

# Why Nazis attend Palestinian college rallies

By Karen Dunn, co-lead counsel in *Sines v. Kessler* : 6-7 minutes : 11/9/2023

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Why are [white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups](#) popping up at pro-Palestinian rallies across America, including most recently in Washington, D.C.; Orlando, Florida; Boston; and Missoula, Montana? I'll give you a hint: It's not because they care particularly about [the situation in Gaza](#). No, for these groups, the large-scale protests across America present a golden opportunity to mainstream the same [antisemitic tropes](#) they have been pushing for years and, if they get their way, create new opportunities for extremist violence.

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As one of the lawyers who sued the white supremacists responsible for the [violence in Charlottesville, Virginia](#), in 2017, I checked in on those defendants to see what they have said about recent events. Jason Kessler, the lead organizer, wrote that Palestinians have a right to declare that "Jews will not replace us." Richard Spencer, a longtime leader of the alt-right (an expression he coined), posted that lighting the Roman Arch of Titus in blue and white in solidarity with Israel was "a reversal and subversion of Titus' achievement" (the arch commemorated the Roman Empire's defeat of a Jewish rebellion in A.D. 81). Nathan Damigo, founder of the white supremacist organization Identity Europa, posted on Oct. 7: "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!" The next day, white supremacist Matthew Parrott, a co-founder of the Traditionalist Worker Party, praised Hamas' attack, stating that "every military act by the Palestinian forces is an act of freedom fighters" and comparing the massacre of families to "breaking out of a concentration camp to attack your guards."

And the National Justice Party, founded by white supremacists involved in Charlottesville, responded to the Oct. 7 attacks by [marching in front of the White House](#) with signs that said "No White Lives for Israel" and "Zionism=Terrorism," expressly calling for the "destruction of Israel." NJP's website now encourages people to "begin to imagine a world where Israel no longer exists" in an article titled "Four Ways The Destruction of Israel Can Benefit The West."

While white supremacists target all nonwhite groups and their allies, the unifying animus is a hatred of Jews. One of the organizers of Charlottesville had a day job as an exterminator; he told his girlfriend he would rather be killing Jews than cockroaches. Another organizer said that when his newborn son opened his eyes for the first time, his first thought was of Adolf Hitler. And on the day before James Alex Fields drove his Dodge Challenger into a crowd of peaceful counterprotesters, he responded to his mother's texting "be careful" with a picture of Hitler saying, "We are not the ones who need to be careful." White supremacist leaders know the power of antisemitism, and they use it tactically to fuel the movement.



Those tactics are straight from the Nazi playbook — literally. The white supremacist website Daily Stormer (which took its name from the Nazi publication *Der Stürmer*) produced a “style guide” to help white supremacists write effective propaganda. Under the heading “Prime Directive: Always Blame the Jews for Everything,” the guide instructs that “as Hitler says, people will become confused and disheartened if they feel there are multiple enemies. As such, all enemies should be combined into one enemy, which is the Jews.” Or as one Charlottesville defendant put it, “If you want to defend the South and Western civilization from the Jew and his dark-skinned allies, be at Charlottesville on 12 August.”

## Recommended

White supremacists may be looking specifically to exploit division on college campuses and provoke violence between protesters and counterprotesters, just as they did in 2017. What was publicly called “Unite the Right” was privately called the “Battle of Charlottesville,” and it was inspired by an earlier violent event that year called the “Battle of Berkeley.” This was because the ultimate goal of these groups is an all-white ethno-state, which, the theory goes, can be achieved only after a race war.

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To have a “race war,” you have to have battles, conflict and violence. White supremacists want antisemitism to be the match that starts the fire (or lights the tiki torch). In Charlottesville, that’s what happened. It started with hundreds of people carrying torches and chanting antisemitic slogans and ended in violence against all races and ethnicities, terrorizing an entire town, killing a woman and grievously injuring many other people.

It is important that our [college campuses, cities and town squares be places for speech](#), debate and protest — all rightfully protected under our Constitution. But we should [not tolerate antisemitism anywhere](#), not only

because it is morally wrong, but also because for a growing white supremacist movement, it is a mechanism to rally the troops against all nonwhite groups and usher in what Spencer once called “a new world of political violence.” The leaders of that movement are reveling in this moment, hoping that antisemitism becomes normalized, is allowed to flourish and creates a more acceptable gateway to racial hatred and violence.

If Charlottesville taught us anything, it is that accepting the [normalization of antisemitism](#) carries with it tremendous costs for Jews and non-Jews alike. We allow antisemitism to surge at our own peril. And make no mistake, the violence that ensues will affect all of us.

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