

**Written Testimony to the House Natural Resources**

**Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations**

**Rep. Paul Gosar, chairman**

Hearing on “Desecrating Old Glory: Investigating How the Pro-Hamas Protests Turned National Park Service Land into a Violent Disgrace”

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Chairman Gosar, Vice Chairman Collins, Ranking Member Stansbury, distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the honor of testifying. I’m president of the Capital Research Center, where for decades we have studied nonprofits and extremist groups.

I applaud the full Natural Resources Committee and this subcommittee for your attention to the outrages perpetrated on Park Service land by groups who often had ties to foreign powers. These groups’ violence on federal land fits with the groups’ support of violence in the Middle East and with their violence-soaked ideology.

In considering the riot at Union Station, we should immediately distinguish between violence and speech. Free speech is precious in a free country. That’s why the very First Amendment protects speech in general and why the first Article of the Constitution protects the “Speech and Debate” of Members of Congress in either house. But speech is not violence, and violence is not speech, even though we often hear radicals making both those claims.<sup>1</sup> As Rutgers Professor

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<sup>1</sup> See Haidt, Jonathan and Greg Lukianoff. “Why It’s a Bad Idea to Tell Students Words Are Violence: A claim increasingly heard on campus will make them more anxious and more willing to justify physical harm.” *The Atlantic*, July 18, 2017; <https://archive.is/GzJRC>.

Mark Bray explained in his *Antifa: The Anti-Fascist Handbook*, these radicals believe “‘free speech’ as such is merely a bourgeois fantasy unworthy of consideration.”<sup>2</sup>

Extremists who urge violence in protests are attacking the possibility of free government, which requires citizens and government officials to be able to speak and debate freely as they try to achieve their desired policies through rational argument, rather than by using violence to coerce those who disagree with them. But the kind of radicals who led the violent protests you’re investigating despise free governments and democracies like America and Israel. Instead, as I will document, they love tyrannies like Mao’s Communist China, the mullahs’ Iranian theocracy, and Lenin’s Soviet Union—all regimes ruled by violence. Mao explained this ideology’s essence: “Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.”<sup>3</sup>

Without violence, how are these extremists to achieve the dreams they graffitied onto Columbus Circle monuments, such as “US Empire will burn” and “Israel will fall”? Or take another of their graffiti slogans, “‘ Hamas is comin’ .”<sup>4</sup> What does that mean but that the bloody violence Hamas perpetrated on Israelis on October 7, 2023, will—so these radicals hope—be visited upon Americans?

Some of the groups who organized that protest are focused on Middle East issues, but other groups focus on entirely different issues. This lumping together of numerous causes may puzzle ordinary Americans, but it is standard for the radical Left, which views all sorts of discrete causes as united under what is sometimes called “the omnicause.”

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<sup>2</sup> Turley, Jonathan. “‘Your speech is violence’: the left’s new mantra to justify campus violence,” *The Hill*, June 3, 2023; <https://thehill.com/opinion/education/4032778-your-speech-is-violence-the-lefts-new-mantra-to-justify-campus-violence/>. This article cites several more “speech is violence” claims.

<sup>3</sup> Quotations from chairman Mao Tsetung; [https://archive.org/details/isbn\\_9780835123884/page/60/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/isbn_9780835123884/page/60/mode/2up).

<sup>4</sup> Costescu, Jessica. “Pro-Hamas Agitators Burn American Flag and Foist Palestinian Flag Over Union Station as Bibi Addresses Congress,” *Free Beacon*, July 24, 2024; <https://freebeacon.com/israel/pro-hamas-agitators-burn-american-flag-wave-terrorist-flags-clash-with-police-as-israeli-pm-addresses-congress/>. Underlining in original graffiti.

