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5 Ways American Jews Can Help Israel—by Helping Ourselves

Dear Friend of Israel, Friend of FLAME:

Many American Jewish leaders have recently delivered scathing—even hysterical—criticism of Israel, particularly targeting the Israeli government’s efforts to reform its judiciary and strengthen the country’s security.

Surely, it’s understandable for American Jews to care about Israel’s future, to feel protective about the world’s only Jewish state. It’s our heritage. It’s our refuge in case of disaster.

By the same token, we must forgive Israelis if they are unimpressed with the recent American criticism. After all, it is they who deal with almost daily terror attacks and suffer the real experience of unjust, undemocratic treatment in their courts.

Nonetheless, Israelis welcome—and critically need—the help and support of American Jews. When dealing with international issues—such as antisemitism globally—we are stronger when both Israeli and American Jews stand together. Israel also values the American support in the United Nations and its investment in Israel’s military might, which makes the Jewish state—and Jews everywhere—safer.

Tragically, however, the ability of American Jews to substantially assist Israel is rapidly fading. That’s because the influence of Jews in the United States—our political and social clout—is diminishing due to our weakening institutions, identity and solidarity.

While Israel has many challenges and flaws, a sober look at the dissipating state of American Jewry should evoke even greater alarm.

Five major problems—all steadily increasing—threaten the very fabric of American Jewry, let alone our ability to support Israel. Until we address these critical issues in our own backyard, our opinions about Israel’s new government

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YOU DESERVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH...

Demand Justice for Jewish Students

New report shows skyrocketing attacks on students' Jewish identity—rooted in anti-Zionism, a modern disguise for classic antisemitism. It's time to fight back.

Despite rising campus attacks on Israel, many Jewish students still support the Jewish state. But anti-Zionism based in the classroom and public square forces many students to hide their Jewish identity. Greater enforcement of Title VI anti-discrimination laws promises a cure to this injustice.

What are the facts?

According to a new report by AMCHA Institute, bullying and harassment of Jewish students on university campuses spiked in the last year, while attempts to censor Zionism increased on 644 U.S. college campuses. Jewish identity trips are listed in nearly 20 states. Retention of Jewish students in 1990s New Germany, near 90% of U.S. Jewish students say they hide their Jewish identity, according to a 2021 poll by the Brandeis Center for Human Rights.

While discrimination against most ethnic minorities is strictly outlawed on campus, university administrators have generally failed to protect Jewish students from attacks against them. Furthermore, a spike of complaints recently filed with the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) now demands action under Title VI anti-discrimination statute. Campuses, such as Washington University, City University of New York, University of Vermont, University of Illinois and University of Southern California, are among schools facing OCR investigations for alleged antisemitism violations.

Not surprisingly, the AMCHA report registered pro-Palestinian groups, such as Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), for responsibility in 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 making antisemitic hate, to date only a single chapter of SJP has been personally threatened with a U.S. campus at New York's private Yeshiva University. The bias has not yet reached its peak.

AMCHA report also noted the contribution of non-Jewish Jewish anti-Zionist groups and individuals to the assault on Jewish identity. One such group is Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), which now co-sponsors Jewish identity as a venue for antisemitism.

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 suffer attacks on Jewish identity. In fact, AMCHA found that twenty percent of threats to Jewish identity took place at events supported by academic faculty.

Sadly, without federal intervention, there's little hope universities will stop antisemitic attacks. Legally, Jewish students who feel their Jewish identity is threatened can only rely on their schools' harassment policies to protect them. These policies usually failed because based on one ethnicity or religion, but most cases university administrators do not recognize hostility toward Israel and its supporters as a religious or ethnic issue.

This approach by university administrators ignores the definition of antisemitism established by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), which is recognized worldwide and includes discrimination and harassment based on anti-Israel bias.

Furthermore, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 may offer powerful resources for Jewish students under attack. Because the nation prohibits discrimination based on ethnic identity, recent complaints to the OCR emphasize the integral connection between Zionism and Jews' historic relationship to their ancestral home, the land of Israel. Indeed, Zionism is not a political opinion—it is a fundamental feature of Jewish ethnic identity. Likewise, the Jews are not simply a religious group but rather are a people who share ethnic language, culture, ancestry and a powerful territorial heritage.

While violations of Title VI do not carry criminal penalties, their consequences can be massive. First, recipients of federal government funding—which represents billions, even tens of millions of dollars for most universities—can be refused or reduced. Second, the OCR can require that causes of violations be remediated—meaning Jewish students will no longer suffer attacks by students or faculty for their Zionist beliefs. Third, the reputational damage caused by civil rights violations can seriously threaten university fundraising and student recruitment efforts.

Attacks against Jewish students represent an assault on the American social fabric and our democracy. Higher education administrators should be shocked by how often in the wake of Jewish antisemitism, especially in the form of discrimination, harassment, anti-Zionism, schools that fail to respond have only one path to be protected aggressively under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Enforcement must be swift, painful and swift. Jewish students deserve better than the current hostile environment on campus. They deserve justice.

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should perhaps remain muted.

1) Antisemitism and anti-Zionism are surging.

BDS on college campuses, anti-Israel lawmakers in Congress, critical race theory and intersectionality in our public schools, street attacks on Orthodox Jews—all threaten the well-being of Jews in the U.S. and Israel.

The Pew Research survey, *Jewish Americans in 2020*, found that three quarters of American Jews believe there is more antisemitism in the country than five years ago, and just over half (53%) say they feel less safe than they did five years prior.

