

A GUIDE TO

LEFT-WING ANTISEMITISM

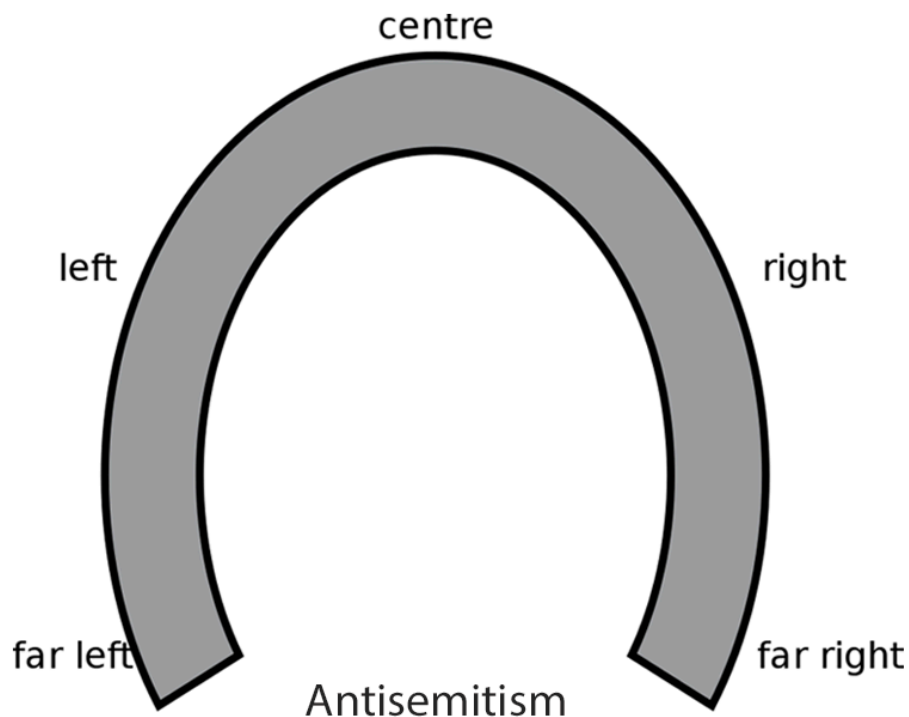


Left-wing antisemitism refers to prejudice, discrimination, hostility, or hatred directed against Jews, based on leftist ideologies or perspectives. It is particularly nefarious because it is often dressed up as part of a broader “Social Justice” movement, and therefore more widespread and socially acceptable than antisemitism associated with the far right.



How does antisemitism on the left compare to the far-right?

A useful model for understanding the relationship between antisemitism on the far-left and far-right is political horseshoe theory. Both extremes, despite their differing ideological foundations, tend to view Jews as a monolithic and malign group with undue power and influence.



While antisemitism from the far right tends to be overt and readily identifiable, left-wing antisemitism is typically more subtle. Unfortunately this makes it more prevalent and socially acceptable among progressives.



What does left-wing antisemitism look like?

Jews are labeled ‘Oppressors’: Jews are portrayed as inherently part of the oppressor class, particularly in discussions framed within an oppressor–oppressed framework. This narrative can lead to the demonization of Jews as privileged or complicit in systems of oppression, overlooking the diversity of Jewish experiences and erasing the history of discrimination and persecution faced by Jews.

Anti-Zionism: While criticism of Israeli policies is not inherently antisemitic, when it extends to denying the Jewish people's right to self-determination or portrays Israel as fundamentally illegitimate, it can cross into antisemitic territory.

Collective Guilt: When all Jews, no matter where they may live, are held responsible for the actions of Israel, it reflects a form of collective punishment and is a manifestation of antisemitism.

Selective Outrage: When individuals or groups disproportionately focus on Israel's actions while ignoring similar or worse actions by other countries, it can suggest a bias against Jews.

Holocaust Revisionism: Denying or downplaying the Holocaust is a form of antisemitism, and it sometimes occurs on the left, often under the guise of questioning historical narratives or criticizing Israeli policies.



Where does left-wing antisemitism come from?

While various influences have contributed to the prevalence of left-wing antisemitism, one significant culprit today stems from an academic framework that emerged around the 1970s: **Postcolonial Theory**. This theoretical framework was heavily influenced by Palestinian-American scholar Edward Said, who framed Zionism as a “colonial project.”

Within Postcolonial Theory, Israel is portrayed as a colonial, imperialist, oppressive power, while Palestinians are depicted as helpless victims without agency. This portrayal has significantly influenced perceptions, particularly within activist circles, turning the cause of "Free Palestine" into a trendy "Social Justice" issue.

Postcolonial Theory, like other Critical Theories, operates as a form of activist scholarship. It doesn't necessarily aim for historical accuracy. Instead, it seeks to "reenvision history" from the "perspective of the oppressed." While presenting itself as legitimate and rigorous, it prioritizes its political goals over the genuine production of knowledge.



How did left-wing antisemitism spread?

Middle-eastern Funding of Universities: Billions in undisclosed Middle Eastern funding to U.S. universities have significantly contributed to shaping antisemitic discourse and framing the Israel-Palestinian conflict as an “indigenous rights” issue against “colonialism” in higher education.

Social Media Activism: Social media has helped propel what was once an obscure academic field mostly confined to college campuses into an international post-colonialist movement disguised as “Social Justice.” Over time, especially in the last decade, these Postcolonialist concepts have even penetrated K-12 education, instilling a binary oppressed/oppressor worldview that casts Jews as oppressors.

DEI: Through corporate diversity programs, it has now become a dominant ideology in mainstream institutions, including many Jewish organizations. As a result, left-wing antisemitism is now a prominent feature in far-left and progressive circles.

Underestimating the problem: Many Jewish organizations dedicated to combating Jew hatred chose to focus on far-right antisemitism. This oversight has allowed left-wing antisemitism to proliferate and gain ground.



Why the focus on left-wing antisemitism?

Many Jewish organizations already exist to tackle antisemitism associated with the far-right. While there is concern about threats on both sides of the aisle, the **Jewish Institute for Liberal Values (JILV)** focuses on the left.

JILV was formed in 2021 to address a specific ideology emerging on the left that has become embedded into our institutions and propagates antisemitic ideas and tropes.



Jewish Institute
for Liberal
Values