

The **FIVE MYTHS** About Israel Perpetrated by the Pro-Hamas Left By Robert Spencer



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MYTH #1: Israel Is Occupying Palestinian Land

No, Israel is not occupying Palestinian land. Most supporters of the Palestinian cause likely assume that there was a previous Palestinian state that the Israelis occupied and destroyed, but in reality, there has never been a Palestinian state of any kind, ever, at any point in history. There has been a region known as "Palestine" since 134 AD, when the Romans applied that name to the land that had previously been known as Judea, that is, land of the Jews. But "Palestine" was akin to "Staten Island" — it was only the name of a region, never of a people or a nation.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Ottoman Empire had sovereignty over the territory that is now Israel and the supposedly occupied land as well. The Ottoman Empire was, however, known by this time as "The Sick Man of Europe." In the early 1920s, just before the empire fell altogether, it conceded control of Palestine and the land that came to be known as Transjordan and now as Jordan to the League of Nations. On July 24, 1922, the League granted administrative control over these territories to Britain with specific instructions to create a "national home for the Jewish people."

Britain immediately turned over

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This flag of Palestine (third row down), found in the above 1939 edition of the French encyclopedia,

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This flag of Palestine (third row down), found in the above 1939 edition of the French encyclopedia, Nouveau Petit Larrousse Illustré, shows that it was recognized as a Jewish entity even then.¹

77% of the Mandate to the Arabs to create Jordan but remained generally committed to establishing a Jewish

FRONT COVER IMAGES: (Top) Rockets are fired by Hamas from Gaza City towards Israel on October. 7, 2023. Photo is by Said Khatib/AFP/Getty Images. (Bottom) Supporters of Palestine gather at Harvard University to show their support for Palestinians in Gaza at a rally in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on October 14, 2023. Photo is by Joseph Prezioso/AFP/Getty Images.



national home in the remainder. This was known as the Mandate for Palestine. Leftists sometimes. point to Mandate for Palestine as the Palestinian state that supposedly predated Israel, but this claim relies on the ignorance of the fact that this British territory had been explicitly set aside for Jewish settlement; nine years before the founding of the modern state of Israel, a 1939 flag of "Palestine" sports a star of David.1

When the State of Israel was founded in 1948, it immediately had to fight a war for its survival against the surrounding Arab nations that had vowed to destroy it. Then there was finally an occupation — in fact, two: Egypt occupied Gaza and Jordan occupied Judea and Samaria (which it renamed the West Bank). "In the early 1920s, just before the [Ottoman Empire] fell altogether, it conceded control of Palestine and the land that came to be known as Transjordan and now as Jordan to the League of Nations. On July 24, 1922, the League granted administrative control over these territories to Britain with specific instructions to create a 'national home for the Jewish people."

Israel won back those territories in the Six-Day War of 1967, but that was actually ending an occupation, not starting one: the only international law governing sovereignty over those territories stipulated that they were to be part of a national home for the Jewish people.

So from whom was the land stolen? Not from the Ottomans, who had ceded it to the League of Nations. Not from the League of Nations, which had granted administrative powers over it to the British. Not from the British, who only had it in order to help create a Jewish state there. And not from the Palestinians, who didn't even exist until the 1960s.

¹ Robert Spencer, "The flag of Palestine, 1939," Jihad Watch, November 15, 2014.

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MYTH #2: "Palestinians" Are a People

Ever since 134 AD, when the Romans renamed Judea, "the land of the Jews," Palestine, after the name of their ancient Biblical enemies, the Philistines, Palestine had been the name of a region. But it was never the name of a nation or a distinct people. The "Palestinian people" were a propaganda invention.