“In many students’ eyes,” the *New York Times* reported, “the war in Gaza is linked to other issues, such as policing, mistreatment of Indigenous people, racism and the impact of climate change.”<sup>5</sup>

Classic examples of this agglomerating of seemingly disparate left-wing causes appeared in my testimony to this committee in April. I noted that Code Pink, known for its foreign policy focus, both protested its support for Hamas in far-off Gaza and also jumped on the domestic environmentalist bandwagon to advocate for the Green New Deal.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, another radical group, Pueblo Action Alliance (PAA),

seamlessly connects radical environmental views with radical foreign policy views and shows a fondness for revolutionary violence—all obvious just from the front page of PAA’s website. That landing page currently shows a PAA flyer for the COP28 climate conference that includes radical environmentalism (denouncing carbon capture, hydrogen, water and nuclear power; demanding a complete phase-out of fossil fuels), radical feminism (calling for “feminist regenerative economies”), and radical anti-Israel policies (“solidarity with our Palestine relatives”).<sup>7</sup>

In radicals’ minds, all particular causes are part of a single cause: the revolt of the oppressed against the oppressor. As one 1960s American radical put it, “The issue is never the issue. The issue is always the revolution.” That’s likely what this July’s protestors meant when they chanted, “There is only one solution, intifada revolution.”<sup>8</sup> To endorse intifada is to endorse violence. The last intifada did not result in debate or an effort to persuade others through rational speech and peaceful protest. It resulted in thousands of deaths among Palestinians and Israelis.

An essay popular among American radicals, “10 Anarchist Theses on Palestine Solidarity in the United States,” reiterates the omnicause theme and the death wish: “our main task as

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<sup>5</sup> Peters, Jeremy W. “It’s Not Just Gaza: Student Protesters See Links to a Global Struggle,” *New York Times*, May 1, 2024; <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/01/us/pro-palestinian-college-protests.html>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/118/meeting/house/117026/witnesses/HHRG-118-II15-Wstate-WalterS-20240430.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Costescu, Jessica. “Pro-Hamas Agitators Burn American Flag and Foist Palestinian Flag Over Union Station as Bibi Addresses Congress,” *Free Beacon*, July 24, 2024; <https://freebeacon.com/israel/pro-hamas-agitators-burn-american-flag-wave-terrorist-flags-clash-with-police-as-israeli-pm-addresses-congress/>.

revolutionaries in the United States remains to be the unmaking of the American empire. Anarchists are for solidarity with Palestine.... *Freedom for Palestine means Death to America.*”<sup>9</sup>

My Capital Research Center colleague Ryan Mauro has documented this phenomenon in a lengthy report, *Marching Toward Violence: The Domestic Anti-Israeli Protest Movement*.<sup>10</sup> As Mauro explains, dozens of groups involved in disruptive anti-Israel protests are “pro-terrorism.” That is, they support Hamas and/or the October 7 terrorist attacks, and many possess a militancy that pushes the movement “toward a wider, more severe campaign focused on property destruction and violence properly described as domestic terrorism.” The movement’s

long-term goals are revolutionary. It demands the “dismantlement” of America’s “colonialist,” “imperialist,” or “capitalist” system, often calling for the U.S. to be abolished as a country.<sup>11</sup>

Looking specifically at the 250+ endorsers of the July 2024 violent protests in Washington, D.C., Mauro quickly identified 90 that qualify as extremist groups. That is, they publicly support terrorism/Hamas or identify themselves as Marxist, communist, or anarchist, which means they are anti-American aspiring revolutionaries.

For example, CUNY for Palestine endorsed the rally and is pro-Hamas and pro-violence. In fact, Capital Research Center broke the story that it had arguably become a terrorist group itself by identifying as part of the Iran-led “Axis of Resistance” that includes Hamas and the other Iran-backed terrorists.<sup>12</sup> In a statement, it declared, “The city of New York and their pigs are going to

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<sup>9</sup> Emphasis in original; [https://archive.org/download/zines-war/10 Anarchist Theses on Palestine Solidarity in the United States-screen.pdf](https://archive.org/download/zines-war/10%20Anarchist%20Theses%20on%20Palestine%20Solidarity%20in%20the%20United%20States-screen.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Mauro, Ryan. *Marching Toward Violence: The Domestic Anti-Israeli Protest Movement*. Capital Research Center, October 9, 2024; <https://capitalresearch.org/article/marching-toward-violence-the-domestic-anti-israeli-protest-movement/>.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> <https://capitalresearch.org/article/cuny-for-palestine-vows-to-destroy-university-and-target-nyc/>.

keep brutalizing and escalating, and so will we.”<sup>13</sup> Note that this is an example of combining radical anti-Israel ideology with radical anti-police ideology.

