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At Auschwitz, Musk says social media, free speech would have prevented extermination

On his first visit to Nazi death camp, owner of X dismisses allegations that his laissez-faire attitude is promoting antisemitism

By [CANAAN LIDOR](#) and [AGENCIES](#)

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Elon Musk carries his son X Æ A-Xii on his shoulders flanked by Ben Shapiro, right, Rabbi Menachem Margolin, second from left, and Gidon Lev at the Auschwitz-Birkenau museum in Poland on January 22, 2024. (Yoav Dudkevitch)

On his first visit to the Auschwitz Nazi death camp in Poland, billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk said that free speech would have prevented the murders that were perpetrated there.

Musk, the owner of the X social network formerly known as Twitter, spoke at a discussion panel in Krakow on Monday after he toured the camp along with Ben Shapiro, the conservative Jewish-American pundit, and Rabbi Menachem Margolin, an influential leader of European Jewry.

At Auschwitz, Musk, carrying his 3-year-old son X Æ A-Xii on his shoulders, toured the grounds with Shapiro, Margolin, and Holocaust survivor Gidon Lev. They lit a memorial candle, observed a moment of silence, and placed a wreath at the former death camp's so-called Wall of Death.

“If there had been social media, I think it would have been impossible to hide,” Musk said of the murders committed at Auschwitz. “If there’d been freedom of speech as well,” Musk told Shapiro about his visit. Musk also

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policies at X, despite calls for him to curb the alleged proliferation of antisemitism and other forms of perceived hate speech on his platform.

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Margolin, the director of the European Jewish Association, which invited Musk to Auschwitz for its annual Holocaust commemoration event, pushed Musk on this point during his introduction to the discussion with Shapiro.



Rabbi Menachem Margolin speaks at the annual European Jewish Association meeting held in Porto, Portugal on May 16, 2023 . (EJA)

“I remember you saying that AI [artificial intelligence] is potentially the most pressing risk to humans,” Margolin told Musk. “I must tell you that there is a clear and present danger of a different AI: antisemitic incitement.

SpaceX enterprise, in November retweeted a post on X that accused some Jews of promoting hatred of whites, which the author of the post equated with hatred of Jews in connection with the war in Gaza. Musk later apologized for repeating and endorsing the post, calling it a “dumb” action.

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Anti-Defamation League, which Musk said had tried to chase advertisers away from X following his \$44-billion purchase of the social media site in October 2022. The ADL denied this, but Musk has threatened to sue them. Musk has disputed that the volume of antisemitic speech on X surpasses that of other social media platforms that have more censorial policies in place.

“Legacy media are our direct competitors. They’re going to try to look at every angle to cancel X,” Musk said when asked by Shapiro why X has come under scrutiny. “Look at the incentives,” Musk told Shapiro, who has defended Musk on Shapiro’s The Daily Wire platform against allegations that X is encouraging antisemitism.



Elon Musk, carrying his son X Æ A-Xii on his shoulders, speaks with Rabbi Menachem Margolin at the Auschwitz-Birkenau museum in Poland on January 22, 2023. (Yoav Dudkevitch)

“I don’t think there should be gatekeeping function by a small number of individuals,” Musk also said at the discussion.

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Manuel Valls, and Matteo Renzi, an Italian senator and former prime minister of that country. The speakers reiterated their opposition to antisemitism and support for Israel and European Jewish communities.



This photograph taken on January 22, 2024 from Rafah, shows smoke billowing after an Israeli strike in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip. (AFP)

Valls was among the speakers who condemned the prosecution of Israel at the International Court of Justice in the Hague, initiated by South Africa. That country “weaponizes terms like genocide for an anti-Israel agenda,” Valls said.

Musk said he had been “naïve” when it came to antisemitism.

“The circles that I move, I see almost no antisemitism,” he said. “Two-thirds of my friends are Jewish. I’m Jewish by association, aspirationally Jewish. I never hear about it at dinner conversations; it’s an absurdity in my friend circles. But looking at the pro-Hamas rallies that have taken place at almost every city in the West, it’s blown my mind.”



US billionaire Elon Musk, left, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, center, take a tour of Kfar Aza, November 27, 2023. (Amos Ben Gershon/GPO)

Israel, most of them civilians, and abducted more than 250 others, among other war crimes and atrocities.

Israel in October launched a ground offensive into Gaza that has led to the death of more than 25,000 people, according to unverified statistics provided by the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza. The figures do not indicate how many of the dead are combatants. Israel says it has killed some 10,000 terrorists in the fighting.



Israeli soldiers overlook the Gaza Strip from a tank, as seen from southern Israel, January 19, 2024. (AP Photo/ Maya Alleruzzo)

The events in Israel and Gaza unleashed a wave of antisemitism in the West and beyond, online as well as on university campuses.

“All of the riots that were in the major cities and college campuses, I think, that was a shocking wakeup call to any sort of civilization or civil-minded person. Really quite a shock,” Musk said.



The discussion took place shortly before the 79th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp on January 27, a date that the United Nations designated to be International Holocaust Memorial Day.

One million European Jews died at the camp built by Nazi Germany in occupied Poland between 1940 and 1945, along with more than 100,000 non-Jews.

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