for race rioters than for law enforcement officials, and played a critical role in fomenting progressive injustice on college campuses. That many of the most extreme, hard-core progressives see Obama's administration as a sellout speaks only to the limitless racism of their movement. Though progressives like to cast themselves as fighting to overturn institutional injustice, their primary activity appears instead to be reformulating history as a struggle between inherently righteous races and inherently wicked races. Jews have experienced such revisionism before. It has never ended well.

The Obama administration helped push this radicalized racial identity politics to the point that it now permeates society. To pick but one example that garnered national attention, New York's Ethical Culture Fieldston School—traditionally counted among the nation's finest, most exclusive, and most proudly progressive institutions—developed a mandatory program requiring third-to-fifth graders to select the racial identity that best described them, segregate into racial affinity groups, and discuss racial tensions.³⁰ To its proponents, the program set out to combat racism; to many others, it felt more like a program designed to promote racism. And this controversial program is but one example of a trend pervading American education and thought at every level. At a sensitivity session run for University of California faculty at the behest of Chancellor Janet Napolitano (Secretary of Homeland Security during Obama's first term), faculty were advised to avoid advocating for a colorblind society or the melting pot model of American immigration, or against affirmative action, because all of these positions now represent racial microaggressions.³¹ That most of us who favor such positions do so precisely because we see them as critical steps towards a more racially inclusive and harmonious society—suggesting, at a bare minimum, a difference of opinion—is irrelevant. Progressives have deemed them all racist microaggressions worthy of banning.

³⁰ Sophia Hollander, "Mandatory Race Talks Roil Elite New York City School," *Wall Street Journal*, Mar. 13, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/mandatory-race-talks-roil-elite-new-york-city-school-1426293330>.

³¹ Josh Hedtke, "California professors instructed not to say 'America is the land of opportunity,'" *The College Fix*, Jun. 10, 2015, <http://www.thecollegefix.com/post/22839/>.

In short, the Obama Administration and its allies helped the country's progressive elite invert the definition of racism. Old-school anti-racists (like the authors of this essay) define racism as the division of humanity into predefined racial categories, the mandatory assignment of every individual to one of those categories, and the application of different rules and standards to people assigned to the different categories. We oppose all such racist efforts.

Progressives reject that definition as misguided at best, and likely pernicious. In typically Orwellian progressive parlance, their preferred definition of racism manifests itself in any attempt to justify, preserve, or perpetuate structural inequalities put in place by a white patriarchy, and designed to ensure the continued exploitation of women, people of color, and those whose sexual identities or preferences run afoul of traditional cisgender heterosex normativity. Progressives believe that this structural racism is so pervasive that only constant vigilance to call it out and eradicate it wherever it appears, no matter how seemingly subtle or inconsequential, can turn us into a just society. They have even developed a theory of "intersectionality," under which anyone who fights against one element of this structural racism owes an obligation to those fighting against each of its other manifestations. Intersectionality is particularly dangerous to Jews, because it requires anyone fighting for any aspect of social justice to adopt the false "Palestinian narrative" of Jewish oppression and exploitation.³²

Over the past few years, progressives have thus bombarded America with discussions about "microaggressions," "white privilege," "structural racism," and "intersectionality." Within that hierarchical classification of victims and victimizers, Judaism—or more broadly, Judeo-Christian morality—plays a central role in the construction of the dominant structurally racist paradigm. To progressives, the Jews are not a multi-racial indigenous Middle-Eastern people with a history of oppression, enslavement, discrimination, and victimization (at the hands of Europeans and others); Jews are the most reviled of all white people of European descent. In the panoply of villains populating the universe of the progressive SJWs, Jews play a prominent role. Many Jewish progressive concede that role, and thus work overtime to compensate and atone for Jewish perfidy.