In the 1960s, in order to counter the image of the tiny Jewish state standing virtually alone against the massive Muslim Arab nations surrounding it, the KGB (the Soviet Committee for State Security) invented



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the "Palestinians," an even smaller people who were, the propaganda insisted, oppressed by a powerful and ruthless Israel.² The French historians Guy Millière and David Horowitz, authors of the book *Comment le peuple palestinien fut inventé* (How the Palestinian People Were Invented), explain that the Palestinians were invented in order to "transform a population into a weapon of mass destruction against Israel and the Jewish people, to demonize Israel, and to give totalitarianism and anti-Semitism renewed means of action."³

A nation and a people need a distinct identity, and so one was constructed for the Palestinians. For a national flag, the new Palestinians appropriated the banner of the ill-fated Arab Federation of Iraq and Jordan, a short-lived 1958 union between those two nations. The new nationality's founding father was Yasser Arafat, who was even less of a Palestinian than his people. According to Ion Mihai Pacepa, who had served as acting chief of Cold War–era

² Jamie Glazov, "From Russia With Terror," FrontPageMagazine.com, March 31, 2004.

³ Jean Patrick Grumberg, "When Was the 'Palestinian People' Created? Google Has the Answer." Gatestone Institute, November 20, 2017.



Communist Romania's spy service, Arafat was one of the multitudes of the indigenous people of Palestine who was actually from somewhere else: "the KGB destroyed the official records of Arafat's birth in Cairo, and replaced them with fictitious documents saying that he had been born in Jerusalem and was therefore a Palestinian by birth."4

In the early days of the existence of the Palestinians. the fact of their nonexistence in history was much more widely known than it is today. In 1969, Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir stated that "there was no such thing as Palestinians.... It was not as though there was a Palestinian people in Palestine considering itself as a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and

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took their country away from them. They did not exist." In fact, she noted, an "independent Palestinian people with a Palestinian State" had never existed.6

The Arab Muslims of Palestine knew this as well. Syrian President Hafez Assad once told Yasser Arafat: "You do not represent Palestine as much as we do. Never forget this one point: There is no such thing as a Palestinian people, there is no Palestinian entity, there is only Syria. You are an integral part of the Syrian people, Palestine is an integral part of Syria. Therefore it is we, the Syrian authorities, who are the true representatives of the Palestinian people."

⁴ Ion Mihai Pacepa, "The KGB's Man," The Wall Street Journal, September 22, 2003.

⁵ Golda Meir, "Who Can Blame Israel?," Sunday Times, June 15, 1969.

^{7 &}quot;Palestinians: The Invented People."

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While the Specifics Have Varied, Arab Leaders Have Agreed That Palestine Is Either Part of Other Arab Nations or Part of the Larger Arab World as a Whole



Syrian President Hafez Assad (above) once told Yasser Arafat: "You do not represent Palestine as much as we do. Never forget this one point: There is no such thing as a Palestinian people, there is no Palestinian entity, there is only Syria. You are an integral part of the Syrian people, Palestine is an integral part of Syria. Therefore it is we, the Syrian authorities, who are the true representatives of the Palestinian people." 7



Prime Minister of Jordan Abdul Hamid Sharif (above) said in 1980: "The Palestinians and Jordanians do not belong to different nationalities. They hold the same Jordanian passports, are Arabs and have the same Jordanian culture."



PL.O. Chairman Yasser Arafat (above) admitted in 1993: "The question of borders doesn't interest us.... From the Arab standpoint, we mustn't talk about borders. Palestine is nothing but a drop in an enormous ocean. Our nation is the Arabic nation that stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea and beyond it.... The P.L.O. is fighting Israel in the name of Pan-Arabism. What you call 'Jordan' is nothing more than Palestine." ¹¹

In a 1977 interview with the Dutch newspaper *Trouw*, PLO executive committee member Zahir Muhsein likewise acknowledged that the Palestinian people were a propaganda invention:

The Palestinian people does not exist. The creation of a Palestinian state is only a means for continuing our struggle against the state of Israel for our Arab unity. In reality today there is no difference between Jordanians, Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese. Only for political and tactical reasons do we speak today about the existence of a Palestinian people, since Arab national interests demand that we posit the existence of a distinct "Palestinian people" to oppose Zionism.



