

**POLITICAL
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Challenging the Right,
Advancing Social Justice

CONSTRUCTING CAMPUS CONFLICT

Antisemitism and Islamophobia
on U.S. College Campuses,
2007–2011

SENIOR EDITOR
MANAGING EDITOR
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

CHIP BERLET
DEBRA CASH
MARIA PLANANSKY

MAY 2014

The logo for Political Research Associates (PRA) consists of a dark blue square with rounded corners. Inside the square, the words "POLITICAL", "RESEARCH", and "ASSOCIATES" are stacked vertically in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

**POLITICAL
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Political Research Associates (PRA) is a social justice think tank devoted to supporting movements that are building a more just and inclusive democratic society. We expose movements, institutions, and ideologies that undermine human rights.

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INTRODUCTION

ON CAMPUSES ACROSS THE UNITED STATES, there are Jewish and Muslim students who experience bigotry. At times they feel intimidated and do not express their actual political, religious, or philosophical views in the classroom. In some cases, they do not feel safe when crossing the campus commons. At the same time, these are not the daily experiences of most Jewish and Muslim students. The nation's campuses are not aflame with religious prejudice, nor are they places where physical threats are commonplace.

How can we explain these apparently contradictory realities? That was the challenge behind this study. Political Research Associates believes both antisemitism and Islamophobia as phenomena exist on campuses, and in this report we offer a set of tools for thinking about them.

Antisemitism and Islamophobia on college campuses are manifested in a complex set of interactions among a number of different players: students, faculty and administrators, off-campus organizations, interested outside parties, and news media. From student protests to faculty tenure controversies, campuses have become flashpoints for public controversy on issues associated with antisemitism and Islamophobia. Demonization and scapegoating can spiral upwards. Students' positions become polarized. There is little room for genuine questions to be answered or different solutions to be weighed for merit.

This condition is particularly acute when campuses become polarized around issues associated with events in the Middle East. Campuses, of all places, should be environments that invite open dialogue. Nonetheless, at times debates about the Middle East escalate into confrontations laced with Islamophobic or antisemitic statements. These confrontations sometimes boil over from rhetorical debates to physical confrontations. News accounts can distort such conflicts by either hyperbolizing or minimizing events.

Our investigation endeavors to bring some perspective to the question of the nature, scale, and origins of bigotry in these situations. We have attempted to trace many of the historical tendencies that have converged on today's American college campuses. Turning to historical, sociological, and linguistic data, we offer some interpretive frameworks that we hope will help the reader understand the elements of the current debate, and in particular, the ways that both antisemitic and Islamophobic language and tropes are being deployed in campus conflicts. We have turned to a number of scholars for their perspectives on the broader meaning of these debates and on the ways in which debates off campus play out in the student, faculty, and administrative realm. And in visits to campuses across the country we have investigated the ways in which the ever-changing nature of conflict in the Middle East has played out in campus life, with often distressing results.

PRA had researchers conduct face-to-face, telephonic, and e-mail interviews with students, faculty, administrators, persons associated with influential campus organizations, and academic experts both on- and off-campus. When a person in this report is identified by name, that person is a real individual, not a composite. Occasionally, individuals asked not to be identified by their names, and we honored that request. Again, these are real individuals, not composites. Even a cursory glance at this report, however, reveals it to be a composite in the sense that it is a montage. We highlight a range of voices and opinions. This is intentional.

Part of PRA's study design was to retain researchers and writers from a wide range of religious and ethnic backgrounds. Their points of view and findings were not forced into a single perspective or narrative lens. Some may argue that the material on which this report was based, therefore, is self-contradictory; or may pluck out a particular sentence or sentiment and claim it represents (and therefore discredits) the entire report. That would be unfortunate, since one of the major findings of this study is that honest dialogue that does not shy away from actual be-

liefs—and even bitter disagreements—is a key to building campuses that are safe for every student.

In the classic Japanese film *Rashomon*, the director Akira Kurosawa presents an incident from a variety of conflicting viewpoints, all of which reflect a particular reality from a specific, subjective perspective. It became common in the course of our research to refer to the “Rashomon effect,” by which our researchers meant that they had a hard time synthesizing and summarizing the information that had been collected into a single coherent and linear narrative. Conflicting claims about what “really” happened during a particular campus incident sometimes made it appear that two or more unrelated incidents had occurred.

PRA seeks to illustrate what has been happening on campuses in recent years and how students, faculty, and administrators feel about it. In an arena of intense ideological, political, religious, and philosophical struggle we offer no easy solutions, nor do we promote a monolithic answer. We identify many questions that would benefit from further research. This study argues that antisemitism and Islamophobia can and should be challenged on college campuses. If done so carefully and constructively, prejudice and discrimination can be reduced.

Informed debate creates a milieu that stimulates intellectual growth. We seek to explore issues and incidents in a way that, in the long run, will ameliorate aggression, intimidation, and assaults on campus—which are never appropriate or acceptable in the quest for knowledge.

Note: The term “antisemitism” denotes the demonization and scapegoating of Jews, not Semites as a socially-constructed “racial” category or language group. This spelling parallels denigrations implied by the terms “racism” and “sexism.” Where the term is used in a quote, we have retained the writer’s original style.

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SETTING THE SCENE

There is no hierarchy of oppressions.
—Audre Lorde

BY CHIP BERLET

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THE TERMS “Islamophobia” and “antisemitism” when we use them in this report? According to historian Walter Laqueur:

*Islamophobia and antisemitism, each in its way, are imprecise terms we could well do without but it is doubtful whether they can be removed from our political lexicon.*¹

This statement is as true today as when Laqueur wrote it in 2006. We use these terms as shorthand for more complicated realities. In an overarching sense, we are referring to a variable collection of stereotypes, prejudice, bias, bigotry, anger, and fear that attribute certain specific, negative traits to Jews or Muslims. The speaker’s community is portrayed as being threatened and subverted by that stigmatized “Other.” Much of this report will untangle the definitions and implications of these beliefs.

Antisemitism and Islamophobia can and should be challenged on college campuses; if done carefully and constructively, prejudice and discrimination can be reduced. Destructive and sometimes deadly forms of ethnocentrism and religious bigotry are not limited in history to Muslims or Jews, and we can learn much by studying the patterns and particularities of “the nature of prejudice.” This latter phrase is the title of the classic 1954 study by Gordon Allport.²

Much of Allport’s work remains valid, but as Irwin Katz pointed out in 1991, “Forty years of social psychological research have not provided strong support for Allport’s assumption that prejudice causes discrimination nor an explanation of the substantial long-term movement in the majority’s racial sentiments and beliefs.”³ Allport was a pessimist “about the prospects for immediate prejudice reduction in the United States” in the 1950s, but as the new millennium approached there was clear social science evidence that some traditional prejudices in the U.S. population had been reduced.⁴ While this work is unfinished and needs constant attention to avoid backsliding, there is clear evidence that both prejudice and discrimination can be reduced over time by appropriate constructive practices, at least in some societal settings.

Prejudiced beliefs alone do not automatically generate acts of discrimination, aggression, or violence. Sometimes people discriminate primarily as a reaction to peer pressure even if they consciously or unconsciously are troubled by the prejudice of their peers.⁵ Prejudice is a belief structure whereas discrimination is an act. It is easier to change the way people act than to change their beliefs. It is beliefs,

however, shaped by life experiences, family traditions, peer interaction, education, and media expression that lead to actions that should not be acceptable anywhere in civil society, including on campuses.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

Without a struggle, there can be no progress.
—Frederick Douglass

To understand how antisemitic and Islamophobic conflicts are constructed on college campuses by some students we need to locate those conflicts within a larger set of political and historical dynamics. As Pam Chamberlain observed in her study of campus political activism for the Ford Foundation:

*University campuses have long been the site of a range of ideological battles in this country and elsewhere. Because colleges are touted as the training locale for tomorrow’s leaders and the central venue for academic freedom, they have become flashpoints for many debates on political issues. Colleges also have been the focal point for issues related to what and how curricular material is taught, and how students’ lives are regulated by their schools.*⁶

Campuses also have long been centers of antiwar activism that, in turn, prompt activism by supporters of the specific war being debated. University classrooms and campuses become a place where debates over U.S. military actions in the Middle East and ongoing debates over the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians intersect.

Some critics of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East use Islamophobia to justify an oversimplified geopolitical analysis. A number of critics of U.S. foreign policy accurately point out that a high level of Islamophobia in the United States is enlisted to reinforce interventionist militarism and support for right-wing Israeli government policies.

Some of these critics of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, however, then describe an “Israeli lobby,” “Zionist lobby,” or “Jewish lobby” in ways that imply U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East can be explained in monocausal terms. These hyperbolic oversimplifications can sometimes invoke classic stereotypes of Jewish power, even when this is clearly not the intent. Conspiracists may attribute military decisions by U.S. administrations to “hidden” influences or “secret teams,” with some suggesting there are Jews behind the scenes, pulling the strings.

At the same time, some supporters of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East use Islamophobic rhetoric or invoke Islamophobic tropes. In some cases, they use incidents of anti-

semitism on U.S. college campuses to justify their positions.

Each of these assertions finds an echo, in some way, on today's U.S. college campuses, as this report will describe.

Given this background, it is necessary to make explicit the following statements: Not everyone who denounces Judaism or Jews on campus is Muslim or Arab. Not everyone who denounces Islam or Muslims on campus is Jewish. Not everyone who denounces Israel or Israelis on campus is Muslim or Arab. Not everyone who denounces Palestine or Palestinians on campus is Jewish. Nothing in this report should be construed to suggest otherwise.

This report will include information about how the various forms of prejudice, stereotyping, and bigoted conspiracy theories make their way onto college campuses. This involves tracing the way in which students obtain and consider information obtained from a wide variety of media sources as well as conversations with friends, family, fellow students, professors, and more.

SOCIAL SCIENCE INSIGHTS

According to sociologists Doug McAdam and David Snow, a social movement is

*a collectivity acting with some degree of organization and continuity outside of institutional channels for the purpose of promoting or resisting change in the group, society, or world order of which it is a part.*⁷

Sociologists do not think that people who join social movements are psychologically dysfunctional or irrational. Sociologists see movement activists as people with grievances who mobilize resources, exploit political opportunities, develop their own cultures, and create frames, narrative storylines, and slogans in ways that are both strategic and instrumental.⁸

In sociological terms, a "frame" is simply a specific point of view or perspective that focuses attention on a specific aspect of a larger and more complex scene like an image enclosed in a picture frame. Typically, framing is a process whereby movement leaders illustrate grievances and power struggles in terms that are accessible and highly resonant in multiple target audiences.⁹

"Master frames" are broad perspectives that undergird an entire movement.¹⁰ A "metaframe" is a frame so broad and pervasive in a culture that many different movements can use it despite ideological differences. Metaframes mentioned in this report include Dualism and Apocalypticism.

A "narrative" as used by sociologists is a story told within a movement culture. Narratives have a plot, heroes and villains, and an instructive text or subtext that demonstrates which ideas and actions are valued and which are condemned. For a political or social movement, the shared understanding created by such narratives helps bind its members together and is also attractive to potential movement recruits. Narratives can support or challenge the status quo and existing hierarchies of power, wealth, and privilege.¹¹

TOOLS OF FEAR

The tools of fear are the techniques found in frames and narratives used to create a loathed and/or feared "Other." They include dualism, demonization, scapegoating, and apocalyptic aggression.¹²

DUALISM

Dualism is a concept that divides the world into the forces of "good" and "evil." A particular form of religious dualism, Manichaeism, was broadly practiced between the third and seventh centuries, and incorporated into many features of early Christianity. Dualism, especially what Dick Anthony and Thomas Robbins call "exemplary dualism," can be found in "totalist" religious and ideological movements "with highly dualistic worldviews" and "an absolutist apocalyptic outlook" where members cast a "projection of negativity and rejected elements of self onto ideologically designated scapegoats."¹³

Richard Hofstadter noted that the "fundamentalist mind...is essentially Manichaeism."¹⁴ The United States has a significant presence of politically active fundamentalist Christian conservatives.¹⁵

DEMONIZATION

A form of vilification, demonization is the process through which a group of people target other individuals or groups as the embodiment of evil.¹⁶ The hated target is first denigrated, then dehumanized, and finally demonized.¹⁷ Typically, proponents claim that the target is plotting against the public good. Demonization often involves demagogic appeals. Demagoguery has been used historically both by populists to denounce corrupt elites,¹⁸ and by government officials to justify political repression.¹⁹ In both instances, its use is based on fears of conspiracies by real and imaginary subversive elements.²⁰ Demagogues are seen as charismatic movement leaders; otherwise, their performance is interpreted as buffoonery.²¹ [For more on the character of demonization, see discussion of Sharansky model of the "3 D" definition for antisemitism later in this report.]

SCAPEGOATING

Scapegoating in the form of the ritualized transference and expulsion of evil is a familiar theme across centuries and cultures.²² In Western culture the term "scapegoat" can be traced to an early Jewish ritual described in the book of Leviticus in the Bible. As Gordon W. Allport explains:

*On the Day of Atonement a live goat was chosen by lot. The high priest, robed in linen garments, laid both his hands on the goat's head, and confessed over it the iniquities of the children of Israel. The sins of the people thus symbolically transferred to the beast, it was taken out into the wilderness and let go. The people felt purged, and for the time being, guiltless.*²³

The word scapegoat has evolved to mean a person or

The tools of fear are the techniques found in frames and narratives used to create a loathed and/or feared "Other."

group wrongfully blamed for some problem, especially for other people's misdeeds. "Psychologically," Richard Landes explains, "the tendency to find scapegoats is a result of the common defense mechanism of denial through projection."²⁴ People redirect frustrated aggression or guilt over their own misconduct onto the scapegoat.²⁵ But scapegoating does not necessarily work the same way at the personal level, such as within a family, as it does at a societal level where, in Susan M. Fisher's words, "the scapegoated group serves more as a metaphor." Nor does scapegoating by large groups and social movements indicate mass mental dysfunction.²⁶

In our book *Right-Wing Populism in America: Too Close For Comfort*, Matthew N. Lyons and I use the term scapegoating to describe the societal form as

*the social process whereby the hostility and grievances of an angry, frustrated group are directed away from the real causes of a social problem onto a target group demonized as malevolent wrongdoers. The scapegoat bears the blame, while the scapegoaters feel a sense of righteousness and increased unity. The social problem may be real or imaginary, the grievances legitimate or illegitimate, and members of the targeted group may be wholly innocent or partly culpable. What matters is that the scapegoats are wrongfully stereotyped as all sharing the same negative trait, or are singled out for blame while other major culprits are let off the hook.*²⁷

Scapegoating often targets socially disempowered or marginalized groups. At the same time, the scapegoat is often portrayed as powerful or privileged. In this way, scapegoating feeds on people's anger about their own disempowerment, but diverts this anger away from the real systems of power and oppression. A certain level of scapegoating is endemic in most societies, but it more readily becomes an important political force in times of social competition or upheaval. At such times, especially, scapegoating can be an effective way to mobilize mass support and activism during a struggle for power.

Rene Girard has examined scapegoating from a theopolitical perspective and popularized the concept of "Mimetic Scapegoating."²⁸

APOCALYPTIC AGGRESSION

Apocalypticism involves the sense of expectation by individuals or groups that dramatic events are about to unfold during which "good" will confront "evil." This confrontation will change the world forever and reveal hidden truths.²⁹ In this context, we are examining apocalypticism in the sociological sense where it serves as a master frame.³⁰

Members of apocalyptic movements believe that time is running out. The term "millenarianism" refers to all apocalyptic movements, while "millennialism" describes apocalyptic movements built around a theme involving a one-thousand-year span (or some other lengthy period).³¹ Robert J. Lifton observes that "historically the apocalyptic imagination has usually been nonviolent in nature," but

such beliefs also can generate horrific violence.³² An apocalyptic leader may take on the mantle of the messiah, and in some cases urge forms of apocalyptic aggression against the scapegoated enemy. While apocalypticism and apocalyptic aggression have been linked by some scholars to trauma,³³ there appears to be little or no direct link between trauma and specific forms of prejudice.³⁴

CONSPIRACISM

Conspiracist thinking exists around the world and, in some circumstances, can move easily from the margins to the mainstream, as has happened repeatedly in the United States.³⁵ Historian Robert Alan Goldberg traces the concept of conspiracy thinking back to the "Latin word *conspirare*—to breathe together," which implies some type of dramatic scenario.³⁶ Conspiracism is a particular narrative form of scapegoating that frames demonized enemies as part of a vast insidious plot against the common good, while it valorizes the scapegoater as a hero for sounding the alarm.³⁷ Mark Fenster, a law professor and expert on culture, governance, and power, argues that persons who embrace conspiracy theories are trying to understand how power is exercised in a society that they feel they have no control over. Often they have real grievances with the society, which are sometimes legitimate and sometimes seeking to defend unfair power and privilege.³⁸ Conspiracism evolves as a worldview from roots in dualistic forms of apocalypticism. Conspiracist thinking has appeared in mainstream popular discourse as well as in various subcultures in the United States throughout its history.³⁹

SUBVERSION PANICS AND COUNTERSUBVERSION MOVEMENTS

Fear of subversion by sinister conspirators is woven into many contemporary narratives about threats to the United States posed by Jews or Muslims. According to the civil liberties attorney and activist Frank Donner:

*The American obsession with subversive conspiracies of all kinds is deeply rooted in our history. Especially in times of stress, exaggerated febrile explanations of unwelcome reality come to the surface of American life and attract support. These recurrent counter-subversive movements illuminate a striking contrast between our claims to superiority, indeed our mission as a redeemer nation to bring a new world order, and the extraordinary fragility of our confidence in our institutions.*⁴⁰

In the contemporary United States, certain instances of antisemitism and Islamophobia are driven by apocalyptic expectations and related conspiracy theories shared within global religious subcultures.⁴¹ This is better documented and accepted by scholars of antisemitism than scholars of Islamophobia. Some of this baggage accompanies students involved in campus confrontations in the United States.

EXPLORING ANTISEMITISM

BY CHIP BERLET

FALSE AND DEROGATORY ALLEGATIONS about “The Jews” have a lengthy and sordid history.⁴² Historic tropes include antisemitic language, imagery, and ideas about Jews as an evil and monstrous chimeric threat. Our research indicates that some students who engage in political work on the Israel/Palestine conflict or efforts against the Iraq and Afghan wars circulate outrageous claims that derive from historic antisemitic and Islamophobic sources. Some pro-Palestinian or anti-Zionist activists have circulated claims derived from organized White supremacists and the forged hoax document, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.⁴³ This study shares an important interview with British sociologist David Hirsh, who offers a nuanced discussion of how both unwitting and deliberately provocative antisemitic language is deployed.⁴⁴

Campus incidents identified as antisemitic are regularly tracked and reported in the media. However, it is often difficult to find accounts that make distinctions among incidents that are clearly antisemitic, that is, based in perceptions of race, religion, and culture; those that blur the line between antisemitism and anti-Zionism; and those that are primarily negative expressions of opinion about Israeli state policy and behavior. An extensive discussion of these contested definitions is a central aspect of this PRA report in the belief that increased clarity about these issues will support the development of more nuanced and effective campus interventions.

WHAT IS ANTISEMITISM?

The Hillel Foundation identifies four common forms of antisemitism on campus:

- Outright Anti-Semitism.
- Anti-Israel political speech that becomes anti-Semitic speech or acts.
- Interpersonal problems expressed as anti-Semitism.
- Anti-Semitism Born of Ignorance.⁴⁵

A 2006 Hillel study found that “51 percent of college students reported that they felt anti-Semitism during the past three years either on campus or while they were still in high school.” Hillel, however, noted that feelings “can be deceiving: The 2000 National Jewish Population Survey reported that while the vast majority of college students perceived anti-Semitism, only 26 percent had personally experienced it.”⁴⁶

So is antisemitism rampant on campus or not? “We take all incidents seriously,” explains Hillel Associate Vice President for Communications Jeff Rubin. “Most reported ‘antisemitic’ occurrences may be simple vandalism, interpersonal hostility, or simple ignorance of symbols that are offensive to Jews,” says Rubin, who counsels campuses when antisemitic incidents occur.⁴⁷

Prior to World War II, “What is antisemitism?” was a relatively easy question to answer. There were two main historic forms analyzed by scholars:

- Christian animosity towards Jews based on religion
- Political ethno-nationalist attacks based on a pseudo-scientific claim of racial characteristics.

In both cases, mass social or political movements were built in certain historic moments that targeted Jews as scapegoats and resulted in assault, expulsion, murder, and mass murder.⁴⁸ These acts were often prompted by fraudulent conspiracy theories about Jewish perfidy that were used to justify apocalyptic aggression.⁴⁹

The Nazi genocide of Jews and the targeting and elimination of other “enemies of the state” flowed naturally and horrifically from these antecedents.⁵⁰

WHEN IS IT ANTISEMITIC?

College students pick up their ideas about politics and geopolitical struggles from a variety of on-campus and external sources. What follows is a list of statements about the relationship between Jews and the State of Israel and the implications of that relationship for American and international policy that, in their full form, have been labeled as antisemitic by some individuals and groups.⁵⁷ We begin with each statement. Later, under “A Discussion of the Rhetoric,” we move on to discuss the context in which these statements originated. Only by exploring the complexity of these issues can we ascertain where, exactly, comments critical of Israeli policies cross the line into antisemitism. Understanding these expressions and attitudes is critical to evaluating the issue of antisemitism on campus.

1. “For too long, a deep polarization has characterized the conversation on Israel, or lack thereof, across America.⁵⁸ Israel’s settlements in the occupied territories have, for over forty years, been an obstacle to peace. They have drained Israel’s economy, military, and democracy and eroded the country’s ability to uphold the rule of law.”⁵⁹

“American elected officials should respect the need for the permanent status of Jerusalem to be determined in the context of a negotiated two-state solution, and refrain from steps, rhetorical or practical, that inflame an already tense situation – for instance, calling for the immediate relocation of the American Embassy to Jerusalem.”⁶⁰

2. “[We urge] the government of Israel to hasten to end the occupation of Palestinian territories. [We strongly urge] the United States to take seriously its leadership role to begin a peace initiative that will end Israel’s occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem.... An end of the occupation is essential to achieving peace and the common good of the two peoples...[and] three faiths that are deeply rooted in this land. [We urge] the Israeli government and the Palestinian leadership to work on resolving the issue of the right of return [of Palestinians to their prior homes now inside Israel]. With the assistance of the United Nations, both sides can, if they will, strive for and reach, an understanding that affirms

the right of return of Palestinians while working out a mutually acceptable formula for implementation.”⁶¹

3. “Christian support for the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple is also invariably linked to the political claims of exclusive Jewish sovereignty over not only the Temple Mount and Jerusalem but much of the Middle East as well. Whether intentionally or otherwise, therefore, Christian Zionists are complicit in perpetuating a form of apartheid as well as the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from the Occupied Territories. Many regard this reading of history as questionable, coloured by a literal exegesis of highly selective biblical passages, profoundly misguided and essentially racist. Far from demonstrating a ministry of reconciliation to all nations, which is at the heart of the Christian faith, Zionism perpetuates religious intolerance and incites ethnic violence.”⁶²

4. “[A study criticizing ‘Christian Zionism’ has] done an immense service to mankind, and to the peoples of the Middle East in particular, in analyzing what is called, in the US, ‘Christian Zionism’, a purely American phenomenon, with a direct impact on the genocide practiced in Palestine by the Israeli authorities.”⁶³

5. “The apartheid state of Israel is on the way down. They are living in fear ... and it is about time they live in fear.... The truth of the matter is: Your days are numbered. We will fight you until we are martyred or until we are victorious.”⁶⁴

6. “The war in Iraq was not a war for oil, but was a war conceived by the neo-cons and the pro-Israeli lobby in the United States to benefit Israel, and to elevate Israel to a very important position in the Middle East, as a part of a plan to achieve overall US global control.... The neo-cons who are almost exclusively Jewish and the Israel lobby got the US into the war in Iraq.... there are people in Washington, in the intelligence department, in the intelligence agencies who, for their own reasons, are very much worried about the ‘Israelization’ of US foreign policy. And these people in Washington, or people who used to work in Washington, have had a long term fight against the Israel lobby.”⁶⁵

7. “The Israeli Zionist regime is deeply alarmed by the prospect of the end of the dictatorship. Although the Israeli regime pretends to be the great champion of ‘democracy,’ the reality is that it fears the development of a genuine people’s government in Egypt, the largest Arab country that possesses the largest army in the Arab World.”⁶⁶

8. “A brazen attempt by influential ‘Israel-firsters’ in the policy echelons of the...administration to extend their control to the day-to-day espionage and covert-action operations of the CIA was the hidden source of the controversy and scandals that shook the U.S. intelligence establishment this summer.... The dual loyalists, whose domination over the federal executive’s high planning and strategy-making resources is now just about total, have long wanted to grab a hand in the on-the-spot ‘field control’ of the CIA’s worldwide clandestine services. They want this control, not just for themselves, but on behalf of the Mossad, Israel’s terrorist secret police.”⁶⁷

9. “For the first time in the history of world empires, a tiny ethnic-religious minority representing less than two percent of the population is able to shape US policy in the Middle East to serve the colonial interests of a foreign country (Israel), which represents less than one percent of the population of the Middle East.... The Zionist power configuration in the US, with several hundred thousand fanatical activists throughout the country, can mobilize close to 98 percent of the US Congress on any legislation favoring Israel.”⁶⁸.... Equally important, the majority of the largest film, print and electronic media are owned or deeply influenced by Zionist media moguls who are committed to slanting the ‘news’ in favor of Israel.”⁶⁹

10. “Jewish media control determines the foreign policy of the United States and permits Jewish interests rather than American interests to decide questions of war and peace. Without Jewish media control, there would have been no Persian Gulf War, for example. There would have been no NATO massacre of Serb civilians. There would have been no Iraq War, and thousands of lives would have been saved. There would have been little, if any, American support for the Zionist state of Israel, and the hatreds, feuds, and terror of the Middle East would never have been brought to our shore.... We must oppose the further spreading of this poison among our people, and we must break the power of those who are spreading it. It would be intolerable for such power to be in the hands of any alien minority with values and interests different from our own. But to permit the Jews, with their 3,000-year history of nation-wrecking, from ancient Egypt to Russia, to hold such power over us is tantamount to race suicide.”⁷⁰

11. “International Finance [assumed] control...and gained an increasing influence in all economic undertakings by means of [their] predominance in the stock-exchange.... the freemason organization, which had fallen completely into their hands, was a magnificent weapon which helped [them] to achieve [their] ends. Government circles, as well as the higher sections of the political and commercial bourgeoisie, fell a prey to [their] plans through [their] manipulation of the masonic net, though they themselves did not even suspect what was happening.... [the] objective was the destruction of the national economic system and the establishment of international capitalistic domination in its stead. And this goal has really been reached, thanks to the stupid credulity of the one side and the unspeakable treachery of the other.... [we] did not recognize with adequate clearness the difference between capital which is purely the product of creative labour and the existence and nature of capital which is exclusively the result of financial speculation.”⁷¹

A DISCUSSION OF THE RHETORIC

1. “For too long, a deep polarization has characterized the conversation on Israel, or lack thereof, across America....”⁷²

This statement by J Street is one of a collection of policy position statements on the group’s website.⁷³ J Street, founded in 2008, is a national organization which seeks to “ensure a broad debate on Israel and the Middle East in national

OTHER DEFINITIONS OF ANTISEMITISM

The attributing of all or part of one's own misfortunes, and those of one's country, to the presence of Jewish elements in the community, and proposing to remedying this state of affairs by depriving the Jews of certain of their rights; by keeping them out of certain economic or social activities, by expelling them from the country, by exterminating them etc. - *Jean Paul Sartre, Anti-Semite and Jew*.⁵¹

Attitudes and actions against Jews based on the belief that they are uniquely inferior, evil, or deserving of condemnation by their very nature, or by historical or supernatural dictates. - *Paul E. Grosser and Edwin G. Halperin, Anti-Semitism: The Causes and Effects of a Prejudice*.⁵²

The hatred and persecution of Jews as a group; not the hatred of persons who happen to be Jews, but rather the hatred of persons because they are Jews. - *Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism*.⁵³

Anti-Semitism is an expression of deep negative feelings for Jews. Its roots are theological and psychological, and it differs from other forms of ethnic and racial prejudice. A statement or expression is considered anti-Semitic when it assigns unique, immutable traits to the Jews and describes them as the source of all the wickedness, inequity and evil in the world from time immemorial to this day - *Esther Webman, Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Anti-Semitism and Racism and the Dayan Center of Tel Aviv University*.⁵⁴

The belief or behavior hostile toward Jews just because they are Jewish. It may take the form of religious teachings that proclaim the inferiority of Jews, for instance, or political efforts to isolate, oppress, or otherwise injure them. It may also include prejudiced or stereotyped views about Jews. - *Anti-Defamation League (2010)*.⁵⁵

Antisemitism is a durable and unique historic and contemporary form of prejudice or demonization appearing at various times based on perceptions of religion, ethnicity, and race. In the U.S., Christian supremacist notions created systems of oppression that kept Jews in a second-class status until after WWII. While institutionalized antisemitism as a form of oppression is no longer a major force, prejudice and demonization remain. Although Jews are actually a diverse ethnoreligious group, their biased critics often project on them a racial identity that has motivated intimidation and violence. - *Political Research Associates (1994)*.⁵⁶

politics and the American Jewish community.⁷⁴ ZioNation, a "Progressive Zionism and Israel Web Log," harshly criticized J Street in 2009 for allegedly endorsing a production of the short stage play "Seven Jewish Children" by Caryl Churchill.⁷⁵ David Hirsh, in his interview in this report, describes Churchill's play as antisemitic. ZioNation, however, then labeled J Street antisemitic, and wondered if J Street would endorse a public reading of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.⁷⁶

Ari Roth, artistic director of the theater where the event was staged, explained that "we never 'produced' the play; it was read (in both Hebrew and English) as a critical exercise, to better discuss and analyze it...we held a two-night 'critical inquiry' about it, inviting panelists to hear the play and then discuss it; we invited Israeli and American artists to write their own response plays to it."⁷⁷

Peter Marks of the *Washington Post* reviewed the event as "a watershed in the evolution of immediate dialogue between a political play and its audience....the way Roth constructed the event, bringing together actors, theatergoers, experts and even, via e-mail, Churchill herself, conferred on it some of the formalized gravity of a symposium and the messy urgency of an emergency meeting." Marks wrote, "Listen-

ing to the sharp give-and-take became as integral to the experience, in fact, as listening to the eight fine actors seated around a table, reading from Churchill's script and the scripts of two other playwrights. The additional dramatists—Robbie Gringras, an Israeli, and the American Deb Margolin—wrote playlets critical of Churchill's that mimic hers in structure and style."⁷⁸

J Street issued a statement that it "takes no position on the content of *Seven Jewish Children* – it is, after all, a play, and not policy. We do, however, stand unequivocally behind Theater J in its decision to feature programming that examines different facets of this critical debate over how our community can best support Israel."⁷⁹ J Street describes itself as representing "Americans, primarily but not exclusively Jewish, who support Israel and its desire for security as the Jewish homeland, as well as the right of the Palestinians to a sovereign state of their own."⁸⁰

The incident described here seems to be an example of the complaint by those supporting Palestinian rights that sometimes the term "antisemitism" is used to discredit and suppress an open discussion of criticisms of Israeli government policy and actions.