The Backlash

Of direct relevance to the question of the Alt-Right, the progressive racial agitators that the Obama Administration empowered and encouraged claimed a bizarre blind spot. To hear them tell it, they never imagined that their obsessive focus on racial categorization, identity grievance politics, and redistributive economics pitting each group against all others, might engender a backlash. Apparently, it came as a complete surprise to them that some actual "white people," particularly those who never felt personally privileged,

³² See e.g., Canary Mission, "Intersectionality or Just Blaming the Jews?" Jul. 18, 2016, <https://canarymission.org/intersectionality-just-blaming-jews/>.

might take them seriously. Progressive SJWs purportedly never imagined that some, upon learning about “white privilege” and the attempts to dismantle it, might conclude instead that it is a structure worth preserving—and that the progressives struggling against it were disproportionately responsible for their own unfortunate circumstances.

Such an oversight—if in fact it was an oversight—represents either willful blindness or a deeply religious conviction that the progressive sense of justice is unassailable, self-evident, Truth. Returning once again to Occam’s Razor, it seems far more likely that it was not an oversight at all—that the progressive leaders who had built their careers preaching civil rights while practicing racial agitation needed a foil. Unprepared for the reality that the Civil Rights struggle in America had been won, they needed racist foes to remain relevant. They thus kept up their campaign of slanderous lies until someone volunteered to play the role of villain. The lengths they have taken to purge opposing viewpoints is indicative of willful behavior, worthy of censure.

The progressive agitators in need of a racist foe would have liked the 2016 Republican nominee to assume that villainous role, but Donald Trump refused to comply. Trump was—and remains—the progressives’ worst nightmare: a political leader whose common sense sees right through their lies, and who treats them with the full contemptuous disdain they deserve. Far from promoting divisiveness among Americans or promoting racist sentiment as traditionally (and properly) understood, Trump simply dismissed the progressive agitators as the irrelevant and petty criminals they are; the only distinctions he ever drew were between Americans and foreigners. That left the progressive SJWs with little to fall back on other than their classic insistence that all criticism of the progressive agenda was inherently racist (and/or antisemitic)—a charge that even many of their allies recognized had grown stale with overuse.³³ Fortunately for the progressives, however, a tiny sliver of the voters appreciative of Trump’s refusal to kowtow to the abusive moralist scolds of the PC movement took the bait. That fringe support provided the hook for a slanderous campaign shoehorning Trump into the role they had preordained for him.

The emergence of the “Alt-Right” represented the culmination of the SJW’s hard work. For the first time in decades, the SJWs had manufactured foes willing to spout offensive racial epithets and employ graphic antisemitic imagery. Far from inadvertently microaggressing, these new enemies basked in the offense taken at their efforts, heard all condemnation from all sides as adulation, and energized themselves with the anguish they caused others. The progressive SJW agitators had finally found foils whose intentions and methods were as vile as their own—and whose much smaller numbers and clear lack of influence all-but-guaranteed progressive victory.

³³ See *e.g.*, Frank Bruni, “Crying Wolf, then Confronting Trump,” *New York Times*, Sept. 1, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/01/opinion/campaign-stops/crying-wolf-then-confronting-trump.html>.

Those of us more interested in minimizing the possibility that the Alt-Right will mainstream Holocaust humor and Jew hatred than in providing progressive SJW Jew haters with a right-wing foil, however, must pay close attention to who they are and to what seems to matter to them. The *Brietbart* article presented a convincing depiction of the Alt-Right “mainstream” as a *Lord of the (Gad)Flies* movement of frustrated, rebellious, young performance artists. Regrettably, much as rebellion in the 1960s relied upon scatology, pornography, and obscenity to shock—think of George Carlin’s famous “seven words you can’t say on television” routine, or Lenny Bruce’s entire oeuvre—rebellion today relies upon the only arenas still capable of shocking jaded contemporary sensibilities: racism, sexism, antisemitism, and generalized hate speech.

Leading Alt-Right writers deploy Jew hatred and racism *because they think it’s iconoclastic, brave and funny*. Their actual rancor towards Jews or other minorities is tough to gauge. This appallingly sophomoric humor is callous and troubling. No one should ignore it or shrug it off. But it would be an unforgivable mistake to confuse those who think “Jews to the gas chambers!” is an edgy punch line with those who embrace, for example, the silencing of Israeli academics or the boycotting of Jewish businesses as part of a practical political agenda. Among other things, such a misclassification engenders fear and panic when the more appropriate response is revulsion, and it leads to an inevitable misdirection of effort and misallocation of resources. Furthermore, it falls directly into the trap that counterculture performance artists most like to set for their audiences: the more seriously we take them, the funnier and more avant-garde their work becomes. Every article treating the Alt-Right as a serious threat to civilized society strengthens the movement. Every article that calls out the Alt-Right as the collection of fourth-rate clowns it is weakens the movement’s appeal.