For tactical reasons, Jordan, which is a sovereign state with defined borders, cannot raise claims to Haifa and Jaffa, while as a Palestinian, I can undoubtedly demand Haifa, Jaffa, Beer-Sheva and Jerusalem. However, the moment we reclaim our right to all of Palestine, we will not wait even a minute to unite Palestine and Jordan.8

Abdul Hamid Sharif, the Prime Minister of Jordan, would have agreed. He said in 1980: "The Palestinians and Jordanians do not belong to different nationalities. They hold the same Jordanian passports, are Arabs and have the same Jordanian culture."9



King Hussein of Jordan put it most succinctly of all in 1981: "The truth is that Jordan is Palestine and Palestine is Jordan."10

Even Yasser Arafat himself admitted this, saying in 1993: "The question of borders doesn't interest us.... From the Arab standpoint, we mustn't talk about borders. Palestine is nothing but a drop in an enormous ocean. Our

⁸ James Dorsey, "Wij zijn alleen Palestijn om politieke redden," *Trouw*, March 31, 1977. https://brabosh.com/2016/02/18/pqpct-bbo/

^{9 &}quot;Palestinians: The Invented People."

¹⁰ Ibid.



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— ZAHIR MUHSEIN P.L.O. Executive Committee Member in 1977

nation is the Arabic nation that stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea and beyond it.... The P.L.O. is fighting Israel in the name of Pan-Arabism. What you call 'Jordan' is nothing more than Palestine."¹¹

This ploy has worked beautifully. The idea that Israel is occupying Palestinian land was furthered in the 1990s by the Oslo Accords, to which Israel unwisely acceded, and in which it agreed to work toward the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, which would only become a new base for more jihad attacks against a diminished Jewish state. But a Palestinian state, if it is ever created, would be the first-ever such entity in the history of the world.

11 Ibid.



MYTH #3: Israel Is Really an "Apartheid State"

As pro-Palestinian demonstrations take place on campuses all across the nation, the idea is persistent and pervasive: yes, the Hamas attacks on Oct. 7 were terrible, but Israel had it coming because it is an oppressive apartheid state. The "apartheid" word gets thrown around quite a lot in connection with Israel, yet like so many other charges leveled at the Jewish state, there is nothing to it.

The term "apartheid" comes from South Africa, where it referred to a system of institutionalized racial segregation and discrimination that was in place from 1948 to 1991. The word itself means "separateness," and South Africa instituted numerous laws to keep the races apart in schools, workplaces, and areas where the public gathered, such as beaches.

There is absolutely nothing like this in Israel. As political analyst Hugh Fitzgerald has explained: "In Israel, Arabs sit on the Supreme Court, serve in the Knesset, go abroad as ambassadors. The chairman of Israel's largest bank, Bank Leumi, is an Arab. Jews and Arabs work in the same factories and offices,

Unlike in South Africa During the Apartheid Years, There Is No Racial Segregation or Discrimination in Israel



(Above) A Somali Israeli soldier serves in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) alongside white Israeli soldiers. The media watchdog HonestReporting points out that "the legal, state-sanctioned discrimination that is the definition of apartheid is not only absent from Israel, it is furiously combatted by its laws and independent judiciary. Israel's basic laws serve as legal safeguards, providing protection of life, body, and dignity in a democratic state with equal rights for all, including ethnic minorities." 13

"I was in Israel, my brother. In Israel, you won't find the same divisions between Jews and non-Jews that we used to witness during apartheid. There are no segregated buses for different ethnic groups, like Jews and Arabs. In Israel, everyone boards the same bus, travels wherever they need to, and disembarks as they wish. There is no apartheid in Israel, not even within their schools." ¹⁴

— MOSIUOA LEKOTA Former Anti-Apartheid Activist from South Africa play on the same sports teams and in the same orchestras, act in the same films, are treated in the same hospitals by both Jewish and Arab medical personnel, attend the same classes in the same universities. Jews and Arabs own restaurants and start high-tech businesses together. The only difference in their treatment is that Jews must, while Arabs may, serve in the military." 12

There are no legal restrictions upon Arabs in Israel. The media watchdog HonestReporting points out that "the legal, statesanctioned discrimination that is the definition of apartheid is not only absent from Israel, it is furiously combatted by its laws and independent judiciary. Israel's basic laws serve as legal safeguards, providing protection of life, body, and dignity in a democratic state with equal rights for all, including ethnic minorities." ¹³