2. “[We urge] the government of Israel to hasten to end the occupation of Palestinian territories....”⁸¹

This excerpt comes from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which in 2003 introduced a “Resolution on Israel and Palestine: End the Occupation Now,” presented to its 215th General Assembly.⁸² The accompanying language in the larger document and aggressive rhetoric used by some Presbyterians in implementing the resolution came under fire from a variety of Jewish groups.

In October 2003, for example, Samir Makhoul spoke at the College of Wooster in Ohio, replacing a scheduled Palestinian speaker who was denied a visa. The presentation was hosted by the local Presbyterian Peacemakers group. According to a report in the *Cleveland Jewish News*, Makhoul “presented...The Protocols of the Elders of Zion as a factual book that ‘explains’ how Zionists have been taking over the world’s political, economic, religious and communication organizations.” The newspaper reported that Makhoul’s slide presentation concluded “with a Star of David morphing into a swastika, and had frames equating Zionism with Nazism. The ‘equals’ sign was then replaced by a ‘greater than’ sign, suggesting that Zionism was even worse than Nazism.”⁸³ For months no one was able to prompt any sort of apology for the event. Eventually the president of the College of Wooster made a public apology.⁸⁴ That finally prompted a statement from the Presbyterian Peacemakers “distancing themselves from Makhoul’s presentation.”⁸⁵

The Wooster incident was not typical, but it represented the worst fears of those who questioned the wisdom of the wording of the 2003 resolution. Soul-searching within the national Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) led to discussions with several representatives of Jewish groups concerning ambiguities and attitudes in the language of the resolution that most Jews would find troubling. Over several years modifications were made to the policies and policy documents of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). One text approved by the General Assembly urged its members to be “be a voice for the victims of violence in both Israel and Palestine. We ask PC (U.S.A.) members, congregations, committees, and other entities to become nonpartisan advocates for peace. As such, we will not over-identify with the realities of the Israelis or Palestinians. Instead we will identify with the need for peacemaking voices in the midst of horrific acts of violence and terror.”⁸⁶ This is an example of how the process of open dialogue over appropriate terminology and actions can have positive results.⁸⁷

3. “Christian support for the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple is also invariably linked to the political claims of exclusive Jewish sovereignty....”⁸⁸

This statement starts out with a depiction of the role of Christian Zionism as an apocalyptic evangelical and fundamentalist movement that supports hardline and expansionist policies in Israel. The statement is by Stephen Sizer, Pastor of Christ Church in Virginia Water, United Kingdom. Sizer’s opinions on the Israel/Palestine conflict are widely circulated. Sizer’s claim that Zionism seeks “exclusive Jewish sovereignty” over “much of the Middle East” is overbroad and problematic.

He then uses the term “apartheid,” which has also been used by other critics of Israeli policy, including former President Jimmy Carter. It is a harsh assessment, but as a description of the nature and implications of certain Israeli policies, it is one that could reasonably be debated on a college campus if presented carefully.

Sizer suggests the State of Israel is involved in “the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from the Occupied Territories.” The term “ethnic cleansing” refers to a form of genocide. According to the United Nations Convention on Genocide, “genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group,” such as:

- Killing members of the group;
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.⁸⁹

If by this reference to genocide Sizer means to say certain acts of the Israeli government could be measured against the terms of the United Nations Convention on Genocide, then that is one matter. If, however, Sizer is invoking the images of the Serbian slaughter of Muslims in Kosovo, the genocidal campaigns in Darfur, or the Nazi genocide of Jews, then the comparison is flawed and hyperbolic.

Another overbroad and problematic statement by Sizer is his claim that Christian Zionists use a “highly selective” reading of certain “biblical passages” that are “profoundly misguided and essentially racist.”⁹⁰ It is true that Christian Zionism is based on an idiosyncratic reading of the Bible; Sizer, however, does not define the terms “Zionism” and Christian Zionism. What form of Zionism? Which group of Christian Zionists? And how is Sizer using the term “racist?” Is he suggesting that Jews are a specific racial category and Palestinians are a different racial category? Sizer’s sloppy language invokes the idea that if one is “antiracist” one should only support the Palestinians and not consider the complexity of the situation in the Middle East.

The same problem of definition plagues the claim that “Zionism perpetuates religious intolerance and incites ethnic violence.”⁹¹ Is it true that some Israelis have used their personal interpretation of “Zionism” to justify religious intolerance and incite ethnic violence? This can be documented. Sizer, as noted above, does not define the term “Zionism,” however, and thus his statement can be appropriated to defend or dismiss a wide range of positions on Israeli government policy and on the legitimacy of the existence of the State of Israel.

4. “[This study criticizing ‘Christian Zionism’ has] done an immense service to mankind....”⁹²

Why is this statement here? Because it represents an attempt

by Holocaust deniers to use Pastor Sizer's essay to promote suspicion of Jews and open the door to recruitment into anti-semitic and neonazi circles.⁹³

Sizer cannot control how his words are used and this essay apparently was posted on the internet without his permission. Nonetheless, Sizer can control who he relies on for information, and in the past he has relied on the Rev. Dale Crowley. Richard Bartholomew reports that "Crowley keeps company with unsavoury characters connected with the far-right Liberty Lobby and its Spotlight" newspaper. Crowley is listed on the "Board of Contributors" of the *Barnes Review*, a Holocaust denial outfit.⁹⁴ Placing advertisements in campus newspapers calling for an "open debate" on the Holocaust is one maneuver by antisemites to gain access to students for recruitment. Holocaust deniers use the struggle in the Middle East as a way to entice pro-Palestinian and peace activists into interpreting the actions of the State of Israel through the lens of conspiracist chimeric antisemitism. This lens is the basis of so-called "Historical Revisionism" as practiced by Holocaust deniers.⁹⁵

5. "The apartheid state of Israel is on the way down. They are living in fear...."⁹⁶

Amir Abdel Malik Ali made this statement in May 2006 at the University of California, Irvine.⁹⁷ [We profile both Ali and repeated incidents at Irvine in this report.] Ali is clearly suggesting the elimination of the State of Israel, but goes further by suggesting "it is about time they live in fear." Ali also is predicting a fight to the death when he says, "We will fight you until we are martyred or until we are victorious." It is hard to imagine a defense of these statements that would not entail some form of antisemitism. Nonetheless, the *Los Angeles Times* article reporting on Ali's remarks is reposted on the website of Norman G. Finkelstein, under the trivializing heading "Usual Suspects, Usual Garbage." [We profile Finkelstein later in this report.]

6. "The war in Iraq was not a war for oil, but was a war conceived by the neo-cons and the pro-Israeli lobby in the United States to benefit Israel...."⁹⁸

This conspiracy theory was spun by Jeff Blankfort in a 2006 interview by Silvia Cattori.⁹⁹ When Blankfort is accused of antisemitism, he incorporates that into the vast plot he envisions against himself and other supporters of Palestinian rights. Blankfort is part of the international online "Voltaire Network" in which 9/11 Truthers intersect with other conspiracy theorists including antisemites.¹⁰⁰

7. "The Israeli Zionist regime is deeply alarmed by the prospect of the end of the dictatorship...."¹⁰¹

This statement is by Brian Becker, a top leader of the Act Now to Stop War and End Racism Coalition (ANSWER), the major national organization organizing against U.S. involvement in military actions in the Middle East. A number of progressive antiwar activists have complained about Becker's rhetoric and the way in which clearly antisemitic signs and statements are tolerated at public demonstrations coordinated by ANSWER. In response, ANSWER says it opposes antisemitism and cannot control what people say or the signs they carry at demonstrations. Critics of ANSWER's response

point out that other organizations protesting the wars in the Middle East actively discourage antisemitic signs and statements, and have asked people carrying clearly antisemitic placards to either discard them or leave the demonstration.¹⁰²

According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), ANSWER is one of the "Top Ten Anti-Israel Groups in America."¹⁰³ ADL writes that "ANSWER's rallies opposing the United States' wars in Iraq and Afghanistan often include signs condemning Israel and praising anti-Israel terrorist groups."¹⁰⁴ ADL gives a compelling example:

*At an ANSWER-organized rally to protest the Gaza war in Orlando on January 10, 2009, Emmanuel Lopez, an ANSWER-Florida steering committee member, praised the "Palestinian resistance" and argued that the only terrorists in the Middle East are the Israeli Defense Forces and American forces in Iraq. He also led the crowd in chants of "From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be Free," a call for the dismantlement of the state of Israel.*¹⁰⁵

The ADL criticism that antisemitism makes a regular appearance at ANSWER rallies is valid. Throughout its criticism on its website and in reports and briefings, however, ADL consistently conflates its reporting on antisemitism with criticism of "far Left and anti-war movements" for positions critical of Israeli and U.S. policies and actions in which there is scant evidence of antisemitic content or rhetoric.¹⁰⁶ This blurs an important distinction at the heart of campus confrontations from which charges of antisemitism emerge.

8. "A brazen attempt by influential 'Israel-firsters' in the policy echelons of the...administration...."¹⁰⁷

This charge aimed at criticizing the Reagan administration appeared in the antisemitic newspaper *Spotlight* in 1981.¹⁰⁸ It is placed here as an example of how antisemites use coded language to imply that Jews are "dual loyalists" who do not have a commitment to the United States and thus comprise a phalanx of alien subversion. Compare this trope with the rhetoric that follows.

9. "For the first time in the history of world empires, a tiny ethnic-religious minority representing less than two percent of the population is able to shape US policy in the Middle East to serve the colonial interests of a foreign country (Israel) ... the majority of the largest film, print and electronic media are owned or deeply influenced by Zionist media moguls...."¹¹⁰

This was written by anti-Zionist sociologist James Petras in his book *Rulers and Ruled in the US Empire: Bankers, Zionists, Militants*;¹¹¹ and an essay titled "The Politics of an Israeli Extinction Campaign" appearing in the *Palestine Chronicle* in 2009.¹¹²

10. "Jewish media control determines the foreign policy of the United States...."¹¹³

This statement is by the National Alliance, a U.S. neonazi group promoting White supremacy and antisemitism. The National Alliance promotes the revolutionary overthrow of the American political system. During the 1990s, the

National Alliance was a leading neonazi organization in the United States.¹¹⁴

11. “International Finance [assumed] control...and gained an increasing influence in all economic undertakings by means of [their] predominance in the stock-exchange...”¹¹⁵

This amalgam of statements by Adolf Hitler is taken from his book *Mein Kampf*.¹¹⁶ Hitler is writing about the Jews. The longer statement above by Hitler as edited, however, is very similar to many current online conspiracist theories alleging secret cabals—not only accusing Jews, but the Freemasons, the “Secret Elites,” the “Banksters,” space aliens, the Chinese government, etc.¹¹⁷

CHIMERIC ANTISEMITISM, THE PROTOCOLS, AND CONSPIRACY THEORIES

What makes antisemitism different from other forms of prejudice or scapegoating? Scholars of antisemitism sometimes discuss the concept of “chimeric antisemitism.” The chimera was a horrible fire-breathing monster from Greek mythology. The term “chimera” has come to mean any fantastic claim about something, someone, or some group and in this case, a fantastic claim about “The Jews” as a group.¹¹⁸

According to David Norman Smith, Jews become

[T]he objects of an obsessional exaggeration so extreme that they are transfigured, in thought, into literally transcendental, Luciferian figures of bestiality and danger. It is possible, of course, for other groups to share this fate, and history offers several examples of groups that have been similarly vilified: “heretics” in medieval Christendom, “soulstealers” in late-imperial China, the Illuminati and [Freemasons] in the aftermath of the French Revolution. But there is a specificity to chimerias that we miss entirely if we revert to the idea that, since every prejudice distorts truth to some extent, every bias is Manichaeian. Not every exaggeration is equal. Not every lie is a Big Lie.¹¹⁹

What constitutes antisemitism on campus is frequently measured against a person’s incorporation of certain claims about “The Jews” that are drawn (wittingly or unwittingly) from the fantasized or “chimeric” claim about Jewish people as a threatening group codified in the notorious bigoted antisemitic forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.¹²⁰

ANTISEMITISM IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY: AN AMERICAN DILEMMA

The prevalence of conspiracy theories in the Black community follows a unique route through folklore accounts that reflect a history of repressive racism, according to Patricia A. Turner, and as such, they have functioned as counter-narratives and “tools of resistance.”¹²¹ Legitimate resistance to oppression does not, however, render conspiracy theories accurate, useful, or acceptable. Moreover, sometimes these

conspiracy theories step over the line into antisemitism.

Although the Rev. Louis Farrakhan denies he is a bigot, and some of his critics have themselves used racist appeals, Farrakhan has in fact made a number of statements concerning Jews over the past few years that reflect disdain and prejudice. When the Nation of Islam circulated the book *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews*, it helped to clarify any lingering confusion concerning Farrakhan’s reliance on historic antisemitic conspiracy theories concerning Jewish power and control. The book is a lengthy pseudo-academic treatise that reaches the false conclusion that Jews controlled the slave trade. The text strongly implies that Jewish ownership of and attitudes towards slaves was somehow distinct from and more venal than ownership of and attitudes towards slaves by non-Jews. Left unexamined are the readily available statistics showing that the vast majority of slave-owners were not Jewish. The book was sold through ads in the Nation of Islam’s newspaper *Final Call*.

An educational brochure circulated over a decade ago by a branch of the All African People’s Revolutionary Party (AAPRP) starts out by criticizing Zionism and Israeli politics but soon descends into rampant anti-Jewish conspiracism. “ZIONISM is a well organized and financed, international conspiracy which controls the economic and political life of the United States and Europe,” says the brochure. Although accurately noting, “All Jews are not Zionists,” the brochure goes on to claim, “The international Zionist movement exerts an almost total strangle-hold over the economic, political, social and cultural life of the African community [...]. They use their money, their power, the FBI, CIA, IRS, the courts and prisons; and many other ways to control and destroy our movements, leaders and people.”¹²² At the same time, some leaders of the AAPRP have confronted antisemitism within their organization.¹²³

Henry Louis Gates Jr., in his 1992 essay in the *New York Times* on “Black Demagogues and Pseudo-Scholars,” observed:

The trend has been deeply disquieting for many black intellectuals. But it is something most of us, as if by unstated agreement, simply choose not to talk about. At a time when black America is beleaguered on all sides, there is a strong temptation simply to ignore the phenomenon or treat it as something strictly marginal. And yet to do so would be a serious mistake. As the African-American philosopher Cornel West has insisted, attention to black anti-Semitism is crucial, however discomfiting, in no small part because the moral credibility of our struggle against racism hangs in the balance.¹²⁴

A complete analysis of this phenomenon and interaction between the Nation of Islam, other Black Muslims, and other parts of the Muslim world is beyond the scope of this report, but these theories can have special resonance on historically African-American campuses.¹²⁵ We do note, however, that since the 1970s there have been short-term and long-term discussion groups in communities across the nation where Blacks and Jews have sought to reduce tensions.¹²⁶

ANTISEMITISM IN ARAB & MUSLIM INFORMATION NETWORKS

For many centuries Jews in Muslim areas of the Middle East faced complicated relationships with the dominant populations ranging from persecution to acceptance. There was not the type of racialized Judeophobia that grew malignant in Europe in the 19th century. Thus Jews did not experience the type of antisemitism seen in modern times. Mark R. Cohen writes that in Islam prior to the twentieth century “Jews and Christians, though protected as dhimmis were considered infidels and suffered humiliation and contemptuous treatment from the dominant group.” Under Sharia Law, however, dhimmis “enjoyed a kind of citizenship, second class and unequal though it was.”¹²⁷ This reality, reports Cohen, was “in keeping with their religious inferiority and lowly rank in the hierarchy of Muslim society.” Still, according to Cohen:

*...in day-to-day life, the Jews of Islam regularly crossed boundaries in the hierarchy to participate—however temporarily and, at times, tenuously—as virtual equals with Muslims of similar category. Though always at risk of incurring Muslim wrath and even persecution, Jews, nonetheless, enjoyed substantial security during the formative and classical periods of Islam.*¹²⁸

According to Reuven Erlich, an author of *Anti-Semitism in the Contemporary Middle East*,¹²⁹ this situation began to change in the mid-1800s:

*Classic Christian-European anti-Semitism infiltrated the Ottoman Empire during the second half of the nineteenth century along with other modern European ideas. It was encouraged by diplomats, merchants and members of the priesthood, and spread mainly among Christian Arabs. However, only at the beginning of the twentieth century did Middle Eastern anti-Semitism gain momentum as a by-product of the nascent Zionist-Arab conflict. Ever since, it included classic anti-Semitic elements—as found and shown in many Christian medieval sources—which had been adopted by early adherents of the Arab nationalist movement.*¹³⁰

In contemporary times, conspiracy theorists from Arab and Muslim countries sometimes weave the *Protocols* into their criticisms of Zionism and Israel.¹³¹ In 2002, Egyptian television aired a 41-part series based on the *Protocols*, titled “Horseman without a Horse.”¹³² A year later, a Syrian television production about a vast Jewish conspiracy was aired by Al-Manar, a Lebanon-based satellite network.¹³³ In 2005, the Lebanese government forced the Jordan-based network Al-Mamnouto to stop airing the same series.¹³⁴

When he was prime minister of Malaysia in 1997, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad gave a speech to “10,000 followers” in which he “singled out financier George Soros as aiding a suspected Jewish agenda to destabilize the currency and block the progress of Moslems.”¹³⁵ A complete analysis of this is beyond the scope of this report.¹³⁶

ANTISEMITISM AND THE POLITICAL LEFT: AN UNRESOLVED PROBLEM

In his 1992 book *The Socialism of Fools: Anti-Semitism on the Left*, progressive rabbi Michael Lerner acknowledges “that the left as a social movement has been fundamentally flawed by monumental insensitivity, and at times overt Jew hating.” Lerner then notes that this “does not necessarily invalidate the left critique of capitalist society or make one want to abandon the left egalitarian and democratic impulses.”¹³⁷ Lerner nonetheless holds the Left accountable:

*The tragic irony of the past hundred years is that those who have been involved in liberal and progressive social change movements, instead of realizing that they must systematically unmask this “socialism of fools” and redirect anger at those with real power, have instead sometimes acquiesced to and even participated in the very belief structures that make anti-Semitism popular. And while anti-Semitism on the left today tends to be unconscious it has a long history of not always being unconscious or unwitting.*¹³⁸

It is common to deny that antisemitism is present on the political Left, even though it remains a problem discussed in some sectors of the Left. It is also common to claim that all or most criticism of Israeli policies or of Zionism are forms of antisemitism.¹³⁹ In 2007, Mitchell Plitnick, then policy director for Jewish Voice for Peace, told a reporter, “I’ve seen enough anti-Semitism at...rallies that it’s really disturbing to me.” Then Plitnick added, “But it’s hard for us to make a legitimate case when [the charge of] anti-Semitism is so often used to deflect criticism of Israel.”¹⁴⁰

Plitnick’s last point gets complicated by the nature of actual incidents. In anti-Zionist groups such as ANSWER, left-wing anti-imperialist politics intersect with anti-Israel and anti-Zionist rhetoric in a way that lends itself to antisemitic interpretations. This is discussed in detail in the interview with David Hirsh.

In 2003 Philip Green, writing in the left-liberal *Nation Magazine*, tried to sort out some of the issues involved in complaints of Left antisemitism. Green pointed out that “the primary element in almost all left foreign-policy positions today is, and long has been, opposition to American imperialism.”¹⁴¹ Green agreed that this form of analysis “has sometimes led elements of the left to romanticize the Third World and to exculpate its grossest tyrants, including those in Arab states.” Green, however, puts this mistake in a larger context:

Such bending over backward to support any and all opponents or victims of the United States is a political and moral error, but again, it has nothing to do with anti-Semitism or “Israel-bashing.” Whatever critique we ought to make of tyrants such as Saddam Hussein or opportunists such as Yasir Arafat, it remains the case that Israel is both the chief benefactor of American imperialism and its most visible outpost our “most-favored nation.” Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians takes place under the umbrella of

American protection, with arms paid for or supplied by the United States, with the unquestioning support of both major political parties. And more than any other nation today unless one counts Tony Blair as a nation it has hitched itself to the bandwagon of American belligerency. ¹⁴²

Even if one agrees with Green, it does not mean there is not a case for charging that antisemitic rhetoric is still being circulated on the Left. A number of progressive Jews continue to raise this issue, and several conferences on the subject have been held around the country. Progressive activist April Rosenblum challenged her Left allies to stand up against antisemitism on the Left in a 2007 pamphlet:

The past didn't go anywhere. Antisemitism didn't somehow naturally disappear after its worst outbreak. Our whole activist lives are based on the understanding that oppression doesn't go away by itself. You have to take action. Whole peoples' movements have to, collectively, for a real shift to occur. When was there a mass effort by radical movements to educate ourselves and the world and overturn antisemitism? ¹⁴³

We agree there is still an unresolved problem of Left antisemitism and we defend this view in this report in part by critically examining the work of James Petras, Jeffrey Blankfort, Alison Weir, and others.

UNWITTING ANTISEMITISM

Unwitting antisemitism is usually a combination of ignorance and unconscious socialization. ¹⁴⁴ Someone, especially a student who has little familiarity with Judaism, the Jewish community, or Israel and picks up false ideas and unwittingly expresses them in public is different from a conscious and witting antisemite who has internalized the frames and narratives of an ideological Judeophobic worldview.

On campuses across the United States, geopolitical disputes around Jews and Israel draw from the deep well of antisemitic images and rhetorical tropes. When activists on either the Right or the Left use phrases such as “international bankers,” “Zionist dual-loyalists,” and images of “Zionists” or “Jews” that incorporate an octopus, snake, cockroach, spider, or rat, it poisons the well of intellectual discourse regardless of the intent. ¹⁴⁵

Educated people in the United States should know enough about the history of antisemitism not to use these stereotyped and hackneyed phrases or images when criticizing Israel or Jews, no matter what the issue. But they do not. Based on interviews at a broad range of campuses, few non-Jewish students had any idea of the history of antisemitic allegations, rhetoric, narratives, or imagery. Those that did have some knowledge had generally been involved in interfaith work.

IS THERE A NEW ANTISEMITISM?

The term anti-Semitism is rather difficult to define, and the distinction between hatred of Jews and opposition to the State of Israel or the Zionist movement is not always clear. — Reuven Erlich ¹⁴⁶

One of the central themes of the organized movement to combat antisemitism on campus is the concept of the rise of the “New Antisemitism,” a term popularized in a 1974 book by Arnold Forster and Benjamin R. Epstein. All too often, when the subject comes up, tempers flare and arguments ensue. Clarity suffers. The current claim that there is a New Antisemitism draws on discussions and definitions circulating in Europe. These have been incorporated into policy formation at the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights and in the U.S. Civil Rights Commission after the election of President George W. Bush. The core assumption that developed in these agencies was a New Antisemitism exists, and that it is endemic on U.S. college campuses.

The term New Antisemitism has been employed to describe forms of antisemitism that flourished after WWII and/or after the creation of Israel. There are no questions that the establishment of the nation-state of Israel as a geographic and political entity created new opportunities for antisemitism. While religious and racial nationalist forms continued, political antisemitism became more prominent.

The Six-Day War marked a major shift in how Israel was viewed among several constituencies in the United States. These included not only Arabs and Muslims living in the United States, but also portions of the political Left, human rights groups, Christian groups, and progressive Jews. For example, as early as 1967, there was a concerted effort to raise the issue of Palestinian rights and calls for the condemnation of Israel's then-recent actions at the National Council of Churches Conference on Church and Society. ¹⁴⁷

Since that time, support for Palestinian rights has expanded throughout various Protestant denominations. In some cases, these concerns have been fueled by antisemitic baggage. Clearly, since the founding of the nation-state of Israel, both religious and racial nationalist forms of antisemitism have had political dimensions that have employed religious or racial nationalist rhetoric, images, or tropes.

But was the New Antisemitism actually new? In 2004, Natan Sharansky, as Israel's minister for Diaspora Affairs, developed the framework for analysis (noted above in our discussion of international definitions of antisemitism):

...the so-called “new anti-Semitism” poses a unique challenge. Whereas classical anti-Semitism is aimed at the Jewish people or the Jewish religion, “new anti-Semitism” is aimed at the Jewish state. Since this anti-Semitism can hide behind the veneer of legitimate criticism of Israel, it is more difficult to expose. Making the task even harder is that this hatred is advanced in the name of values most of us would consider unimpeachable, such as human rights. ¹⁴⁸

Brian Klug, a respected scholar of bigotry, writing about

the rise of a “new anti-Semitism” in 2004 has noted the “spate of recent articles and books assert the rise of a ‘new anti-Semitism.’”¹⁴⁹ Klug listed three books he felt had been particularly influential: *Never Again?* by Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League; *The New Anti-Semitism*, by feminist psychologist and professor Phyllis Chesler; and *The Case for Israel*, by Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz.¹⁵⁰

Klug summarizes:

As the words “threat” and “crisis” in the subtitles of the books by Foxman and Chesler indicate, the “new anti-Semitism” is generally seen, by those who proclaim its existence, as a clear and present danger. Foxman believes that a “frightening coalition of anti-Jewish sentiment is forming on a global scale.” Chesler goes even further: “Let me be clear: the war against the Jews is being waged on many fronts militarily, politically, economically, and through propaganda and on all continents.” She even perceives a wider threat to Western civilization itself: “Who or what can loosen the madness that has gripped the world and that threatens to annihilate the Jews and the West?”¹⁵¹

Klug acknowledged bombings of synagogues and an arson attack on an Orthodox Jewish school in Paris and wrote that “researchers report a 60 percent worldwide increase in the number of assaults on Jews (or persons perceived to be Jewish) in 2002” over the previous year. He notes there was a rise in conspiracy theories about Jews over the same period, and that anti-Jewish “slogans and graphics have appeared on marches opposing the invasion of Iraq.”¹⁵²

Klug, however, pushed back, writing:

*The authors under review tend to lump all these facts together, along with a wealth of evidence for what they see as an explosion of bias against Israel: in the media, in the United Nations, on college campuses and elsewhere. They conclude that there is a single unified phenomenon, a “new anti-Semitism.” However, while the facts give cause for serious concern, the idea that they add up to a new kind of anti-Semitism is confused. Moreover, this confusion, combined with a McCarthyite tendency to see anti-Semites under every bed, arguably contributes to the climate of hostility toward Jews. The result is to make matters worse for the very people these authors mean to defend.*¹⁵³

Around the same time, Earl Raab set up a useful frame for understanding the debate over the concept of a “New Antisemitism” in a 2002 article entitled “Antisemitism, anti-Israelism, anti-Americanism.”¹⁵⁴ According to Raab, all of these can exist independently of each other or be blended. How do we sort this out? Raab argued that it had “become customary to ascribe all anti-Israelism, a term that has come to describe a systematic prejudice against Israel, to antisemitism.”¹⁵⁵

Raab observed that the idea that “new antisemitism is nothing but the old antisemitism in the guise of anti-Is-

raelism” is a “perception is largely shared by American Jews.”¹⁵⁶ However, he argued that anti-Israelism could be a valid concern without asserting that it encompassed antisemitic beliefs:

Of course, it is tempting just to merge the two pathologies. One prejudice is directed against the presupposed negative characteristics of an entire ethnic/religious group; the other is directed against the presupposed negative policies and proclivities of a nation-state, which, in this case, is largely peopled by that ethnic/religious group. One can easily be suspicious.

*But a systematic prejudice against Israel is identifiable as a discrete phenomenon, dangerous in its own terms, whether it is or is not caused by antisemitism. It can be identified in its own sphere and with its own particulars, by the universal symptoms, the Four Horsemen of all prejudice: prejudice, stereotype, double standard, scapegoat.*¹⁵⁷

The heart of this debate is a disagreement within the leadership of the Jewish community in the United States over the definition of the term “antisemitism,” and a disagreement over the concept of the “New Antisemitism.” There is even disagreement over the proper way to spell “antisemitism.”

Rabbi Michael Lerner argues that “The ADL and other Jewish establishment groups have been part of the problem,” because they “draw the line in such a way as to identify as ‘anti-Semitic’ or ‘self-hating Jews’ those who are critical of Israeli policy.”¹⁵⁸ Critics to Lerner’s right suggested that the progressive Jewish community was engaging in antisemitism. In 2007, Lerner answered those critics in an article entitled “There Is No New Anti-Semitism.”¹⁵⁹

From the moment I started Tikkun Magazine twenty years ago as “the liberal alternative to Commentary and the voices of Jewish conservatism and spiritual deadness in the organized Jewish community,” our magazine has been attacked in much of the organized Jewish community as “self-hating Jews” (though our editorial advisory board contains some of the most creative Jewish theologians, rabbis, Israeli peace activist and committed fighters for social justice).

