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December 13, 2022



When will American universities put a stop to skyrocketing attacks on students' Jewish identity?

Dear Friend of Israel, Friend of FLAME:

A shocking new report by the AMCHA Initiative reveals that threats to students' Jewish identity doubled in the 2021-2022 academic year.

Many radical professors, students and even some Jewish organizations are trying to rip Zionism from the fabric of Judaism, using cancelation, shame and blame as their weapons.

These “progressives” reject the globally accepted definition of antisemitism, which holds that attempts to demonize or delegitimize Israel are clear signs of hate against the Jewish people. The radicals' rejection of this definition is based on the falsehood that Zionism is *not* an integral value of Judaism—therefore their anti-Zionism does not constitute antisemitism.

But according to a Pew survey conducted last year, most Jews regard Israel as a fundamental part of their Jewish identity. Increasingly, however, if Jewish students express support for the Jewish state, they run the risk of being mocked, ostracized or punished by their peers and professors.

Worst of all, administrators and governing regents responsible for student safety and civil rights on campus have neglected or refused to clamp down on the tyranny of antisemitic radicals. Their failure to respond to such discrimination puts Jewish students—as well as academic freedom—at perilous risk.

The AMCHA Initiative's recent report, “A Looming Crisis for the American Jewish Community: Campus Antisemitism and the Assault on Jewish Identity,” reveals disturbing trends across university campuses nationwide. AMCHA cites these developments as among the most egregious:

- The lie that Israel is not a democracy
- The lie that Israel is an apartheid state

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YOU DESERVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH...

Democracy Thrives in Israel

A new report ranks the Jewish state as one of the world's strongest, most equitable democracies—despite baseless falsehoods about its oppression of Palestinians

While many accuse Israel of apartheid, genocide, and rights violations, they offer little convincing evidence. In the contrary, Israel has a superior record of civil liberties, elections, rule of law and equal opportunity at all levels of society, making it the world's 24th most successful democracy.

What are the facts?

Israel's national coalition government for its alleged treatment of Arab-Israeli citizens, as well as Palestinian Arabs living in surrounding occupied territories. In each country, a recent survey reported according to the Pew Research Center (2021) the 11th—the Economist Intelligence Unit—ranked Israel as one of the most thriving democracies in the world, scoring higher than the United States, Spain, Italy and some 19 other nations. The index ranks countries according to 15 criteria, covering each nation's performance according to its 1) electoral process and pluralism, 2) functioning of government, 3) political participation, 4) political culture and 5) civil liberties.

Israel's 2021 ranking shows consistent improvement in its democratic processes

compared with the first such report in 2006, when the Jewish state ranked only 47. In the current report, Israel was ranked for its inclusion of an Arab party in today's ruling government coalition.

No surprise, since Israel's robust democracy has a vibrant electoral tradition, stable governing institutions, high political participation among its citizens, a vigorous, even business political culture, and broad, equal civil liberties for all its citizens.

Unfortunately, even as Israeli democracy improved in the past year, the EIU noted that democracy globally usually deteriorates. This was due to the rise of "illiberalism," causing an unprecedented withdrawal of civil liberties, including a "high percentage of state power over large areas of public and personal life."

In contrast to Israel, some Middle Eastern regimes, the highest ranking of which was Tunisia, reaching only 75th place—and they are not as democratic, but are "hybrid regimes." The term of Palestine was ranked as an "authoritarian" regime in 198th place.

Like all countries in the index, Israel's performance in the EIU evaluation was based on the health and performance of democratic institutions among its citizens.

While critics often unfairly blame Israel for a lack of democratic freedoms in Israel and territories ("The West Bank") and Gaza, they ignore the fact that the Oslo Accords gave governance responsibilities of Palestinians in those territories directly to their respective counterparts—the Palestinian Authority and Hamas.

Unfortunately, neither of these Palestinian governments holds regular elections, supports basic civil liberties, nor freedom of speech, assembly or press.

Jewish values help guarantee Israel's democracy

State, too, that while the nation state law declares Hebrew to be the national language, this is not different than in the United States, in which English is the mother tongue. Nor does Israel's nation state law establish any official religion—unlike some seven European countries that declare state religions in their very constitutions.

In short, Israel can be a great role model of the Jewish people while still cherishing and improving one of the most ethically diverse and best democratic on earth. In fact, some would argue that it is precisely Jewish values of compassion and justice that best help and help guarantee Israeli robust democracy. No matter which disdains accusations Israeli citizens exploit the Jewish state's diversity to create one of the strongest and most successful democracies on earth, providing political freedom and economic opportunity cannot be the majority of the world's nations. Moreover, the suffering and plight of the Palestinians has led to a robust Israel and without which the result of authoritarian governance by its corrupt dictatorial regimes and their influence related to media press.

This message has been published and paid for by

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- Bullying and intimidation of Jewish students tripled. Attempts to disconnect Zionism from Judaism and from progressive causes nearly tripled.
- Promotion of anti-Zionist Jews as more authentic than Zionist Jews doubled.
- Calls to rid the campus of Zionism increased more than six-fold, and attempts to cancel Israel-related events, programs, classes, and trips increased nearly five-fold.
- Calls for Jewish students to reject Birthright or other Jewish identity trips increased nearly 20-fold.

In total, the AMCHA Initiative's report documented 254 attacks on Jewish identity on 63 campuses across the U.S. during the 2021-2022 academic year. This is in addition to skyrocketing attacks on Jews *off campus* in the past year.

Not surprisingly, the AMCHA report implicated pro-Palestinian groups, such as Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), as being responsible for targeting Jewish students. Indeed, the report found that anti-Zionist groups like SJP were the largest overall contributors to attacks on Jewish identity.