In his *Marching Toward Violence* report, Mauro discusses in detail the two groups whose leadership in the July riots most disturbs the Committee: the ANSWER Coalition and the broader coalition to which it belongs, Shut It Down for Palestine. Both these “coalitions,” Mauro documents, “glorify and assist illegal protests of varying severity.” They “encourage those crimes by directing activists to militant websites that teach how to fight police, destroy property, and commit other guerrilla acts.”<sup>14</sup>

For example, ANSWER explicitly lauds protesters who “have shut down highways, train stations [like Union Station], and bridges in the United States.” ANSWER “signed a declaration of the Committee of Anti-Imperialists in Solidarity with Iran that backs Iran’s direct attack on Israel and explicitly chooses the side of the Iran-led ‘Axis of Resistance’ consisting of the government of Syria, Iran-backed Palestinian terrorist groups including Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, the Yemen-based Houthis and Iran-backed militias in Iraq who are trying to kill U.S. troops.” These bloodthirsty entities who rule by violence do not exhaust ANSWER’s loyalties. The coalition also supports Putin’s bellicose Russia by denouncing the “US and NATO proxy war in Ukraine.”<sup>15</sup>

ANSWER, like many extremist groups in the anti-Israel orbit, enjoys the privileges of a tax-exempt charity, but rather than having to publicly report its finances, employees, board members, and the like in the way independent charities must, it hides itself in the cloak of a “fiscal sponsorship,” a situation where a parent charity extends its tax-exempt status to a project like ANSWER while relieving the project of the burden of public disclosures of its internal operations.

Worse, ANSWER’s fiscal sponsor is Progress Unity Fund, a far-left 501(c)(3) “charity” which also fiscally sponsors Pivot to Peace, one of whose members was arrested in 2023 for illegally

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<sup>13</sup> <https://cryptpad.fr/pad/#/2/pad/view/uQ2Yro0KM65RaVe46ZEwM7LgVS1st41eQ2SO7UaHMDI/>.

<sup>14</sup> Mauro, *Marching Toward Violence*, p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

acting as a foreign agent for China.<sup>16</sup> InfluenceWatch reports it “is closely connected to the [Workers World Party](#) (WWP) and its break-away group, the [Party for Socialism and Liberation](#) (PSL), both of which are revolutionary Marxist-Leninist parties” that celebrate revolutionary violence.<sup>17</sup>

In the 1960s, the WWP worked with violent extremists in the Weather Underground, which conducted dozens of bombings. Later it would demand the release of convicted cop-killer Mumia Abu-Jamal,<sup>18</sup> and more recently its leaders traveled to North Korea to celebrate the anniversary of the “tremendous victory” of Communist North Korea in the Korean War. In this celebration of solidarity with the most brutally repressive regime on the planet, the WWP reports it was joined by the ANSWER coalition.<sup>19</sup> Brian Becker and other leaders of ANSWER are Workers World Party members, and ANSWER has been described as “an outgrowth” and a “front” for the Party.<sup>20</sup>

The Progress Unity Fund’s ties to the Party for Socialism and Liberation, which formed the Fund, are arguably even more disturbing. This party backs the Chinese Communist Party’s murderous repression of the Tiananmen Square student democracy movement, even as it still supports the Soviet Union’s murderous repression of a popular uprising against its rule in Hungary in 1956.<sup>21</sup>

Such loyalty to the current Chinese Communist Party’s leaders may result in financial support from the Party and deserves investigation, which brings us to the larger coalition, Shut It Down for Palestine.

Shut It Down lists<sup>22</sup> as its members the following groups:

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-801204>.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/progress-unity-fund/>.

