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‘My Entire Life Story is Pro-Semitic’: Elon Musk Addresses Antisemitism Accusations With Jewish Leaders



by *Andrew Bernard* ✉



Elon Musk, chief executive officer of SpaceX and Tesla and owner of X/Twitter, gestures as he attends the Viva Technology conference dedicated to innovation and startups at the Porte de Versailles exhibition centre in Paris, France, June 16, 2023. Photo: REUTERS/Gonzalo Fuentes

Elon Musk, the billionaire owner of the X/Twitter social media platform, on Thursday struck back against charges that he has engaged in antisemitism and allowed antisemitic hate to flourish online.

“My entire life story is, in fact, pro-Semitic,” Musk said in a discussion with conservative political commentator Ben

Shapiro streamed on X. “I actually went to Hebrew preschool ... in South Africa when I was kid. Now, I don’t know if I’m genetically Jewish or what — maybe somewhere — but [I’m] aspirationally Jewish.”

Musk has drawn controversy in recent weeks after [he liked a post by an Irish neo-Nazi](#) who falsely accused the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), a Jewish civil rights group, of “financially blackmailing social media companies into removing free speech on their platform.” He replied to the tweet: “The ADL has tried very hard to strangle X/Twitter.”

Several accounts began tweeting the hash tag #BantheADL in a campaign to kick the group off X.

Musk has since [threatened to sue the ADL for defamation](#), claiming that “our US advertising revenue is still down 60%, primarily due to pressure on advertisers by ADL.”

The entrepreneur did not mention the ADL directly in Thursday’s talk but said he and his social media platform had come under pressure from what he described as left-wing activist groups.

“Our policy is to resist any attempts at censorship to the maximum degree allowed by law,” Musk said. “In the US, by far the biggest pressure comes from fairly far left activist groups, and they tend to act in coalitions. There’s a whole bunch of them ... What they’re trying to do there is impose left — often extremely far left — values on X and other platforms under the guise of ‘hate speech.’ But it is, in fact, a matter of politics, or really views that I think the general public would consider to be somewhere between far left and extreme left ... It’s really disturbing, frankly.”

In a statement to *The Algemeiner*, an ADL spokesperson noted that Israel and Jews are frequently targets of hateful antisemitic and anti-Zionist attacks on X.

“At the end of the day, the way to judge any conversations or policies is in whether they reduce the amount of antisemitic hate on the platform,” the spokesperson said.

The question of the extent to which antisemitic content has increased since Musk purchased X/Twitter last year has been a subject of contentious debate. Under the leadership of Musk, who has described himself as a “free speech absolutist,” X lifted bans on several previously suspended accounts.

Thursday’s discussion included comments from a range of Jewish leaders, including former Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, legal expert Alan Dershowitz, human rights activist and former Israeli politician Natan Sharansky, and Rabbis Menachem Margolin, Ari Lamm, Abraham Cooper, and Shmuley Boteach.

The event came days after [100 Jewish leaders signed an open letter](#) accusing Musk of engaging in antisemitism and promoting antisemites on his platform. Musk on Thursday claimed that antisemitism on X has declined under his watch.

“We’ve actually been tracking the hate speech views, antisemitic or otherwise, and they’ve gone down since the acquisition, objectively,” Musk said. “And we’ve had multiple third parties, unrelated to us, to do their own analysis with a full data dump and they’ve concluded the same thing.”

Musk also said that he would examine whether X might adopt the the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s working [definition of antisemitism](#), which has been embraced by dozens of governments and hundreds of civic institutions around the world. The billionaire also said he would tentatively agree to visit the infamous Nazi death

camp Auschwitz in Poland when he next goes to electric car maker Tesla's factory in Berlin.

Musk is also the CEO of Tesla.