New ADL Report Shows Antisemitism Widespread on European Left

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Brazen expressions of anti-Zionism and hostility towards the State of Israel that spill over into antisemitism continue to be visible among socialist and far left political parties in Europe, according to a new assessment published on Tuesday by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL).

The report, titled ‘Antisemitism and Radical Anti-Israel Bias on the Political Left in Europe,’ draws on contributions from four Jewish or pro-Israel institutions in France, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom. It examines how ‘anti-Israel actions and calls for the application of BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions) against Israel are increasingly common in leftist political circles in Europe.’ The report further notes that their ‘rhetoric influences, and draws inspiration from, some left-leaning activist movements in the US.’

The report identifies ‘common antisemitic themes that emerge from each of the four countries, including claims that Jewish cabals control politics and media; Holocaust trivialization; equating Israel with the Nazi regime; and the false charge that accusations of antisemitism are used to silence criticism of Israel,’ the ADL observed.

‘While left-wing antisemitism has existed in France for many years, its mainstreaming is a source of deep concern in the French Jewish community,’ stated the contribution from France, supplied by the editors of the Jewish magazine *K*. ‘Since the mid-20th century, the French left had been influenced by the Soviet Communist Party with its anti-Zionism that challenged the legitimacy of Israel’s existence, propagated conspiracy theories, and portrayed Israel as a destabilizing factor both regionally and internationally.’

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Among several examples in France is the profusion of ‘images of Jews controlling the government…found on social media accounts of left-wing activists, including some prominent personalities. In 2017, Gérard Filoche, a member of the Socialist Party executive committee, tweeted an image of newly elected President Emmanuel Macron with three prominent French Jews in the shadows behind him.’

Similarly, in Germany ‘Israel-centered antisemitism is a major contributor to the normalization of antisemitism, making it difficult to combat the phenomenon in general,’ stated the contribution from the Amadeu Antonio Foundation, a prominent anti-racist organization. It cited the May Day demonstrations in Berlin in 2022, where ‘antisemitic slogans could be heard from the outset: ‘From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,’ ‘Apartheid Israel’ and one that explicitly trivializes terror: ‘Stop the war, Intifada until we prevail.’ The crowd chanted the motto ‘Yallah class war,’ while posters showed Leila Khaled, member of the terrorist organization Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which is responsible for numerous attacks against Israeli civilians.’

The contribution from the Spanish pro-Israel organization ACOM argued that during the years of General Francisco Franco’s military dictatorship, ‘antisemitism maintained its classical forms and was clearly a right-wing issue in Spain, as in the rest of Europe. Today, anti-Israel antisemitism of the political left accounts for the overwhelming share of antisemitism, while the Spanish right is almost entirely pro-Israel and guards against antisemitism.’ It noted as well that the ‘BDS movement and the extreme left are the same thing in Spain. Criminalizing Israel is a tenet of [far left party] Podemos and its political fellow travelers. The party’s ties to the Iranian regime would be enough to prevent Podemos from receiving even non-marginal electoral support in many parts of the world. Yet, in Spain, it is not only part of the governing coalition but even is key to Prime Minister [Pedro] Sanchez remaining in office.’

In the UK, ‘there is a strong crossover between the pro-Palestine movement, the far left of the Labour Party and other left-wing groups including some Trades Unions,’ the contribution from the Community Security Trust (CST), a voluntary organization, stated. The group stressed that the period of far- left leader Jeremy Corbyn’s 2015-20 term at the helm of the Labour Party had witnessed a series of scandals around antisemitism, but that the situation had now improved, ‘largely due to the efforts made by the current Labour leadership to comply with the demands set forth by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) following their investigation [into Labour Party antisemitism.]’

‘There’s no doubt that the anti-Zionist rhetoric and terminology popular in European left circles are increasingly being adopted and exploited by some in the US political far left,’ Marina Rosenberg — ADL senior vice president of International Affairs — said in a statement accompanying the report.

‘While antisemitism from individuals associated with left-leaning political organizations is generally less violent than the threat of right-wing antisemitism, its increasing penetration into the political mainstream is deeply concerning,’ she said.