

# When that Other Ball Drops

The ball wasn't alone in the sky this year. It had plenty of company with hovering drones, scanning the masses, searching for revelers drunk on antisemitism.

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Times Square New Year's Eve Ball 2024 (Photo by Cindy Ord/Getty Images)

It was in 1908 when New York City began the annual tradition of ushering in the New Year with the celebratory dropping of the ball in Times Square. It is estimated that over one billion people from around the world count down along with the hundreds of thousands standing below the ball — braving all that cold and claustrophobia.

This year another element was added: The possibility of a terrorist attack kicking off 2024 in grand Islamist style.

Not a fanciful fear, at all. In 2023, a Muslim brandishing a machete and screaming “jihad!” attacked three police officers: And that was *without* a war in Gaza that has sparked 1,000 protests in New York City since the Oct. 7 massacre in Israel.

Indeed, from the earliest days after such brazen barbarism, New Yorkers witnessed protests that were far from peaceful — and rooting for the terrorists! There were arrests at various iconic New York landmarks: The Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade; the lighting of the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center; the disruption of pre-Christmas shopping in Midtown; and obstructing the busiest days of travel at Kennedy International Airport and Grand Central Terminal.

The Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges were blocked and became impassable. Even religious observances went un-spared: Demonstrators marched in front of churches chanting, “No Christmas as Usual!” Others coopted the story of Jesus, a Jew, and converted him into a Palestinian — violating strictly enforced rules against cultural misappropriation, when committed against a person of color.

The afternoon before New Year’s Eve, a pro-Hamas rally took place at Columbus Circle in Manhattan called, “Shut it Down! For Palestine.” A smoke bomb went off inside the flagship Macy’s in Herald Square.

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This year, all eyes were not on the ball. Savvy New Yorkers — and anxious Jews — were keeping an eye out for Muslims wearing keffiyeh masks. Such threatening spectacles have been all too common as of late — whether on college campuses or in cities where pro-Hamas protests assailed the streets, ripping down posters of kidnapped Israeli infants, and defacing synagogues, Jewish schools, and Jewish-owned businesses.

Given the state of chaos that seems to be everywhere — most notably in blue states — everyone is nervously waiting for that other ball to drop.

We are living through a very dangerous era of generalized, normalized lawlessness. We are living through a very dangerous era of generalized, normalized lawlessness. The only person being prosecuted anymore, seemingly, is Donald Trump. If not for him, we could seriously defund many of the District and United States Attorneys' offices — at least in New York, Detroit, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Atlanta, and San Francisco.

The police are, to some extent, properly making arrests. But with the abolishment of bail and nearly all crimes lessened to misdemeanors, criminals aren't required to spend even a night in jail. Instead, they are released—joyfully rejoining the ranks of repeat offenders.

But even those arrests are becoming rare. Anti-Israel protestors in New York are immunizing themselves from police interference by invoking a settlement agreement, reached this past September, emanating from the Black Lives Matter mayhem in which the police were accused of blocking crowd movement.

Anarchy is the new ethic. Violent actions are justified as “resistance.” Falling into the “oppressor” camp opens up a wide variety of allowances — especially if you’re Jewish. Complaining about violence is dismissed as the pouting of “white privilege.” Calls for enforcing the law — immigration or criminal — are categorically “racist.”

Whether it is a southern border that exists only on maps, with its asylum-seeking bingo, the smash-and-grab looting and menace of vandals, or the fist-pumping marches to the tune of “Defund the Police” or “From the River to the Sea,” our laws don’t seem to apply anymore. Mobs form easily and act recklessly like shoppers on a limitless spending spree.

But we’re not permitted to have a national conversation on just how bad things have gotten because doing so risks the social ostracism of stepping in a woke minefield.

Israel’s war in Gaza is especially fraught with the peril of identity politics. Support for Hamas has revealed a scourge of antisemitism not seen since the 1930s.

And not unlike the German universities that idealized Hitler, today’s brand of antisemitism is equally respectable. Ivy League propogandists have infected intellectual life. Jew-hatred will soon be its own academic major. Calling for Jewish genocide will come with extra credit; screaming “intifada!” into the faces of Jewish students may not be magnanimous, but it just might earn magna at graduation.

The more times “Gas the Jews!” is repeated, the capacity for shock disappears, and once dormant antisemitic impulses begin to feel invincible.

As overt antisemitism becomes more unapologetically mainstream, the faces behind those keffiyeh masks will become revealed. And it will become clear that the most strident protestors are young Muslims. Pink-haired progressives don't bother with headscarves and have nothing to hide other than unfinished dissertations.

The Arab Street is another matter, however. It migrated to Europe and glorified Sharia in the great western cities. Now Gaza provided a detour to America. The first generation of Muslim immigrants simply wanted to belong and become citizens. Their children have more in common with their co-religionists in Ramallah, Damascus, and Kabul.

The Pew Research Center reports that of the 3.5 million Muslims in the United States, three-quarters are immigrants or children of immigrants — 35% between the ages 18-29. It is this demographic that is mostly responsible for shutting down our streets with anti-Israel animus.

Muslim and progressive bedfellows deserve one another. Muslims may not be woke on homosexuality, transgender rights, or even race. But they are all-in when it comes to hating Jews. The perfect alignment of an ancient jealousy with a shared disgust of white colonialists, Jews, and infidels. Black Lives Matter emboldened a new generation of Muslims to believe that Jewish Lives Don't Matter.

The immigration crisis plays into this, too. Antisemitic reinforcements may be on the way, if they are not already here.

Latin Americans are no longer the only ones breaching nonexistent borders. Those from the Middle East have undertaken longer, more inscrutable journeys. Some may be on “no-fly lists,” yet inexcusably entering America with the ease of paragliders.

The culture war is no longer just ideological, or discreet. It is resembling an actual war. If you're Jewish, combat fatigue has probably already set in. If you happen to live where streets have surrendered to an occupational army of woke overlords, Happy New Year, Good Luck, and send postcards of your city under siege.

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