*The reason? We believe that Israeli policy toward Palestinians, manifested most dramatically in the Occupation of the West Bank for what will soon be forty years and in the refusal of Israel to take any moral responsibility for its part in the creation of the Arab refugee problem, is immoral, irrational, self-destructive, a violation of the highest values of the Jewish people, and a serious impediment to world peace.*¹⁶⁰

At the start of the new millennium, many in the international community were deeply concerned with what they saw as an increase in the frequency and severity of antisemitic incidents, particularly within Europe. By 2004, global initiatives to combat antisemitism were well underway:

- The first ever worldwide seminar on antisemitism took place in Brussels on February 19, 2004 under the auspices of European Union.¹⁶²
- The U.S. State Department was in the process of quantifying and characterizing antisemitism throughout the world.¹⁶³
- President George W. Bush signed the Global Anti-Semitism Review Act on October 16, 2004 saying, “Defending freedom also means disrupting the evil of anti-Semitism.”¹⁶⁴

Following the initial European Union antisemitism seminar in February, Israel’s Minister for Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs Natan Sharansky opened up an international debate on the contemporary nature of antisemitism. Antisemitism in the twenty-first century, some contended, was a different phenomenon than the more familiar and easily identifiable antisemitism that had characterized Europe’s worst moments the century prior. Sharansky offered a way to define the term given new realities: The “3D approach.”¹⁶⁵ Something would be considered antisemitic if it fit one of three Ds: demonization, double standards, and delegitimization. The distinct brand of antisemitism which particularly concerned Sharansky was the rise of what he termed Arab and Islamic antisemitism “that is genocidal in nature against both Jews and the State of Israel.”¹⁶⁶ Sharansky linked the laxity of countries’ response to growing “Arab/Islamic anti-Semitism and the sharp increase in physical and verbal attacks on Jews and Israelis globally.”

Thinking of antisemitism as not simply actions by individuals, but as something that could be endorsed and acted upon by a country, Sharansky argued for a linkage policy concerning state-sponsored antisemitism. Combating this type of behavior, Sharansky said, should play a prominent role in the bilateral relations between the United States and the Arab and Muslim worlds. Diplomatic relations between the United States and other states should assert that antisemitism falls outside accepted state behaviors. Sharansky’s 3D definition of antisemitism specified the need for consequences for those who called for Israel’s destruction or for those who said it had no right to exist as a nation-state. If implemented, Sharansky’s proposed policy would have major consequences for many Middle Eastern countries, whose criticism of Israel run from legitimate policy critiques to coded antisemitism, to outright bigotry and vitriol.

Despite proposed usage of the 3Ds of demonization, double standards, and delegitimization as “tests” for antisemitism, determining whether a statement or behavior was indeed antisemitic was still fuzzy to many observers. ADL director Abraham Foxman took up the issue in the months following Sharansky’s articulation of the 3D model. That April, Foxman’s op-ed, “Blurring the line” appeared in *Haaretz*, Israel’s oldest daily newspaper, which publishes a weekly English-language edition in the United States.¹⁶⁷ Foxman, following Sharansky, cited demonization, double standards, and delegitimization as part of a litmus test for determining whether criticism amounted to antisemitism. He wrote that the line between “legitimate criticism of a sovereign nation, and the demonization and delegitimization

of the Jewish people, its nationalism and its state” can be easily crossed. At the same time, he felt that it was “okay to question Israel” if those questions were fair and not subject to double standards.

However, Foxman went on to say:

The Palestinian–Israeli conflict has been hijacked, resulting in an explosion of global anti-Semitism. It has provided a camouflage of semi-respectability. The attacks are not about a nation state, they are about Jews. A hideous and grotesque double standard clearly exists in my mind. Anti-Zionism has long been a code word for anti-Semitism. We have had to define for ourselves when anti-Israel and anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism.

First, let me say anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism. There should be no debate about that. After all, what is anti-Zionism but the denial of Jewish nationalism?

Foxman then claimed that “the cumulative effect of articles by so-called anti-Israel critics leads to a blurring of the line of what is legitimate criticism of policies of the State of Israel, and what is the demonization of Jews. The result is the raising of society’s tolerance level for antisemitism.”¹⁶⁸

This statement, combined with his statement that “anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism,” left little room for any critical political stance or belief about the State of Israel not to be labeled antisemitism.

Days before Foxman discussed his definition of antisemitism in *Haaretz*, he and the ADL board had taken issue with the report by European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), now known as the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) on Antisemitism in the European Union. The EUMC had published two reports that spring.¹⁶⁹ Their findings documented that violent antisemitic attacks were motivated by tensions in the Middle East, but Foxman later wrote, the EUMC “downplayed this new element in anti-Semitism in Europe.”¹⁷⁰ He took issue with the reports’ assertion that “... the largest group of the perpetrators of antisemitic activities appears to be young, disaffected white Europeans.”¹⁷¹

Foxman and the ADL felt that what was “missing from these stories were the revelations of the actual report – of the ‘new’ nature of anti-Semitism.”¹⁷² He argued that violent incidents were being primarily perpetrated by Muslim immigrant youth, and expressed concern over the report’s failure to identify anti-Zionism as antisemitism.¹⁷³

The ADL was not the only American Jewish organization concerned with developments in Europe. On March 26, 2004—at approximately the same time that the EUMC released its report—the American Jewish Committee (AJC) released its own report, which found that “the pronounced increase in animosity towards Jews and Israel across Western Europe concludes that many of those who denounce Zionism, the Jewish national movement that led to the creation of Israel, are in fact using that as subterfuge for propagating anti-Semitism.”¹⁷⁴

As part of the EUMC’s efforts to build bridges and increase transatlantic dialogue, EUMC director Beate Winkler spoke at the AJC’s 11th International Leadership Conference on May 9, 2004. The conference’s focus was “Confronting Antisemi-

tism—Mobilizing Governments.” The executive director of the AJC had spoken at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe’s Conference on Antisemitism just a few weeks earlier.¹⁷⁵ In her presentation, Winkler said:

*The situation in the Middle East clearly has an impact on antisemitic patterns of behaviour in Europe—after the Israeli incursion into Jenin, for example, there was a marked rise in antisemitic incidents in Europe. Our report makes a clear statement: criticism towards Israel can become antisemitic, but it is not so per se. The context must always be considered. But, for example, the demonization of Israel and the denial of its right to exist are clearly antisemitic in our view.*¹⁷⁶

Winkler concluded her presentation remarking, “The current situation regarding antisemitism in some European countries cannot be linked only to the situation in the Middle East.”¹⁷⁷

As the EUMC was disseminating its findings to American audiences, the United States government was conducting its own inventory of antisemitic incidents from July 1, 2003 to December 15, 2004.¹⁷⁸ The U.S. Department of State issued its “Report on Global Anti-Semitism” on January 5, 2005, underscoring its commitment to eradicating antisemitism, as well as providing a country-by-country overview of antisemitic incidents and trends.¹⁷⁹

In the report, the United States identified four main sources of global antisemitism in recent years:

- *Traditional anti-Jewish prejudice that has pervaded Europe and some countries in other parts of the world for centuries. This includes ultra-nationalists and others who assert that the Jewish community controls governments, the media, international business, and the financial world.*
- *Strong anti-Israel sentiment that crosses the line between objective criticism of Israeli policies and anti-Semitism.*
- *Anti-Jewish sentiment expressed by some in Europe’s growing Muslim population, based on long-standing antipathy toward both Israel and Jews, as well as Muslim opposition to developments in Israel and the occupied territories, and more recently in Iraq.*
- *Criticism of both the United States and globalization that spills over to Israel, and to Jews in general who are identified with both.*¹⁸⁰

The report found that three out of four triggers of antisemitism were tied to criticism and conflict over the State of Israel.

Unlike the EUMC’s reports, the U.S. State Department’s study focused on Middle East tensions and Israel. When reporting on Europe, the State Department acknowledged that far-right groups (neonazis and racial nationalists) in Western Europe still accounted for a significant proportion of attacks

against Jews and Jewish properties. The report differed with the EUMC by saying that

*disadvantaged and disaffected Muslim youths increasingly were responsible for most of the other incidents. This trend appears likely to persist as the number of Muslims in Europe continues to grow while their level of education and economic prospects remain limited. In Eastern Europe, with a much smaller Muslim population, skinheads and others members of the radical political fringe were responsible for most anti-Semitic incidents.*¹⁸¹

Soon after the U.S report was issued, the EUMC established a working definition in March 2005:

The EUMC Working Definition

Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

In addition, such manifestations could also target the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- *Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.*
- *Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.*
- *Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.*
- *Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g., gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).*

- *Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.*
- *Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.*

Examples of the ways in which antisemitism manifests itself with regard to the State of Israel taking into account the overall context could include:

- *Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.*
- *Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.*
- *Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.*
- *Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.*
- *Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the State of Israel.*

However, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as anti-semitic.

Antisemitic acts are criminal when they are so defined by law (for example, denial of the Holocaust or distribution of antisemitic materials in some countries).

Criminal acts are antisemitic when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property—such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries—are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews.

Antisemitic discrimination is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries.

The EUMC's inclusion of criticism of Israel proved to be contentious. In the United Kingdom, starting in the autumn of 2005, government officials began an investigation that became known as "The All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism."¹⁸² Simultaneously, there was also a government effort in the United States to look into antisemitism—though it was restricted to college and university campuses. [For more info on the United States timeline, see "Timeline: The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights."]

In the United Kingdom, the Inquiry operated under the EUMC's working definition of antisemitism in an effort

to consider the evidence on the nature of contemporary antisemitism, evaluate current efforts to confront it, and to consider further measures that might be introduced. The Inquiry's findings, published in September 2006, alerted the public to "a form of anti-Jewish prejudice which takes the form of conversations, discussions, or pronouncements, made in public or private, which cross the line of acceptability." The report termed this type of prejudice "antisemitic discourse" to "describe the widespread change in mood and tone when Jews are discussed, whether in print or broadcast, at universities, or in public or social settings."¹⁸³ The Inquiry reported:

We are concerned that anti-Jewish themes and remarks are gaining acceptability in some quarters in public and private discourse in Britain and there is a danger that this trend will become more and more mainstream. According to a significant amount of evidence we received, it is this phenomenon that has contributed to an atmosphere where Jews have become more anxious and more vulnerable to abuse and attack than at any other time for a generation or longer.¹⁸⁴

Examples of "antisemitic discourse" were described in an extensive discussion.¹⁸⁵ The Inquiry did indeed make an effort to not take sides in a major debate, though emphasizing that the parliamentary initiative was concerned with the effects of prejudice and hostility.

The report further focused on antisemitism on British university campuses. This assessment gives a perspective that shines a productive light on circumstances at their American counterparts. Jewish university students in the United Kingdom were found to be well integrated and a part of campus life. However, the study found that the contemporary situation in the Middle East was causing tensions between members of student bodies on some campuses. In some instances, Jewish students were being intimidated or harassed. "Jewish students have become increasingly alarmed by virulent and unbalanced attacks on the state of Israel and the failure of student bodies and organisations to clearly and forcefully condemn antisemitism when it occurs."¹⁸⁶

The Inquiry also found that though campuses were united in condemning the Far Right when it was antisemitic, "when left wing or pro-Palestinian discourse around the Middle East is manipulated and used as a vehicle for anti-Jewish language and themes, the antisemitism is harder to recognise and define and Jewish students can find themselves isolated and unsupported, or in conflict with large groups of their fellow students."¹⁸⁷ Typical tensions on campus could be attributed to "No Platform" policies, visiting speakers, student union motions, and academic boycotts.¹⁸⁸

It is important to recognize that the "All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry" list of recommendations about how to combat antisemitism on university campuses was delivered not to the government, but to the higher education sector. For its part, the government pledged itself to "helping institutions tackle racial and religious intolerance, including antisemitism, in higher education."¹⁸⁹ Emphasizing that the higher education institutions are "'public authorities' institutions"

and are “individually answerable to the law and for fulfilling their legal duties with regard to equality and diversity,” the government noted that many institutions chose to go further than the letter of the law, tackling antisemitism and racism holistically. The government cited an updated good practice report, saying “Promoting Good Campus Relations: Dealing with Hate Crime and Intolerance” and “Promoting Good Campus Relations: An Institutional Imperative” should be read in tandem.¹⁹⁰ The government response also took an official stand against academic boycotts of Israel, specifically calling out the UCU for its choice to boycott.¹⁹¹

The U.K. government noted that the EUMC definition of antisemitism was “still seen as a work-in-progress that requires further testing and comment from stakeholders as to its practical use and effectiveness in supporting data collection.”¹⁹² As the EUMC transformed into the FRA, follow-up work on the definition was delayed, but the definition was not final as “initial feedback and comments drew attention to several issues that impacted on the effectiveness of the definition as a data collection support tool.” FRA dropped the proposed definition¹⁹³

INTERVIEW

A CONVERSATION WITH DAVID HIRSH ON WHEN ANTI-IMPERIALISM BECOMES ANTISEMITISM

David Hirsh is a Lecturer in Sociology at Goldsmiths College, University of London. He is the author of *Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism: Cosmopolitan Reflections* (2007) and “Law Against Genocide” (2006). Hirsh completed his MA in Philosophy and Social Theory at Warwick University, where he wrote his Ph.D. on Crimes against Humanity and International Law. He was interviewed in June 2009.

Berlet: *It seems that people who think of themselves as anti-racist and of some sort of progressive political bent have a hard time recognizing antisemitism. Even if they recognize antisemitic statements, they have a hard time seeing it in the same context of a broader global anti-racist struggle. Why do you think that is?*

Hirsh: I think people are very good at recognizing some kinds of antisemitism. If it wears a Nazi uniform they understand it, if it's right-wing they understand it, if it's some sort of very simple worldview of racism and anti-racism. If it comes from the Left and it comes from people who are anti-racist, then there's often much more difficulty in recognizing and understanding what's going on. There [are] many reasons for that.

One is that we think of antisemitism as being Nazism. Nazism was actually an unusual form of antisemitism. It was very clear. It allowed no exceptions. It allowed no escape for Jews. Most forms of antisemitism haven't been like that. Christian antisemitism allowed people to convert to Chris-

tianity and therefore make themselves clean. Also, political antisemitism allowed Jews to put themselves on the right side of history. One of the things we shouldn't get too hung up on is the idea that antisemites are all like Adolf Hitler, because they're not.

Berlet: *In recent years, it's been clear that a lot of folks on the left have been part of a global anti-Zionist struggle and they don't seem to recognize the boundaries. There's another question which is embedded within that, [in] which there seems to be a misunderstanding of Zionism as a monolithic project that has remained unchanged since the late 1800s, and that creates all sorts of problems. Can you explain what you've written about that, in terms of the basic misunderstanding of [Zionism] being a monolithic project?*

Hirsh: It's actually very interesting, because although these anti-Zionists think of themselves as being very macho, Marxists [and] historical materialists, yet their narrative and how they explain Zionism is almost solely in terms of ideas. So it'll be explained that Theodore Herzl had an idea in the late 19th century, which will be explained [as] a racist idea that Jews and other people couldn't live together. And every subsequent manifestation of Zionism (or at least of what we don't like about Zionism) is explained in terms of the idea that Herzl had. Now of course, one of the flaws of that kind of reasoning is that material things happened in Europe and in the Middle East and in Russia in the 20th century which transformed Zionism from a whole set of rather utopian movements into a really existing state. So, I think sure, we should look at the ideas and the fight over ideas that have been going on ever since the beginning of Zionism, but we also need to understand the social and material realities of Jewish life.

Berlet: *Clearly one of the most significant things that happened was the Nazi genocide of Jews and others in WWII. The formula that has emerged in anti-Zionist circles recently is that what Israel is doing to the Palestinians, especially in Gaza, is tantamount to what the German Nazis did to the Jews during WWII. That seems to be historically inaccurate, but it also changes the understanding that Zionism changed dramatically after WWII because of the Holocaust.*

Hirsh: Well, one can do all sorts of strange things with analogies. The important thing about Nazism, the reason that Nazism is Nazism in the popular and political imagination, is because it set out to exterminate the Jews. And extermination is a project that's even rather different from mass murder. So Nazism is known for extermination. Now the idea that what is happening in the Israeli-Palestine conflict is anything similar to that is just wrong. There's no extermination, there never was a plan of extermination, and there is no mass murder and there is no genocide. So why do people keep raising that as an analogy?

It seems to me that one of the reasons people raise that as an analogy is because they think it has a particular effect on Jews when it is said that the Jews or Israelis have become similar to those who persecuted them. And of course it does have a particular effect on Jews. It has an effect of upsetting Jews. I think that that's really the point of it. There are all sorts of serious historical analogies for the rise of Jewish and

Palestinian nationalism in the Middle East.

One can look at Europe in the 19th century, one can look at the breakdown of the Ottoman Empire, one can look at the Balkans, one can look at many, many things. It's not similar to Nazism. Why do people say it's similar to Nazism? They say it's similar to Nazism in order to wind up the Jews, so actually the charge that the Israelis are the new Nazis is a kind of Jew-baiting. It's literally that. It is a charge whose function is to upset and to annoy and to wind up.

I also find that it's one of those things people think of, and they actually think they're very clever when they think of it. They say, "The Jews have become the Nazis." There's a kind of kernel behind it [that] one can understand, the idea that if one has been subject to persecution then one should be able to recognize it and one should be less willing to become a part of something like that in the future. But it seems to me a fundamentally flawed kind of logic, partly because one only has to ask the question: What were the Jews supposed to learn at Auschwitz?

The question itself is fundamentally flawed. Auschwitz wasn't any kind of positive learning experience, and the overwhelmingly majority of the Jews who had anything to do with the Holocaust learned nothing from it because they were killed by it. It wasn't a learning experience and it wasn't an experience which made people better, or more left-wing, or more anti-racist. There was no silver lining to the Holocaust.

What did people learn? People learned next time, don't rely on Western civilization to prevent antisemitism and genocide, next time have bigger friends, next time have a state with which you can defend yourself, and next time have more tanks. Now that's not my lesson. It's not my politics.

The idea that the Jews should have learned something from the Holocaust is a kind of category error in thinking about the Jews as one people, as a unity. Because in truth, different Jews learned different things from the Holocaust, and different Jews have different kinds of politics and different kinds of worldviews and different kinds of attitudes to what goes on. And the idea that the Jews collectively should think one thing or learn one thing is problematic. It's an idea which comes up again and again, and I think it doesn't make much sense.

I'm afraid to articulate the thought, what should the blacks have learned from slavery? You just have to articulate the thought to realize what a vile kind of way of thinking it is, yet people say this about the Jews routinely—and some serious people. Jacqueline Rose, the well-known literary theorist and psychoanalyst, has asked these questions in the press in quite a kind of angry way, and has put forward the analogy between Jews and Nazis.

In my own institution, I went down the corridor six months ago and was handed a leaflet saying that what was happening in Gaza was the same as what happened in the Warsaw Ghetto. The leaflet advertise[d] a meeting for students at which a woman who was presented as a Holocaust survivor was going to make this argument. And this meeting was very well-attended.

Because there was a Jewish woman making the argument,

and because she called herself a Holocaust survivor, people really thought that that came with a significant authority. If one raised the question about the appropriateness of that kind of discussion on campus, the answer would be very straightforwardly, "Well [she's] a Holocaust survivor making this argument not us. How can you raise the question in that context?"

Berlet: In terms of the consistency issue. If critics of the idea of the state of Israel—let's define that [as a state resulting from] Zionism [which itself is] a project that has a lot of different historical moments and a lot of different aspects—people will argue that the idea of the state of Israel is itself a form of colonialism and settlerism. And what I find dramatically obvious is that the same people who raise that argument do not raise it in the same way with countries like Australia, New Zealand, or even the United States. And it seems that very often in these discussions people exceptionalize Israel. They run away from logical and sequential arguments that would be much more powerful if you wanted to be a critic, and yet they get away with it.

Hirsh: Well, I think the way you phrase it is very interesting ... There's an old Jewish joke which was around I believe in the 1920s that asks, "What's the definition of a Zionist?" And the answer is a Zionist is one Jew who gives money to a second Jew so a third Jew can live in Palestine. Point being, Zionism was a utopian movement. It was a movement which didn't have much mass purchase in Europe in the 1920s. Why? Because nobody wanted to go live in a swamp on the coastal plain of Palestine.

So Zionism was an idea, it was a political movement which one could be for or one could be against. One could be a Bundist, one could be a socialist—actually all of these movements were movements of the Left, were radical movements, were anti-racist movements. And of course the [political] Right didn't want to have anything to do with any of them.

Zionism was a minority and a rather utopian movement at that time—It was an idea with which one could agree or disagree and enter into discussions.

Things changed. After the experience of antisemitism in Europe, after the Holocaust when Europe attempted to wipe itself clean of Jews, after the pushing out of the Jews from the cosmopolitan cities of the Middle East, after the experience of antisemitism in Russia, after 1948 and the setting up of the state of Israel, after the wars of '48 and '56 and '67 and '73, Israel is no longer an idea, actually.

I think it's very important because Israel is often talked about as though it is an idea or Zionism is an idea or Israel is some kind of a political movement. One will often hear people talking about "the Zionists": the Zionists do this, the Zionists should be driven out, the Zionists think that. ... I don't use the term "the Zionists" in that way, because I don't think Israel is a political movement. Israel is a nation-state, rather like other nation-states. To talk about Israel as though it were a political movement is to ask whether it's a good political movement or a bad political movement. And one doesn't do that with Croatia or with France or with the United States. Is the United States a good idea or a bad idea?

Well, who cares—the United States exists. We oppose destructive kinds of nationalism, we have a political program against racism, blah blah blah. But nation-states are not political movements and Israel isn't a political movement.

Berlet: There are a bunch of settler nations in the world ...

Hirsh: Well, I suspect that the overwhelming majority of nations are settler-nations in some sense. Nations classically and pretty well always have been carved out by national movements, which aim to create an idea of nationhood which defines itself against people who didn't fit into that idea of nationhood.

It's a classic and ordinary history for nation-states, and it's not pleasant anywhere actually, and of course Israel has particular unique features to its history. It's more recent than many states, but not than many others—because after the fall of the Soviet Union, for example, there was another huge wave of nationalism and the creation of nation-states and national self-determination. That came often with the defining of people who didn't fit. So Israel isn't anymore all that new, and isn't in any sense unique.

I think there's quite a lot at stake in the idea that Israel is unique. Antisemitism, I think, has always tried to understand and to construct the Jews as being centrally important to everything that happens in the world. The Jews are not centrally important to everything that happens in the world. Jews are a rather small and rather insignificant group of people, actually.

So antisemitism always created out of them a kind of huge threat, usually through conspiracy theory, or a huge threat because the Jews didn't accept Jesus, or a huge threat because the Jews were heralds of modernity and therefore [behind] the breakdown of traditional values. So Jews [were always constructed] as centrally important to what happened in the world, and they're not. And I think that when one sees the construction of Israel as though it were centrally important to everything that happens in the world, then one is in danger of seeing a similar pattern emerging.

One often sees people who claim that the Israel-Palestine conflict is the key to world peace, or even the key to peace in the Middle East. There was an interesting version of that in the ... *Observer*. The morning after the election in Iran, there was an editorial which was very fresh, nobody really knew what had happened in the election [yet], and the editorial said, "The election may have been stolen by Ahmadinejad—It may have been stolen, there's people in the streets, we don't know what's happened yet, time will tell. Whatever happens, the most important event is Bibi Netanyahu's speech at Bar-Ilan University next week about the peace process."

Now, I don't think that's true—I don't think a rather tedious speech by a rather tedious Israeli politician is more important than the stealing of an election in Iran and the fact that there's a huge mass popular movement against that stealing of that election. Iran is hugely important in its own right, for Iranians. It's an old state with a huge culture of its own, with a democratic tradition of its own, with a revolutionary tradition of its own. It's a state where there's been fighting over democracy for decades, where the bus workers from Tehran

were brutally suppressed about a year ago when they went on strike, where's there a tradition of the Left.

So why would the *Observer* newspaper just kind of say, "Well, we don't know yet what's going to happen in Iran, but the most important thing is Netanyahu?" The reason it does that, I think, is because that there's such a temptation to understand Israelis and Palestinians as being symbolic of much, much bigger, much, much more important things. So the importance of Israelis and Palestinians is blown up out of all proportion.

What comes with that then is an idea that Palestinians become the symbolic oppressed of the whole world, and Israelis and the Jews who argue [on the side of Israel] become symbolic of the oppressors throughout the world. One can see very straightforwardly how that can lead easily to conspiracy theory and to a reconstruction of the Jews as being central to everything that goes wrong in the world. So a lot of these debates about uniqueness are very important because Israel and Palestine are treated as though they were unique by many people, by many anti-Zionists.

Anti-Zionists claim to be universalists and cosmopolitans and anti-nationalists, but in truth, the way they relate to Israel is not the way they relate to anywhere else on the planet. For example, the boycott [sanctions and divestiture movement]. If you look at the debate which happened over the boycott in my trade union recently it was interesting because there was a lot of rhetoric [about] the Israeli incursion into Gaza in December/January [2009] that was very, very unpleasant. The Israelis went in chasing after Hamas fighters and they killed a lot of people who were in and around the targets—[and] of course the targets base themselves in civilian areas.

So the war in Gaza was very, very unpleasant, and in my view the Israelis shouldn't have been doing it. However, a month later in Sri Lanka, the Sri Lankan state did to the Tamil Tigers what the Israelis didn't to Hamas—that is, they went in, they separated the fighters from the civilians, they put the civilians in camps, they killed many thousands of people, they shelled the camps, they finished off the fighters, they took their territory and then they went through the civilians one by one and found the Tamil Tigers and dealt with them.

Now I think that's appalling, and I'm very pleased that the Israelis don't behave like that in Gaza. So why is it that at my union conference there's an emergency motion about Sri Lanka, and people talk reasonable sense about Sri Lanka: people get up and say there's a history of colonialism and a peace movement which fell apart, there's important things we have to understand about the conflict, what we have to do as a trade union is to forge links with Sinhalese and Tamil [the two major ethnic groups] trade unionists, and we need to fight for politics of peace and reconciliation between Tamils and Sinhalese in Sri Lanka. [These are ideas reflecting] perfectly normal [and] reasonable trade union values.

The debate then moves straight on to Israel, and the debate hinges only around the idea of boycotting Israeli academics—the idea that Israeli academics need to be punished and Israelis need to be shown that their academics are not part of a global academic community. What about the University of

Colombo in Sri Lanka? Nothing. So [we have] a much more serious situation in Sri Lanka, but much more serious anger against Israelis than against the Sri Lankan state. And an anger which spreads not only to the Israeli state but to Israeli civil society, because one of the tropes of anti-Zionism is to portray Israel as though there's no distinction between the people and the state. So who do we punish? We punish the people, the academics. Why? Because they are the state.

[That's a] very threatening and menacing view, to say that working-class people or civil society or ordinary people in a city are the state. We don't normally do that. Anti-Zionists do that with Israel and they shouldn't do it.

Berlet: It would seem, conceptually, that attacking two large office buildings in downtown New York would be the same categorical error, that by punishing people in an office building, which is viewed as the center of power, is equally wrong. Once any group looks at a nation-state and says that they are a loci of power and therefore it is legitimate [to argue that] every civilian is a target. That's a collapse of understanding how complicated nations, governments, [and] societies are.

With the issue of Israel it's collapsed even further so that not only is it the state of Israel and the government of Israel and the Israeli people, but Jews worldwide, [who] are all complicit in this "conspiracy."

Hirsh: During the conflict in Gaza, one of the official spokesmen of Hamas actually said publicly that since the Israelis are killing Palestinian children, then the Hamas movement is calling for the killing of Jewish children across the world. One would think that that was a kind of big, important statement from an antisemitic movement, which was promising to kill Jewish children across the world. It wasn't taken seriously by anybody, by anti-racists—nobody expressed surprise or shock. It was just said, "Well, what do the Israelis expect?"

One of the things about 9/11 is that people are able to look symbolically again. The Twin Towers are raised to symbolize something in people's imagination in a similar way that Israelis are raised to symbolize something in people's imagination. But really, who was in the office boxes of the Twin Towers? They were cleaners and technicians and all sorts of people. They weren't all bankers. They weren't all the architects of global capital. And of course similarly—even more clearly—when buses are blown up in Tel Aviv. Rich people in Tel Aviv don't go around in buses [partly] because they get blown up. So there's a symbolism to the blowing up of buses which has nothing to do with the reality of it.

There's a kind of likemindedness to it—"Wasn't it interesting to see the symbolism of capitalism in New York collapse? Isn't it interesting to see the Palestinians gaining some revenge?" It's a kind of simple, likeminded symbolic thinking which has no relation to politics, to a serious political tradition of the left of anti-hegemonic politics which says ... "We have to build a politics that doesn't replicate what we're fighting against."

It's often said, "Well what can one expect from Palestinians who endure occupation? One can only expect that they will be angry with Jews." And I have some sympathy with that,

actually, although in truth many, many Palestinians don't adopt that kind of racist politics. In Palestine there are ... political discussions and many, many people find ways of expressing their politics and their resistance [other] than killing Jews.

Then there's another level [of] that discussion, which is one might say that if you were brought up in a Palestinian refugee camp policed by Jewish Israelis, you might dislike Jews. But what about us, in universities outside of Palestine? What's our responsibility in those discussions? And it seems to me that we have a particular responsibility to stand up against the kind of politics of hatred which is in some sense is understandable within Palestine.

Berlet: A point you've made is that in other forms of racism and oppression—institutionalized or systematic [forms]—it is very unusual to analyze the situation in terms of what the victims are doing to make people hate them. And yet that seems to be part of the equation of discussing not just the state of Israel and the politics of the government of Israel, but the whole Middle East conflict. [This is then] extended out to what is uncarefully described as the Jewish Lobby or the Zionist Lobby.

Hirsh: I think that's a very important point. The argument goes that Israel behaves badly, and I don't disagree with that. I think Israel often behaves badly, it often behaves stupidly, [and] it often behaves in a way which is reckless of Palestinian life. I think in order to organize the kind of occupation that the Israelis find themselves organizing, a sort of daily regime of violence and humiliation and racism just goes along with that territory. That's why it's very important the occupation should come to an end and there should be a settlement between the Israelis and Palestinians.

But having said that, I think the idea that because Israel behaves badly in Palestine, then it's reasonable for people to hate Jews, takes a whole other step. [This] is a logic which people buy into in different kinds of ways, sometimes explicitly and sometimes not. One doesn't do that in other places. If one said, "Well, it's reasonable to be misogynistic because women do nag a lot and they do get annoying, and if they stop nagging people would stop being misogynistic," there's nobody who wouldn't be able to see through that kind of logic.

