



Is an Anti-War Party Possible?

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Glenn Greenwald (GG): All right, the next question is from The Mill Man who asked: "Hey Glenn, do you think the pro-Palestine protests would have gained more MAGA sympathy if they were also explicitly against funding the Ukraine war? Just wondering, because I've come to believe that appealing to people's consciences is not effective, particularly when the media is against your cause. It just comes off as moralizing without the drumbeat of propaganda on your side. So, maybe a broader anti-interventionist protest that unites left and right might have been more effective? More of a 'what good does it do us ordinary Americans to have all these people killed'- movement? !Are we safer? Are we richer?"".

I think it's a very interesting point. And I would say that question describes the approach that I have been trying to take, myself, in my own journalism, and kind of the areas that I have focused on – this kind of common ground between populist left and populist right, anti-establishment left and anti-establishment right – which includes not only opposition to the US financing and arming the Israeli destruction of Gaza, but also the US finance and fueling the war in Ukraine and just the general militaristic war, endless war posture that the United States is one that I think does no Americans any good, except for a tiny sliver of elites who run these industries that profit so much at everybody else's expense. And so I do think that had these protests been more generalized against the US war machine and heightened Ukraine as an example as well, it may have attracted a broader base of support.

But let me just say a couple things about that. Because I'm not entirely sure in this case if that's true. I understand it in theory. I think it has potential, but I think it's so important not to underestimate the enormous hold that Israel has on large swaths of our political spectrum. And not just our political spectrum, but American conservatism and even large parts of MAGA. In fact, it is often the case, I really do believe, that a lot of these sentiments in defense of Israel are even stronger than the sentiments in defense of the United States. And one of the things I – obviously if you go back and read the Israel lobby by John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt from 2007, it details a lot of that, but I think one of the things that has happened is, I say this in Brazil, I'll just explain in Brazil. In Brazil, Brazil used to be an

overwhelmingly Catholic country, the largest Catholic country in the world, and it still is very Catholic, at least in the sense of who identifies as a Catholic, but Catholics tend not to be particularly devout or driven by religion. It's just kind of a religion of Brazil, like Christianity is the religion of the United States, some people are very devout, but by and large it would be a secular society with kind of Catholic informed values.

But over the last three or four decades there's been this emergence of a very passionate and intense evangelical movement. There's always been evangelicals around, but it's only quite recently where evangelicals have been convinced that one of their highest religious duties is to politically support Israel and support everything it does and want to fund it with great enthusiasm. So if you go to a protest or a march or demonstration organized by the Brazilian right, you'll see at least as many Israel flags as you will Brazilian flags, because Israel plays such a central role, defining central role in how right-wing evangelical politics are expressed. In fact, there's this – just as a side note – there is this interesting anecdote where there's this drug gang that kind of rules the favelas, they constantly fight for expansion, and the head of this gang is devoutly evangelical, demands that everybody in his communities that he runs be evangelical and he united a bunch of the communities that he gained power over and he called it the complex of Israel. And all over the place there are Stars of David and Israeli flags, they use the uniforms of the IDF. That is how central Israel has become in the evangelical mindset.

And so if you look at a major part of the US Congress, obviously, you have American Jews who are inculcated from birth to revere Israel. And then you have national security hawks who just see Israel as an important instrument or extension of American power. But you also have huge parts of the MAGA movement that are composed of evangelicals who will tell you outright. They don't want to give money to any other country in the world, they don't want to defend any other countries in the world except for Israel, and that's because God has mandated that they defend Israel. Some of them believe that Israel has to be unified under the control of the Jews for the Messiah to return, at which time he will actually consign all Jews, because they don't accept the divinity of Jesus to eternal damnation. But Jews are happy to accept that support because they don't actually believe that will happen, but others just have a more generalized view of the book of Exodus and some of the chapters of what we call the Old Testament that God promised Israel to the Jews and said that whoever defends and supports and blesses the Jewish people in Israel will themselves be blessed.