The longer we equate the Alt-Right with a military force that nearly conquered Europe, the more we stoke its collective egos. A blogger who screams “Auschwitz!” as a comedic shattering of taboo is more closely akin to a kindergartener shouting “fart!” than to a Brownshirt. Those truly committed to blunting the Alt-Right’s offensive (pun intended) will treat them as the juvenile delinquents they are, and minimize their role in the public consciousness unless and until one of two things occurs: If they learn how to express their serious political and policy concerns civilly—as Gottfried encouraged—we should engage them with comparable civility and seriousness. But if, instead, they choose to become violent, we should treat them as the criminals they will have become and move to crush them.

In point of fact, there are deep thinkers, scholars, and analysts who share Gottfried’s political agenda, his loathing of the left, and the venom he heaps on the neocons (whom he sees as

leftist usurpers intent upon destroying the conservative movement).³⁴ Perhaps the best place to see their work is VDARE.com, the self-described “voice of the Historic American Nation,”³⁵ and almost certainly the finest repository of contemporary paleoconservative thought. Many non-paleocon readers—and most American Jews—will find much of the VDARE material discomfiting (we do). Its writers take a very skeptical view of immigration, and many are prone to see pro-Israel Jews exercising undue influence on American foreign policy and culture. Such thinkers—rather than Trump and his supporters—are the true heirs to the Pat Buchanan wing of the GOP (Buchanan himself is a VDARE contributor). Some of them may legitimately qualify as racists and antisemites, but most likely do not. Though many paleocons cheered Trump, particularly when he advocated taking a hard line on immigration, they understand that their faction remains small and weak. The Jewish community appears to understand that lack of influence as well—though VDARE has been available to any Internet user since 1999, it has generated little attention (and less passion) from the American Jews now cowering in fear of the Alt-Right.

Sites like VDARE publish serious thought pieces and policy proposals. Though we ourselves find more than a few of their proposals offensive, we could say the same about many progressive proposals appearing in far more prominent and influential places. The vast difference between the tenor of the VDARE discussions and the sophomoric Alt-Right attacks that garnered headlines, coupled with the minimal influence that most active VDARE contributors have on public debate and policy, provides significant insight into the scope of antisemitism to the right of America’s political center. It is always troubling and it always warrants watching, but it pales in comparison to the antisemitism that has become mainstream (if not quite yet majority) to the left of the political center. It has nothing to do with Donald Trump, and by all appearances it is set to play no role in the Trump administration.

Meanwhile, the oddly controversial *Breitbart* article about the Alt-Right also highlighted the left as the locus of the genuine threat to Jews in America today. And it is that willingness to equate the very worst fringes of the political right with increasingly mainstream movements on the American left that likely explains the progressive obsession with discrediting *Breitbart*:

1488ers are the equivalent of the Black Lives Matter supporters who call for the deaths of policemen, or feminists who unironically want to #KillAllMen. Of course, the difference is that while the media pretend the latter are either non-existent, or a tiny extremist minority, they consider 1488ers to constitute the whole of the alt-right. Those looking for Nazis under the bed can rest assured that they do exist. On the other hand, there’s just not very many of them, no-

³⁴ See e.g., Paul Gottfried, “Conservatives, Neoconservatives, Paleoconservatives: What Next?” *VDARE.com*, Apr. 12, 2007, <http://www.vdare.com/articles/conservatives-neoconservatives-paleoconservatives-what-next>.

³⁵ VDARE home page, www.vdare.com.

one really likes them, and they're unlikely to achieve anything significant in the alt-right.³⁶

Like Trump's statement upon withdrawing from the Reform Party sixteen years ago, the *Breitbart* article equates supremacists of the right and the left—perhaps the single worst thing anyone could do to a progressive SJW. The leftist attacks on *Breitbart* are thus hardly surprising: the truth hurts.