But the logic which says, "Well Jews behave badly in the Middle East and all over the world; they kind of act as a sort of lobby in order to defend that bad behavior ... and therefore it's not all too surprising that people hate them," then that would be considered as some kind of legitimate argument amongst anti-racist circles. Why? There's no reason for that I think. I think that one has to take seriously the transformation of hostility against human rights abuses into racist forms. One has to take that seriously.

I was in a debate with Seamus Milne who is a *Guardian* columnist ... I think we can go together some distance and I think we can agree that when the Palestinians are involved in fighting Jewish soldiers [...] the hostility which they may feel [can be] manifested in a language of antisemitism or in a trope of antisemitism.

How do we deal with that, how do we understand that? Now

it seems to me that Seamus Milne's argument was what we have to do is translate it back into the language in which it was meant. He invents a rather Stalinist and a rather mystical notion of the real spirit of Palestinian resistance. And the real spirit of Palestinian resistance [Milne says] has been democratic and liberational. If it happens at one time or another to be expressed or manifested in the language of antisemitism, then what we need to do is translate it back into the real language of Palestine of resistance and liberation.

Now, I don't think it's quite as simple as that. You know racism starts with something real in the world. It starts with some real grievance or some real hatred or some real thing and it becomes entrenched into a racial way of thinking. And it's that transformation of real grievance into a racial way of thinking that we have to take apart and we have to oppose. One of the reasons we have to oppose that is because then it becomes a thing in itself. So White people who are worried about poverty or poor housing—if they then translate that into a racist narrative and say, "Well the Blacks are taking our houses, the Blacks are taking our jobs," then one loses any possibility of fighting over good housing and good jobs.

Racism always has some kind of legitimate grievance somewhere in its history. But one has to take seriously the forms that it takes. And if hostility to the occupation in Palestine is articulated through the language of Jew-hatred, then we have to take that seriously.

There was something else I wanted to say, to go back to your question. [It] is the idea of ... institutionalized antisemitism, because I think that's rather important. I don't think people who do antisemitic things or who say antisemitic things in Britain today are Jew-haters. [I don't think] they hate Jews. I think what they do is stumble into antisemitic ways of thinking of which they're not really aware. So I think the question shouldn't be, "Does somebody intend to harm Jews or does someone intend to feel a hatred of Jews?" The question should be, "What is the nature of the arguments people are making?" If they are making a unique argument that Israeli Jews should be excluded from campuses, or if they're saying Israel is the uniquely bloodthirsty state, or a uniquely child-killing state—then one should relate that back to where those kinds of ideas come from.

If one is saying that the Jews or the Israel lobby are responsible for the Iraq War, then one has to relate that back. The Jews have been held responsible for every war—there's nothing new about this. In the Hamas charter it says explicitly the Jews were responsible for the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution and [for] global imperialism, for the First World War and for the Second World War ...

In Britain there was a peace movement against the Boer War, and many people in that movement argued that the British Empire was being manipulated by Jewish diamond interests in southern Africa. Now I don't think the people in the Stop The War coalition today have any clue that their talk about the Israel lobby is similar to [the rhetoric of] the people who were in the stop the war coalition at the time of the Boer War ... who said that behind this imperialist action is Jewish diamond interests. There's no conception of the history in which people find themselves. So my point is that

one shouldn't ask, "Do people hate Jews?" And one shouldn't ask, "Do people know what they're doing?" One should ask, "Why are these tropes and these images being replayed and refound [today] when one talks about Israel and Palestine?"

In a sense it shouldn't surprise us—people have a hostility to Israel, some of it legitimate and some of it justified and some of it not. But putting that aside for one moment—if you want to express hostility to Israel and if you want to express hostility to the Jews who you think defend Israel's human rights abuses, then available to you is a huge cultural reservoir of ways in which you can express hostility to Jews.

There's conspiracy theory, there's blood libel, there's a whole set of ways of thinking. Now I can demonstrate that very often in rhetoric which is anti-Israeli, these tropes and these images from previous antisemitisms are replicated. Now if you're replicating these tropes and these ideas and these images you may well not know that you're doing it—you're not doing it because you hate Jews or because you're a convinced racist, you're doing it because there is a reservoir of resources available to you if you want to make propaganda against Jews.

Let me give you one example. There was a poster which ... had a picture of a Jaffa orange, and it had blood coming out of the orange and it said, "Don't buy a Jaffa, squeeze the occupation"—something like that. Now, anybody who knows anything about the history of antisemitism will know immediately that a combination of blood and food and Jews is already problematic. And the message of that poster is very clear—the message of that poster says that Jews are trying to give you food which is contaminated by the blood of the children that they've killed. Don't buy it, don't eat it, it should disgust you, it should encourage you and remind you to boycott Jaffa oranges.

There is a long history of this idea that Jews mix the blood of the people they kill and eat it—mix it with their food. Now, I don't think that the person who designed this rather striking poster knows anything about that. I don't think that the person who designed that poster is an antisemite. It's quite conceivable that [the designer] has never heard of the blood libel. Yet they produce a classic blood libel image.

So this should be a lesson to us that we need to be careful. Yet, just asking people to be careful very often elicits a kind of hostile and angry response. The response is absolutely standard—the response to anyone who raises the issue of antisemitism in relation to hostility to Israel, to Zionism—the response is that "you're accusing me of antisemitism not because you believe there is antisemitism but in order to play the antisemitism card, in order to make it impossible to delegitimize criticism of Israeli human rights abuses."

Anyone who's ever called on this or that antisemitic comment ... produces the same response. The response is to accuse the Jews who raise the issue of antisemitism of doing so in a despicable and dishonest way in order to close down free speech. [It is a] very serious allegation. It's an allegation that in my work I've come across explicitly and implicitly. It's an allegation that says that I'm not an academic ... not a sociologist. I'm just some kind of scribbler for Israel.

This same [experience] happened to Harold Jacobson, the

novelist. Howard made a very serious critique of Caryl Churchill's play *Seven Jewish Children*. The play made an argument that the conflict in Gaza was a result of the neurotic ways in which Jews bring up their children to be unconcerned about the killing of the "other"—about the killing of Palestinian children.

Howard Jacobson made this [serious critique of the play and] he said the play was antisemitic. Caryl Churchill replies, "Well he would say that wouldn't he, it's the usual tactic." Meaning Howard Jacobson [is] not an intellectual, he's not a novelist, he's not interested really in talking about antisemitism. He's really interested in doing is using antisemitism as a kind of despicable tactic to defend Israeli human rights abuses in Gaza.

Berlet: This is a question I struggle with. How do you approach a criticism of Israel or Zionism in a constructive way when you think some form of demonization or scapegoating is involved? Or a conspiracy theory that ties back to these historic tropes about Jews having power and control and plotting subversive [activities]? [Especially when we live in] a society that doesn't teach people about the history of allegation against the "other." A lot of these criticisms that talk about global Jewish power track back to the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. [In the] United States prior to [the Protocols] the same narratives were used against faceless plutocrats during the Populist movement and later deformed into open antisemitism. But all the way back to the late 1700s when in both France and Scotland there were books written that made the exact same allegations against the "Other." In this case being the Freemasons [and the] Illuminati. We as a society have replicated ... these analogues to the Protocols. We know there are techniques people use to demonize an "other," and yet we don't seem to be teaching schoolchildren that this is in fact one of the techniques that they should be aware of and not copy.

Hirsh: I think it's very interesting because I think one of the things about the society in which we live, about modernity, is that it looks a bit like a conspiracy. We live in a world where the power is in the hands of a small number of people, and it looks as though the media does their bidding and does what's in their interests. It looks like the whole of society is set up for the benefit of the powerful. So it's not idiotic to believe in a conspiracy. But there's a history to this, and the history is very interesting.

People like Max Weber and Emil Durkheim and Karl Marx invented structural accounts of how the world works to explain how a minority of people take all the power to themselves which didn't rely on conspiracy theory. I think there's an argument which says sociology itself was invented in order to undercut conspiracy [theory]; and possibly quite explicitly to undercut antisemitic conspiracy theory. Marx—whether you like Marx or you don't like Marx—he offers a structural account of capitalism which doesn't rely on a conspiracy of the few interests. I teach Marx to our first-years, and it's quite difficult to teach because a lot of them they come away with the idea that that's precisely what [Marx] does. They write in their essays, "Well there are a small number of rich people who exploit everybody else," and they come out with conspiracy theory. But of course *Capital* is

much more interesting than that.

More recently ... there's something interesting that's happened to Marx and Durkheim and Weber and social theory, which is that the critiques of social theory and structure have ... come to the fore.

It's actually very easy to critique anything about the world that exists.

You and me, we're clever guys; we can sit down and critique democracy. And we can critique law, and we can critique social theory. We can show that the powerful are in charge even if law says that everybody is equal. We can take very thing apart. We can even take the idea of truth apart. We can show how truth is related to power, and how knowledge is related. We can do all that.

The problem is that if one critiques everything simply negatively then one ends up with nothing. I think it's a kind of rather frightening view that people like George Orwell, for example, were very aware of. George Orwell was very aware that the people who critiqued everything in bourgeois society the most successfully were the totalitarians.

It was the totalitarians who said, "We don't believe in bourgeois law, it's just a trick. We don't believe in bourgeois democracy, it's just a trick, we don't believe in truth, it's just a trick. We know who really runs the world."

Those kinds of ideas, and the collapse of structural ways of trying to understand the world, [have made it] illegitimate to try to understand the world. And this is true on a popular level, but also in a serious professorial level.

So it doesn't surprise me that when everything is critiqued then we move back to conspiracy theory, because all we are left with is power. If all notions of authority or democracy or law or anything become dissolved into power, then the question becomes, "Well, who are the powerful?" And then take your pick: the Jews, the gays, the Muslims, whatever.

But I think there is a kind of bigger underlying problem, which leads towards this way of thinking, and I think it's a cynicism about the values of democracy, but [also about the] values of the Left. The Left I was brought up in was a place where we tried to understand how the world worked, and we tried to change the world. Changing human beings was part of changing the world. Now it's evident that there is a totalitarian moment to that, as well. But I think we need to keep hold of that problem, but also keep hold of the original problem.

As my good friend Robert Fine [in *Political Investigations: Hegel, Marx, Arendt*] puts it, we have to hold the critique of existing society in one hand—and we also have to understand the critique of the critique. We have to understand that the people who have most successfully critiqued existing society were the totalitarians: the Stalinists and the Nazis. So I don't think there's anything surprising about the rise of conspiracy theory.

EXPLORING ISLAMOPHOBIA

BY CHIP BERLET

OUR CAMPUS INTERVIEWS REVEALED a startling level of ignorance about Islam and the ethno-cultural practices of Muslims from a wide array of national and family backgrounds. Rohany Nayan, a doctoral candidate at the University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Education, works with the interfaith Lubar Institute for the Study of Abrahamic Religions on campus. She told us that for a campus that considers itself sophisticated, she found the level of ignorance on campus interesting:

Now I'm at UW Madison, which is well-known for liberal thoughts, and being Democrats and all that kind of stuff. But even among the professors, not only my department but the classes I've gone to or the social functions I've gone to, it's really scary to think of the statements that come out of their mouths. I'm just like WHOA! You know, you might want to look into it a little more before you make that statement. And imagine, this is a professor, and imagine uninformed Americans, and especially Americans who have never met or spoken to a Muslim, imagine the misunderstanding that can occur.¹⁹⁴

This theme of ignorance shaping attitudes will come up repeatedly in this section.

In the decade since 9/11, individuals from a variety of Muslim faith traditions and national origins have experienced a significant rise in their experience of Islamophobia. In our field research, Muslim and Arab students described instances where non-Muslims expressed the belief that they were being trained as terrorists or were abusing their college education as a cover for terrorist activity. Muslim college students have also been caught up in more general anti-immigrant rhetoric and have heard strangers express doubts about whether they are in the United States legally. Assertions such as historian Samuel Huntington's argument that Islam is "a different civilization whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power" go unchallenged in many quarters. The off-campus media environment portrays images of Muslims as either hyper-violent, hypersexual or sexually repressed, or a combination of the three. Students and occasionally Muslim college administrators, staff, and even professors hear and are hurt by these canards and can be at a loss about how to respond to them.

Moreover, few Americans seem to make distinctions among Muslims with origins in different countries. Similarly, they fail to distinguish among Arabs and Arab-Americans with different national origins, religions, or secular beliefs.

WHAT IS ISLAMOPHOBIA?

Most groups in the United States that represent the interests of Muslims use the term Islamophobia in the same way

that groups that represent the interests of Jews use the term antisemitism.¹⁹⁵ Definitions vary.¹⁹⁶ One of the most commonly used definitions comes from the Runnymede Trust in Great Britain, which explored the complex interactions among Islamophobic prejudice, discrimination, exclusion, and violence. The Trust states that Islamophobia is being expressed when:

- Islam is seen as a monolithic bloc, static and unresponsive to change.
- Islam is seen as separate and "other." It does not have values in common with other cultures, is not affected by them and does not influence them.
- Islam is seen as inferior to the West. It is seen as barbaric, irrational, primitive, and sexist.
- Islam is seen as violent, aggressive, threatening, supportive of terrorism, and engaged in a "clash of civilizations."
- Islam is seen as a political ideology and is used for political or military advantage.
- Criticisms made of "the West" by Islam are rejected out of hand.
- Hostility towards Islam is used to justify discriminatory practices towards Muslims and exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society.
- Anti-Muslim hostility is seen as natural or normal.¹⁹⁷

Contemporary Islamophobia rests on a long history of conflict. As the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia explained:

*Hostility towards Islam and Muslims has been a feature of European societies since the eighth century of the Common Era. It has taken different forms at different times and has fulfilled a variety of functions. For example, the hostility in Spain in the fifteenth century was not the same as the hostility that was expressed and mobilised in the Crusades. Nor was the hostility during the time of the Ottoman Empire or that which prevailed throughout the age of empires and colonialism. **It may be more apt to speak of "Islamophobias" rather than of a single phenomenon** [emphasis ours]. Each version of Islamophobia has its own features as well as similarities with, and borrowings from, other versions.¹⁹⁸*

It is important to be aware of how Islam was seen in Europe over many centuries, because these tropes are the basis for most contemporary narratives about violent Islam threatening the survival of American and/or broader Western culture. Some Christians who assert that Islam is a threat to national survival argue that the ultimate goal of Islam (seen as monolithic and based on a specific reading of Islamic sacred text) is to establish a global caliphate and subdue all other nations and religious entities. They appear to find no irony in the fact that using this interpretive model, the same can be said about Christianity.

A few days after 9/11, conservative columnist Ann Coulter wrote:

*We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity. We weren't punctilious about locating and punishing only Hitler and his top officers. We carpet-bombed German cities; we killed civilians. That's war. And this is war.*¹⁹⁹

Coulter combined tropes about the Crusades and the war against Fascism in a single Islamophobic package.

As we describe elsewhere, a national network of individuals and groups with access to the major commercial media produces and circulates spurious claims about Islam and about Muslims living in the United States. This network also publicizes campus incidents involving antisemitism. Its claims range from biased to alarmist to demonstrably false. While there is a broad and troubling circulation of antisemitic materials easily available over the internet from both domestic and international sources, this ad hoc collection does not rise to the same level of systematic circulation of the Islamophobic materials in America's commercial media.

AFTER 9/11

THE STATISTICS

The U.S. Department of Justice compilation of crimes based on prejudice reveals that while Muslims make up around one percent of the U.S. population, some 14 percent of crimes based on religious discrimination target Muslims. A Pew Research Center survey found that a few months after the terror attacks on September 11, 2001, 25 percent of those polled felt that the religion of Islam itself was "more likely than others to encourage violence." A year later that figure was 44 percent, and it has fluctuated around that percentage through March 2011, when it was 40 percent.²⁰⁰ According to a 2011 Pew study, most "conservatives [and] Tea Party supporters link Islam to violence." Tea Party supporters polled at 67 percent; conservative Republicans at 66 percent; and White evangelicals at 66 percent as compared to White mainline churchgoers, who were at 43 percent. Among the least biased were Black people and liberal Democrats, who polled at 24 and 29 percent respectively.

THE RHETORIC

After 9/11, a number of American right-wing evangelicals excoriated Islam in the broadest terms. According to Paul S. Boyer, by 2003, "anti-Islamic rhetoric" was "at fever pitch."²⁰¹ Boyer argued that there was a "shadowy but vital way that belief in biblical prophecy is helping mold grass-roots attitudes toward current U.S. foreign policy."²⁰²

There were also plenty of public pronouncements by Christian Right leaders articulating Islamophobic sentiments. For example:

- Paul Weyrich and William Lind of the Free Congress Foundation wrote that Islam was a "very evil, wicked religion," and that "Islam is, quite simply, a religion of war... [American Muslims] should be encouraged

to leave.... [They] are a fifth column in this country."²⁰³

- Evangelical leader Franklin Graham, son of the world-famous revivalist preacher Billy Graham, stated that "Muslims pray to a different God... Islam is a very evil and wicked religion."²⁰⁴
- The Rev. Pat Robertson, founder of the Christian Coalition, said of Muslims, "They want to coexist until they can control, dominate and then, if need be, destroy."
- U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft said that "Islam is a religion in which God requires you to send your son to die for him. Christianity is a faith in which God sends his son to die for you."²⁰⁵

Robertson further explained his views by stating:

*I think Osama bin Laden is probably a very dedicated follower of Muhammad. He's done exactly what Muhammad said to do, and we disagree with him obviously, and I'm sure many moderate Muslims do as well, but you can't say the Muslim religion is a religion of peace. It's not.*²⁰⁶

ARABOPHOBIA INTERSECTS WITH ISLAMOPHOBIA

Islamophobia is often mixed in with Arabophobia.²⁰⁷ We know very little about the extent of Islamophobia's intersection with anti-Arab prejudice. In the United States, few seem to make distinctions among Muslims from different national origins or Arabs and Arab-Americans from different national cultures. For example, Sikhs, who are almost never from ethnic Arab families and are never Muslim, are often lumped into this category as targets of bigotry.²⁰⁸

A guide written for reporters at the *Detroit Free Press* offers these thoughts:

*Like all people, Arab Americans are too often described in simplistic terms. Although the Arab culture is one of the oldest on Earth, it is, in many parts of the United States, misunderstood. There are no easy, one-size-fits-all answers. Culture, language and religion are distinct qualities that act in different ways to connect Arabs, and to distinguish them from one another.*²⁰⁹

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN THE LARGER SOCIETY

The terrorists who carried out the 9/11 attacks justified their violence in the name of Islam. The attacks generated a tremendous sense of anxiety and fear in the United States. Millions of people who had only the sketchiest notion of Islam as a religion now faced the reality that the terrorism was carried out by Muslims. Bigots seized on the fact that a handful of Muslims perpetrated the attacks on 9/11 to indict the entire religion of Islam.

Our literature review and research suggest that there are significant levels of Islamophobic prejudice among some people in the following sectors in the United States: ²¹⁰

- Right-wing Republicans; ²¹¹
- The Christian Right; ²¹²
- Militarists, neoconservatives, and supporters of hardline Israeli government policies; ²¹³
- Right-wing radio and television pundits and demagogues; ²¹⁴
- Biased anti-terrorism experts and trainers; ²¹⁵
- Tea Party supporters and other participants in the broader Patriot Movement; ²¹⁶
- Xenophobic, anti-immigrant, and White Nationalist groups. ²¹⁷

These sectors do not comprise a united alliance, and some groups are openly critical of—and at times vociferously oppositional toward—groups in other sectors. At the same time, groups can work on parallel and complementary projects despite political disagreements, thus reinforcing the outcome without any cooperation. In a few cases there is direct cooperation, in a myriad of fluid formats. ²¹⁸ One that stands out in producing Islamophobia is the alliance of the neoconservatives with the Christian Right. ²¹⁹

The domestic sectors listed above are reinforced in their beliefs by a decade-long global campaign to demonize Muslims and the religion of Islam built on top of pre-existing prejudice against Muslims. We argue that the post-9/11 campaign uses Islamophobia as an effective way to mobilize a constituency on the political Right in the United States. The Islamophobic claims that originate in these sectors are introduced to campus by students who have learned them from peers, parents, and major media. These students sometimes invite speakers who share these ideas to campus.

APOCALYPTIC CHRISTIAN RIGHT ISLAMOPHOBIA

Israel, as a modern nation-state, was created in 1948, but it was not until the 1970s that some fundamentalist Christians began an earnest discussion as to whether or not the return of Jews to the Promised Land was a sign of the approaching apocalyptic End Times. The spark was a book titled *The Late Great Planet Earth*, published in 1970 by a respected Christian publishing house. ²²⁰ The basic narrative claim was that the creation of Israel started the clock ticking on the End Times battle between good and evil, after which triumphant Christians would welcome the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. In this scenario, devout Christians were seen as mandated by God to defend Israel.

Paul S. Boyer, who studies Christian apocalyptic beliefs, argues that the relationship between U.S. foreign policy and Christian utilization of Bible prophecy is too often overlooked in analyzing political trends involving the Middle East. According to Boyer, “religion has always had an enormous, if indirect and underrecognized, role in policy formation.” ²²¹ Boyer’s views are shared by other authors. ²²²

Different polling questions produce different results, but we think it is fair to estimate there are somewhere between 45 and 100 million “born again” or evangelical Christians in the United States. In the 2000 presidential election, 32 percent of the votes George W. Bush received came from church-going White evangelicals; and 14 percent of all voters identified themselves as part of the Christian Right. ²²³

Starting in the late 1970s, the Christian Right became part of the New Right project, a coalition of ultra-conservatives, corporate conservatives, libertarians, and others who swept Ronald Reagan into the presidency. ²²⁴ The Christian Right is composed primarily of politically conservative Protestants mobilized into a social movement around what they call “traditional” moral and family values. Conservative political strategists have linked this religious social movement to a political movement that seeks political power through elections and legislation. The Christian Right and its allies in the Republican Party have used fear, demonization, and scapegoating as part of a strategy of “mobilizing resentment.” ²²⁵

By the 1990s there was another growing theo-political movement known as Christian Zionism, which today is embraced by many in the Christian Right as well as a number of conservative Republican politicians, at least in terms of political rhetoric. ²²⁶ This movement mobilizes conservative Christians to support the most hardline political forces in Israel regarding Palestinian demands for control of land. ²²⁷

Christian Zionism can easily spill over into religious bigotry against Muslims. Within Christian Zionism, there are those who tie the religion of Islam to the forces of Satan building an earthly End Times army to battle Godly Christians for control of the planet. As an example, Boyer points to Hal Lindsey’s prophecy novel, *Blood Moon*, published in 1996. In the novel, “Israel, in retaliation for a planned nuclear attack by an Arab extremist, launches a massive thermo-nuclear assault on the entire Arab world. Genocide, in short, becomes the ultimate means of prophetic fulfillment.” ²²⁸ In Christian bookstores it is easy to find books linking Muslims to Satanic plots of deception, including books portraying Islam as the false religion of the Antichrist.

Popular Christian fundamentalist author Tim LaHaye began his career writing books exposing the sinister conspiracy of liberals promoting secular humanism, immorality, and subversion. ²²⁹ LaHaye then linked up with Jerry B. Jenkins to create the *Left Behind* series of Christian apocalyptic novels, which have sold more than 70 million copies.

Gershom Gorenberg, a journalist and scholar working in Israel, blasts the *Left Behind* authors because they

promote conspiracy theories; they demonize proponents of arms control, ecumenicalism, abortion rights and everyone else disliked by the Christian right; and they justify assassination as a political tool. Their anti-Jewishness is exceeded by their anti-Catholicism. Most basically, they reject the very idea of open, democratic debate. In the world of Left Behind, there exists a single truth, based on a purportedly literal reading of Scripture; anyone who disagrees with that truth is deceived or evil. ²³⁰

The main villain of the *Left Behind* series of books, Gore-bergs notes, is “Nicolae Carpathia, the man who turned the United Nations into a one-world government with himself as dictator,” on behalf of Satan. In fact, Carpathia is revealed in the book as the dreaded Antichrist. LaHaye also publishes a newsletter on the possible fulfillment of Biblical prophecy.²³¹

A significant publication describing the connection between apocalyptic prophecy and U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East is the glossy magazine *Midnight Call: The Prophetic Voice for the Endtimes*. Promotional mailings have included letters headlined: “The Prophetic Return to Israel;” “Islam, Israel and the USA;” and “Revealing the Hidden Truth about the Middle East.” The latter is an advertisement for the book *Saddam’s Mystery Babylon: Revealing the Hidden Agenda of the Most Sinister Entity in the Bible*.²³²

Boyer elaborates on this fixation on Saddam Hussein:

Anticipating George W. Bush, prophecy writers in the late 20th century also quickly zeroed in on Saddam Hussein. If not the Antichrist himself, they suggested, Saddam could well be a forerunner of the Evil One. In full-page newspaper advertisements during the Persian Gulf War of 1991, the organization Jews for Jesus declared that Saddam “represents the spirit of Antichrist about which the Bible warns us...”²³³

Other scholars have examined how apocalypticism in the Christian Right functioned during the Presidential administration of George W. Bush, especially after 9/11.²³⁴

While bashing Arabs and Muslims as possible agents of the Antichrist is common in this sector of Christian fundamentalism, special warnings are also issued against global peace efforts by the European Union and the United Nations, seen as part of the Antichrist’s plan for a “New World Order” and one-world government.

SUBVERSION PANICS, PATRIOTS, AND PUNDITS

As mentioned above, there is a national network of individuals and groups with access to the major commercial media that produce and circulate claims about Islam, Muslims living in the United States, and campus incidents involving antisemitism. In an alarming number of cases, individuals and groups have produced dubious claims against Muslims that range from biased to alarmist to demonstrably false. We have provided in this report short sketches of some major Islamophobes. No similar network with access to the major commercial media exists to produce and circulate biased claims about Judaism or Jews living in the United States.

A similar and sometimes overlapping network of individuals and groups routinely demonize liberals and leftists.²³⁵ These biased claims were picked up from media such as Fox News and AM radio talk shows and became purported statements of fact at Town Hall confrontations and within the Tea Party Movement. Major media figures included Glenn Beck, Rush Limbaugh, and the late Andrew Breitbart.

In the 2008 presidential race, Islamophobic scare tactics appeared in several forms, ranging from “nefarious whisper

campaigns” directed at then Sen. Barack Obama to the “distribution of the anti-Muslim propaganda DVD *Obsession* to 28 million newspaper subscribers in swing states” according to Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting.²³⁶

This reached an absurd nadir in 2008, when Jonah Goldberg claimed in his book *Liberal Fascism* that liberals and their socialist allies were pushing America down a slippery slope toward tyranny through totalitarian social planning and political correctness.²³⁷ An authentic academic expert on fascism, Robert Paxton, debunked Goldberg’s definitions of fascism and scolded Goldberg for capitulating to the “the sloppy current American usage by which ‘liberal’ means usually pejoratively nowadays, any and all of the various components of the Left, from anarchists and Marxists to moderate Democrats.... Goldberg stereotypes liberals to make them abstract, uniform, robotic.”²³⁸

In terms of the campus debate over antisemitism, many Republican strategists and elected officials owe a political debt to the Christian Right and support campaigns against Leftist ideas on campus with slogans against “political correctness,” “multiculturalism,” the purported anti-Jewish bias of Middle East and Islamic Studies programs, and antisemitism as expressed in campus antiwar and pro-Palestinian demonstrations.

The result, somewhat unexpectedly, is that College Republican clubs are often the organizational nexus not only for confrontational rhetoric and actions that attack liberal and leftist students; but also integrate this with support for hardline policies in Israel and U.S. military intervention in the Middle East. All too often this is accompanied by slogans, signs, statements, and invited speakers who portray Islam in ways that are at least overly-simplified and stereotyped and at worst naked displays of Islamophobic bigotry.

A detailed study of this factor was released as the report *Same Hate, New Target: Islamophobia and its Impact in the United States; January 2009–December 2010*. The report was issued jointly by the Center for Race & Gender at the University of California, Berkeley and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR).²³⁹ The report lists the variety of ways Islamophobia was constructed as a political tool:

National security fears connected to 9/11 were transformed into political ads fashioned by right-wing ideologues focusing on the purported domestic threat and role or status of the American Muslim community in the “war on terrorism.” The real strategic goal behind this approach is to increase the voter turnout of their base while chipping away margins from the opponents or alternatively bringing more of the independents into their camp. Islamophobia worked as planned and Tea Party and...[Republican] candidates in general rode the effects to statistical margins of victory in key races.

The 2010 elections witnessed a rising popular tide brought about by the deep recession, massive lay-offs, and a nasty healthcare debate. This popular tide in-part coalesced into the Tea Party and was strategically redirected into a political campaign opposing President Barack Obama’s policies across the board. This strat-

egy found resonance in the utilization and deployment of Islamophobia.

In addition, during the midterm elections in 2010, the Center for Race and Gender “documented the following manifestations” of Islamophobia:

- Using the words Muslim and terrorist interchangeably or alternatively depicting Muslims as being “terrorist sympathizers.”
- Making Islam synonymous with terrorism; referencing Islam as something foreign and to be feared, the “other.”
- Politicizing the Park51 center in New York and wrongly referring to it as a “Victory Mosque” and “Ground Zero Mosque.”
- Describing Islam as “a totalitarian, theocratic, political ideology,” or a cult.
- Making Sharia into a major political issue and putting it on the ballot in Oklahoma; describing Sharia as a “cancer.” Asserting, despite a lack of supporting evidence, that Muslims are “taking over” and America faces an imminent enforcement of Sharia law.
- Using the internet as a major hub for Islamophobia production, dissemination, and then influencing the debate in the mainstream, without [discussants] fact checking or ascertaining the validity of any claims.
- Using Muslim-sounding or Arabic names and references to mosques in ads to imply a sinister design or conspiracy related to targeted candidates.
- Making association with mainstream Muslim groups into a point of attack. Using “the un-indicted co-conspirator” label against a number of individuals and organizations.
- Weaving the Palestine-Israel conflict into Islamophobia production in the campaigns.
- Returning political donations from Muslims in order that political candidates not be identified as having cozy relations with Muslims.²⁴⁰

CONSTRUCTING ISLAMOPHOBIA ON CAMPUS

The stereotyping of Muslims as terrorists since the attacks on September 11, 2001, has direct implications for Muslim students whether they are immigrants or American-born. Muslim students also face the ongoing anti-immigrant backlash that typically scapegoats immigrants during a recession as well as White racism toward people seen as “non-White.”