So for them it's a genuine religious conviction, or on the part of evangelicals, or a deeply embedded, extremely indoctrinated identification with Israel among American Jews, then it isn't so easy to just say, oh yeah, they're going to start being okay with these protests against the Israeli destruction of Gaza as long as we just throw Ukraine in as well. Because I just, I mean, I see the emotion – I see emotion in people when you talk about this issue. It's unlike almost any other. For a lot of people, this is the red line. The single greatest issue. And not a small number of people. A large number of people. Now, obviously there's a lot Jews who are highly critical of Israel. They participated and led the protests. Obviously this show, hosted by myself, is highly critical of Israel, and I was taught all the same things about Israel that

other American Jews were from birth. And there are evangelicals who don't mix their religion with their politics, especially on foreign – but I'm saying in general, it is such a dominant issue. You can pretty much, in these factions, take any position at all, and they'll be fine with it. You can disagree with them about almost anything. But you disagree with them about this, and they will write you off. Because this – this foreign country – is the highest and most sacred duty. And it's so ironic that there's so many people who identify as America First for whom this is true. Obviously, huge parts of MAGA and America First don't see Israel this way, but many, many of them do.

The other problem is that a lot of people on the left, broadly speaking, by the left I mean the left-er wing of the Democratic Party. I don't mean the hardcore leftists who would never support the Democratic Party. I mean like the mainstream people who are called left, like Bernie Sanders, AOC, even a little inward toward the mainstream get called the left. They unanimously, almost overwhelmingly, support Ukraine and support the NATO war in Ukraine and want the United States to continue to fund it. So if you were to introduce a Ukraine element into these protests, it would alienate a huge number of people who don't support that at all. These should combine, I absolutely agree that opposing the US financing and funding and arming and diplomatic protection of Israel should lead you to the conclusion that the US should stop doing the same thing with respect to Ukraine.

Now, obviously, people would say, oh, they're totally different. Israel is the aggressor, and Ukraine is a victim of an aggression, so we should defend the victims of aggression, which is Ukraine. Obviously people have a different view on that as well. But it's just a very difficult, it's a difficult group of views to mix because it would alienate so many people one way or the other, and I'm not sure that if the focus was on or Israel was a major part, it would really become tolerable for all those people for whom Israel plays such a vital role.

And then I guess the last thing I would say about this is that I really don't think you compare the war in Ukraine to the war on Gaza. They're not even remotely comparable in terms of civilians killed, in terms of the destruction that it's ushering in, in terms of the humanitarian crimes and the atrocities and the war criminality. I mean, I really think that what the Israelis are doing in Gaza, especially with the resumption now of this bombing campaign when there was barely anything left to bomb, just the absolute indiscriminate slaughter and killing, the complete destruction of civilian life in Gaza, blowing up every hospital, every university – and I know all the arguments, " Hamas was there", etc. But I think that what we're witnessing in Gaza is by far the worst atrocity, certainly, of the century. And I could make a case in my lifetime. I mean, try not to be too maximalist about it. There's a recency bias. There's been a lot of massacres and slaughters in the last several decades. But I would certainly say that about this century because there's just zero constraints of any kind that are observed, zero regard for human life among Palestinians. Zero.

And it's been so sustained, the Gazans are basically helpless, they don't have an army, they don't have NATO behind them, they don't have aircrafts being shipped to them. They have very primitive weapons that make them able, sort of, to fight a guerrilla campaign, but not to

guard against airstrikes. It's basically a sitting-duck population, a helpless population. So I understand why people felt a particular need to go out and protest that, especially because our government is who is paying for it, who is arming it, who is diplomatically shielding it. So it's a complicated question, but I do wish a lot that people would be more open to the idea that there really is huge common ground among left-wing populists and right-wing populists. And the problem is that people on the right, including right-wing populists, are taught to hate anything on the left and left-wing populists are taught to hit anything on the right. And that was why my attempt to examine and foster this common ground on issues like trade and war and intelligence community and military industrial complex and corporatism alienated so many people on the left because the idea that there could be anybody on the right who has views that they could connect to or that they could work with is so anathema to how people have been indoctrinated to think and just stay over here in their separate corners. And so yes, I wish there was a lot more thinking along these lines, but unfortunately, we're pretty far away from that.

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