

Montreal Anti-NATO Protest Transformed Into Violence and Hatred

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Police say they've arrested several people in Montreal following an anti-NATO/pro-Palestine protest that resulted in fires and left some businesses with smashed windows. The Canadian Press/Adrian Wyld



By Anders Corr

11/25/2024

Updated: 11/25/2024

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Commentary

The anti-NATO and pro-Palestine [protests](#) on Nov. 22 dissolved into chaos about 40 minutes after the two marches merged on the streets of Montreal. Video shows black-clad rioters in masks [breaking windows](#) of the convention center where NATO met, while another protester appears to intimidate a journalist through frenetic jumping and wild arm movements uncomfortably close to the journalist's head and camera.

A sign in one part of the crowd called for "[intifada](#)," which means different things to different people. It can mean "uprising," "struggle," or "shudder," but also interpreted as "shaking off," "getting rid of," or "[violence against Jews](#)." At a smaller protest in the same Canadian city the day prior, a woman threatened pro-Israel counter-protesters with "[the final solution](#)" in apparent reference to the Holocaust.

Over the past year in Montreal, Jewish community centers, schools, and synagogues have been attacked with firebombs and gunfire.

The Nov. 22 protesters alleged that Israel is committing genocide and that NATO countries that support Israel are complicit. There have been almost 50,000 deaths caused by the Israel Defense Forces in Gaza and Lebanon, but the protesters do not readily admit that such casualties happen in most wars, and most wars are not genocide.

Neither do they admit that the [ratio](#) of civilian-to-military deaths is relatively low compared to other such wars. [Hamas](#) and [Hezbollah](#) terrorists hide weapons and firing positions among the civilian population, which is against international law. Israel usually warns nearby civilians before a strike against these military targets takes place.

Neither do the protesters admit to the culpability of Iran and its proxies, including not only Hamas and Hezbollah, but the [Houthis](#), all of whom initiated the violence on or shortly after Oct. 7, 2023, and are therefore arguably to blame.

Most of the 800 Montreal protesters were peaceful. But that does not excuse organizers from enabling violence by allowing between 20 and 40 of them to form an undisciplined crowd from which violence should have been expected. Any planned measures to stop such violence did not work. The same could be said of some right-wing gatherings, which sometimes have a fringe group of people ready for violence against their leftist counterparts.

Many in Montreal were clearly not trained in nonviolence. Gandhi's independence struggle in India from 1919 to 1942, and Martin Luther King's civil rights movement in the United States from 1955 to 1968, were successful because they were disciplined and nonviolent. Violence against these movements backfired on the authorities, which led to the public sympathy that resulted in their wins. The opposite is happening with Palestinian violence, and the violence of protesters who support them. The effect of the Oct. 7 massacre and Hezbollah's missile attacks was over [44,000 deaths in Gaza](#), and 3,500 in Lebanon. The Montreal protesters who mimic Palestinian violence in miniature, or threaten far greater violence, are also hurting their cause.

Some Montreal protesters set cars on fire. Some are charged with assaulting [police](#). "Small explosive devices" like smoke bombs and "metal items" were thrown at police, according to a news report. As many as five people were [injured](#), including a police officer, and three were arrested. "Montreal Antifa" reportedly co-sponsored the march. The protest included "anti-capitalist, anti-militarist, anti-imperialist, and anti-colonialist" messages, which are all buzzwords for communists and anarchists. The next day, another anti-NATO protest demanded that Canada leave the alliance. The regimes in Russia and China, both of which would like to chip away at Canada's Arctic regions, must have been overjoyed.

The protesters are entitled to their opinions, and peaceful protest is of course a human right, but vigilantism, violence, and intimidation are not. Not only did a small number of protesters cause unacceptable property damage, intimidate journalists, threaten Jewish counter-protesters with the Holocaust, and allegedly assault the police, but the broader mass of peaceful protesters failed to understand the

importance of the NATO alliance to protect their right to protest. There is no such right in places like Russia, China, Iran, or North Korea. And, without the alliance, less powerful countries like Canada could be more compromised than it already is by China's attempts at [elite capture](#). The more territory that Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea take, the more they can use that territory and its resources against the United States and its allies.

Neither do the protesters understand the [history](#) of the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Most protesters only know a one-sided history of the "Nakba" and after. The Nakba is the flight of approximately [700,000](#) Palestinians from Israel in and around 1948, caused by a civil and then international war that Arabs started. The protesters rarely know the other side of the story, for example the flight of [900,000](#) Jewish people from Middle Eastern countries like Iraq and Yemen in 1948 due to the war and the region's anti-Semitism.

The protesters claim to be anti-racist, but denounce Jewish "colonization" of [mandate Palestine](#) starting in the 19th century, a form of migration that was initially entirely peaceful. Neither do they know much about the colonization of Israel by the Roman and Ottoman empires over most of the first and second millennia A.D., and how Jewish people were mistreated in their own homeland during these periods.

The protesters typically do not know how the British in mandate Palestine attempted to right that injustice by creating a diverse and multicultural Palestine welcome to both Jews and Arabs, which devolved into brutal anti-immigrant violence against Jews starting with Arab raids, riots, and murders in the 1920s and 1930s. This anti-Semitic and anti-immigrant violence was the reason that Jewish people on their small farms and villages in mandate Palestine had to buy guns and organize themselves into self-defense militias. The militias gradually grew into the modern State of Israel to deter frequent failed invasions from neighboring Arab states.

To call Jewish people in Israel "oppressive colonizers" is therefore a misreading of history. People in the Middle East have always

migrated, Jewish people have always been in Israel, and Jewish people generally only fight when forced to do so in self-defense.

One must ask why leftist protesters tend to miss all of this. Is it because a one-sided history of Israel is taught at the universities, from which many of the protesters come? Many professors are self-avowed Marxists. Others do not go so far, but placate the far left and elite historical data such as the above to not offend their colleagues and students. They can ignore the atrocities, and romanticize the achievements of, not only Palestinian terrorists but their Russian and Chinese allies.

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) used terrorism to fight Israel from the 1960s to the 1980s, and allied with the Soviets, Chinese, and other leftist terrorists like the Weatherman in the United States and Red Army Faction in Germany. All of them failed, arguably because they initiated violence in their struggles.

As in Montreal, use of violence tends to grab the attention of the media, and the message that the peaceful protesters wish to convey is lost. With the loss of their message, goes the loss of their movement.

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Anders Corr

Author

Anders Corr has a bachelor's/master's in political science from Yale University (2001) and a doctorate in government from Harvard University (2008). He is a principal at Corr Analytics Inc., publisher of the Journal of Political Risk, and has conducted extensive research in North America, Europe, and Asia. His latest books are "The Concentration of Power: Institutionalization, Hierarchy, and Hegemony" (2021) and "Great Powers, Grand Strategies: the New Game in the South China Sea" (2018).



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