The experience of Islamophobia by Muslim students in the United States varies greatly by campus. A survey of students affiliated with the Muslim Student Association was conducted by Pamela Taylor, a member of our field research design team. The results showed that many Muslim students have experienced incidents which they interpret as biased

and the result of some form of Islamophobia.

In the worst cases, there have been physical assaults. In 2007 at Guilford College in North Carolina, a group of six football players was charged with beating up three Palestinian students.²⁴¹ Assessing this overall situation, Brian Levin, director of the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University, San Bernardino, suggested, “What we have here is a climate where Islamophobia is not only considered mainstream, it’s considered patriotic by some, and that’s something that makes these kinds of attacks even more despicable.”²⁴²

However, it is worth saying that just as in the case of Jewish students facing antisemitism, Muslim students experience at least two types of incidents: those which are the product of ignorance and bias fostered by cultural stereotypes in the media and public discourse and those which are directly and deliberately malicious.

Among the first group of Islamophobic incidents are the regular challenges Muslim women face in wearing hijab and, as mentioned previously, the voicing of concerns that Muslim and Arab students are abusing their college education as a cover for terrorist activity or to return home and plan more terrorist attacks. There is also suspicion that Muslim students may be in the United States without the proper documentation.²⁴³ On analysis, most of these Islamophobic incidents seemed to be unpremeditated, and are types of idiosyncratic behaviors that can be overcome by educational and intercultural, bridge-building efforts.

The more volatile incidents occur when bigoted Islamophobes are quoted or brought onto campus as “experts.” For instance, we have seen situations where sponsoring speakers with a history of Islamophobic statements (such as claims that Islam is inherently violent) or screening Islamophobic films or videos (such as the film *Obsession*), can be a tactic to punish “liberals” and pro-Palestinian activists on campus.

This type of deliberate, Islamophobic behavior is exemplified by David Horowitz’s “Islamofascism Awareness Week.” [See profile of Horowitz elsewhere in this report.]

At the University of Washington, Muslim Student Association members reported they felt safe on campus, but experienced prejudice when they returned home from school. “Seattle is different, we are fortunate, Seattle is a very educated” and open city, said one student. All agreed that any sort of overt anti-Muslim incident was “very rare” both on campus and in the surrounding community. When returning home from campus, however, these students found their families and home communities pressured by prejudice and stereotyping from major media and organized groups critical of Islam. One student remarked that it was shocking that no one seemed to “fact check” false anti-Muslim information in major media and noted that this was “adding to the conspiracy theories” about Muslims that were circulating among the general public. Social science studies have shown that the media can play both negative and positive roles in challenging prejudicial public perceptions.²⁴⁴

ISLAMOPHOBIC EVENTS ON CAMPUS

The film *Obsession: Radical Islam’s War Against the West* has been shown on numerous campuses, where it is some-

times met by protests. Its supporters say it is a fearless look at radical Islam. Its detractors claim it is anti-Muslim and bigoted. As a documentary, *Obsession* clearly is one-sided and not hesitant to use provocative polemical techniques. For example, *Obsession* features scenes of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Muslim children being encouraged to become suicide bombers, interspersed with those of Nazi rallies.

Many Young Republican campus groups and other ultra-conservative campus political groups utilize the film and its notoriety to obtain publicity and message broadcasting, sometimes involving as allies more broadly-focused Jewish groups on campus. A November 2007 screening of *Obsession* at the University of Florida was "organized by Law School Republicans, College Republicans, Gators for Israel, Jewish Student Union, and Jewish Law Students Association," reported the *St. Petersburg Times*.²⁴⁵

The conditions required for public screenings by the distributors do not appear to encourage a broad dialogue on campus. For example, according to the *New York Times*:

When a Middle East discussion group organized a showing at New York University [in 2007], it found that the distributors of "Obsession" were requiring those in attendance to register at IsraelActivism.com, and that digital pictures of the events be sent to Hasbara Fellowships, a group set up to counter anti-Israel sentiment on college campuses.

"If people have to give their names over to Hasbara Fellowships at the door, that doesn't have the effect of stimulating open dialogue," Jordan J. Dunn told the *Times*. "Rather, it intimidates people and stifles dissent." Dunn is the president of the Middle East Dialogue Group at New York University which involves both Jews and Muslims.²⁴⁶

Walid Shoebat, identified in *Obsession* as a former Palestine Liberation Organization terrorist, compares radical Islamists to Nazi Germans, according to the *St. Petersburg Times*.²⁴⁷

A 2008 article in the *Jerusalem Post* reported:

*The BBC, Fox News and CNN have all presented Shoebat as a terrorist turned peacemaker, interviewing him as someone uniquely capable of providing insight into the terrorist mindset.*²⁴⁸

The *Jerusalem Post* then detailed a number of discrepancies in and challenges to Shoebat's story of his early life. When Shoebat spoke at the University of California, Davis in February 2007, the Muslim Student Association (MSA) charged Shoebat with "spreading hate by claiming the majority of the world's Muslims support radical Islam," wrote United Press International.²⁴⁹

Shoebat is one of several speakers—the others are Kamal Saleem and Zachariah Anani—who claim to be reformed terrorists. The *Jerusalem Post* noted:

The three "ex-terrorists" have appeared previously at Harvard and Columbia universities and, most recently, at the US Air Force Academy in Colorado, in Febru-

*ary, at a conference whose findings, the organizers said, would be circulated at the Pentagon and among members of Congress and other influential figures.*²⁵⁰

The *New York Times* noted that "professors and others who have heard the three men speak in the United States and Canada said some of their stories border on the fantastic."²⁵¹

In response to Shoebat's speech, the MSA at UC Davis scheduled DePaul University Professor Norman Finkelstein as a speaker, which elicited protests from Jewish students. According to UPI:

*Finkelstein is the son of Holocaust victims but also author of The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering. He denies critics' claims he is a Holocaust denier and said his message is Israel should retreat to its original borders.*²⁵²

ISLAMO-FASCISM AWARENESS WEEK

Since 9/11 a right-wing Islamophobic "Anti-Jihad" movement has developed in the United States. This report includes profiles of a number of leading Islamophobic pundits. Additional relevant information is contained in the campus profiles of Columbia University and Temple University. Here we look specifically at one aspect of the campaign by David Horowitz. Horowitz claims that leftist professors are imposing ideological orthodoxy on college campuses.

In January 2006 the conservative publishing house Regnery published Horowitz's *The Professors: The 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America*. The book includes references to Islam and the publisher claimed on its website that "Horowitz blows the cover on academics" including those who "promote the views of the Iranian mullahs," "support Osama bin Laden," and "advocate the killing of ordinary Americans." The Regnery website continued, "Horowitz exposes 101 academics representative of thousands of radicals who teach our young people who also happen to be alleged ex-terrorists, racists, murderers, sexual deviants, anti-Semites, and al-Qaeda supporters."²⁵³

In a lengthy and serious article in the UK's *Guardian* newspaper, Gary Younge dismissed the Horowitz book as "a sloppy series of character assassinations, relying more heavily on insinuation, inference, suggestion and association than it does on fact." According to Younge, "Evidence to back up his central argument that these [left-wing] leanings are at all related to a teacher's ability to be fair, balanced or competent in class—are non-existent."²⁵⁴

Younge cautioned that unlike the 1950s "McCarthy era, most threats to academic freedom—real or perceived—do not, yet, involve the state" and lack widespread public support. Yet he turns to Ellen Schrecker, author of *Many Are the Crimes McCarthyism in America*,²⁵⁵ who argues that some comparisons are apt. "In some respects it's more dangerous," argued Schrecker. "McCarthyism dealt mainly with off-campus political activities," but the focus on what is going on in the classroom "is very dangerous because it's reaching into the core academic functions of the university, particularly in

Middle-Eastern studies.”²⁵⁶ Younge concluded that “a growing number of apparently isolated incidents suggests a mood which is, if nothing else, determined, relentless and aimed openly at progressives in academe.”²⁵⁷

Younge noted without comment that “Horowitz accuses those who accuse him of McCarthyism of being McCarthyites themselves.” According to Horowitz, “All they do is tar and feather me with slanders [it’s] the politics of Stalinism.”

What Horowitz peddles, nonetheless, is McCarthyism in the form of an ideological witch hunt, aimed primarily at campuses and using the tactic of bullying and panicking college administrators into allowing his destructive and reckless claims to be circulated in a way that maximizes media exposure and fundraising.

Consider the frame and narrative used in a blurb for *The Professors*: “Today’s radical academics aren’t the exception—they’re legion. And far from being harmless, they spew violent anti-Americanism, preach anti-Semitism, and cheer on the killing of American soldiers and civilians all the while collecting tax dollars and tuition fees to indoctrinate our children.”²⁵⁸ These same frames and narratives helped set up Horowitz’s next big project: “Islamofascism Awareness Week.” The “Student’s Guide to Hosting Islamofascism Awareness Week, 2007” issued the marching orders:

During the week of October 22–26, 2007, the nation will be rocked by the biggest conservative campus protest ever – Islamofascism Awareness Week, a wake-up call for Americans on 200 university and college campuses.

The purpose of this protest is as simple as it is crucial: to confront the two Big Lies of the political left: that George Bush created the war on terror and that Global Warming is a greater danger to Americans than the terrorist threat. Nothing could be more politically incorrect than to point this out. But nothing could be more important for American students to hear. In the face of the greatest danger Americans have ever confronted, the academic left has mobilized to create sympathy for the enemy and to fight anyone who rallies Americans to defend themselves. According to the academic left, anyone who links Islamic radicalism to the war on terror is an “Islamophobe.” According to the academic left, the Islamofascists hate us not because we are tolerant and free, but because we are “oppressors.”

*If there are other groups on campus who share your agendas, form a coordinating committee to plan the events and deal with the media. As long as a screening or speaker is billed as part of Islamofascism Week, a group may sponsor an event under its own auspices. Thus a campus College Republican club or Hillel could sponsor a panel or speaker on a subject related to Islamofascism under its own auspices so long as it is willing to have it billed as part of Islamofascism Awareness Week.*²⁵⁹

According to human rights activist Eboo Patel, Islamofascism Awareness Week had an ugly objective: “Every time you see a Muslim, the organizers...want you to think ‘terrorist.’” Patel wrote, “I used to believe that fear and hatred of Muslims was the last acceptable prejudice in America.” With events such as Islamofascism Awareness Week and the popularity books such as Robert Spencer’s *Religion of Peace? Why Christianity Is and Islam Isn’t*,²⁶⁰ however, Patel began to realize that “Islamophobia is far worse than I thought,” and “not just the last acceptable prejudice in America. There are people who want you to believe that hating Muslims is your patriotic duty.”²⁶¹ Then Patel warned:

*The America that I love faces real threats from terrorists. Too many of those terrorists call themselves Muslims. Victory requires that we focus like a laser beam on these enemies. Anybody encouraging America to take its eye off the terrorists by spinning the illusion that all 1.3 billion Muslims in the world are dangerous is weakening our national security and endangering your life.*²⁶²

Marcy Newman, a professor in the English Department at Boise State University in Idaho, notes that when Horowitz spoke at Boise State in 2009, he made numerous statements about Islam and the Middle East that were not only bigoted, but were also mistaken on the most basic facts about Islam. She charged that Horowitz was “feigning that there is an imbalance in the way that faculty educates students about Islam” and hiding behind “the moniker of academic freedom.” More attention needs to be paid to “the context for the viewpoints he seeks to legitimize in college classrooms,” wrote Newman. “Specifically, he created this network of activists to ensure that professors would present an anti-Palestinian and anti-Muslim perspective in class.”²⁶³

Newman agrees “there is a need for educating Americans about Islam,” but added:

*What we need is understanding and knowledge, not propaganda that masquerades as education and does nothing to further insight and only inflames an already tense divide in the U.S. On a university campus, we need nuance and complexity in understanding a religion that is so woefully maligned in the U.S. media, not more propaganda and prejudice that reinforces misconceptions about Islam.*²⁶⁴

[See the interview with Hosy Nasimi, a student from Boise State]

A CONVERSATION WITH SOPHIA SHAFI

At the time of the interview, Sophia Shafi was a Ph.D. student at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado.

BERLET: What do you believe are the roots of Islamophobia in the U.S.?

SHAFI: The roots of Islamophobia in the West and in the United States go back to the Middle Ages. In my research I found that they have not changed much. They're usually focused on the Arab, but also sometimes on the Persian. These two often serve as the stand-in for all Muslims, even though Arabs are a minority of the world's Muslims (about 14 percent) and most of the world's Muslims are Asians or Africans. What I found is that these static stereotypes have had a constant repetitive structure over the past 1,400 years, and they seem to mostly focus on sex and violence. Usually the Muslim is [either] oversexed or sexually repressed and violent. Hypersexualized and hyperviolent imagery are quite common.

BERLET: How did this preexisting set of stereotypes play out after 9/11?

SHAFI: There were some themes or images that seemed to be dominant. One of them was the veiled or burkaed woman. Another was the kind of hyperviolent Muslim terrorist or South Asian terrorist. Then another theme that was very popular was this idea that the hijackers committed these crimes to get these 99 virgins in heaven.

BERLET: In terms of your own personal experience, have you run into situations where either consciously or unconsciously people talked to you using stereotypes about Muslims?

SHAFI: I have. When I lived in New Mexico I would go to the bank and they'd say "Shafi...what kinda name is that?" I've gotten the, "Why aren't you wearing a hijab?" When I was married (I'm not married anymore), I'd get, "Your husband lets you work?" So...those things were quite common. I live in a fairly educated, progressive community [now], so I don't get that as much these days.

BERLET: When you look on TV, it must be disheartening to see the repetitive stereotyping and hyperbole used to talk about, not just Muslims but Arabs as the "Other" that threaten the United States...what Huntington used to call the clash of civilizations. That argument helped generate not only Islamophobia, but also broader themes of xenophobia, nativism, racism, and national chauvinism. What has the impact of Huntington's thesis been on the Muslim experience?

SHAFI: Huntington's thesis was used by Milošević to explain or validate his ethnic cleansing of not only Croatian Catholics but even Bosnian Muslims. His argument was that if they weren't stopped they'd take over Europe. It's ... a repeat of the battle at the end of the [Early] Middle Ages, and he was...Charlemagne or something. That's probably not a good analogy, but he saw himself in that role.

BERLET: So there is a good "us" and a bad "them," and in terms of America the projection appears to be that all Muslims are tempted by terrorism, and most are likely to be recruited by it. That seems absurd.

SHAFI: [Especially] if you look at the number of Muslims in the world. The estimates of Al Qaeda...it is a very, very small number. Another thing that the media does a lot is they tend to group all these [Islamic] groups together. And so someone who's in Al Qaeda has the same ideology as Hezbollah or Hamas or Ikwan, the Muslim Brotherhood. In actuality, these are very, very different groups. Some have national goals. Al Qaeda is an international, translocal organization that has goals that include everything [from] ending global warming to establishing a caliphate, a global caliphate that never existed. So they're quite different from a group that is interested in establishing a Palestinian state, or thinks Mubarak is an oppressive tyrant.

BERLET: It would seem that in terms of...unraveling these issues, it seems like an overwhelming problem to try and untangle.

SHAFI: I think one of the best ways to try and untangle it is to look for sources outside of American media conglomerates. You can go to the BBC or to Al Jazeera or Alarabiya. It's probably going to help [sort out] some of these dynamics a little bit better because American media generally does not do a very good job at this, they just don't.

HOW ISLAMOPHOBIA AND ANTISEMITISM INTERACT ON CAMPUS: KEY FINDINGS

The thing about democracy, beloveds, is that it is not neat, orderly, or quiet. It requires a certain relish for confusion.

—Molly Ivins

BY THE RESEARCH TEAM

AS “CONSTRUCTING CAMPUS CONFLICT” and its associated data indicates, PRA has found that Islamophobic and antisemitic incidents on American college campuses are not primarily generated by outright and deliberate religious or ethnic bigotry. On campuses where Jewish or Muslim identity are seen as primarily religious and cultural rather than political, students who belong to one or another of these groups, or neither, tend to behave with respectful curiosity and a commitment to coexistence. They routinely make friendships based on other salient commonalities and shared interests or experiences. Many describe getting to interact with people from different backgrounds as an important aspect of their educations.

PRA’s review and analysis of many of the most publicized incidents described as antisemitic and/or Islamophobic on campus that have taken place over the past decade show a clear pattern. Most of these incidents have emerged during confrontations over policies and politics in the Middle East. Moreover, these incidents often emerge when provocative external actors and less often, but occasionally, members of the university community take advantage of the campus as an arena for amplifying their own political or ideological positions. Students can and do become engaged in these debates. Sometimes these students find persuasion and ideological alignment with such speakers. More often, however, they are unprepared to question the facticity of the speakers’ statements, are unaware of the implications of the bigoted rhetoric and tropes these speakers employ, and—perhaps most important—these students are often ignorant of the self-interest and or historic alignments behind these actors and their arguments.

Thus, those who would attempt to intervene and find constructive ways to address antisemitism and Islamophobia on campus must turn not only to the community of students, faculty, and administrators on campus, but also address sources of conflict that lie beyond campus borders.

INCIDENTS MINIMIZED BY STUDENTS

While our study looks at reported incidents of antisemitism and Islamophobia, it is important to note that students do not always recognize or report such incidents even when they are directly targeted. Many students in our field research began interviews by saying that they had been lucky not to have

experienced bigotry. However, as the conversation unfolded, they detailed specific incidents of verbal abuse. Muslim students were more likely than Jewish students to report personal experiences of some type of overt bigotry on campus. Most of these consisted of hearing statements demonizing Islam or intrusive comments directed at women wearing hijab. Importantly, both Muslim and Jewish students routinely asserted that such incidents were insignificant or had not really bothered them. In many cases, these so-called minor incidents went unreported. Other researchers have proposed that this tendency to minimize an expression of prejudice is a manifestation of internalized oppression.

CHALLENGES FOR PRACTICING BELIEVERS

Both Jewish and Muslim students are often thrust into roles of “representatives” of their particular faith and ethnic traditions on campus. Our conversations with a wide range of students on campuses across the country indicate that Muslim students, especially those who are visible to outsiders by their dress or daily prayer practice, tend to expect to play this role and are often well-fortified to take on that responsibility. Jewish students, on the other hand, especially those who come from communities where the Jewish presence was unremarkable, are often startled by questions and unprepared for outright bias. When they are challenged on political issues regarding the role of Israel in the Middle East, many feel unprepared for the virulence of the debate and, no matter what their position, have acknowledged feeling frightened and exposed by the demand that they justify or disavow past or present Israeli government policies.

Moreover, practicing believers of any faith often find themselves somewhat marginalized in campus communities, especially at those schools that have the reputation as bearers of rationalist, enlightenment values.

This is less true at schools such as Boston College or Brandeis University, both profiled in this report, which are institutions with strong religious foundations. A significant number of students who choose to enroll there do so because of their respect for religious principles or religious studies offerings.

Charles Cohen is a professor of history and religious studies at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. He also is the director of the interfaith Lubar Institute for the Study of Abrahamic Religions on campus (LISAR). Cohen suspects that

...there are more practicing believers of a variety of traditions on university campuses than the students themselves let on. [...] The culture of rationalist epistemology in universities is so powerful that other thoughts sort of flow in a subterranean way and very, very seldom break out.”²⁶⁵

RULING OUT CERTAIN DETERMINANTS

PRA’s research indicates that statistics such as the ratio of Jewish or Muslim students to non-Jewish or non-Muslim students, or the size of that religious/ethnic population in

the surrounding community, do not seem to be predictive of the likelihood of antisemitic or Islamophobic incidents on a particular college campus.

Formal campus offerings, such as the number of courses on religious or Middle-Eastern topics, also do not seem to be indicative of the likelihood of antisemitic or Islamophobic incidents on campus. They may, however, offset a certain degree of bigotry based on ignorance. Professors report that since 9/11, introductory courses on Islam and Arabic have increased markedly in popularity.

Assertions that resources granted unevenly to one group or topic automatically indicates prejudice or stigma do not bear up under close inspection. For example, at Wayne State University in Michigan, it appears the reason that more Arabic than Hebrew courses are taught is that students believe familiarity with Arabic will help them get jobs with international corporations or positions in the military or law enforcement. Circumstances where Muslims were not assigned private prayer space typically could be traced back to legitimate competition among student groups for space on campus.

STUDENTS TAKE COEXISTENCE INTO THEIR OWN HANDS

Our research found many heartening incidents where students took the job of responding to bigotry into their own hands. Our profile of Boston College includes this report:

The experience of a Jewish member of the BC women's hockey team illustrates both the overall acceptance and the explicit rejection of prejudice. After someone made an antisemitic remark to her, the young woman told her team, and the other players responded with an overt and universal show of verbal and practical support. They decorated the team's locker room for Hanukkah, attended a Shabbat service and meal with her, and, when she received a grant to research antisemitism on college campuses, attended her final presentation. As this anecdote suggests, while BC is not immune from insensitivity and offensive behavior, the counter-response tends to be dramatically larger and more substantive.

Humor helps, advises Eboo Patel, founder of Interfaith Youth Core:

Students at one university invited a well-known, conservative anti-Muslim speaker to campus as a part of "Islamofascism Awareness Week," whose talk focused on the alleged oppression of women within Islam. Rather than staging a protest, or going to his talk and arguing against him, a clever female Muslim student organized "Islamofashion Awareness Week" as an opportunity to talk about female fashion within Islam and open up conversation about the rich diversity of female experiences within the tradition. Her events were a huge success, and helped to reframe the campus

*atmosphere from one of combat to mutual respect and learning.*²⁶⁶

Patel notes, "Campuses are a place where students often encounter religious diversity with a greater intensity than ever before, while simultaneously thinking critically (maybe for the first time) about their own identity, the identities of others, and their relationships to others."²⁶⁷ Ongoing student-generated interfaith/intercultural projects are a strong counterweight to occasional inflammatory incidents. Student organizations that engage in shared activities not only create awareness but also support a durable sense of camaraderie among student participants. We have highlighted numerous examples of such projects in this report.

College administrators can help keep campus debates from escalating into bigotry by establishing and/or supporting student interfaith organizations. These organizations are more resilient and less subject to pressure and potential manipulation by outside interests.

CAMPUS ADMINISTRATION

How a school responds to antisemitic and Islamophobic incidents or controversies around the Middle East is important. When a university administration has no policy in place to deal with such conflict, the result can be more damaging to the long-term atmosphere on campus and the reputation of that school as a place that is safe for students of different backgrounds than the actual conflict itself. Too few administrators anticipate a need to set clear standards regarding appropriate behavior on campus in a way that actually reaches students.

Members of a campus community must consider a range of possible responses before an incident occurs. The Anti-Defamation League has produced resources explaining how institutional codes of conduct may be improved, including the laws governing the acceptable range of student speech on a public or private campus. Our review of alleged antisemitic and alleged Islamophobic incidents which received significant media coverage indicates that when college administrators avoid taking strong stands to both support the personal safety of their students and affirm the importance of measured, civil discourse on campus, other interested outside parties invariably step in to fill the void.

Task forces and other administrative or quasi-legal structures created expressly to deal with specific incidents do not have a good track record of dealing with conflicts productively. Such reactive responses often fail to solve a problem, much less address the source of the conflict. As an example, we explore a series of incidents at the University of California at Irvine. An off-campus community Task Force was convened in 2006 to work with campus groups to address the alleged antisemitic atmosphere at Irvine. The Task Force was perceived to be listening to only the most alarmist voices; consequentially, Hillel and its affiliate, Anteaters for Israel, distanced themselves from the Task Force's work. When they did, outside, right-wing Jewish groups moved in.

THE WORLD BEYOND THE CAMPUS

Colleges and universities do not exist in a vacuum. Campuses consist of undergraduate and graduate students, professors, staff, administrators, and members of campus affiliated national groups, among others. These groups interact with local communities and organizations and participate in national and international debates, many of which are represented by outside advocates and advocacy organizations.

Some campus groups, especially big-tent organizations, become de facto arbitrators for dealing with conflicts but they are not always prepared to address them effectively. Our profile of Hillel observes:

*Hillel does not have a strong organizational focus on combating antisemitism. As Jeff Rubin, Hillel's associate vice president for communications explains, Hillel deals with antisemitism on campus from a pastoral perspective. Hillel professionals are trained in social work. To a limited degree, Hillel also deals with antisemitism from a policy perspective. Hillel did co-sponsor a manual on "Fighting Holocaust Denial in Campus Newspaper Advertisements" but doesn't link to it on the Hillel website. When they do discuss antisemitism in public, Hillel uses the draft European/EUMC definition. This draft definition was adopted without public discussion or Congressional oversight by the U.S. State Department.*²⁶⁸

National Hillel published an excellent report on campus antisemitism in 2007, and various Hillel campus chapters have played an important role in helping facilitate interfaith efforts.²⁶⁹

FANNING THE FLAMES

A variety of well-funded external individuals and groups have been repeatedly linked to campus confrontations that fall under the umbrella of Islamophobia and antisemitism. Some organizations have invited inflammatory and bigoted speakers to campus. There are a number of possible reasons such speakers have been welcomed.

- The inviter is unaware that the speaker has been criticized as bigoted.
- The inviter is aware of the allegations of bigotry but dismisses these allegations.
- The inviter has been pressured by outside groups or individuals (including religious or political mentors or relatives), even though the inviter is aware of the allegations of bigotry.
- The inviter seeks to punish the opposition on campus by bringing in a "big name" speaker who will blast the opposition, and any potential bigotry is deemed less important than a highly visible confrontation.

Some high-profile individuals on both the Right and the Left (and comprised of Jews, Muslims, Christians, and

pundits without strong religious identities) inflame college debate in their presentations to student groups. They use their own celebrity to amplify media coverage of campus incidents. They then use publicized campus conflict to bolster their own arguments, raise their own profiles, or generate funds for their own initiatives. One of the worst offenders is David Horowitz and his David Horowitz Freedom Center. Our analysis of published and broadcast media reports shows that rhetoric containing allegations that are Islamophobic or Arabophobic is far more likely to appear in major commercial media than antisemitic rhetoric. Importantly, campus incidents involving allegations of Islamophobia seldom receive proportionate media attention.

MEDIA

Media can play both negative and positive roles in intergroup conflicts, and that has been particularly true in terms of media coverage following the 9/11 attacks.²⁷⁰

"Factors that contribute to Islamophobia may vary by context," explains Erik Nisbet, a communications professor at Ohio State University.²⁷¹ Nisbet continues:

*For example, in Europe, Islamophobia is driven by Muslim immigration and direct intergroup contact since Muslims can be as high as 5–10% of the total population in some countries (in comparison, African-Americans are about 12% of the population in the United States). However, in the U.S. where the estimated Muslim population is below 2% of the total population, Islamophobia is more often driven by the media and cues from political or religious elites, what scholars call "mediated intergroup contact."*²⁷²

In 2008 Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), the national media watchdog group, released the report, *Smearcasting: How Islamophobes Spread Fear, Bigotry and Misinformation*.²⁷³ According to FAIR, the report "describes a loose network of right-wing, anti-Muslim partisans who regularly use innuendo, questionable sources of information, and even lies to smear, and effectively marginalize, Muslims in the media."²⁷⁴ The dozen offenders singled out by the report were:

- Talk show hosts Bill O'Reilly, Sean Hannity, Michael Savage, and Glenn Beck;
- Christian Right televangelist Pat Robertson;
- Conservative activists Michelle Malkin and David Horowitz;
- Writers and commentators Mark Steyn, Robert Spencer, and Debbie Schlussel; and
- Academic Daniel Pipes.

In a case study, FAIR reported how Pipes wrote a critical essay that became "a successful campaign to oust the principal of a secular Arabic-language New York City public school." The principal was Debbie Almontaser, who had been praised by human rights groups for her "history of forging interfaith and interethnic alliances" which included working

with the Anti-Defamation League in anti-bias workshops.²⁷⁵ Instead, a smear campaign falsely branded her as a “stealth Islamist,” and “media pressure eventually forced her to resign.”²⁷⁶ Pipes’s essays appeared on his website pipelinenews.org and campus-watch.org.

The local media attacks were led by the conservative *New York Post* and *New York Sun*, and especially by Alicia Colon, an op-ed columnist for the *Sun*.²⁷⁷ Colon said Pipes prompted her concern with a column where he predicted that the establishment of the school “will generate serious problems.” According to Pipes: “I say this because Arabic-language instruction is inevitably laden with pan-Arabist and Islamist baggage.... learning Arabic in and of itself promotes an Islamic outlook.” Pipes goes on to claim that Almontaser said that “Arabs or Muslims...are innocent of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.”²⁷⁸

Well-known investigative reporter Larry Cohler-Esses of *Jewish Week* tracked down the full quote and reported that Almontaser had actually told some students “I don’t recognize the people who committed the attacks as either Arabs or Muslims.... Those people who did it have stolen my identity as an Arab and have stolen my religion.”²⁷⁹

The website of the Hard-Right organization Accuracy in Media, aim.org, picked up Pipes’s allegations.²⁸⁰ A number of unfair attacks were posted on militantislammonitor.org, such as: “Dhabah Almontaser’s extremist hijab makeover—From fundamentalist to Islamo fashionista.”²⁸¹

Another case study by FAIR covered how “Conservative columnist and Internet activist Michelle Malkin pressured Dunkin’ Donuts into dropping an ad featuring celebrity chef Rachael Ray wearing a black-and-white scarf.” Malkin mistakenly identified Ray’s scarf as a keffiyeh, a traditional headcovering worn in many regions of the Middle East by Arabs and others. Malkin called the keffiyeh a symbol of the “murderous Palestinian jihad.”²⁸² Islamophobic rhetoric appears across the right-wing media, including the *Human Events* newspaper and David Horowitz’s frontpagemag.com and his website devoted to blacklisting leftists: discoverthenetworks.org.