For the Jews, and specifically for the Jewish journalists who suffered direct personal attacks, the Alt-Right's motivation and its overall weakness provide small comfort. One constant of Jewish history is that Jews and mobs don't mix. It doesn't matter where on the political spectrum the mob places itself, or what grievances motivated it. Nor does it matter who stands at the front of the mob's direct line of fire. Sooner or later, every mob concludes that the Jews are to blame. Al Sharpton and David Duke—to pick two prominent examples—might not agree on much, but they share a clear and demonstrable distaste for Jews. And though most American Jews are far more afraid of Duke than of Sharpton, it is Sharpton rather than Duke who has Jewish blood on his hands—at a bare minimum stemming from his roles in the Tawana Brawley hoax of 1987, the Crown Heights pogrom of 1991, and the Freddie's Flower Market massacre of 1998.³⁷ And it is Sharpton rather than Duke who has managed to mainstream himself in the media, the general culture, and as a power broker of note with one of the two major political parties.

Looking Ahead

Where does that leave American Jews as we enter 2017? The only fair answer is wary—precisely as we should have been upon entering every other year. Jews have been the overwhelming primary victims of religiously-inspired hate crimes since at least the moment that the FBI began collecting statistics.³⁸ Identity politics has already led to urban race riots that promise to get worse before they get better. The inherent racial divisiveness of the past few years has now invited bona fide white supremacists back into the discussion. The media focus on racist, antisemitic Internet trolls has given them precisely the notoriety they crave. Campus progressivism is adamant that Israel is a criminal aggressor, and that non-Israeli Jews are culpable as its enablers. President Obama, Secretary Kerry, Ambassador Power, and the UN chose to use the Obama Administration's waning days to declare open season on Israel. Only a blind fool would deny that antisemitism in America is on the rise.

It would take an equally blind fool to deny that things will get worse before they get better. The Democratic Party continues to push the false narrative of a race-based

³⁶ Bokhari and Yiannopoulos, *supra n. 4*.

³⁷ In fairness to both Duke and Sharpton, Sharpton was far more likely to encounter Jews as a New York City native than was Duke in his rural Louisiana home.

³⁸ See, <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/>.

spoils system because it galvanizes progressive voters. Hillary Clinton dedicated an entire evening of the Democratic Convention to black supremacists who vilify the police. The week after the convention, the thus-feted Black Lives Matter movement published a “platform” containing antisemitism vile enough to earn the contempt of Alan Dershowitz and numerous other PEPs and PEP organizations.³⁹

In the days since the election, Barack Obama’s lame duck parting shots have included helping the UN brand Israel an international outlaw—the Security Council’s first adoption of the (since withdrawn) General Assembly pronouncement that Zionism is a form of racism—unmistakably ratifying the progressive narrative of Jews as white European colonizers rather than as indigenous people returning home to escape oppression in European, Persian, Levantine, and North African states. With that single action, Obama should have erased any doubts that lingered after his enabling and funding of the Iranian nuclear program of the ill intentions he harbored toward Israel and the Jews—though it seems inevitable that most progressive Jews will continue to insist otherwise. Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN), a former spokesman for Louis Farrakhan’s Nation of Islam, and a current supporter of both Hamas and BDS, is a leading contender for DNC Chair. Even if the party breaks in another direction, the level of support he has garnered, including from leading Jewish Democrats like Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) is deeply disturbing.

What is particularly troubling, however, is the difficulty that PEPs seem to have in extrapolating from the clarity with which they can see *explicit* progressive antisemitism to reach reasonable conclusions about progressivism as a whole. Like Dershowitz, most PEPs still see Black Lives Matter as an important civil rights organization that went sadly astray when it came to Israel. The gyrations PEPs require to preserve their simultaneous commitment to progressivism and at least some attenuated sense of Zionism makes them the most internally conflicted of the Jewish progressives—and consequently the group whose hopelessly mixed messages engender the most confusion.

