

In speech on floor of US Senate

Democratic Majority Leader Schumer libels anti-genocide student protesters as “aiders and abettors” of antisemitism

Jacob Crosse

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Speaking from the floor of the US Senate Wednesday morning, Democratic Majority Leader Charles Schumer (New York) delivered a 40-minute warmongering tirade accusing young people and workers protesting the genocide in Gaza of “aiding and abetting” antisemites.

“Antisemites are taking advantage of the pro-Palestinian movement to espouse hatred and bigotry towards Jewish people,” Schumer asserted, without providing evidence to back up the claim. “[W]e see so many of our friends and fellow citizens, particularly young people who yearn for justice, unknowingly aiding and abetting their cause.”

After accusing students on college campuses and in high schools in the United States of being useful idiots for fascists and antisemites because they object to genocide, collective punishment and ethnic cleansing directed against the Palestinian people, Schumer lamented that following the armed incursion of Hamas on October 7, “some of our fellow citizens” justified a “brutal terrorist attack” because of “the actions of the Israeli government.”

Schumer neglected to mention the attacks by the far-right Netanyahu government against the Palestinian people prior to October 7 this year. He said nothing about the seizure of Palestinian lands by Zionist-fascist settlers, military raids in the occupied West Bank or calls by Jewish supremacist legislators to “subdue” Palestinians in Gaza “once and for all.”

Schumer was similarly silent on “actions” taken by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) since October 7:

- Saturation bombing and ground attacks on hospitals,

mosques and schools that have killed an estimated 20,000 Palestinians, most children and women. According to figures from Iraq Body Count, more Palestinian civilians have been killed in less than two months in Gaza than during every year of the American occupation of Iraq, except 2006 (29,526), 2007 (26,112) and 2014 (20,218).

- The killing of “at least 57 journalists” as of November 29, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). This compares to 10 journalist fatalities recorded by the organization in the 21 months since the Russian incursion into Ukraine.

Schumer’s speech, billed as an “address on antisemitism,” was an incitement to more intense repression directed against anti-war protests on college campuses and in high schools.

While Schumer repeatedly smeared students protesting the Israeli military campaign and the apartheid policies of Israel as promoters of antisemitism, he never criticized his “Republican colleagues,” many of whom regularly trade in antisemitic conspiracy theories and dog whistles, from tirades against the “globalist” George Soros to promotion of the “Great Replacement Theory.”

Schumer’s speech was delivered less than 24 hours after virtually every member of the House of Representatives, Democratic and Republican, voted in favor of House Resolution 888. The measure, introduced by Republican Rep. Michael Lawler (New York) is titled: “Reaffirming the State of Israel’s right to exist.”

The resolution states that “the Jewish people are

native to the Land of Israel.” It asserts that denying Israel, “the only Jewish state,” the “right to exist” is a “form of antisemitism.” It proclaims that the House of Representatives “rejects calls for ... the elimination of the only Jewish State.”

Several Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) members and self-declared “progressive” Democrats voted in favor of the measure, which equates the Jewish religion with the Zionist state, including Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (New York), Ilhan Omar (Minnesota), Greg Casar (Texas) and Ayanna Pressley (Massachusetts).

Michigan Rep. Rashida Tlaib, the only Palestinian member of Congress, who was censured earlier this month for initially failing to condemn the October 7 raid by Hamas and for using the phrase “from the river to the sea,” could not summon the courage or principle to vote “no,” and instead voted “present.” The only representative to vote against H. Res. 888 was far-right Kentucky Republican Thomas Massie, who nevertheless said he agreed with “the title ... and much of the language.”

In his speech Wednesday, Schumer attacked protesters for using the phrase “colonizers” to describe illegal Zionist settlers. He also attacked the phrases “glory to the martyrs” and “from the river to the sea,” falsely characterizing the latter as a “violently antisemitic message” and “racist dog whistle.”

Schumer went on to defend his appearance at the “March for Israel” pro-genocide rally held in Washington D.C. earlier this month, saying that labeling it a “hate rally” was “antisemitism.”

Speakers at the pro-Israel rally included Pastor John Hagee, a virulent antisemite who previously said Hitler was sent by God to drive the Jews into Palestine, and the fascistic evangelical Christian speaker of the house, Mike Johnson.

As the WSWS noted in a Perspective statement on the rally, “[T]he most popular chant at the rally, ‘No Ceasefire! No Ceasefire!’ would have been more accurately rendered as ‘Genocide, genocide, more genocide!’”

Schumer concluded his speech by directly attacking students at Hillcrest High School in Jamaica, Queens, New York, roughly 30 percent of whom identify as Muslim. On November 20, hundreds of students protested at the school after it came to light that one of

the teachers not only attended the pro-genocide rally in Washington, but provocatively updated her social media profile photo, inserting a photo of herself at the D.C. event with a sign reading, “I Stand with Israel.”

Schumer accused the students of running “rampant in the hallways,” and forcing the teacher to “hide in a locked office for hours,” something Hillcrest High School Chancellor David C. Banks told the *New York Times* never happened.

Schumer boasted that he had invited the teacher to witness his speech from the Senate gallery, and characterized the student protest as “antisemitism, pure and simple.”

Schumer’s speech came one day after it was revealed that the US Department of Education was expanding its “investigation” into alleged antisemitism at high schools and colleges to include Harvard University and the New York City Department of Education.



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