We previously discussed the report *Same Hate, New Target: Islamophobia and its Impact in the United States; January 2009–December 2010*. The report was issued jointly by the Center for Race & Gender at the University of California, Berkeley and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). In the report, along with an extensive survey of Islamophobia on various media outlets, the authors identified those they considered among the worst offenders, including:

- Pamela Geller and Stop the Islamization of America (SIOA);
- Robert Spencer and Jihad Watch;
- Brigitte Gabriel and Act! For America;
- Frank Gaffney and the Center for Security Policy (CSP);
- Steven Emerson and the Investigative Project on Terrorism (IPT);

- Daniel Pipes and the Middle East Forum and Campus Watch; and
- Newt Gingrich²⁸³

In 2011 and 2012, Gingrich made Islamophobia a centerpiece of his campaign for the Republican nomination for President.

The report also singled out four members of Congress who, in October 2009, “called for an investigation of Muslim Capitol Hill interns” who the representatives (with no evidence) feared might be spies. The representatives were, apparently, worried that these interns might have ties to terrorist Osama bin Laden or Al-Qaeda. The four were Reps. John Shadegg (R-AZ), Paul Broun (R-GA), Trent Franks (R-AZ), and Sue Myrick (R-NC).²⁸⁴

Lack of fact-checking and general credulity on the part of an understaffed and under-resourced media reporting on Islamophobic campus incidents creates problems. This particularly irked PRA field researcher Michelle Goldberg, who studied a number of incidents at Columbia University [see related profile in this report]. She described the experiences of one professional journalist who made the effort to investigate the serious allegations:

Liel Leibovitz, for example, was working as an editor at The Jewish Week when he got a call from someone at the David Project²⁸⁵ telling him about [the documentary video] “Columbia Unbecoming” and urging him to write about it. The caller told him that the film showed “serious, institution-wide persecution of Israeli students.” Leibovitz, himself an Israeli and a Columbia graduate student, was skeptical, since this description didn’t match his own experience. But he was also intrigued so he asked to see the film. The caller said he couldn’t because the documentary wasn’t public, but that he should write about it anyway. Leibovitz refused. Some of his colleagues, he noted, were less reticent.

Leibovitz decided to do some reporting on the film’s accusations. With the help of a friend in the registrar’s office he got a list of students who had taken classes with the professors singled out in the documentary. Of them, he chose 36 names, 30 of which he thought were Jewish, and contacted them to ask them about their experiences. Not one reported anything like anti-Semitism or political intimidation.²⁸⁶

In the case of campus incidents of antisemitism or Islamophobia, there may be ample media coverage of the incident itself, but little follow-up concerning steps students, faculty, and administrators may have taken to confront prejudice and educate their campus community.²⁸⁷

PATHS FORWARD

BY CHIP BERLET

DURING THE EARLY STAGES OF THIS PROJECT one of our researchers spoke with a professor at a college in Montana who, in the face of the heated controversies nationwide, had pulled together a seminar on Islam and Judaism to educate students, the campus, and the surrounding community. When contacted, he expressed surprise, claiming he only had done what any reputable college would have done.

At San Francisco State University, a campus that gained national headlines as a hotbed of bigotry, most students questioned on campus a few years later had no idea there had ever been a confrontation between students over any issues involving antisemitism, Judaism, Islam, or the Middle East. On the other hand, administrators and faculty explained in detail the steps the university had taken to challenge entrenched stereotypes. One administrator bemoaned the fact that every foundation or government grant seeking assistance in this regard by the college was turned down.

Along the way we ran into news articles about the “Three Amigos.” We tracked that to Imam Jamal Rahman, Pastor Don Mackenzie, and Rabbi Ted Falcon in Seattle—three interfaith amigos who use their spiritual wisdom and easy humor to “openly address the usual taboos of interfaith dialogue — the ‘awkward’ parts of each tradition — in order to create a more authentic conversation.”

At the private Jesuit St. Louis University in Missouri, a 2009 appearance by David Horowitz (co-sponsored by the College Republicans and Young America’s Foundation) was rejected by Dean of Students Scott Smith, who told reporters he especially was troubled by “the blanketed use of the term Islamo-Fascism.”²⁸⁸

Student volunteers at the Conference on World Affairs at the University of Colorado at Boulder were among the first to be interviewed for the project. Started in 1948 “as a forum on international affairs,” the conference “expanded rapidly in its early years to encompass the arts, media, science, diplomacy, technology, environment, spirituality, politics, business, medicine, human rights,” and more.²⁸⁹ Panels have included Jews, Muslims, and Christians struggling with their religion’s history and practices. It is an iron-clad rule at the conference that panelists must treat each other and the audience with respect—or they will never again be invited to participate.²⁹⁰

The most impressive interfaith campus project we found was at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. There, the Lubar Institute for the Study of Abrahamic Religions (LISAR) brings together not only Jews and Muslims but also students and faculty from a range of faith traditions in settings that span from shared meals to volunteer activities in the community to full-scale research projects.²⁹¹ Charles Cohen, founding director of LISAR, seeks to expand understanding about the Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. He thinks there are still gaps at universities in the United States in terms of increasing respectful interaction despite the reality of religious and political differences:

At one level, I’ll call it academic, is an enterprise to think about research about the historical cultural religious interactions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam as parts of a larger tradition rather than as individual religious traditions, and to see them always as in dialogue with each other, in contest with each other if you will—which has certainly often happened—but not in isolation.²⁹²

Cohen sees that carrying over into the other level of actual interactions among “Christians, Muslims and Jews.” In terms of scholarship, he explains, that means efforts to “engage religious leaders as well, members of the laity and non-members of these communities. That includes students.” In terms of community there should be more efforts to encourage people on campus “to learn about each other’s traditions and simply meet each other to discover each other as living members of those traditions and as human beings.”²⁹²

A collection of online resources to extend this discussion is at <http://www.researchforprogress.us/campcon/>.

REFERENCES

Note: In some case full cites are repeated to facilitate linking to online resources. All of these resources were consulted during the research phase, and their inclusion here is not necessarily an indication of approval or disapproval.

PROFILES AND PORTRAITS

CAMPUS PROFILES

AS DESCRIBED IN OUR INTRODUCTION, in developing this report, PRA investigated a wide variety of U.S. college campuses. These schools were both public and private, were based in various regions of the country, were of various sizes, offered different curricula, and enrolled different combinations of students (and in particular, different combinations of student backgrounds, religious affiliations, and ethnicities). We selected a mix of campuses—those where high-profile incidents that had been deemed antisemitic or Islamophobic had taken place and those that seemed to be calm or weathering interfaith issues in a productive way. We commissioned some profiles that described certain campuses in very broad terms that highlighted the range of their curricula and activities, and others that focused in on specific initiatives.

In some cases, we engaged authors to visit campuses and speak to students, faculty, and administrators in person. In other cases, the research was conducted primarily over telephone and email as well as in the archives of contemporary accounts by professional journalists, advocates, and students (primarily through review of student newspapers). We intentionally selected a group of contributors who would represent a wide range of backgrounds, voices, and opinions. In the case of certain particularly well-publicized incidents, we commissioned more than one writer to contribute to the discussion, and/or provided a more in-depth sidebar addressing a particular controversy.

That antisemitic and Islamophobic acts have actually occurred on campus is indisputable. However, given the array of evidence about any given campus incident, it is possible that a reader will come up with a different assessment of the event than did the author of the profile or supplementary material. PRA is committed to well-substantiated research and to analysis based on facts. At the same time, openness to interpretation of those facts is completely within our intention to foster a broad range of perspectives.

Many of these campus profiles refer to organizations and individuals who have been actors in campus life over the past decade. While we have endeavored to limit overlap of information, some identifications and references are made more than once for ease in reading.

No single campus profile exemplifies all of the issues associated with understanding the roots or expression of either antisemitism or Islamophobia on campus. Neither does any single author represent the position of PRA as an organization on these complex and contentious issues. Over the course of compiling this series of profiles, we discerned many of the themes and patterns that have already been discussed and others which will be analyzed below. Certain salient facts remain anecdotal at this time, but these, too, point the way for targeted research that we believe will help build more constructive engagements around, and responses to, antisemitic and Islamophobic behaviors on campus when they do arise.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY

AT A GLANCE

Name	University of California at Berkeley
Location	Berkeley, California
Student body.....	25,540 undergraduate students 10,298 graduate and professional students
Gender	53% female, 47% male (Undergraduate)
Self-identification as students of color	15.7%

UC BERKELEY AND THE INTERSECTION OF POLITICS AND PREJUDICE

PAMELA K. TAYLOR

The University of California at Berkeley has long been classified by various Jewish groups as a bastion of antisemitism. These feelings are so strong that some concerned organizations and individuals have recommended that, until the atmosphere improves, Jewish students should not attend University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley). In stark contrast, Berkeley Hillel argues Jewish students are thriving at UC Berkeley and that antisemitism is not a serious problem. How can the complex dynamics that make for such starkly different perspectives be untangled?

The UC Berkeley student body has close to 40,000 students; in 2010, there were 25,540 undergraduates and 10,298 pursuing graduate degrees. Of these, 1,844 of undergraduates and 1,912 of graduate students were international students. Based on the freshman class in 2010, the largest group of students on campus is Asian American, at 45.7 percent, followed by Whites at 31.7 percent, Latinos at 11.5 percent and African Americans at 3.4 percent. UC Berkeley, like most American universities, does not track religious identification officially, but Hillel estimates that there are 2,500 Jewish undergraduates and about 500 Jewish graduate students. From incoming student surveys, estimates put the number of Muslim undergraduates around 550. Students at UC Berkeley can take advantage of majors and minors in many curricular areas including religious, ethnic, and Jewish studies programs, and Near Eastern and Southeast Asian studies.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN DAILY LIFE

Muslim students at UC Berkeley say that life for Muslims on campus is good. Of the 15 Muslim Student Association members interviewed in 2009, all stated that they felt welcomed and safe on campus. Most shared the sentiment that San Francisco is a very liberal, very tolerant city and that UC Berkeley reflects the attitude of the surrounding community.

Despite this overall assessment, nearly half of the students had experienced verbal harassment or other Islamophobic incidents. For instance, one young woman who was wearing a headscarf reported a couple of young men driving past her shouting, “Where are the local jihad camps?” This young woman laughed off the incident as funny. A second student explained, “These are the things I don’t remember, I just forget about them. They were mostly verbal, but I don’t really remember specifics.” Students staffing the Muslim Students Association (MSA) information table on Sproul Plaza had similar attitudes. “Most people come to ask genuine questions and are very open-minded. We don’t get a lot of passive/aggressiveness in the questions,” one of the women explained. “When we do get snide remarks, we just pass it off as immaturity.”

Elizabeth Gillis, Director of Special Projects, Division of Equity & Inclusion at UC Berkeley, remembered a more serious incident in which a group of eight Muslim women, three of whom were wearing headscarves, were harassed by three men in a car. The men, one of whom had his head covered by a blanket, drove up to the women, called them racist names and threw bottles of water at them. They drove away and then returned, terrifying the girls who did not know whether the men had weapons. Fortunately, the men left without further harassment.

While such incidents are rare, they reflect the anger and fear of Muslims felt by many Americans, which at times spills over into campus life. A 2007 Zogby poll revealed that 76 percent of young Arab Americans (18–29) had experienced racial discrimination, while a Pew Trust report from the same year said that 42 percent of American Muslims in the same age group reported discrimination or harassment based on religious identity. An ABC/*Washington Post* poll in April of 2009 showed that 48 percent of Americans had a negative view of Islam, compared with 41 percent who had a positive view, with rates of unfavorable opinions among Republicans, conservatives, and evangelical Christians between 60 and 65 percent. The fact that the Muslim students at UC Berkeley focused on the positive, and downplayed their negative experiences, speaks of a healthy resilience and strength of identity. It also speaks to the fact that while such incidents do happen, they are clearly seen as being perpetrated by a minority and are outweighed by the generally tolerant atmosphere on campus.

STUDENT ACTIVIST GROUPS

International conflict in Israel/Palestine engenders tension on UC Berkeley’s campus that often intersects with ethnic prejudice. It is important to identify some of the players promoting antisemitism and/or Islamophobia and describe the demonization of both Israel and Palestinians at the intersection of politics and prejudice.

Over the past few years, two campus groups have increasingly come to loggerheads over the Israel/Palestine conflict—Tikvah, a Zionist group that strongly supports Israel, and Students for Justice in Palestine. In 2008, members of the groups came to blows over the display of a Palestinian flag during a pro-Zionist concert. Each side claimed that they

were attacked by the other in the altercation at the concert, and that racial slurs were hurled at them along with the punches.

Interestingly enough, the UC Berkeley chapter of the MSA has not been highly involved in Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) efforts. Its focus has been primarily religious, prioritizing efforts to establish a Muslim prayer room, religious study circles for male and female students, providing iftars and setting up juma prayers, and hosting a “Peace Not Prejudice” week that showcases the arts as expressions of Muslim identity. The MSA’s retreat from politics has not been without controversy, and some of the MSA members expressed the view that the MSA should be more involved with SJP efforts. But it has protected the Muslim students on campus from any sort of direct Islamophobic reaction to political concerns. In large part, the political conflict over Israel has not spilled over into an Islamophobic reaction because it is not seen on campus as a Muslim effort but as political activism by a multifaith coalition of students from many faiths and backgrounds. The fact that SJP also includes a significant number of Jews has further served to protect it from claims that it is antisemitic. As SJP member Tom Pessah, a graduate student in sociology who is an Israeli citizen and coauthor of the UC Berkeley version of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions resolution [see below], explained, “How can you say we are antisemitic? We are Jews too.” While various off-campus bloggers and Jewish groups have called SJP a hate group, on-campus familiarity with its mixed faith nature makes such claims unconvincing. Activities such as Israeli Apartheid Week can make Jewish students feel ill at ease at best, and threatened and intimidated at worst. These acts may not be motivated by antisemitic sentiments based on ethnic and religious stereotyping and prejudice per se (or they may be) but they most certainly can feel antisemitic and contribute to an atmosphere on campus where Jewish students are viewed with a certain hostility because of their actual or presumed support of Israel.

THE ESCALATION OF CONFLICT

Several important trends emerge out of these conflicts. The first is that each disruption or counter protest escalates the intensity of confrontations among and between student groups.

A second trend is the involvement of outside Jewish groups in the campus conflict. The Zionist Organization of America, for one, has embroiled itself in various disputes, calling upon the Chancellor of UC Berkeley to investigate anti-Jewish bias on campus, alleging that Dean Poullard has a double standard, and publishing highly inflammatory reports of events on campus. The involvement of the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) seemed calculated to further inflame tensions between Tikvah and SJP rather than to help the two groups co-exist peacefully. The ZOA specifically targeted SJP in its complaints to the Chancellor, apparently hoping to get SJP banned or sanctioned by the college. The use of high rhetoric by some of these outside groups serves to foster the image of UC Berkeley as a hotbed of antisemitism, whether or not this accurately reflects the situation on the ground.

A third trend is the use of exaggeration and outright

misinformation to further causes. Descriptions of events are divergent, and in the resulting confusion it is easy for polemical views to be reinforced. SJP has been depicted as evil, lying, and virulently antisemitic. Any defense its members may make of themselves is discounted as more lies. So, too, with Tikvah, which has been depicted as oppressive, callous in its pursuit of promoting all things Israeli, and virulently anti-Palestinian. (In this mish-mash of truths, half-truths, and outright lies, of intimidation and threats being hurled in both directions, it is very difficult to ascertain the truth of any given conflict at UC Berkeley in the past decade—which are real, which are trumped up, and which are small provocations that have been hyped into major events.)

Even more difficult is determining the extent of antisemitism on campus in a context where there is little agreement on what constitutes antisemitism vis à vis the State of Israel. Some advocates, including members of Tikvah, seem to feel that any criticism of Israel is a priori antisemitic in nature and that any demonstration of solidarity with Palestine is an affront. (Tikvah member, UC Berkeley alumnus Gabe Weiner described his reaction to the hanging of the Palestinian flag in silent protest of anti-Palestinian lyrics in the following words: “I went up to the second floor because the message they were sending was an abomination to our national rights.”) Others, such as SJP member Tom Pessah, assert that broad criticism of Israel, up to and including the move to support boycott, divestiture and sanctions (BDS), is perfectly acceptable and even necessary, especially for an Israeli citizen such as himself.

ACADEMICS

The fight over Israel/Palestine and its impact on campus is not limited to student activities. In 2003, Abbas Kadhim, a doctoral candidate at the time who was teaching Arabic classes, was alleged to manifest gross antisemitism by bringing up the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in class, and stating it was written by Zionist Jews as their plan for world domination. The student who complained, Susanna Klein, stated, “I asked Mr. Kadhim if he was being serious about his claim. He assured me that he was 100 percent certain in his belief that Jews were behind the *Protocols*.” Klein’s complaint to the UC Berkeley administration included a call for Kadhim’s dismissal from the college.

Kadhim countered that it was Klein who had steered the conversation towards the *Protocols*, whereupon he told her that most Iraqis believed it to be true, without offering a personal opinion. When six of the eight students in the classroom confirmed Kadhim’s story, the school discontinued its investigation of the incident and publicly announced its findings. Noted Jewish scholar Daniel Boyarin, then Chair of the Near Eastern Studies Department said, “This complaint has been investigated by the deans and they have concluded that it is a lie,” adding that, “the department has no need to go anywhere from here, except perhaps to consider disciplinary action with respect to a slanderer.”

As with other events at Berkeley, Klein’s accusation received widespread attention in the Jewish press and blogosphere. Indeed, the initial charge was made on Dafka.org,

the website of a pro-Israeli group whose stated goal is “to take back America’s college campuses with the Truth” and whose website has also included articles with titles such as “Islam Plays for Keeps: Understanding the Enemy” and “Ban Islam or Just the Islamists?” As in the conflict between Tikvah and SJP, the Kadhim incident demonstrates the important role outside groups take in disseminating and amplifying claims of antisemitism. It also reinforces the disturbing conclusion that pro-Israeli activists at Berkeley may be willing to play loose with the facts in order to achieve their ends.

BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT, AND SANCTIONS (BDS) ON THE UC BERKELEY CAMPUS

BY MARIA PLANANSKY

In 2010, a vote to support the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement came before the University of California, Berkeley student governing body (Associated Students of the University of California Senate). This issue had been simmering in the consciousness of some University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley) student activists since the late 1990s.²⁹³ In 2009, junior Andrea Walden had co-founded the coalition Take Back Berkeley, calling for “divestment from Israel and all companies profiting off of the occupation of Palestine.” Walden was inspired by the success of a campaign to divest from Israel at Hampshire College. At that point, student groups on all sides of the conflict were careful not to instigate conflict. “Especially because of what happened [in November 2008 with the ‘Palestinian flag’ incident during a campus musical performance], leaders of student groups have been very careful not to exercise their power in ways that lead to violence,” Tara Raffi, president of the Jewish Student Union explained at the time. Ramy Salah, president of the Muslim Student Association, remained hopeful students could conduct themselves with civility when addressing controversial issues. “People need to realize that we’re in UC Berkeley, which is a platform for free speech and expressing our opinions,” he said. “UC Berkeley students are smart enough to learn from their mistakes.”²⁹⁴

THE BILL

However, by the time Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) was ready to be officially debated in the spring of 2010, tensions over Israel/Palestine had flared again. Two members of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), Tom Pessah (an Israeli citizen) and Emiliano Huet-Vaughn, co-authored SB118, titled “A Bill In Support of UC DIVESTMENT FROM WAR CRIME.” SB118, supporters said, would be the first step of many in a long-term process to get the UC Board of Regents, which is responsible for the University of California system, to divest approximately \$135 million worth of investments from five American companies, including General Electric and United Technologies, that had been allegedly been supplying Israel with electronics and weapons.²⁹⁵ The bill referenced the UN’s Goldstone Report, condemned Israeli war crimes, and called for the establishment of a task force to investigate whether the University of California budget and/

or the student government’s budget was complicit in funding any human rights abuses or war crimes worldwide. SB118 was sponsored by four student senators.

On March 17, 2010, the Associated Students of the University of California (ASUC) Senate passed the bill 16-4. The ASUC Senate meeting drew a record number of attendees, attracting more than 100 (some news accounts report over 200) students, faculty and staff; the bill’s passage followed four hours of discussion with over 80 speakers.²⁹⁶ “It was really exciting to see so many people engaging in the issue,” ASUC Senator Christina Oatfield said. “There was a little bit of shouting but overall I was surprised by how respectful everything was.”²⁹⁷

Opinions were sharply divided. Hillel president Wayne Firestone said the bill was “one-sided, divisive and undermines the pursuit of peace.”²⁹⁸ Matt, a speaker from Tikvah, spoke during floor discussion, saying “this bill is flagrantly anti-Israel, and absolutely takes a ‘side’ in the political web of the Arab-Israeli conflict.” He agreed “[universities] should not have investments in countries with abysmal human rights records,” but said to the assembly, “If you are going to divest funding from Israel in the name of human rights, you must divest funding from every single other country in the region ... The fact that this country is being brought up before any of these others singles out Israel, and the fact that to date no resolutions have been passed condemning any of these other countries nor removing investments in them is indicative ... that Israel is held to a higher standard.”²⁹⁹

ASUC Senator Rahul Patel noted, “Saying ‘why Israel and why not the Sudan or China’ ignores the fact that there is a clause in the bill that states that the committee will also go on to [develop] further divestment strategies in areas like Myanmar [in condemnation of] the Chinese government’s war crimes or [divest from companies doing business in] areas like the Sudan or the Darfur region.”³⁰⁰ Student Nairi Shirinian, a SJP member, argued that the bill “doesn’t target Israeli companies. It doesn’t target Israeli intellectual life, education, anything like that. It’s targeting American weapons manufacturers that have been directly linked to human rights violations...”³⁰¹

Off-campus players were quick to weigh in on the student senate’s vote; domestic and international Jewish media paid particular attention to developments at UC Berkeley. Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz [see profile] was one of the first to issue a statement. “Divesting from Israel is immoral, bigoted and if done by a state university illegal,” Dershowitz said. “It encourages terrorism and discourages peace. Any university that would actually divest from Israel will be subjected to countermeasures—financial, legal, academic and political. We will fight back against this selective bigotry that hurts the good name of the University of California. This misuse of the university’s name does not represent the views of students, faculty, alumni and other constituents of the greater Berkeley community. Instead it represents the hijacking of the university for improper ideological purposes. It must be rejected immediately and categorically.”³⁰²

The international pro-Israel advocacy organization StandWithUs called the bill “misguided.” In an e-mail written on March 24, StandWithUs urged people to write to ASUC President Will Smelko, UC Berkeley Chancellor Robert Birgeneau,

and president of the University of California public school system Mark Yudof, asking them to veto the “unfair divestment bill.”

At the other end of the political spectrum, the pro-Palestinian organization Jewish Voice for Peace stated that it “congratulates the UC Berkeley student Senate for the historic vote to divest from companies that profit from Israel’s Occupation of Palestinian Territories.”³⁰³

THE VETO VOTE

The following week, ASUC President Will Smelko vetoed SB188. “While the ASUC as a body has stated convincingly that it does not want ASUC and U.C. dollars going to fund weapons, war crimes or human rights violations, this veto has to do with the mechanism by which the ASUC achieves its mission of building peace and goodwill in a way that avoids the shortcomings of the bill (a selective, one-sided focus on a specific country that lacks important historical context and understanding),” Smelko said.³⁰⁴

The likelihood of overriding the senate president’s veto was a real possibility—a two-third majority, or 14 votes, were needed to override the veto, and 16 senators had already voted in favor of the bill. Student activists organized around the override vote, coordinating rallies, protests and public events.

On April 16, 2010, approximately 200 people took part in a silent protest against the SB188 veto. SJP asked participants not to bring any outside literature with them to the event or to engage with the opposition. While SJP was the primary organizer of the protest, supporters of divestment were from a diverse ethnic and religious makeup; similarly, opponents of divestment came from diverse ethnic, religious, and political backgrounds. The veto override ultimately failed in the early hours of April 29; the veto was upheld, one vote short of the 14 needed to override it.

The original SB188 vote was March 17; the veto override vote April 29. During those weeks, a number of off-campus actors voiced their support or opposition to the veto override and some directly engaged the student senators. In support of divestiture, activist writer Naomi Klein wrote an open letter to the ASUC Senate urging them to override the veto; Noam Chomsky expressed his support of the UC Berkeley divestment bill; Richard Falk, Special Rapporteur for Occupied Palestinian Territories, UN Human Rights Council, wrote to the senators expressing his support for an override; Archbishop Desmond Tutu supported divestment. Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) asked supporters of the bill to write to the senators, urging them to override the veto.³⁰⁵ A number of University of California faculty indicated their support, as did many prominent Nobel Laureates.³⁰⁶

The progressive Jewish peace organization J-Street sent out an e-mail blast urging the senators not to override the veto: “Our support for the president’s veto is rooted in our belief that the bill does not advance the cause of real peace and security for Palestinians and Israelis. Specifically, the bill fails to express support for Israel’s right to exist as a democratic home for the Jewish people and for a two-state resolution to the conflict,” their letter said, “In this vein, we oppose, for instance, the global Boycott, Divestment, and

Sanctions (BDS) movement which supports the right of return of Palestinian refugees to Israel and fails to draw a clear distinction between opposition to the post-1967 occupation and opposition to the existence of the State of Israel itself as the democratic home of the Jewish people. Even if it was not the intent of the students who drafted this bill, its passage is now being seized on by the global BDS movement as a victory in its broader campaign.”³⁰⁷

One student senator, Ariel Boone, said she received over 5,000 e-mails in support of and in opposition of the bill. Boone explained that letters of opposition ranged from “Berkeley professors, notably, the former head of the Peace and Conflict Studies major, and from academics, conspiracy theorists, rapture-ready Christians, and Jewish fraternity brothers worldwide.” She noticed the difference between e-mails sent to the ASUC Senators and those sent to her specifically: Letters addressed to the whole senate tended, she said, to carry the tone of “‘You all are ignorant 20-year-olds who have no idea what devastation you will wreak by your feeble votes on this issue which is over your head.’ Letters directly addressed to me tend to take the tone, ‘You claim to represent queer students. Israel’s a paragon of virtue in the field of queer rights! How dare you oppress LGBT individuals worldwide with your vote?’” Boone further noted that posters advocating different positions were displayed at bus stops in front of the student government building, as well as in postings on UC Berkeley students’ Facebook pages.³⁰⁸

In the week before the veto, multiple swastikas were found drawn on the Clark-Kerr campus. The drawings, classified as hate incidents, were not met with student concern at first. When a meeting was called to discuss the incident, no students attended. Freshman Rachel Newman’s comment was typical when she said that she felt the drawings did not necessarily indicate a broader “hateful” atmosphere. “I wouldn’t be surprised if it was just a bunch of drunk kids,” she said. “But I am upset the kind of things that [had] been happening at UC San Diego came here ... [the swastika] is a symbol that carries a lot of weight.”

The day after the veto was upheld at the ASUC’s Senate, Friday April 30, approximately 45 individuals protested the recent hate incident, calling for the end of “hidden hatred” at UC Berkeley. Protesters said antisemitism was still a problem at the campus and said that many incidents of antisemitism were going ignored or unreported. Ronald Hendel, Norma and Sam Dabby, Professor of Hebrew Bible and Jewish studies, spoke to the group at Upper Sproul Plaza and said he believed the rise in antisemitic actions was connected to discussions of the ASUC divestment bill.

The demonstration saw its only disruption when a man who had been observing the protest screamed, “That is a lie!” in response to a speaker’s allegation that the bill unfairly targeted Israel. The crowd chanted “anti-Semites out,” until the man turned away from the protest.³⁰⁹

Only after the ASUC Senate held its last session of the spring 2010 semester did the administration come out with a statement on the original divestment bill and subsequent veto. A portion of the statement by Russell Gould, Chairman, Board of Regents; Sherry L. Lansing, Vice Chair, Board of Regents; and Mark G. Yudof, President of the University reads as follows:

In the current resolutions voted on by the UC student organizations, the State of Israel and companies doing business with Israel have been the sole focus. This isolation of Israel among all countries of the world greatly disturbs us and is of grave concern to members of the Jewish community.

*We fully support the Board of Regents in its policy to divest from a foreign government or companies doing business with a foreign government only when the United States government declares that a foreign regime is committing acts of genocide. The U.S. has not made any declaration regarding the State of Israel and, therefore, we will not bring a recommendation before the Board to divest from companies doing business with the State of Israel.*³¹⁰

ACADEMIC YEAR 2010–2011

Tensions around events in the Middle East were less marked at the beginning of the 2010–2011 academic year. In September 2010, UC Berkeley Chancellor Robert Birgeneau acknowledged the tensions between students over the Israel/Palestine situation. Addressing a student question about the previous spring's incidents and the Chancellor's role, Birgeneau said, "We were very careful not to get directly involved in that last year, because I felt that this was a student-student issue." Birgeneau continued, "I think it's not appropriate for the administration to tell students what their politics should be."³¹¹

Birgeneau hosted an iftar with Muslim students at the beginning of the academic year. There was a large number of attendees. Birgeneau says that there he emphasized that Muslim students should make a strong effort "not to allow themselves to get strongly influenced by people who make incendiary comments, and make sure they maintain control and they act civilly. Muslim students cheered on that."³¹² The previous year, Birgeneau had met with the Israeli consul general and Jewish community leaders, where the need for moderate voices to speak was brought up.

Birgeneau explains, "We need moderation so that we can have civil discussion about what everybody recognizes is a very complex situation which is happening many thousand miles away. And I think I would say generally ... when we talk about mistrust, when we talk about these kinds of incendiary situations we're actually talking there about some very loud statements we hear from a limited number of people, as opposed to what the overwhelming majority of the campus actually feels."³¹³

Nonetheless, on-campus tensions did arise, albeit markedly less volatile than those in the previous academic year. In October 2010, a hate incident was reported on the UC Berkeley campus. One day before an SJP-sponsored event in which Gaza Freedom Flotilla peace activists were scheduled to speak on campus, six stickers defaced SJP's informational wooden display board. The stickers were a mixture of "anti-Muslim" and "pro-Israel" and included ones that read "Fight Islamic Extremism;" "Israel Celebrating 62 Years: If You Will It, It Is No Dream;" and "Making The World a Better Place"

written above faces of Osama bin Laden, Mahmoud Ahmadienejad, Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez; the images were superimposed with gun crosshairs. According to SJP member Nairi Shirinian, an SJP member removed the stickers before an office could see them.³¹⁴ In response to the incident, Kifah Shah, assistant director of the UC Berkeley's Multicultural Center, told the *Daily Cal* that hate crimes and incidents, particularly those against Muslim and Arab students, are "somewhat common" and often "discounted by the administration [and] ... viewed as isolated incidents rather than part of a larger problem of racism."³¹⁵

In early March, UC Berkeley joined campuses all over the world holding "Israeli Apartheid Week" events organized in part by SJP. In response, Tikvah held overlapping "Israel Peace and Diversity" Week. Unlike the events of the previous academic year, these competing programs did not engender any public incidents.

