



Louis Farrakhan: America's Foremost Anti-Semite

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The best known and most virulent full-time anti-Semite in the US is Louis Farrakhan, the long-time leader of the Nation of Islam. He attacks the Jewish religion and people as well as the State of Israel, using a broad array of classic anti-Semitic motifs, and has called Adolf Hitler a "very great man." Though Farrakhan has spent decades inciting anti-Semitism, he is legitimized by his many interactions with prominent Americans. The First Amendment of the American Constitution does not allow for this hater to be brought to court, a limitation that not only enables but even strengthens his anti-Semitism.

According to the ADL, anti-Semitic incidents in the US increased 57% in 2017. This is the largest increase since 1979. The October 2018 murders of 11 Jews in a synagogue in Pittsburgh have placed the spotlight on white supremacists, who are certainly an important component of the problem of the promotion of anti-Jewish hatred in the country.

The idea that Jews are pure evil has its origins in Christianity. For centuries, the Jew was often portrayed as the killer of God, the anti-Christ, and Satan. Joshua Trachtenberg summarized how medieval Christendom saw the Jew thus: as "sorcerer, murderer, cannibal, poisoner, blasphemer."

But focusing exclusively on the extreme right leads to major distortions in the analysis of the expanding anti-Semitism problem. Consider, for example, the one individual who most fervently and tenaciously spreads anti-Semitism in the US.

That individual is Louis Farrakhan, minister and leader of the Nation of Islam (NOI), an African-American political and religious movement. NOI was formed in 1930, and its current membership is estimated at 20,000-50,000. Farrakhan qualifies for the title of foremost full-time American anti-Semite because of his use of a wide variety of anti-

Semitic motifs.

Farrakhan has called Judaism a “gutter religion” and “a religion of Satan.” He spews hate against the Jews as a people and against the State of Israel. His incitement has persevered over the course of decades. In March of 1984, Farrakhan praised Adolf Hitler, calling him a “very great man.” Farrakhan is also a homophobe and an anti-white racist.

The Jewish Virtual Library has divided a selection of Farrakhan’s anti-Semitic statements into several categories.

A prominent one is conspiracy theories. Farrakhan asserts that Israeli and Zionist Jews played key roles in the 9/11 attacks, and claims that Jews received text messages warning them not to come to work on September 11.

In line with the “Jews are pure evil” motif, Farrakhan speaks about “satanic Jews.” In a 2018 sermon, he said that “satanic Jews” had infected the modern world with poison and deceit. The Jew as poisoner is another classic anti-Semitic motif. In the 14th century, during the Black Death plague, Jews were accused of poisoning streams and wells. Many were murdered because of these false accusations.

Farrakhan has also used the word “termites” to describe Jews, which echoes the language of the Nazis. By “biologizing” language, the Nazis turned Jews into “bacteria,” “vermin,” “parasites,” and other forms of subhuman. In doing so, they laid the groundwork for genocide. Farrakhan’s choice of the word “termites” for Jews fits into this dehumanizing category.

In addition to his regular use of anti-Semitic tropes characterizing Jews as evil, as poisoners, and as subhuman, Farrakhan also frequently states that “Jewish power is gigantic.” In the 1990s, he said that Jews are “a very small number of people, but they are the most powerful in the world.” He also said: “When you want something in this world, the Jew holds the door.” Farrakhan has claimed that Jews control the world, are the secret power behind global finance, and exert “a tremendous amount of influence on the affairs of government.” He claims that Israel and the Jews control both the Senate and House of Representatives, and refers to white people in important positions in Mexico as “Mexican Jews.” Farrakhan even blames the Jews for helping the Third Reich take power.

Farrakhan sometimes interweaves two anti-Semitic motifs. For example, he has said: “You [the Jews] have wrapped your tentacles around the US government.” This combines the hate motifs of gigantic Jewish power and Jews’ subhuman nature.

Dual loyalty, the most pervasive anti-Semitic motif in the world, is of course also in Farrakhan’s rotation. He compiled a list of Jews who have worked closely with US

presidents and said, "Every Jewish person that is around the president is a dual citizen of Israel and the United States of America."

In his November 2018 visit to Tehran, Farrakhan addressed law students at Tehran University. At the end of his talk, Farrakhan and the students joined together to chant "Death to Israel" and "Death to America." Farrakhan also took the opportunity to declare the establishment of the State of Israel an "outlaw act" and accused the Jewish state of "thievery, lying, and deceit."

One would have expected that within his movement, voices of protest would have been heard over the years against their leader's extreme anti-Semitism. This has not occurred. The Nation of Islam is thus a tainted movement.

Alan Dershowitz has pointed out that while mainstream American figures generally keep their distance from notorious anti-Semites – none of them would sit down, for example, with white supremacist and anti-Semite David Duke, a former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan – many of them are perfectly willing to meet Farrakhan. A photo recently emerged of Barack Obama smiling beside Farrakhan at a 2005 meeting that had been arranged by the Black Caucus. Also, at the funeral of singer Aretha Franklin in August 2018, Farrakhan enjoyed celebrity-like status, sitting only two seats away from former president Bill Clinton.

Linda Sarsour, the Palestinian-American National co-Chair of the Women's March, former executive director of the Arab American Association of New York, and advocate of BDS, has been a strong supporter of Farrakhan for years.

In February 2018, another National co-Chair of the Women's March, Tamika D. Mallory, attended the Nation of Islam's annual Saviours' Day event in Chicago. There, Farrakhan delivered an inflammatory keynote speech that included statements about "powerful Jews" whom he considers his enemies. While Mallory and Sarsour have condemned anti-Semitism, homophobia, and other forms of hatred, they have not renounced Farrakhan, prompting calls for them to resign.

The Republican Jewish Coalition has similarly called on seven Democratic law makers who sat down with Farrakhan for personal meetings while in office to resign: Andre Carson (D-Ind.), Maxine Waters (D-Calif.), Danny Davis (D-Ill.), Al Green (D-Tex.), Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), Gregory Meeks (D-NY), and Rep. Keith Ellison (D-Minn.), the deputy chair of the Democratic National Committee. Ellison has since been elected attorney general of Minnesota. There have also been condemnations of these meetings by other Democratic representatives. After the criticism, some of those seven politicians explicitly condemned Farrakhan. By meeting with him, they and other high-profile figures legitimized America's leading anti-Semite.

In a democratic country, a man who is such a regular source of major hate speech should be brought before a court and condemned to jail. However, this is not possible in the US due to the First Amendment of the Constitution, which guarantees free speech even to extreme inciters.

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