

HANDOUT

Contemporary Examples of Antisemitic Conflation

Article 1: [“Abuse directed at London Hanukkah party bus investigated as a hate crime, police say”](#) (CNN), December 2, 2021

London (CNN) — London Metropolitan Police are investigating a video that appeared to show a group of men spitting at a group of Jewish people celebrating [Hanukkah](#) earlier this week.

The video, filmed from inside a bus dubbed a “Hanukkah party on wheels” in central London on Monday, shows passengers subjected to a barrage of alleged [anti-Semitic abuse](#). . . .

Rabbi Shneur Glitsenstein, who was on board the bus, described the incident as a “bigoted antisemitic attack.”

“Let me be clear: On Monday evening we were attacked on the streets of London for being Jewish and celebrating Chanukah. While our bus contained no references to Israel, we were clearly a Jewish group. The young men who surrounded us were not engaged in political protest; this was a bigoted anti-Semitic attack in the heart of London, seen by dozens of others, who stood by silently,” Glitsenstein said in a statement published by the Chabad Israeli Center Golders Green.

The rabbi said that around 40 young people had gathered to mark the second night of Hanukkah aboard an “open-air party bus.” He said the night turned sour after a group of men approached them as they were dancing in Oxford Street, in central London.

“They (the men) quickly became aggressive and began making profane gestures and yelling ‘Free Palestine!’” Glitsenstein said, adding that as soon as his group returned to the bus, the “young men began shouting profanities at the group, throwing at least one projectile on the top of the bus, spitting at the bus, and banging on the windows with their shoes.” . . .¹

¹ Sharon Braithwaite and Nina Avramova, [“Abuse directed at London Hanukkah party bus investigated as a hate crime, police say,”](#) CNN, December 2, 2021.

Article 2: [“L.A. sushi restaurant attack is being investigated as an antisemitic hate crime” \(LA Times\), May 19, 2021](#)

An attack on diners outside a sushi restaurant by people shouting slogans against Israel is being investigated by Los Angeles police as an antisemitic hate crime.

The attack came as a deadly battle continued in the Gaza Strip, escalating tensions in the U.S. among supporters of Israel and those who back the Palestinians.

A video capturing part of the Tuesday night attack shows people in a caravan of cars flying Palestinian flags yelling, “F— you” and “You guys should be ashamed of yourselves” as they drive by the restaurant.

At one point before the attack, which later escalated to kicking and punching, a person can be heard yelling, “Israel kills children!” . . .

“We don’t know what the motivation is of the people who perpetrated this hate crime, but we’re certainly aware [that] what happens in Israel — what happens in the Middle East — does impact us here on the ground,” said Jeffrey Abrams, regional director of the Anti-Defamation League Los Angeles.

A witness told The Times that people from the car caravan began throwing bottles and other items at diners.

“They were chanting, ‘Death to Jews’ and ‘Free Palestine,’” said the witness, who asked to remain anonymous because he feared for his safety. “They had malice.”

In the video, about eight people, most dressed in black, converge on the diners. The fight grows increasingly violent as it spills farther onto the sidewalk. One man swings a metal stanchion at the attackers, who then push him against a car, punch and kick him, the video shows. . . .

Jewish people were the “top target” of hate crimes in L.A., Chicago and New York in 2019, said Brian Levin, executive director of the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at Cal State San Bernardino.

“When there are violent and particularly prolonged conflicts between Israelis and Palestinians, it translates into an increase in antisemitic hate crime here in the United

States that really shows up in the data,” Levin said, noting that the same can also be true for anti-Muslim and anti-Arab sentiment.

[Hate crimes against Muslim Americans have also](#) been rising sharply in recent years. A Los Angeles city report released last year showed [anti-Muslim hate cases](#) more than doubled, with officials stressing that there were probably many more that never got reported. . . .

Tovah Goldman grew up in the area and said that nothing like Tuesday’s restaurant attack had happened before, even during previous periods of violence in the Middle East.

“It’s scary, because it kind of takes you back to like what generations before us experienced,” said Goldman, 28, the granddaughter of Holocaust survivors, while seated in an SUV with her two young children in the back seat.

Still, she said, she will continue to wear clothes that might identify her as Jewish, including a head covering she sometimes sports.

“I think I should be proud of who I am, because, being a Jew, I do nothing wrong,” she said.²

² Hayley Smith, Richard Winton, and Lila Seidman, “[L.A. sushi restaurant attack is being investigated as an antisemitic hate crime](#),” *LA Times*, May 19, 2021.

Article 3: [“Jewish teens say life on TikTok comes with anti-Semitism”](#) (NBC News), September 25, 2020

Several [Jewish content] creators say their comment feeds are often inundated with the slogan “Free Palestine” and the Palestinian flag emoji. Neither on its own is anti-Semitic, of course. But experts note that when the comments appear over and over again on Jewish content on TikTok — conflating Judaism with Israel and Israeli politics on postings wholly unrelated to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict — they are wielded in a manner that is anti-Semitic.

“It is absolutely legitimate to criticize Israel for its human rights abuses, just like it’s legitimate to criticize any other state . . . but when somebody is posting, let’s say, their bat mitzvah dress or when somebody is putting up a picture of their family’s Passover Seder or when somebody is just talking about their own Jewish pride . . . when the response is ‘Free Palestine,’ what that respondent is saying is ‘your Judaism doesn’t matter at all,’” said Rabbi Jill Jacobs, executive director of T’ruah, a rabbinic human rights organization. She said that those comments imply that those creators have no identity as Jews apart from the state of Israel and that they would fall under the definition of anti-Semitism. . . .