The young activists disagreed as to whether Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW), as well as Israel Peace and Diversity Week (IPDW), helped or hindered student debate and engagement. When asked about what could be done to decrease tensions surrounding the Israel/Palestine issue on campus, SJP member Pessah said, "The main issue for us isn't discomfort on campus. The main issue for us is suffering in Israel/Palestine. If people in Gaza don't have clean drinking water, that's a bigger issue than if two groups on campus don't speak to each other. What we're doing is not killing anyone."

MARCH 2011 LAWSUIT

The controversy over the previous year's IAW events resurfaced when, in 2011, a former student named Jessica Felber filed a civil lawsuit. She alleged she had been attacked and injured in March 2010 by fellow student Husam Zakharia, a leader of SJP, while she was holding a protest sign stating "Israel wants Peace." At the time, no charges were filed, though Felber did successfully seek a restraining order against Zakharia. Felber claimed that UC Berkeley, the Regents of the University of California, and the institutions' ranking officials allowed for and tolerated the development of a "dangerous anti-Semitic climate on its campuses."

Felber v. Yudof cites SJP as "overtly political" and says "it accounts for the majority of anti-Israel activism and anti-Semitic posturing among students at the academies where there are chapters." The suit also details the founding of the national Muslim Student Association (MSA) and devotes a section to "MSA Connections to Islamist Organizations and the Radical Left." Within the section, the suit ties the Muslim Student Association to the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, which the suit points out, "funneled more than twelve million dollar to Hamas, a terrorist organization." The suit also states that the MSA is an active member of the steering committee of the Marxist-Leninist association "International ANSWER." ANSWER stands for Act Now to Stop War and End Racism; the antiwar coalition group has come under fire for its anti-Zionist stance.

Critics cite Felber's suit as a part of an ongoing campaign to shut down campus clubs and organizations, such as SJP and MSA, also known as Muslim Student Unions, by suing

for Title VI violations. Title VI details antidiscrimination obligations which institutions of higher education must meet in order to obtain federal funding.³¹⁶

Neal Sher, one of the two lawyers representing Felber (the other is Joel Siegal), was the former Director of the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations, where he investigated and prosecuted Nazis in the United States. In an interview with David Horowitz's *FrontPage* magazine, Sher characterizes the lawsuit as targeting SJP and MSA for their supposed affiliation and support of "terror organizations." Sher makes clear that not only UC Berkeley, but other UC campuses, such as University of California, Irvine, are culpable for allowing SJP and MSA to play an active role in campus life.

Sher likens the situation to Nazism in Europe: "It is also very troubling that the on-campus activities of the SJP and MSA against Jessica and other students—and the university's failure to confront them—present a disturbing echo of the darkest period in history: the incitement, intimidation, harassment and violence carried out under the Nazi regime and those of its allies in Europe against Jewish students and scholars in the leading universities of those countries during the turbulent years leading up to and including the Holocaust."³¹⁷

UC BERKELEY "ISRAEL LIBERATION WEEK"

MICHELLE GOLDBERG

In November of 2008, Tikvah, a Zionist group on the University of California, Berkeley campus, frustrated and alienated by what they felt was a hostile environment at the university, organized a week of pro-Israel events on campus that they called Israel Liberation Week. It concluded on November 13 with a concert featuring a pro-Israel rapper named Kosha Dillz. As he performed outdoors on the university campus, three members of an interfaith, international coalition of students, professors, and community members who support the Palestinian cause, Students for Justice in Palestine, climbed onto a second floor balcony of nearby Eshleman Hall and unfurled a Palestinian flag. Three people who were at the concert—the Associated Students of the University of California (ASUC) Senator John Moghtader, a Tikvah member, Berkeley alumnus Gabe Weiner, and performer Yehuda De Sa—went into the building to confront them.

It's unclear what happened next. According to the Jewish students, whose version was reported by several pro-Israel websites and news agencies, Weiner was struck by Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) leader Husam Zakharia, instigating a fight that Moghtader tried to break up.

"Members of Students for Justice in Palestine shouted anti-Semitic epithets referencing the Holocaust throughout the ordeal," said a statement by the Zionist Freedom Alliance, a Bay Area group closely aligned with Tikvah. In the mirror-image version told by SJP, the Jewish students were the ones shouting racial slurs, before attacking Zakharia and the two women who were with him. "The million dollar question that we ask each other in this building and outside is who punched first," said Chaya Gilboa, the Israel Fellow at

Berkeley's Hillel.

No one was seriously hurt in the altercation and the whole incident could easily be dismissed as trivial, the sort of thing bound to happen now and then among impassioned, but often immature, young people. Yet the incident received national and even international attention because it symbolized broader fears in the Jewish community about rampant antisemitism on college campuses. Those fears, in turn, have shaped dynamics at UC Berkeley, leading the Jewish community to support the most aggressively irredentist factions of the student body over those who are working towards dialogue and reconciliation. Thus a small scuffle raises big issues—are Jewish students really persecuted at Berkeley? When does anti-Zionism become antisemitism? And how are kids, often raised in homes where support for Israel and its policies is axiomatic and absolute, supposed to tell the difference?

There's no question that Israel isn't popular at UC Berkeley. "It was shocking to me when I came here," said Karen Galor, a UC Berkeley law student who previously lived in Haifa. "I'd just spent two years in Israel right before I came to law school, and I was ready for it, I was like fine, people are not going to like Israel. But I had no idea the kind of hate that people feel for it."

There is a wide-ranging debate about the reasons for leftist hostility towards Israel. Anti-Zionists point to the horrors Israel has inflicted on the Palestinians, the contradictions between Zionism and liberal pluralism, and the moral and financial support that Israel gets from the United States. They bristle at any mention of antisemitism, seeing it as a crude bludgeon used against those who dissent from mainstream political orthodoxy. Their critics—call them anti-anti-Zionists—argue that Israel is held to a far higher standard than other nations and that leftists are hypocritically silent in the face of greater human rights violations by Saudi Arabia, Russia, and Egypt, among others. Both camps have some truth on their side. Good faith critics of Israel are often libeled as antisemites. At the same time, some of Israel's harshest critics, perhaps enjoying the frisson of transgression, have indeed flirted with antisemitism and Holocaust denial.

Lapses into outright bigotry do not, however, appear to be very common at UC Berkeley. Yes, there have been scattered incidents—a swastika scrawled on a bus stop last year, a brick thrown through the Hillel window several years before that—but they are rare. Galor, for one, didn't feel that UC Berkeley's anti-Israel atmosphere stems from antisemitism. She believes that though hostility to Israel is unfair and overblown, it's also a response to Israel's own actions, coupled with UC Berkeley's lefty passion for underdogs. In other words, she feels campus animosities are driven by ideology rather than ethnic or religious prejudice.

THE "NEW ANTISEMITISM?"

Emily Gottreich, Vice Chair of UC Berkeley's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, says, "There's a lot of public concern about antisemitism, coming from the outside, coming from parents, coming from the Jewish donor community in the Bay Area that is really unfounded." Having spent four years

as a Berkeley undergraduate, two years as a post-doc, and six years working at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES), she notes, “I have seen almost, almost no instances of antisemitism on campus. There’s almost nothing. There are some issues around Israel and Palestine, but I emphatically do not see those as antisemitic. That, of course, is the big issue.”

Indeed, for several years, various Jewish leaders have been expressing alarm about what they call “the New Antisemitism,” often defined as a kind of unhinged anti-Zionism said to be especially virulent in academia. In 2005, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights held hearings about antisemitism on college campuses and UC Berkeley was mentioned repeatedly. Testifying before the panel, Sarah Stern, then of the American Jewish Congress, said, “From San Francisco State, UC Irvine, Santa Cruz and Berkeley in the West to Columbia and Harvard on the East, and virtually hundreds of examples in between, this excessive fascination with Israel and the tendency to hold it up to disproportionate scrutiny has spilled over into attitudes and acts of hatred and anti-Semitism on the college campus towards individual Jewish students.”³¹⁸

To some outsiders, the fight on November 13 just proved that Stern was right. Then, a few months later, in an unprecedented recall election, a majority of students voted to remove Tikvah’s John Moghtader from the student senate because of his alleged actions that night. As the story was told in the Jewish community beyond campus, Moghtader was being persecuted for his Zionism. It was only a short step from there to see the recall as an antisemitic provocation and to imagine that UC Berkeley is a terrible place for Jewish students. Some accounts of the fight which have spread across the internet became so exaggerated as to be almost unrecognizable—in one, it was claimed that the pro-Zionist students at the concert were attacked by some 20 anti-Israel students.

On campus, though, things were much more complicated. Most Jewish students clearly didn’t feel that Tikvah represented them—in fact, the group, known to be aggressive and disruptive, was suspended from the campus’s Jewish Student Union after setting off a siren during a Norman Finkelstein lecture. At Hillel, a freshman girl told me that, while her parents had worried that UC Berkeley would be a hostile environment, the only people that made her feel threatened were members of Tikvah. Gilboa was shocked to hear Tikvah students chanting, “From the river to the sea, the land of Israel will be free,” a chant that implies the permanent takeover of the occupied territories. She says she had never heard such rhetoric in Israel.

And yet Gilboa was under pressure to reach out to the Tikvah students rather than argue with them. An ebullient, fifth-generation Israeli with a degree in Jewish philosophy from Ben Gurion University, her job is to serve as a kind of cultural emissary from her country. She’d only been on campus a couple of months when the fight happened, and, initially convinced that the Jewish students were at fault, she was furious. “I was very angry when I heard what happened,” she said, her English heavily accented and slightly broken. “Why Jewish people need to punch Palestinians? We are so far from Israel! Why should we continue this conflict here?”

Gilboa wanted to foster coexistence. She considered the

head of SJP a friend—once a week giving him Hebrew lessons in exchange for Arabic lessons. “We do that because we want to model some relationship in a good way,” she said. The day after the 2008 incident, members of SJP organized a debka, a traditional Palestinian dance, which they performed in a spirit of protest and cheerful defiance, and Gilboa joined in. To many, this would seem like a positive, even beautiful thing—Jewish and pro-Palestinian students responding to violence by dancing together. But the members of Tikvah—and their supporters in the broader Jewish community—it was a kind of betrayal. At the time, some in the local Jewish community complained about Gilboa to Hillel’s national headquarters. “They told the Washington, D.C. office that she’s not pro-Israel, that she’s dancing with anti-Israel people,” said Itamar Haritan, who last year founded a liberal Jewish group on campus called Keshet Enoshi, or The Human Connection. “She’s famous all over the Jewish world for that.” Gilboa now regards that dance as a terrible mistake, an error that she made because she didn’t understand the dynamics on campus. Now, with outsiders accusing Berkeley Hillel of being insufficiently pro-Israel, there is pressure to take a more adversarial stance towards SJP, and to welcome Tikvah back into the fold. In 2008, Tikvah was removed from Berkeley’s Jewish Student Union (JSU) over their conduct during a lecture by Norman Finkelstein, at which bullhorns were used to disrupt the speaker. While Moghtader has flatly denied using profane language, he was caught on video yelling, “F*** you!” at Finkelstein. [See profile of Finkelstein.]

Meanwhile, the Tikvah students continue to feel harassed and aggrieved. “I’d say it’s definitely not so friendly for those who want to be active and outwardly Jewish and pro-Israel,” says Yoni Weinberg, a 20-year-old member of Tikvah from Los Angeles. Weinberg sees no difference between antisemitism and anti-Zionism. He had never heard anyone criticize Israel before he arrived on campus, and the atmosphere stunned him. “Growing up in LA, in a very Jewish neighborhood, you never hear or even know these things exist,” he says. “There it was a question of, ‘How much do you love Israel?’ Here, you see people like, ‘F.U., Jew, Israel this, Israel that.’ It’s hurtful and shocking to see in such a prestigious institution like Berkeley.”

For Weinberg, the academic year of 2009 was particularly fraught. “Earlier this year, on the bus stop, people [drew] swastikas, and they did swastikas equals Jewish star,” he says. “There was a pro-Israel sign talking about coexistence in Israel between Arabs and Jews, and they crossed out the word ‘Jews’ and wrote ‘Free Palestine.’ That was kind of what kicked off the year and created a really negative feeling to this year.”

In fact, though, the origins of the swastikas are as cloudy as those of the November 13 fight. Brian Maissey, like Weinberg, is from a heavily Jewish part of Southern California, and the anti-Israel tone on campus stunned him, leading him to seek support in Tikvah. “The reason I got involved in Tikvah is the same reason Tikvah got started,” he said. “We felt there was a really strong anti-Israel voice on campus, and we wanted to be there to respond to it, and to provide an opposite viewpoint.” But Maissey, a freshman, didn’t want to spend the next four years at war with pro-Palestinian students, and so he regularly—and secretly—met privately with

a member of SJP. The conversation began, ironically enough, during a protest of Israel's invasion of Gaza, to which Maissey had come to counterprotest. "I have the mixed blessing of being naïve enough to think its possible to reconcile with SJP," he says. "Whether that's true or not, we'll see. I feel like its something that's within my power to change during my time here as a student."

BOSTON COLLEGE

AT A GLANCE

Name	Boston College
Location	Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts
Student Body.....	9,171 undergraduate students 4,960 graduate and professional students
Gender	53% female, 47% male
Self-Identification as Students Of Color	24%
Religious Affiliation*	70% Catholic, 2-3% Jewish, 1% Muslim
International.....	50 states, 93 countries, 13% international

*Unofficial numbers

REBECCA STEINITZ, WINTER 2011

Informally known as a member of the “Catholic Ivy League,” Boston College is one of the top Catholic universities in the country. Founded by Jesuits in 1863, Boston College (BC) is located just outside Boston, in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, a wealthy suburb nestled between the Jewish-identified communities of Newton and Brookline. BC has long been the college of choice for Boston’s Irish Catholic elite and its graduates are well-represented among the top echelons of Boston’s law firms and businesses, as well as the ranks of Massachusetts politicians.

More than 150 years after its founding, BC is becoming increasingly national, international, and diverse. Women were first admitted to the school in 1924 and its undergraduate programs were fully co-educational by 1970; today the undergraduate student population is 52 percent female. 29 percent of students identify themselves as of African-American, Hispanic, Asian, or American Indian descent, and 48 states and 93 countries are represented in the student body.

Data on religious identity is harder to come by. The common figure, cited in admissions materials and referenced by faculty and administrators, is that 70 percent of BC students are Catholic and the rest are not. According to the BC Hillel website, 2 percent of the 9,000 undergraduates are Jewish, but another administrator recalled figures stating that 3 percent were Jewish and 1 percent Muslim. Several people who might be expected to know these figures insisted they did not know them and had no idea how to find them; others simply stated that they were not available. One faculty member said that she had heard that students were not asked about their religious identities because Catholic students worried that if they said they were Catholic, the university would check up on whether they were going to Mass. Whatever the exact numbers, which seem likely to approximate the figures cited here, it is clear that BC remains demographically a largely Catholic university, even as those demographics are shifting.

Academically, BC has a wide array of programs. Along with the College of Arts and Sciences, there are graduate schools of Arts and Sciences, Education, Law, Management, Nursing, Social Work, and Theology and Ministry enrolling nearly 5,000 students. The College of Arts and Sciences has 22 departments and 23 interdisciplinary programs which together offer nearly 50 majors and concentrations, along with almost as many minors. These include major and minor concentrations in Islamic Civilization and Societies and a minor in Jewish Studies. Language courses include ten Arabic and eight Hebrew courses offered in the Departments of Slavic and Eastern Languages and Theology.

Almost three quarters of BC’s undergraduates live on campus in 29 residence halls. Special interest living opportunities include freshman leadership and honors houses, and floors dedicated to Multicultural Leadership Experience, Healthy Alternatives Lifestyle, and Romance Languages. Athletics are another important part of the BC community. There are 13 men’s and 16 women’s teams, and the football and men’s and women’s ice hockey teams are perennial powerhouses with a dedicated Boston following off-campus as well as on. The Muslim Student Association and Hillel meet the needs of Muslim and Jewish students, while other extracurricular organizations potentially relevant to these communities include the Arab Student Association, Students for Justice in Palestine, and Student Coalition for Israel.

ANTISEMITISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA AT BOSTON COLLEGE

There appears to be very little overt antisemitism or Islamophobia at BC. Media reports of incidents are few and generally long-past: they include occasional antisemitic remarks by individuals and a swastika painted on a Jewish professor’s door in 1996. Faculty, staff, and students report very few similar events, some merely rumored: one person said she’d heard there had been a swastika drawn on campus four or five years ago but the community dealt with it swiftly, while another said that she had heard of an administrator making an “inappropriate” comment to a group of students and that the person in question no longer occupied the position.

Statistics from the Office for Institutional Diversity confirm this impression. In 2009–10, three incidents of “hate crimes and bias motivated offensive conduct” were recorded in the Office’s incident database; in 2008–09, there were six; and in 2007–08, the first year of the database, there were ten. Of all these incidents only two were classified under religion (the majority were regarding race, gender/transgender, and sexual orientation). At least one of these religion-based incidents appears to have taken the form of graffiti.

The general sense of the campus climate correlates with the data. Muslim Student Association (MSA) President Salman Rangrez simply calls BC “a very accepting place,” and that seems to be the overall impression. It appears that “overt antisemitism and Islamophobia are not tolerated on campus,” as Professor Ruth Langer, Associate Director of the Center for Jewish-Christian Learning, put it. The experience of a Jewish member of the women’s hockey team illustrates both the overall acceptance and the explicit rejection of

prejudice. After someone made an antisemitic remark to her, the young woman told her team, and the other players responded with an overt and universal show of verbal and practical support. They decorated the team's locker room for Hanukkah, attended a Shabbat service and meal with her, and, when she received a grant to research antisemitism on college campuses, attended her final presentation. As this anecdote suggests, while BC is not immune from insensitivity and offensive behavior, the counter-response tends to be dramatically larger and more substantive.

Although it may seem counterintuitive, given the Catholic church's reputation for antisemitism in a variety of eras and contexts, many people identify BC's Catholicism as key to a campus culture that prizes tolerance, politeness, and kindness. It is important to note that BC is a Jesuit institution, and the Jesuits have longstanding traditions of commitment to social justice, education, and interfaith dialogue and understanding. However, many see the Catholic basis of BC's climate as less a matter of doctrine than of attitude. Though Langer explains that "according to the official teachings of the Catholic church, antisemitism is a sin and anti-Islamic actions would [also] be considered that way, although it's less official," she also hails "the general politeness of the campus" which means that "certain kinds of discourse are not acceptable." Similarly, Political Science Professor Alan Wolfe, Director of The Boisi Center for Religion and American Political Life, says that "being Catholic and being at BC is all about being nice and being respectful." In an era when Catholicism is less about creed and more about personal and ethnic identity, he argues, "to be Catholic is a commitment to a kind of service to the common good, to doing right ... Given that, any kind of ethnic or racial hatred would strike [BC students] as not being nice."

There is also an academic component to BC's campus climate. Former Director of Jewish Life Elissa Klein, employed by Hillel, notes that "the Jesuit culture is one of tolerance and learning." After the 9/11 attacks, BC actively set out to create what Langer calls "a base of knowledge" about Islam on campus. With the support of a federal grant, a new interdisciplinary program, Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, was created in 2002. The program, now known as Islamic Civilization and Societies, first offered a minor, but when it had 60 minors (in 2008), it established a major as well.

Arabic was a key component of the program from the beginning. When BC began to offer Arabic courses in 2002 organizers hoped for half a dozen students to start, but 40 enrolled the first year and there were 100 students by 2008. The interest in Arabic is just one sign of general student interest in the field. As Wolfe puts it, "We can't hire enough people to teach about Islam, it's just huge on campus. There's a tremendous fascination and curiosity."

The Jewish Studies program, which offers diverse courses and a minor, similarly aims to educate students with an eye to tolerance. As the program's website puts it, "the program contributes to Boston College's efforts to internationalize and enrich its curriculum by creating a space for reflection on an ethnically and religiously diverse campus." Similarly, the mission of the Center for Christian-

Jewish Learning (CCJL) is "the multifaceted development and implementation of new relationships between Christians and Jews that are based, not merely on toleration, but on full respect and mutual enrichment."

It is important to note, however, that despite the overall sense of a positive campus climate and the academic initiatives designed to foster such a climate, Jewish and Muslim students do not necessarily operate on a fully level playing field. Klein acknowledges that BC's non-Catholic students often feel "different," though she hastens to add that this is not a consequence of overt prejudice or exclusion: "I think some non-Catholic students, Muslims, Jewish students, Episcopalians, do feel a sense of otherness because they are different from the mainstream, but it's not in a hateful way, just in a different way." One of the most glaring inequalities appears in the area of religious resources. Out of 15 campus professionals devoted to religious life—12 campus ministers, two priests, and one nun—14 are Catholic and responsible for Catholic students, services, and programming. Reverend Howard McLendon, a Baptist minister, has responsibility for all other religions, including Jews and Muslims. Reverend McLendon suggests that this disparity may subtly undermine BC's overt commitment to religious tolerance: "If I were talking about an environment where there was a level playing field, and there would be equal opportunities for spiritual formation and spiritual expression of all religions, for that to be a reality, that language or that desire has to be backed up with resources and facilities. In a situation where there would be more parity, there might be one [chaplain] for each of the major religions."

Still, it is clear that BC is a university that is largely safe for Jewish and Muslim students, a place where tolerance is the rule, not just an empty promise.

A NOTE ON ISRAEL/PALESTINE

Two people interviewed for this profile independently brought up the topic of Israel/Palestine. Both explicitly acknowledged that Israel/Palestine is a separate issue from antisemitism and Islamophobia. However, Israel/Palestine has been an issue on campus and, as such, inevitably is an issue for Jews and Muslims, as well as for perceptions of Jews and Muslims. It seems as if much of the animus on this issue is located among the faculty. Where one person commented on a persistent stream of "anti-Israel" activism on campus, the other identified a significant amount of Islamophobia among faculty colleagues, stemming, in his opinion, from Zionism.

A particular locus of concern for this issue has been Jewish sociology professor Eve Spangler's course, Social Justice in Israel and Palestine, which takes students on a trip to Israel/Palestine. While one faculty member believed this course was problematically unbalanced, another suggested that pro-Israel faculty misread student desire to be even-handed as anti-Israel. It seems, though, that while these issues are of acute interest to a small group of faculty and some students, they are not a large-scale campus concern.

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

AT A GLANCE

Name	Brandeis University
Location	Waltham, Massachusetts
Student body.....	3,300 undergraduate 2,200 graduate continuing education
Gender	56% female, 44% male
Self-identification as students of color	21% undergraduates 29% graduates
Religious affiliation*	50% Jewish, 03% Muslim (200 students)
International.....	9.5% undergraduates 30% graduates

*Unofficial estimates

REBECCA STEINITZ, WINTER 2011

BRANDEIS: AN OVERVIEW

Brandeis University, located in Waltham, Massachusetts outside Boston, was founded in 1948 as a Jewish liberal arts university. It remains to this day a unique institution: the only Jewish research university in the United States not directly connected to a specific Jewish denomination and/or religious purpose.

According to statistics from Fall 2009, Brandeis had approximately 3,300 undergraduates and 2,200 graduate and continuing education students. Fifty-six percent of the student body is female, and 9.5 percent of undergraduates and 30 percent of graduate students are international. Approximately 21 percent of undergraduates and 29 percent of graduate students self-identify as students of color.

Like most universities, Brandeis does not keep statistics on religion or religious identification. While the university repeatedly claims that just under 50 percent of undergraduates are Jewish—this is not officially confirmed. It should be noted that there are approximately 250 Orthodox Jewish students who represent a distinct and visible community on campus. There are approximately 200 Muslim students.

Along with its College of Arts and Sciences, Brandeis has three graduate schools—Arts and Sciences, Business, and Social Policy and Management—and a School of Continuing Studies. Brandeis sees itself as both a research university and a liberal arts college. As part of its commitment to a contemporary interdisciplinary version of the liberal arts, the College of Arts and Science has organized its 43 departmental and interdisciplinary majors and minors into eight “umbrel-

las” known as “areas of study.” These include Global Studies, Health: Science, Society and Policy, The Humanities: Reason & Imagination, Jewish Studies, Justice & Public Life, Physical & Computational Science, Preparation for Professional Life, and Visual & Performing Arts.

Given the institution’s origins, it should be no surprise that Jewish Studies is a large, distinctive, and flourishing component of Brandeis’s academic program. The Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies major and minor are housed under Jewish Studies, alongside the Near Eastern and Judaic Studies major and minor. The Hebrew Languages and Literature program (which Brandeis claims is the largest in the United States) offers 36 language-focused courses, while the equivalent Arabic program has eight. Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies and Near Eastern and Judaic Studies, as well as associated departments, offer a plethora of courses on topics related to Judaism and Islam, as well as Jews and Arabs. These range from “Islam Civilizations and Institutions” and “Political Culture in the Middle East,” to “American Judaism,” “Jewish Secularism,” and “Gender in the Bible.”

Numerous study abroad opportunities are available for Brandeis students, including programs in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Tunisia, Turkey, and Israel. Brandeis also has an intercultural partnership with the Palestinian Al-Quds University. At the graduate level, the Master’s program in Teaching has a track for teaching in private Jewish day schools, and the Master’s in Teaching Hebrew is the first of its kind in the country. Brandeis also houses the Crown Center for Middle East Studies, the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies, the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, and the National Center for Jewish Film, as well as the Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education and the Institute for Informal Jewish Education. In short, Brandeis is an academic magnet for all kinds of Jewish studies in particular, but also for studies in Islam and the Middle East writ more broadly.

Brandeis has eleven residence halls and guarantees students four semesters of housing. While many colleges and universities offer kosher dining programs or halls, Brandeis may be unique in the fact that its large traditional dining hall offers both kosher and nonkosher food, so that all students can eat together. Staffed by Jewish, Muslim, Catholic, and Protestant chaplains, the Interfaith Chaplaincy at Brandeis also emphasizes interconnection and pluralism. Brandeis’s Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant chapels were designed and built together, so that each is the same size and their shadows never fall upon each other. There is a Muslim prayer space in the Usdan Student Center. A flourishing Hillel with six staff members is also located in Usdan. Hillel sponsors Orthodox, Conservative Egalitarian, and Reform services, as well as over 20 clubs, performing arts groups, and committees. Not surprisingly, of Brandeis’s over 250 student organizations and clubs, a significant number are diversely focused on Judaism, Islam, and the Middle East, including the Arab Culture Club, the Brandeis Zionist Alliance, the Yiddish Club, *Chalav U’Dvash* (Journal of Zionist Thought), Ba’note (Jewish women’s a capella group), Jewish Fella Acapella (Jewish men’s a capella group), Manginah (co-ed Jewish a capella group), Hillel Theater Group, Brandeis Israel Public Affairs Committee, Brandeis Students for Justice in Palestine, J Street U–Brandeis, Brandeis Jewish Voice for Peace, Muslim Students

Association, Brandeis Reform Chavurah, Brandeis Orthodox Organization, Brandeis Reconstructionist Organization, and Brandeis University Conservative Organization.

As a relatively young university with a smaller endowment than many of its academic peers, Brandeis has been hit hard by the recent economic downturn. The effects of the Madoff financial fraud also had a significant impact on Brandeis's largely Jewish donor base. In 2009, facing a significant deficit, Brandeis announced that it would close its well-respected art museum and sell off some of its major holdings. A huge outcry greeted this announcement and the administration backed off, though the future of the museum remains unclear.

In 2010, a committee of faculty, administrators, and students proposed additional cost-saving measures, including the elimination of jobs and the elimination and/or reorganization of several departments and programs. With a new president installed in January 2011, Brandeis is in an institutional state of flux, though the fundamentals of the university remain strong.

ANTISEMITISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA AT BRANDEIS

Lore has it that Brandeis was founded in part as a response to quotas and discrimination against Jews at Harvard. Whether this is true or not, pluralism and diversity have been overt and fundamental principles of the university from its beginning. Named for Louis Brandeis, the first Jewish Supreme Court Justice and a crusader for social justice and free speech, Brandeis is a Jewish institution which has staked its identity upon inclusiveness and respect.

The University's Mission Statement underscores these commitments: "By being a nonsectarian university that welcomes students, teachers and staff of every nationality, religion and orientation, Brandeis renews the American heritage of cultural diversity, equal access to opportunity and freedom of expression." The Mission Statement is accompanied by a Diversity Statement which highlights the University's origins:

Established in 1948 as a model of ethnic and religious pluralism, Brandeis University:

- *Considers social justice central to its mission as a nonsectarian university founded by members of the American Jewish community.*
- *Aims to engage members of our community as active citizens in a multicultural world.*
- *Seeks to build an academic community whose members have diverse cultures, backgrounds, and life experiences.*
- *Believes that diverse backgrounds and ideas are crucial to academic excellence.*
- *Recognizes the need to analyze and address the ways in which social, cultural and economic inequalities affect power and privilege in the larger society and*

at Brandeis itself.

- *Honors freedom of expression and civility of discourse as fundamental educational cornerstones.*
- *Seeks to safeguard the safety, dignity and well-being of all its members.*
- *Endeavors to foster a just and inclusive campus culture that embraces the diversity of the larger society.*

This history and mission are very much alive at Brandeis today, and are frequently referred to when people want to explain Brandeis's profile and practices. Brandeis asserts that expressions and actions of bigotry are unacceptable. In point of fact, between 2007–2009 there were no reported hate crimes at Brandeis. At the same time, a volatile political climate, especially when it comes to Israel and Palestine, is sometimes—but not universally—articulated in antisemitic and Islamophobic terms.