In September 2023, Mosiuoa Lekota, who is an actual former antiapartheid activist from South Africa, said: "I was in Israel, my brother. In Israel, you won't find the same divisions between Jews and non-Jews that we used to witness during apartheid. There are no segregated buses for different ethnic groups, like Jews and Arabs. In Israel, everyone boards the same bus,

¹² Hugh Fitzgerald, "Marc Lamont Hill Appointed 'Presidential Professor' At CUNY, No One Objects," *Jihad Watch*, August 28, 2023.

¹³ Gidon Ben-Zvi, "The 'Apartheid' Myth: The Improper Use of False and Misleading Claims Regarding Israel, HonestReporting, March 9, 2023.



travels wherever they need to, and disembarks as they wish. There is no apartheid in Israel, not even within their schools."14

Why, then, has the "apartheid" smear become so common among haters of Israel? Because it plays on Western traumas about racism and serves as a shorthand way to demonize the Jewish state without having to bother with actual evidence. The primary evidence that those who claim Israel implements apartheid policies bring forth when they offer any evidence at all is that Israel has built fences between Israel proper and the areas under the Palestinian Authority, and Palestinians who work in Israel have to pass through checkpoints, some of which involve long lines, to get to and from work.

These measures are in place, however, not because of racism on Israel's part but because so many Palestinians have victimized Israel in jihad attacks. The leftists who denounce Israel for being an apartheid state would see it rendered defenseless against those who have repeatedly vowed to destroy it. That's likely the whole idea.

MYTH #4: Palestinian Leaders Are Willing to Negotiate in Good Faith

There have been numerous attempts to negotiate peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians. All have failed. This is not because none adequately addressed the concerns of both sides. The Israelis were ready to accept them all, but the Palestinians rejected them all, including offers to establish a Palestinian state.

On July 11, 2000 came the most generous offer of all. At a Camp David Summit with Arafat and U.S. President Bill Clinton, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak offered Arafat almost everything that he said he had always wanted: a full-fledged independent Palestinian state in Gaza and 92 percent of the West Bank, plus Palestinian sovereignty in East Jerusalem. Clinton offered Arafat a similar deal.

¹⁴ Zvika Klein, "Israel is not an apartheid state, former South African defense minister says," Jerusalem Post, September 24, 2023.

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""Jihad," Arabic for "struggle," in Islamic theology primarily means warfare against unbelievers in order to establish the supremacy of the Muslims over them, and the hegemony of Islamic law. This is a religious imperative, based on the Qur'an's command to fight against the People of the Book and ensure that they "feel themselves subdued" (9:29). It makes it impossible for Muslims to accept a Jewish state in which Muslims live, for then the People of the Book are not living in submission to the Muslims as they should...

Arafat, however, refused the deal. A chagrined Clinton said later: "The true story of Camp David was that for the first time in the history of the conflict the American president put on the table a proposal...very close to the Palestinian demands, and Arafat refused even to accept it as a basis for negotiations, walked out of the room, and deliberately turned to terrorism. That's the real story—all the rest is gossip." 15

The negotiations always fail because of a simple statement in the Islamic holy book, the Qur'an: "Drive them out from where they drove you out" (2:191). Palestinians routinely claim (falsely, as they were actually told to leave by the Arab League) that they were driven from their land by the Jews when Israel declared independence on May 14, 1948. Accordingly, a Palestinian Muslim is likely to believe that driving out the Israelis from where the Muslims themselves were driven out is a divine command that must be obeyed without question.

Destroying Israel is, in light of this, a religious imperative, even an

¹⁵ Jeremy Pressman, "Visions in Collision: What Happened at Camp David and Taba?," International Security, vol. 28, no. 2, Fall 2003, p. 8.