Only marginally less conflicted and confusing than the PEPs are groups like J Street, who have resolved their members’ cognitive dissonance by redefining “pro-Israel” as a single-minded dedication to founding an Arab state in Judea and Samaria, dividing Jerusalem, and opposing every security-based position or action of Israel’s democratically elected government. J Street serves a very important dual purpose to progressivism: it provided a seemingly Jewish imprimatur to President Obama’s abysmally anti-Israel foreign policy, and it enables its members to advocate overtly anti-Israel policies without admitting it.

Jews falling even further down the progressive rabbit hole can align with JVP who—as Rabbi Wise demonstrated above—champions the idea that Jewish values include

³⁹ See, Dershowitz, *supra* n. 16.

national suicide, the embrace of the false “Palestinian” narrative, and the justification of anti-Jewish incitement and terror. This rationale translates nicely into the domestic context, where leading Jewish organizations insist that Jewish values mandate entry into the U.S. of large numbers of antisemitic refugees from Syria.⁴⁰

Finally, the most blindingly honest of the Jewish progressives frequent virulently anti-Israel websites like Mondoweiss, which “grew inside the progressive Jewish community [to] become a critical resource for the movement for justice for Palestinians.”⁴¹ The folks—primarily Jews—who publish there understand that even remote expressions of sympathy for Israel run afoul of progressive doctrine that posits the Jews as invaders of Arab land.

And so, the left-wing press continues to agitate, insisting that all opposition to progressivism is racist, and that the few genuine anti-progressive racists are representative of all their opponents. With each passing year, the false, insulting, and slanderous progressive narrative comes closer to becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. Left unchecked, there is little doubt that at some point, the progressives will provoke a full-blown race war—and claim that war as their ultimate vindication.

America’s Jews must remain vigilant. The left’s vision of Israel as the oppressor of an underdog minority has led to a drastic drop in support for Israel among younger Jews even as campus activism threatens their physical safety, psychological welfare, and Jewish identity. Progressive agitation threatens to spread its riots throughout urban America, where most of America’s Jews live. On the other side of the political spectrum, the Alt-Right poses a potential problem; it is already offensive, and it could become dangerous. Even those who live to confront society’s taboos should realize that some things have become taboo for excellent reasons. Casual humor or apparent approval of the Holocaust, lynch mobs, detention camps, and genocide—or genocidaires like Hitler, Stalin, or Mao—are among them. Much to the glee of progressives, their new sparring partners have crossed that line, and society has become so inured to progressive crossings that their own repeated transgressions go unnoticed.

But God has a way of watching out for the Jewish people even when they refuse to watch out for themselves. Had Hillary Clinton won the election—as most American Jews wished—the federal government’s endorsement and encouragement of progressive antisemitism would have continued unchecked. The Trump Administration, by way of strong contrast, will work hard to discourage and disempower it. Trump himself will use his bully pulpit to show progressive SJWs the contempt they so richly deserve. In so

⁴⁰ See e.g., Jonathan Brodnitsky, “Do Jews Defend their Values by Helping Anti-Semites Immigrate to America?” *Tablet*, Dec. 5, 2016, <http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/218925/helping-anti-semites-immigrate>.

⁴¹ About Mondoweiss, <http://mondoweiss.net/about-mondoweiss/>

doing, he will also allow white supremacists to feel victorious without actually winning anything. Taken together, even those Jews who believe that Trump could do more to shut down the Alt-Right should appreciate the efforts he is making, and will continue to make, to curtail the genuinely dangerous progressive antisemitic movements of campus activism and divisive identity politics—and consequently to defuse the backlash they have already begun to engender. In truth, were Trump to attack the Alt-Right explicitly, it would strengthen and embolden their credentials as a resistance movement—fit foils to warm the hearts of SJWs everywhere.

Yes, most Jews should appreciate Trump's efforts. If rhetoric during the campaign—and since the election—is any guide, very few will. And therein lies the single greatest threat to American Jewry today. We are a community woefully deficient in *hakarat hatov*—recognition and thanks for a good turn. Far too many Jews today are progressives because they desperately seek the approval of the other groups who dwell beneath the progressive umbrella; they stand in awe of blacks, women, Latinos, labor unions, and other minorities whose activist leaders care little for the Jews. Meanwhile, the Jewish communal leadership turns its back in enmity on those who most want to help us—a group that, by every reasonable indication, includes President Elect Donald Trump.