[Josh] Cohen recalled times he was on his way to synagogue with his parents as a child, wearing a kippah, when someone would yell “Free Palestine” at them.

Jacobs said: “Sometimes, online, when Jews speak about anything, really, including subjects that don’t have to do with the state of Israel, that sometimes there is a response of ‘Free Palestine,’ which is a suggestion on the part of the person writing it that Jews are not allowed to talk about anything except for the situation in Israel and Palestine.”

The conflation of Israel with Jewish people is a widespread misconception found both popularly and among politicians.

At the end of a 20-minute call with American Jews just before Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, President Donald Trump said, “[We love your country](#), also,” suggesting that those on the call think of themselves as Israelis. . . .

But TikTokers like Olive note that it’s not actually about support for Israel — it’s that being an American Jew often doesn’t have much to do with Israel at all. She said that at one point she tried to reach out to a person who had made a “Free Palestine” comment on TikTok to explain why Jewish American teenagers had no power over the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

“They couldn’t seem to grasp the fact that I am unrelated to the conflict. Like, they kept saying over and over, ‘You’re stealing my land and hurting my people, and you deserve to get those comments, because you’re a land stealer, because you’re a war criminal.’ I just couldn’t get them to understand or explain to them that that’s just not the case,” Olive said. . . .³

³ Kalhan Rosenblatt, [“Jewish teens say life on TikTok comes with anti-Semitism,”](#) NBC News, September 25, 2020.

Article 4: "[Jewish teen in Brooklyn punched for refusing to say 'Free Palestine'](#)" (JNS), May 13, 2022

A Jewish teen walking in the heavily Jewish neighborhood of Midwood in Brooklyn, N.Y., was hit in the face by an attacker because he wouldn't say "Free Palestine."

The victim and his friend, both 18-year-old *yeshivah* students, were walking down a busy street full of shops and restaurants when a group of teenagers began following them.

One of the teens approached them and demanded that they say "Free Palestine." When the students ignored him, the assailant allegedly punched one of them, giving him a bloody eye. . . .

The assault follows two others within the week, including an attack in the Crown Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn in which a rabbi was [beaten](#) by a man who yelled: "The Nazis should have killed you Jews."

According to the Anti-Defamation League, the highest number of anti-Semitic attacks recorded in the United States took place last year with 2,717 reported cases, more than 330 of them occurring in the state of New York.⁴

⁴ "[Jewish teen in Brooklyn punched for refusing to say 'Free Palestine.'](#)" JNS, May 13, 2022.

Article 5: “Multiple US synagogues hit with anti-Israel, antisemitic graffiti 7 weeks into Israel-Hamas war” (JTA), November 27, 2023

Over the course of a week, three synagogues across the United States were tagged with anti-Israel and antisemitic graffiti.

The vandalism follows weeks of similar defacement at a variety of American Jewish sites, including cemeteries, Chabad Jewish centers, and Jewish buildings on university campuses. The incidents occurred more than a month into the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, which has come alongside a reported spike in antisemitism nationwide.

The recent vandalism targeted synagogues affiliated with three different religious denominations. In Washington state, the FBI is investigating anti-Israel vandalism on Nov. 22 at Herzl-Ner Tamid, a Conservative synagogue in the Seattle suburb of Mercer Island. About 20% of the island’s households identify as Jewish, the Seattle Times reported.

The graffiti, which was spray-painted in red and black in several places across the exterior of the synagogue, included phrases such as “Stop killing,” “Shame on Israel” and “You know better.” The incident follows an FBI investigation into the delivery of suspicious packages to at least five Jewish institutions in the Seattle area. Four of the five envelopes contained white powder, and all five have been determined to be non-hazardous, according to the Seattle Times. . . .

And on Nov. 21 at Romemu, a Jewish Renewal congregation on New York’s Upper West Side, a vandal left antisemitic and white supremacist symbols on the door last Tuesday, including a swastika, a hammer and sickle, a Star of David, and multiple Ks, presumably a reference to the Ku Klux Klan, among other symbols. Law enforcement identified the perpetrator as a person with cognitive impairment who was already known to the police and said the individual posed no further threat. . . .

This week has seen more vandalism of a Jewish sacred space. On Monday afternoon, a Boston man was charged with multiple counts of destruction of property, destruction of a place of worship, and defacing a burial site for vandalizing the New England Holocaust Memorial in that city as well as the graves of Paul Revere and 19 others.

The acts of vandalism come amid what law enforcement and Jewish security agencies say is a rise in anti-Jewish activity. The Anti-Defamation League reported a 388% rise in antisemitic incidents in the United States between Oct. 7 and Oct. 23 compared with the previous year. Between those dates, 190 out of 312 recorded antisemitic incidents were “directly linked to the war in Israel and Gaza[,]” the ADL’s Center on Extremism reported.⁵

⁵ Jackie Hajdenberger, “[Multiple US synagogues hit with anti-Israel, antisemitic graffiti 7 weeks into Israel-Hamas war](#),” JTA, November 27, 2023.