U.S. President Bill Clinton (center), Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak (left), and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat (right) walk on the grounds of Camp David, Maryland, at the start of the Middle East Peace Summit on July 11, 2000. Arafat ultimately refused the deal, and a chagrined Clinton said later: "The true story of Camp David was that for the first time in the history of the conflict the American president put on the table a proposal... very close to the Palestinian demands, and Arafat refused even to accept it as a basis for negotiations, walked out of the room, and deliberately turned to terrorism. That's the real story—all the rest is gossip." 15

act of worship. In 2012, Hamas published a music video that included a lyric apparently inspired by the "drive them out from where they drove you out" command and the Hadith calling on Muslims to kill Jews in order to hasten the Last Day: "Killing Jews is worship that draws us close to Allah."16

A Muslim who believes that Allah has commanded him to drive out the Jews from where he was driven out, and that this command is no more negotiable or susceptible to being questioned than the Ten Commandments is by a Jew or Christian, is not likely to believe that negotiations will bring about a lasting agreement allowing Israelis and Palestinians live side by side in peace.

¹⁶ Itamar Marcus and Nan Jacques Zilberdik, "Hamas: Killing Jews is worship of Allah," Palestinian Media Watch, November 27, 2012.



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Rule of Muslims by infidels, especially those whose enmity toward the Muslims is the strongest (Qur'an 5:82) is unacceptable under any circumstances and can never be tolerated.

MYTH #5: It is a Political War Not a Religious War

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is, in short, what no policymaker, no negotiator, no one who has ever been involved with the Middle East "peace process" has ever admitted it to be: a religious war.

These policymakers and diplomats could have known better, however, if they had simply listened to the people who were prolonging that war. They have never made their intentions secret. The moderator at a 2012 event commemorating the forty-seventh anniversary of the founding of Fatah, the dominant group within the Palestine Liberation Organization, declared: "Our war with the descendants of the apes and pigs [that is, Jews] is a war of religion and faith." ¹⁷

To be sure, other Palestinian leaders on numerous occasions have been actively deceptive about how they see the conflict. One brazen example of this deception came from Mahmoud al-Habbash, a close adviser to Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian Authority's supreme sharia judge, when he stated flatly on September 24, 2018, on official Palestinian Authority television: "Our people's conflict with

¹⁷ Itamar Marcus and Nan Jacques Zilberdik, "PA Mufti: Muslims' destiny is to kill Jews," Palestinian Media Watch, January 15, 2012.



the occupation is a political conflict and not religious, as Israel is trying to market it to the world "18

Yet the same al-Habbash emphasized on October 23, 2015, also on official Palestinian Authority television, that "this is a conflict between two entities, good and evil, between two projects: Allah's project versus Satan's project, a project connected to Allah, which is his will—true and good—and a project connected to oppression and Satanism, to Satanism and animosity, occupation and barbarism."19

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Yet on May 4, 2018, al-Habbash insisted on Quranic Horizons, a program on official Palestinian Authority television, that the conflict was all about occupation, not about anti-Semitism: "We were never supporters of hatred, and were not enemies of peace. We did not exploit anyone, did not attack anyone, and did not deny anyone's right...and here—what we have said and are saying and will continue to say—we do not resist the occupation, we do not resist the occupiers because they are Jewish. No, we resist occupiers whatever their religion may be. You know, if the occupation was Muslim Arab we would resist. What more do you want? We are not against the Jewish religion."20

However, while Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) were occupied by Jordan and the Gaza Strip by Egypt from 1948 to 1967, there was no protest among the Palestinian Arabs against the "occupation," and there were no calls for a Palestinian state including those areas. Palestinian spokesmen

¹⁸ Itamar Marcus and Nan Jacques Zilberdik, "Abbas' advisor: Islam's religious war to destroy Israel has started," Palestinian Media Watch, October 10, 2018.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.



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have again and again made it clear that the Qur'an and Islam in general, not quarrels over various patches of land or occupation or settlements, are what make the Israeli-Palestinian conflict intractable. And contrary to al-Habbash's insistence, they have made it abundantly clear that one of their chief objections to Israel is that it is governed by, and full of, Jews.