<sup>18</sup> <https://workersworld-party.org/about/>.

<sup>19</sup> Holmes, Larry. “What Workers Need to Know About Korea.” *Workers World*, August 28, 2013; <https://www.workers.org/2013/08/10587/>.

<sup>20</sup> Corn, David. “Behind the Placards.” *LA Weekly*, November 7, 2002; <https://web.archive.org/web/20081103052350/http://www.laweekly.com/2002-11-07/news/behind-the-placards>.

<sup>21</sup> <https://socialism.com/fs-article/a-political-critique-of-the-party-for-socialism-and-liberation/>.

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.shutitdown4palestine.org/about>.

Palestinian Youth Movement  
 National Students for Justice in Palestine  
 ANSWER coalition  
 The People's Forum  
 International Peoples' Assembly  
 Al-Awda-NY  
 Palestinian American Community Center

Note that National Students for Justice in Palestine has stated in a toolkit that it distributes, “We as Palestinian students in exile are PART of this movement, not in solidarity with this movement.” It does not name the movement, but since Hamas is an acronym for Islamic Resistance Movement, Students for Justice is clearly claiming to *be* Hamas.<sup>23</sup>

As for The People's Forum, it is “funded by Mr. [Neville Roy] Singham,” reports the *New York Times* in a story whose headline explains how Singham, who now lives in Shanghai, is a tool of Chinese Communist Party propaganda: “A Global Web of Chinese Propaganda Leads to a U.S. Tech Mogul: The Times unraveled a financial network that stretches from Chicago to Shanghai and uses American nonprofits to push Chinese talking points worldwide.”<sup>24</sup> The *Times* adds that Singham's groups enjoy hundreds of millions of dollars of funding and combine “progressive advocacy with Chinese government talking points.”

In a thorough report on Shut It Down, the Network Contagion Research Institute observes that its seven Convenors divide into “two distinct groupings based on ideological affiliation and fiscal sponsorship.” First, the far-left members; namely, The People's Forum, International People's Assembly, and ANSWER Coalition, which “demonstrate significant financial, personnel, and operational overlap.” Second, the remaining four Convenors, “all pro-Palestinian activist organizations, with at least two, [National Students for Justice in Palestine] and Al-Awda, known to have ties to U.S.-designated terrorist organizations.” In addition, Shut It Down is endorsed by Samidoun, “which some Western intelligence services classify as a front for the PFLP (Popular

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<sup>23</sup> [Students for Justice in Palestine]. “Day of Resistance Toolkit – imgix.” October 12, 2023; <https://dw-wp-production.imgix.net/2023/10/DAY-OF-RESISTANCE-TOOLKIT.pdf>, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/05/world/europe/neville-roy-singham-china-propaganda.html>.

Front for the Liberation of Palestine) which is designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the United States, Germany, and Israel.”<sup>25</sup>

Here again we see how the anti-Israel movement has two branches: one composed of far-left radical groups pushing a variety of agenda items; the other made up of explicitly Palestinian-focused groups. Yet they all work together, based on a shared hatred of Israel, America, and other democracies, and on a shared love of tyrannies like Communist China.

Unfortunately, these extremists don't just love violence when it's practiced in those repressive tyrannies. They also desire to see violence practiced in this country, as we see in both their slogans like “ Hamas is comin' ” and “ US Empire will burn ” as well as their actual violence in July in Washington.

I do not say that every critic of American or Israeli policy has succumbed to this nihilistic longing for violence and tyranny, and I emphatically do say that peaceful protests and vigorous debates over foreign policy are legitimate in our free country. But this committee, and the National Park Service that has the weighty responsibility of overseeing protests in most of the nation's capital, should continue investigating what went badly wrong in July and should ponder how to prevent similar misdeeds in the future. As Ronald Reagan famously warned, “ Freedom is ... never more than one generation away from extinction. ”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> <https://networkcontagion.us/reports/ccp-influence-and-radical-ideologies/>.

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/january-5-1967-inaugural-address-public-ceremony>.