Campus antisemitism and anti-Zionism in particular have increased sharply. Late last year, a report by the AMCHA Initiative found that bullying and intimidation of Jewish students tripled.

So far, we are failing to halt this trend, even as many American Jews focus instead on general social issues less critical to Jewish survival.

2) American Jewish community and religious institutions are declining.

Waning Jewish institutional—and therefore political—strength in the U.S. endangers the ability of American Jews to influence government policy, media coverage and support for Israel.

In the past 20 years, more than one third of Conservative synagogues have closed, as have one fifth of Reform synagogues.

Active participants in Jewish Community Federations—regional organizations that represent the interests of American Jewry—are shrinking. Some local Jewish federations have either had to merge with other Jewish organizations to stay afloat . . . or shut down altogether.

What’s more, according to professor Chaim Waxman of the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute, “Diaspora Jewry tend more and more to donate to non-Jewish philanthropies than Jewish ones.”

3) Number of Jewish-identified Americans is dwindling.

Skyrocketing rates of Jewish intermarriage are shrinking the number of self-identified, committed Jews—which reduces the influence American Jews can exert on cultural phenomena, such as antisemitism, critical race theory in schools, financial support for Israel, and the election of pro-Israel politicians.

While intermarriage among the Orthodox Jews in the U.S. is only 2%, intermarriage among non-Orthodox Jews is estimated at 75%. Intermarried Jewish parents are also much less likely to raise their children Jewish.

Only 28% of Jews married to non-Jewish spouses raise their children to be Jewish by religion. Another 29% of intermarried couples raise their children to be Jewish but not by religion. A whopping 30% of intermarried couples don’t raise their children to be Jewish *at all*.

FLAME is the only organization that defends Israel with paid editorial hasbarah messages placed in media nationwide every month: The dire threats from Iran, Hamas and Hizbollah, the injustice of BDS, Palestinian anti-Semitism and more. If you support a bold voice that tells the truth about Israel in American media, please donate now.

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FLAME'S WEEKLY HOTLINE E-NEWSLETTER



FLAME's Hotline e-newsletter keeps you up to date on the most important pro-Israel advocacy issues and features our choice of the week's most informative and thought-provoking article on Israel and the Middle East. If you only subscribe to one pro-Israel news service, make it the FLAME Hotline.



4) Interest of young Jews in Judaism and Israel plummets.

Young Jews are losing their connection to Judaism, the Jewish people and Israel. Yet future American support for Israel will depend on them.

The 2020 Pew survey reports that 40% of Jewish adults between 18 and 29 consider themselves to be “Jews of no religion”—a rate higher than all other age groups.

This lack of affiliation to Judaism is reflected in young Jews’ support for Israel—or lack thereof. As of 2020, only 48% of Jews under 30 consider themselves very or somewhat attached to Israel, compared to two thirds of people 65 and older. In addition, just 35% of American Jews under 30 consider supporting Israel essential, while 27% say supporting Israel is “not at all” important.

5) American Jews fail to support pro-Israel politicians—or oppose Israel’s enemies.

Rather than making support of Israel a focal point of our political action, American Jews often back the Democratic Party in lockstep. Rather than consistently judging politicians by their support of Israel, we instead favor party affiliation.

According to the 2020 Pew survey, 71% of Jews in the U.S. consider themselves Democrats—yet that party harbors known antisemites like Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib and a growing number of politicians who attack Israel.

Conversely, American Jewish Democrats are generally loathe to support any Republicans, despite their pro-Israel loyalty.

How Israel can help American Jews. Even as our Jewish population in the United States is losing many of its connections to Judaism and Jewish identity, Israel’s Zionist culture, influence and population are robust and expanding.

Indeed, Israel is one of the world’s most successful nations on earth. It is one of the most economically successful countries, one of the most influential, one of the strongest militarily, and one of the happiest. Israel was even recently ranked the world’s 23rd most successful democracy—ahead of the United States and 140 other nations.

Rather than counseling Israelis on their internal politics and society, American Jews would surely profit more by engaging and supporting the Zionist spirit to inspire us and strengthen our own community.

Please observe to friends, family, colleagues and elected representatives that American Jewry faces daunting challenges. If we want to help Israel, we need to help ourselves—by focusing on the main issues threatening the health of the American Jewish community. Our Israeli brothers and sisters would no doubt welcome that kind of support.

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—"Demand Justice for Jewish Students"—which exposes rising attacks on Jewish college students' identity and how these acts of antisemitism can be defeated.

Best regards,

James Sinkinson, Publisher
Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)

P.S. You've surely seen headlines describing increasing attacks on Jewish students—in the classroom and in the public square—by radical anti-Zionist students, as well as faculty members. So far, university administrators have failed to prevent this kind of antisemitism on campus. At the heart of this discrimination, Israel's enemies outrageously claim that Zionism is not part of being Jewish. No wonder more and more Jewish students are hiding their Jewish identities on campus. I think you'll agree that we supporters of Israel need to speak out. FLAME's new hasbarah---explanatory message---"[Demand Justice for Jewish Students](#)" tells how new law suits based on Title VI anti-discrimination laws are putting pressure on college administrators to protect Jewish students from such attacks. I hope you'll review this convincing, fact-based editorial, which FLAME intends to publish 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](#).

As of today, more than 15,000 Israel supporters receive the FLAME Hotline at no charge every week. If you're not yet a subscriber, won't you join us in receiving these timely updates, so you can more effectively tell the truth about Israel? Just go to [free subscription](#).



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