A Qatari sheikh, Muhammad Al-Muraikhi, stated this plainly on Qatar TV on January 9, 2009. "We do not treat the Jews as our enemies just because they occupied Palestine," he explained, "or because they occupied a precious part of our Arab and Islamic world. We will treat the Jews as our enemies even if they return Palestine to

us, because they are infidels. They rejected Allah and His messengers."21

An Egyptian imam, Muhammad Hussein Ya'qoub, declared eight days later in a televised sermon that Muslim hatred of Jews had nothing to do with Israel and everything to do with the Qur'an:

If the Jews left Palestine to us, would we start loving them? Of course not. We will never love them. Absolutely not. The Jews are infidels—not because I say so, and not because they are killing Muslims, but because Allah said: "The Jews say that Uzair is the son of Allah, and the Christians say that Christ is the son of Allah. These are the words from their mouths. They imitate the sayings of the disbelievers before.

^{21 &}quot;Qatari Cleric Sheik Muhammad Al-Muraikhi: The Jews Are Our Enemies Because They Are Infidels, Not Because They Occupied Palestine," MEMRI, January 9, 2009.



May Allah fight them. How deluded they are." [Qur'an 9:30] It is Allah who said that they are infidels.

Your belief regarding the Jews should be, first, that they are infidels, and second, that they are enemies. They are enemies not because they occupied Palestine. They would have been enemies even if they did not occupy a thing. Allah said: "You shall find the strongest men in enmity to the believers (Muslims) to be the Jews and the polytheists." [Our'an 5:82]²²

Western analysts routinely ignore these aspects of the conflict, yet among the Palestinians they are foremost.



An Egyptian imam, Muhammad Hussein Ya'qoub, declared on January 17, 2009, in a televised sermon that Muslim hatred of Jews had nothing to do with Israel but was based on their holybook, the Qur'an: "Your belief regarding the Jews should be, first, that they are infidels, and second, that they are enemies. They are enemies not because they occupied Palestine. They would have been enemies even if they did not occupy a thing. Allah said: "You shall find the strongest men in enmity to the believers (Muslims) to be the Jews and the polytheists." [Qur'an 5:82] 22

^{22 &}quot;Egyptian Cleric Muhammad Hussein Ya'qoub: The Jews Are the Enemies of Muslims Regardless of the Occupation of Palestine," MEMRI, January 17, 2009.

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About Robert Spencer

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Robert Spencer is a frequent speaker for Young America's Foundation, on campus and at conferences.

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Young America's Foundation is committed to ensuring that increasing numbers of young Americans understand and are inspired by the ideas of individual freedom, a strong national defense, free enterprise, and traditional values.

As the principal outreach organization of the Conservative Movement, the Foundation introduces thousands of American youth to these principles. We accomplish our mission by providing essential conferences, seminars, educational materials, internships, and speakers to young people across the country.

Rancho del Cielo

Young America's Foundation stepped forward to save President Reagan's Western White House, Rancho del Cielo, in the spring of 1998 to preserve it as a lasting monument to Ronald Reagan and pass on his ideas to future generations. President Reagan committed himself to reaching young people with his ideas—a goal that is also central to the Foundation's mission.



National Journalism Center

For more than 40 years, the National Journalism Center has trained aspiring journalists in the values of balanced, responsible, and accurate reporting. Weekly seminars and on-the-job experience provide participants with the tools to become a leader in combating bias in the mainstream media.

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In 2011, Young America's Foundation unified with Young Americans for Freedom, which serves as the Foundation's chapter affiliate on college and high school campuses across the country. Founded by William F. Buckley, Jr., and a group of young conservatives in 1960 at his home in Sharon, Connecticut, Young Americans for Freedom today promotes to youth the principles of limited government, individual freedom, free enterprise, a strong national defense, and traditional values, as outlined in the Sharon Statement. The chapters accomplish this by participating in a wide range of campus initiatives, such as the 9/11: Never Forget Project, Freedom Week, the GPA Redistribution Contest, and others; and by hosting prominent conservative speakers.

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To learn more about Young America's Foundation, please visit YAF.org or contact Young America's Foundation at 1-800-USA-1776.



"...There has
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of any kind,
ever, at any point
in history."

— ROBERT SPENCER



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