Despite their pattern of stoking antisemitic hate, to date, only a single chapter of SJP has been permanently shut down on a U.S. campus—at New York's private Fordham University. The ban was upheld in court.

AMCHA's report also noted the contribution of nominally Jewish anti-Zionist groups and individuals to the assault on Jewish identity. One such group is Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP).

In the report, AMCHA speculates that individuals and groups like JVP use their Jewishness "to legitimize the redefinition of Jewish identity and the denigration of Zionist Jews." This serves to justify the anti-Zionist attacks mounted by groups like SJP, and also helps deflect charges of antisemitism that such behavior logically provokes.

Bad enough that Jewish students are targeted for persecution by their peers, but even worse when university faculty support the persecution. No wonder, according to AMCHA, that universities with faculty who support the BDS movement were three to seven times more likely to have attacks on Jewish identity.

In fact, the AMCHA Initiative found that "twenty percent of threats to Jewish identity took place at events supported by academic faculty." In addition, "more than one-third of anti-Zionist challenges to well-established definitions of Zionism, Judaism and antisemitism took place in programs sponsored by academic departments."

Sadly, without legislative or judicial intervention, there's little hope universities will put a stop to attacks on Jewish identity if they're instigated by faculty.

While Jewish students with a strong attachment to Israel surely bear the brunt of

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anti-Zionist attacks, Jewish students with minimal connections to Judaism or Zionism suffer as well. Once these students witness the relentless assault on Jewish students and Jewish groups that support Zionism and Israel, they're surely less likely to pursue opportunities to express or explore their Jewish identity for fear of persecution.

Tragically, Jewish students who feel that their Jewish identity is under attack can seldom rely on their schools' harassment policies to protect them. These policies usually forbid harassment based on one's ethnicity or religion, but in many cases, university administrators do not recognize hostility toward Israel and its supporters to be a violation of school policy.

This approach by university administrators constitutes a clear double standard, especially since antisemitism includes the vilification of Israel and its supporters, according to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), whose definition of antisemitism is recognized worldwide—though not by most universities.

Sparkling a glimmer of hope, administrators of the Nevada state education system acted on their own recently to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism. The AMCHA report calls IHRA adoption a “critical tool” to ensure that “Jewish students are recognized and treated exactly as any other ‘protected class’ group under school harassment policies, even when the harassment is motivated by anti-Zionism and not classic antisemitism.”

While we cannot hope to eradicate ant-Zionist antisemitism on (or off) campus, two measures are needed to mitigate its effect on Jewish students.

First, all post-secondary institutions in the U.S. must adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism. This will give administrators added responsibility and moral standing to speak out and censure such racism on campus.

Second, schools have the moral obligation to end the double standard when it comes to attacks on Jews and their ethnic homeland. There must be one single standard on campus to judge objectionable behavior. It cannot simply be positions the political left disapproves of.

The obvious solution is to forbid—and harshly punish—*all physical harassment or speech disruption* of any member of the campus community, whether student, professor or visiting speaker.

Speech denigrating any identity group—such as LGBTQ or disabled people, Blacks, Zionists, women, Koreans, Republicans, Muslims or Jews—should be considered hateful. Speech denigrating any student strictly because of their identity is offensive.

Please express to friends, family, colleagues and elected representatives that 1) it's unjust to permit hate speech against Jews and the Jewish state on campus, while *banning* hate speech directed against other minorities; and 2) all harassment or disruption of free expression on campus should be forbidden and strictly enforced.

I hope you'll also take a minute, while you have this material front and center, to forward this message to friends, visit FLAME's lively [Facebook page](#) and review the P.S. immediately below. It describes FLAME's new *hasbarah* campaign—"Democracy Thrives in Israel"—which exposes false claims that Israel deprives Arab Israeli citizens and Palestinian Arabs of their rights.

Best regards,

James Sinkinson, President

Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)

P.S. Despite Israel's guarantee of civil liberties and equal treatment for all its citizens—including two million Arab Israelis—Israel is still falsely accused of being an apartheid state. Despite Israel and the Palestinians agreeing that the Palestinian Authority will administer its own civil affairs, including elections, Israel is accused of violating human rights because Palestinians can't vote in Israeli elections. I think you'll agree that truth is the only antidote to this lie. FLAME's new *hasbarah* message—called "[Democracy Thrives in Israel](#)" publicizes a new, independent "Democracy Index" in which Israel is named the world's 23rd most successful democracy—ahead of the United States, Italy, Spain and 139 other nations. This new editorial message also clarifies that Palestinians' repression is due overwhelmingly to their two ruling dictatorships. (Palestinians are ranked #109 in the Democracy Index—as "authoritarian.") I hope you'll review this convincing, fact-based editorial, which FLAME published nationwide in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *New York Post*, *Miami Herald*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Los Angeles Times* and *San Jose Mercury News*. This piece will also be sent to all members of Congress, Vice President Harris and President Biden. If you agree that this kind of public relations effort on Israel's behalf is critical, I urge you to support us. Remember: FLAME's powerful ability to influence public opinion—and U.S. support of Israel—comes from individuals like you, one by one. I hope you'll consider giving a [donation](#) now, as you're able—with \$500, \$250, \$100, or even \$18. (Remember, your donation in 2022 to FLAME is tax deductible.) To donate online, just go to [donate now](#). Now, more than ever, we need your support to ensure that the American people, the U.S. Congress and President Biden stay committed to fighting antisemitic, anti-Israel actions by individuals, politicians and commercial companies.

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