It is generally acknowledged that antisemitism is unacceptable at Brandeis. Indeed, for many it appears to be inconceivable. Brandeis undergraduate Lev Hirschorn, co-founder of the Brandeis chapter of Jewish Voice for Peace, most clearly articulates the obvious reasons:

I don't want to say that antisemitism doesn't exist, but it doesn't. It's a Jewish school. 50% of the student body is Jewish. It's got one of the best Judaic studies programs in the country. There's a really high emphasis on the Jewish identity of the university. Anyone who comes to Brandeis knows all that. It's not like it's a secret or anything. It's really difficult for me to imagine there would be any population who would come to Brandeis who would have any issue with Jews, Jewish culture, or any of that. There could be people who are confused, but if they exist, they're very quiet about it.

Sociology professor Gordon Fellman, who has been at Brandeis for 47 years, concurs: "If any non-Jewish student is antisemitic, it would be so unacceptable to express, it isn't expressed." Another student, Jon Sussman, calls the Brandeis campus "incredibly tolerant" and "very placid."

Muslims and community members of other backgrounds have similar assessments. Imam Talal Eid, the Muslim chaplain, calls the climate "very healthy" and says that he has "noticed full harmony between the Jewish students and the Muslim students and ... other faiths."

Imam Eid points both to the absence of the negative—he recalls no anti-Islam attacks or activities, and observes that people at Brandeis take care to distinguish between Muslims and terrorists—and the presence of the positive—Jewish students prepare food for Muslim students to break their fasts during Ramadan and he himself wears "my full outfit, my turban and my robe" and is fully accepted wherever he goes.

The Catholic chaplain, Reverend Walter Cuenin, concurs with Imam Eid's overall assessment, while Kaamila Mohamed, an officer of the Muslim Student Association (MSA), calls Brandeis "a really positive environment," and says, "There's no fear that I know of and I haven't sensed outward hate, in terms of hate speech or things like that."

The one significant exception to these claims—although in some ways the exception that proves the rule—was the March 5, 2010, vandalizing of the newly renovated MSA suite in the Usdan Student Center. Intruders entered the unlocked space and overturned lamps, unplugged appliances and computers, scratched at a sealed door, and took the Imam's Koran, which contained his notes and sermons. The perpetrators were never caught so their motive remains unknown, and many students at Brandeis chose to believe that it could have been a random event. As Sussman puts it, "I never knew what to think of it because it just seemed so strange and out of the blue ... My hope is it wasn't politically motivated or religiously motivated, it was just a prank and unfeeling, it wasn't intentional in that sense." While it's impossible to discern the motives or identities of the vandals, Sussman's observation that "it doesn't seem to be connected to anything else" appears to be true. Imam Eid also believes that this was an "isolated event," a consequence of failed security rather than bias. He points out that similar incidents have occurred in the other chapels at Brandeis but have not received the same media attention because they did not involve the Muslim community at a Jewish school.

It is worth noting that the Brandeis community was hugely supportive of the MSA. As Cuenin describes it, "Everyone rallied together, hundreds and hundreds of kids came together because they were so upset about it." Both the Faculty Senate and the Student Union Senate passed resolutions condemning the vandalism; the university's president, four chaplains, and Associate Dean of Student Life sent an email of support to the entire community; and a solidarity vigil was held, also attended by the president and chaplains. The incident did highlight the fact that Muslim students do not have a chapel of their own, unlike Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish students. Many have noted this lack and suggested that it points to the second-class status of Muslims at Brandeis (though Imam Eid believes the small number of religiously observant Muslim students do not justify a mosque). However, in an op-ed in the Brandeis student newspaper, *The Justice*, MSA officer Wajida Syed acknowledged that "no one will deny that at Brandeis, Muslims are socially and administratively underrepresented," but also insisted that "a single incident should not erroneously color ... Brandeis University," hailed the resounding campus support for the MSA, and characterized Brandeis overall as "a community continually pushing for progress."

When asked why Brandeis has such a positive atmosphere, people almost always cite its history and policies. "It's built into the fabric of this place," says Cuenin, citing not just the larger principles on which Brandeis was founded, but specific gestures toward social justice and inclusivity, such as naming the Protestant chapel after Supreme Court Justice John Marshall Harlan, the sole Justice to oppose Jim Crow laws, and does not recognize fraternities and sororities on the grounds that they are inherently exclusive organizations. Sociology professor David Cunningham agrees, explaining that "Brandeis's mission is inherently about diversity. The whole origin story is all about being inclusive when other schools weren't." Hirschorn affirms that this "origin story" speaks to today's students: "The founding mythology of Brandeis is very rooted in the idea of accepting other people,

being tolerant, not having exclusion or exclusivity. Whether or not that's true, it has a real effect on the student body." "Students recognize that tradition," says Sussman, "and are interested in holding it."

This is not to say that Brandeis is Eden. Mohamed notes that on the Brandeis campus, Jewish is often equated with White, and racial conflicts can lead to negative comments about Jews within student communities of color. She believes that Muslim women students who wear the hijab face subtle resistance on campus. There is a sense of distance and exclusivity between observant and non-observant Jews on campus. But these are minor disturbances on a "placid" and "tolerant" campus—indeed, these kinds of things happen everywhere, but members of the Brandeis community may be more likely to bring them up when they are explicitly asked for examples of bias.

The single persistent exception to the overall harmonious climate at Brandeis is, not surprisingly, focused on conflicts in the Middle East. As Sussman puts it, "Middle Eastern politics is the stumbling block at Brandeis." As a Jewish institution, Brandeis mirrors the complicated relationship American Jews have with Israel. Sussman, who is a student activist, frames the intensity of the issue personally: compared to other regions and political issues, he suggests, "More students have relatives there, or have been there, or are personally connected to that region. It's relevant to people's lives, they feel connected to it." Cunningham frames it politically: "Brandeis is a combination of seeing itself as a progressive place generally, but issues pertaining to Israel play out differently than at other progressive campuses. There is a fairly strong Zionist bent to students' backgrounds and beliefs." He says that while most students are not politically involved, they tend to speak up on Israel. Fellman claims that "most of the students are not interested in Israel, or they [express] knee-jerk, Sunday school mindless support for Israel," a more pointed take on Cunningham's perspective but one which nevertheless suggests a similar sense of Israel being a special issue on campus.

While the activist segment of the Brandeis student body may be a small fraction of the whole, it spans a range of political positions. Brandeis Israel Action Committee is a strongly Zionist organization and an affiliate of American Israel Public Affairs Committee. J Street U-Brandeis is a chapter of the campus arm of the relatively new Jewish lobbying organization, J Street, which supports a two-state solution. Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), a step further to the left, urges divestment and supports boycotts of products made in the Israeli settlements. Brandeis Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) supports the Palestinian cause. J Street U, JVP, and Brandeis SJP were all founded since 2008, suggesting a rising interest in more progressive positions on the Israel/Palestine conflict—though the fact that a Brandeis Tea Party chapter was founded in Fall 2010, and promptly sponsored a showing of *Obsession: Radical Islam's War Against the West*, suggests that right-wing positions also have their adherents. It is noteworthy that all these organizations have a largely Jewish leadership and membership. The Brandeis faculty also has widely diverse positions on the Middle East, from outspoken Zionists like sociologist Shula Reinharz (who is married to the former university President, described below)

and historian Jonathan Sarna, to Fellman, who is a peace activist and Palestinian supporter.

Strong feelings on Middle East issues give frequent rise to what both Cunningham and Sussman aptly call “flashpoints:” incidents and events that cause a significant uproar on campus and often spread to the local and national media as a consequence of Brandeis’s standing in the Jewish community. In the last decade many of those flashpoints, especially those which come to mind for faculty, have concerned actions taken by Jehuda Reinharz, the Brandeis president who stepped down at the end of 2010. Many people on campus perceived Reinharz as attempting to align Brandeis with Israel, a perception which was certainly enhanced in 2002 when he was quoted in the Israeli newspaper *Ha’aretz* as saying, “Part of the responsibility of the university—and since I am the president I am the one who determines such things—is to promote the Jewish agenda in the world” (though he later claimed to have been mistranslated).

Some of Reinharz’s controversial actions included pulling Brandeis advertising from Boston National Public Radio affiliate WBUR to protest what was seen as its pro-Palestinian news coverage (2003) and shutting down the Voices of Palestine exhibit of art by Palestinian youth (2006). He was also heavily implicated in the controversy over former President Jimmy Carter’s 2007 visit to Brandeis to speak about his book *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*. Carter first rejected an invitation to debate well-known Zionist Alan Dershowitz and then after much controversy, spoke on campus alone in a tightly organized encounter, after which Dershowitz spoke in a separate event. While Reinharz provided funding for the event, he did not attend, and afterwards criticized the expense to the Faculty Senate. In the aftermath of Carter’s visit, a student-faculty committee was established to monitor campus speakers on the Middle East.

Each of these incidents generated significant controversy, criticism, and protest on campus, as well as media attention. Brandeis’s wealthy Jewish donor base was also an important constituency in the resulting debates, with some donors trying to influence Brandeis’s positions and some faculty and student activists protesting their involvement. It should be noted, however, that Reinharz also oversaw the creation of the partnership between Brandeis and Al-Quds University in the West Bank and the founding of the Slifka Israeli Coexistence Scholarships, which support Israeli-Arab and Israeli-Jewish students (one each per year) who have been involved in “coexistence efforts” in Israel. That some faculty saw the closing of the Voices of Palestine exhibit as an anomaly vis-à-vis Reinharz’s support for open dialogue about Israel and Palestine, while others saw it as consistent with Reinharz’s support of Israel and censorship of pro-Palestinian positions, testifies to the nature of conflicting perceptions.

Students, understandably, have a more limited history

with the institution. More recent flashpoint events they recall include the 2009 debate between Justice Richard Goldstone, leader of the UN Human Rights Council fact-finding mission on the Gaza Conflict, and former Israeli ambassador to the United Nations Dore Gold; the selection of Israeli ambassador to the United States Michael Oren as commencement speaker in 2010; right-wing activist David Horowitz’s talk on campus in fall 2010; the November 2010 Israeli Occupation Awareness week sponsored by JVP and Brandeis SJP; Noam Chomsky’s talk during Israeli Occupation Awareness Week; and the Tea Party screening of *Obsession*. Like the earlier events noted above, these also generated discussion, controversy and protests from multiple perspectives as well as media coverage.

What is the relationship between conflicts over Middle East politics and antisemitism and Islamophobia on campus? For many faculty, these issues inevitably slide together. In 2007, at the time of the Carter controversy, Professor Shula Reinharz notoriously equated anti-Zionism with antisemitism in her column in Boston newspaper *The Jewish Advocate*, saying, “Most would say that they are simply anti-Zionists, not anti-Semites. But I disagree, because in a world where there is only one Jewish state, to oppose it vehemently is to endanger Jews.” She is definitely not the only faculty member on campus who feels this way but there are also faculty who are careful to draw distinctions between politics and religion, including Fellman, who says, “It’s really the Palestinian issue more than anti-Muslim.”

For many activist students, the explicit distinction between politics and religion is clear. Hirschorn says that, “I don’t think the Israel/Palestine debate at Brandeis is rooted in antisemitism and Islamophobia.” Sussman claims that “Brandeis has lucked out in that we haven’t had any instances of antisemitism in discussing Israel politics.” JVP, to take one organization, explicitly disavows “anti-Jewish, anti-Muslim, and anti-Arab bigotry and oppression.” On the other hand, students do point to a sotto voce conversation, which sometimes becomes louder, on Facebook among other places, in which some degree of prejudice emerges and the political merges with the prejudicial: “People making jokes about Islam and stuff” and “People said on Facebook we should rename [Israeli Occupation Awareness Week] Attack the Jews Week.”

Overall, the Brandeis campus is characterized by an overt and widely embraced ethos of tolerance and diversity. At the same time, it experiences a volatile climate shaped by diverse opinions about Israel and Palestine, including diverse opinions about the relationship between Middle Eastern politics and antisemitism and Islamophobia. When it comes to overt expressions of antisemitism and Islamophobia, however, there are almost none to be found, and in the rare instances when they do occur, they are roundly condemned.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

AT A GLANCE

Name Columbia University
Location: New York, New York
Student body: 5,888 undergraduates
Gender: 47% female, 53% male
Self-identification
as students of color 55%
International..... 11.3% ,87 foreign countries
represented, undergraduate

MICHELLE GOLDBERG, WINTER 2010

The story of the 2004 uproar over Middle Eastern studies at Columbia University actually begins a few years earlier and a few hundred miles away, at Harvard University. There, a campaign led by a graduate student named Rachel Fish got Harvard to return an endowment for a chair of Islamic Studies. Her victory would become a kind of prototype for right-wing pro-Israel activists working to influence a campus climate they regard as hostile.

In 2002, Fish, a second-year graduate student at Harvard's Divinity School and the founder of the Harvard University Graduate Student Friends of Israel, organized a conference about global antisemitism. At a panel discussion she learned something that disturbed her: the school had accepted \$2.5 million from Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, president of the United Arab Emirates, to endow a chair of Islamic Studies. Sheik Zayed was also the funder of the Abu Dhabi-based Zayed Center for Coordination and Follow-up. Set up in 1999 as the think tank for the Arab League, the Zayed Center had hosted major luminaries, including Bill Clinton and Jacques Chirac, but it also had a record of disseminating antisemitism. It sponsored lectures by notorious American antisemites like Lyndon LaRouche and Michael Collins Piper; the latter gave a talk insisting on the legitimacy of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. A guest lecturer from Saudi Arabia had declared that "the Jewish people must obtain human blood so that their clerics can prepare holiday pastries."

Fish organized a campaign to get Harvard to refuse the money, collecting hundreds of signatures and garnering major media attention. Embarrassed, Sheik Zayed shut down the Zayed Center, saying that its activities "starkly contradicted the principles of interfaith tolerance." But Fish and her allies insisted that wasn't enough because he hadn't personally disassociated himself from antisemitism. Unsure what to do, Harvard put the money on hold and eventually the UAE asked for it back.

For Fish it was a major victory—in 2003 *The Forward* named her one of the 50 most influential Jews in America. But it didn't mark the end of Sheik Zayed's involvement in

American academia. In August 2004 the *New York Sun*, a conservative newspaper that would consistently champion Fish's cause, wrote, "Harvard University may not want his money, but the unelected president of the United Arab Emirates has a grateful beneficiary in Columbia University. Columbia told *The New York Sun* it would not return a \$199,985 gift from the office of Sheik Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan to support a professorship in modern Arab studies and literature named after Edward Said."

By then, Fish had taken a job as the New York Regional Director of the David Project, an organization founded in 2002 "in response to the ideological assault on Israel and its supporters on North America's campuses." There, she was able to channel the complaints into a major public controversy with national repercussions. She "came to this with one scalp in her belt. Columbia was to be the next one," said Richard Bulliet, a professor of Middle Eastern history at Columbia. As he points out, "It didn't work. The professors who offended her are still here." Nevertheless, the furor left some scholars feeling like targets of a witch-hunt while convincing some in the Jewish community that the Columbia campus is a hotbed of anti-Israel propaganda.

The centerpiece of the David Project's Columbia campaign was a documentary titled *Columbia Unbecoming* that has never been released to the public, though a transcript appears on a David Project website. The video features a number of students, some of them identified only by their initials, accusing professors in Columbia's Middle East and Asian Language and Culture Department of unfairness and occasionally outright antisemitism. "Columbia and Barnard are great schools and there's a real vibrant Jewish life on campus," says a student in the film identified by the initials D.K. "But for students who want a comfortable environment in which to talk about Israel and the Middle East, there's a problem. Different people have experienced the problem in different ways. But it's not just a few isolated incidents or a few concerned students. It's a situation where students who want an honest discussion of the Middle East on campus are being silenced. And it's a problem that starts with professors."

Columbia Unbecoming is in many ways a dishonest piece of work. Bulliet met Fish before the documentary had been produced. "I talked to her for quite some time about her plans," he says. "Her initial plan was to produce the video and to keep it secret because she said the students, the ones who had agreed to talk, wanted to be anonymous. They didn't want people to see who they were, except her target audience. Her target audience [was] going to be Jewish money sources of Columbia University." Bulliet says he scolded her "very strongly," saying that if she was going to make accusations against the university she had to show the film to the administration. In the end she agreed, and the movie was screened for several Columbia officials.

Still, the way the film was released had many of the hallmarks of a secret smear campaign. Liel Leibovitz, for example, was working as an editor at *The Jewish Week* when he got a call from someone at the David Project telling him about *Columbia Unbecoming* and urging him to write about it. The caller told him that the film showed "serious, institution-wide persecution of Israeli students." Leibovitz, himself an Israeli and a Columbia graduate student, was skeptical, since

this description didn't match his own experience. But he was also intrigued so he asked to see the film. The caller said he couldn't because the documentary wasn't public, but that he should write about it anyway. Leibovitz refused. Some of his colleagues, he noted, were less reticent.

The *New York Sun* led the charge to promote the film and excoriate Columbia. "At a history class, a professor mockingly tells a female Jewish student she cannot possibly have ancestral ties to Israel because her eyes are green," a story about the documentary from October 20, 2004 began. "During a lecture, a professor of Arab politics refuses to answer a question from an Israeli student and military veteran but instead asks the student, 'How many Palestinians have you killed?'" Only in the tenth paragraph does it become clear that the writer, Jacob Gershman, hadn't seen the film, and was relying on the accounts of people who had. He was thus publishing second-hand versions of anonymous accusations.

Those accusations had real political consequences. Joseph Massad, a fiery professor who was singled out in *Columbia Unbecoming*, had not received tenure when the documentary was released. Brooklyn Congressman Anthony Weiner called on Columbia to fire him, a demand echoed by the febrile conservative press. "The way to begin correcting the situation would be with a grand gesture," wrote the *Sun*. "A Columbia honorary degree for Prime Minister Sharon would be one way to do it. So would firing Mr. Massad or giving back the money from the United Arab Emirates ... Then Columbia could set about hiring some teachers who display genuine critical judgment." According to *The Jewish Week*, a fellow Columbia professor sent Massad an email reading, "Go back to Arab land where Jew hating is condoned. Get the hell out of America. You are a disgrace and a pathetic typical Arab liar."

Leibovitz decided to do some reporting on the film's accusations. With the help of a friend in the registrar's office, he got a list of students who had taken classes with the professors singled out in the documentary. Of them, he chose 36 names, 30 of which he thought were Jewish, and contacted them to ask them about their experiences. Not one reported anything like antisemitism or political intimidation.

Of course, The David Project wouldn't have been able to stir things up had there not been underlying tensions. Columbia has long been at the epicenter of battles over how the Israel/Palestine struggle is understood. It was home to the late Edward Said, the Palestinian-American scholar who *Time* magazine once called "the voice of Palestine-in-exile," a man reviled by neoconservatives and much of the mainstream Jewish community. The inflammatory Joseph Massad, his protégé, was if anything even more anti-Zionist and had a reputation for being both brilliant and bullying. He's been a target of the Right since September 11, 2001 when various conservatives grew obsessed with sniffing out treason in American academia.

Unlike, say, the calumnies sometimes hurled at the brilliant and thoughtful Rashid Khalidi, who occupies the Edward Said professorship, the charges against Massad have not always been ridiculous. It's true that the Right has persecuted him, but it's also true that he's often been bellicose, deliberately offensive, and intellectually crude. His language is strident and without nuance: Israel, in his writings, is

a "racist European colonial settlement," its government comparable to Nazi Germany. He describes the Palestinian Authority as the "Palestinian Collaborationist Authority" and says it's the equivalent of the Nazi's Judenrat, or Jewish council. He denounces the idea of Palestinian negotiations with Israel and describes the "half-white and fully Christian Obama" as "rabidly pro-Israeli." He is dismissive, even contemptuous, of Jewish identity, writing in 2002 that "the majority of American Jews are so assimilated into 'whiteness' that they are no longer Jews, religiously or culturally, except by name."

"There was a strongly pro-Palestinian and anti-Israeli mindset among some of the faculty," says Bulliet. "I don't think there's any question about that. The question is whether that mindset manifested itself in the classroom in a way that violated university standards."

As Bulliet sees it, part of the problem is that professors like Massad teach about the Palestinians with the kind of advocacy approach that prevails in African-American or gender studies. "On matters where there is a campus-wide consensus that advocacy in the classroom raises no problem—everyone on campus accepts the idea that blacks and whites are or should be equal—you don't have to balance your opinions in the classroom," he says. "In gay studies, it's pretty much the same thing. You don't have to go up there and say on the one hand gay marriage is a question of rights, but on the other hand it's legitimating evil sexual practices."

Yet there is no such campus consensus on Israel, so teaching as if there was—as if all decent people agreed with Massad that the Palestinians are engaged in a valiant struggle against a colonialist oppressor—is bound to create a perception of unfairness, even if students are free to express their disagreements. "The Middle East conflict is a pretty complex thing, the history of this area is a very complex history," says Ariel Beery, a Columbia student who was featured in *Columbia Unbecoming*, and who emerged as a leader of the pro-Israel students. "Professors were not only teaching only one perspective, they were bullying people who were trying to question things that they were teaching."

Beery claims he only cared about academic freedom—that he wanted to broaden the debate on campus, not narrow it. But in the media, there was at least as much focus on the professors' criticism of Israel as on their alleged harassment of pro-Israel students. "In classrooms, teach-ins, interviews and published works, dozens of academics are said to be promoting an I-hate-Israel agenda, embracing the ugliest of Arab propaganda, and teaching that Zionism is the root of all evil in the Mideast," wrote *The New York Daily News*, which took to calling Columbia a "poison Ivy."

As a result of the furor, Columbia president Lee C. Bollinger set up a panel to look into the allegations. It was a decision that made almost no one happy. The professors and their allies accused him of interfering with academic freedom. Those sympathetic to The David Project pointed out that the committee was comprised of people likely to be sympathetic to Massad, including his thesis advisor, Lisa Anderson. Bollinger called on the legendary First Amendment lawyer Floyd Abrams to advise the committee, a further sign that it was going to take academic freedom seriously.

Meanwhile, outsiders ensured that the campus climate

remained volatile. On March 6, 2005, The Zionist Organization of America and the deceptively named Scholars for Peace in the Middle East held a conference at Columbia titled, "The Middle East and Academic Integrity on the American Campus." Speakers included feminist-turned-arch neoconservative Phyllis Chesler, who said that the Palestinian Solidarity Movement "is a group in my opinion that's quite similar to the Ku Klux Klan or to the Nazi party," and, via video feed, Natan Sharansky, then Israeli government minister for Jerusalem and Diaspora affairs. Zionist Organization of America President Morton Klein got a standing ovation after declaring that there is no Israeli occupation of the West Bank. As the anti-Muslim, anti-Palestinian language ratcheted up, Ariel Beery stood up to object. "Much of what has been said today is not only unproductive, it is counter-productive," he said, according to an article in the *Forward*. He later told the newspaper, "In the end what we want is the healing of the Columbia campus. Propaganda on either side only pushes us further from that goal."

But Charles Jacobs, the founder of the David Project, was unapologetic. "It's more than [the students'] story now," he was quoted saying. "Their story is harassment and intimidation. The story now includes not how what's being taught is taught, but what is being taught, and who has captured these departments." In other words, the students' concerns were merely instrumental to a larger agenda.

In the end the David Project activists mostly failed, in part because their role was so public. The committee investigating their complaints released its report on March 28, 2005 and it was broadly exculpatory. "Across the spectrum of these concerns, we found no evidence of any statements made by the faculty that could reasonably be construed as anti-semitic. Professor Massad, for one, has been categorical in his classes concerning the unacceptability of anti-semitic views," it said. It also found no evidence that students had been penalized for their views in grading.

That said, it did find one instance where Massad had "exceeded commonly accepted bounds" when he blew up at a student who asked whether Israel sometimes warns people to evacuate areas it is going to bomb, accusing her of denying Israeli "atrocities." "Angry criticism directed at a student in class because she disagrees, or appears to disagree, with a faculty member on a matter of substance is not consistent with the obligation 'to show respect for the rights of others to hold opinions differing from their own,' to exercise 'responsible self-discipline,' and 'to demonstrate appropriate restraint,'" the committee wrote.

At the same time, the committee found significant intimidation of professors by pro-Israel groups. In recent years, it said, "The involvement of outside organizations in the surveillance of professors teaching the Middle East increased. The watch-list of professors published online from late 2002 by a group called Campus Watch, [see profile of Daniel Pipes] which invited students to send in reports on their instructors, led to the named professors receiving hate mail. We heard credible evidence that in spring 2004 someone began filming in one of Professor Saliba's classes without permission and left after being challenged ... Graduate student teaching assistants reported that they no longer felt able to express their views freely for fear of retribution from outside bodies and

that their teaching was affected as a result."

Some faculty felt that, by calling together a committee, Bollinger essentially legitimized the work of The David Project and Campus Watch. "I remember a meeting between Bollinger and a bunch of senior faculty, it was said in retrospect that there [should have been] a categorical exoneration based on the unacceptable source of the accusation," said Bulliet. "The David Project does not have a locus standi on this thing. No matter how many students they talk to, we have no idea what students they may have talked to who said positive things. They're clearly designed to be hostile to Columbia." At the same time, he said, "Once the story got out there with details, that might have been impossible." Indeed, it could be that Bollinger handled the situation as well as anyone could have, since he ultimately diffused it.

In the end, despite these right-wing campaigns, Massad was eventually granted tenure, as was Nadia Abu El-Haj, a professor targeted by conservatives in 2007. It's even possible that the controversy helped Massad. According to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Massad was actually denied tenure in 2007. The committee evaluating him split 3 to 2 in his favor, but the provost came down against him. This, of course, led to charges that the school was buckling to outside pressure.

The University then did something unusual—it established a second tenure committee, even though, as *The Chronicle* said, "The university did not acknowledge any problems or irregularities in how the first committee had conducted its job." (According to Columbia's faculty handbook, "A second review may be conducted for a candidate after a negative decision if the Provost determines that the first was marked by procedural irregularities of a magnitude that materially affected its outcome.") Of course, it's possible that the first tenure committee really was improperly politicized, but it's also possible that the campaign against Massad made denying him tenure politically impossible. Either way, he was granted tenure in April 2009. Rachel Fish and Ariel Beery have both moved on, and the situation surrounding Middle East Studies has reverted to a vaguely uneasy but mostly quiet version of the status quo.

COLUMBIA: 2010–2011

MARIA PLANANSKY, SPRING 2011

Since the David Project's Columbia University campaign, the New York campus launched the nation's first-ever Center for Palestine Studies, run out of its Middle East Institute in Knox Hall. Despite limited funding in its January 2010 start-up phase, the center, created to honor former professor Edward Said, is creating comprehensive online resources, and linking with institutions beyond Columbia (such as the Institute for Palestine Studies).³¹⁹

During academic year 2010–2011, relations between pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian student groups became somewhat strained despite an existing agreement that students supportive of either Israeli and Palestinian causes remain free from direct harassment. However, student groups on

opposite sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have found themselves entangled in debates over projects, protests, cooperation, and each other's approaches—as well as in debates over the conflict itself.

On Nov. 18, 2010 Columbia Students for Justice in Palestine members, along with the Right to Education Campaign, constructed a mock Israeli checkpoint at Columbia's Low Library steps, showcasing checkpoints as an example of students living under occupation. Opponents of the simulation, in response, circulated fact sheets on the complicated nature of checkpoints. Loud arguments ensued, with hand gestures being the extent of the physicality. Different student groups debated the occasion in Columbia University's *Spectator* newspaper in the weeks to follow, using impassioned yet respectful language.³²⁰

During the Low Library event, campus Hillel put up a large poster quoting Columbia Students for Justice in Palestine's (CSJP) anti-normalization policy and asserting CSJP's opposition to participation in any project designed to "bring together ... Palestinian and/or Arab youth with Israelis and is not explicitly designed to resist or expose the occupation and all forms of discrimination and oppression inflicted upon the Palestinian people." Indeed, CSJP had rejected all invitations to co-sponsor its activities with Hillel since it enacted its anti-normalization policy.³²¹ CSJP views Hillel as a Zionist organization and argues that its anti-normalization takes into account the idea that dialogue between two sides can create mistaken notions of acceptance.³²²

Still, the policy has a definite effect on Columbia students, as is its intent. Writes Jonah Liben, who serves on the campus Hillel's executive board as the Israel coordinator, "It seems that Columbia Students for Justice in Palestine and others have decided as either written policy or de facto practice never to co-sponsor events with any of the four Israel groups under Hillel's umbrella. The argument boils down to this: As long as you occupiers have the upper hand, we will never program together."

Liben, writing from the Hillel perspective, believes the simulation of checkpoints by CSJP members is a problem and indicates that a key problem on Columbia's campus is that organizations such as CSJP do not collaborate or program with groups, such as Hillel, which have overlapping concerns.

He writes, "CSJP's and others' refusals to co-sponsor events where both groups share common ground not only stifle debate, but forbid it—something harmful for our campus. I, a pro-Palestinian Zionist supporter of universal human rights, often find myself without someone's hand to shake on campus and, really, without any hand at all."³²³

In the midst of this campus-wide debate, students circulated petitions requesting CSJP members engage in dialogue with Hillel members. This and other reactions prompted CSJP to explain their position in greater detail: they refuse to dialogue with Hillel and affiliated organizations in large part because "'Dialogue' gifts the oppressor legitimacy and takes power away from the oppressed. In other words, participating in dialogue, even on college campuses, works to help Israel ignore and sustain the occupation and chokes Palestinian resistance." CSJP's refusal to dialogue, many think, is an example of religious intolerance of Israel as a Jewish state and one that can be linked to the movement to delegitimize Israel's right to exist.³²⁴

The debate has continued. During "Israeli Apartheid Week," a series of events whose aim "is to educate people about the nature of Israel as an apartheid system and to build Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaigns" were held across international academic venues. Columbia students coordinated their on-campus activities with other New York organizations and universities, and competing pro- and anti-Israel displays and gatherings were visible on its College Walk.³²⁵ The mock Apartheid Wall, erected by Israel Apartheid Week (IAW) supporters, was meant to showcase where American taxpayer dollars are going.

Columbia's largest pro-Israel group, LionPAC (under the Hillel umbrella) views the initiative as "deceitful anti-Israel propaganda." LionPAC members published a number of articles in the *Spectator* about the event's validity, and did so in a passionate yet respectful way.³²⁶ Students from all sides of the debate focused on the use of the term "apartheid," as regards to Israeli policy.³²⁷ CSJP members, challenged by claims that IAW is antisemitic, reject that label, saying that it instead is motivated by social justice and love.³²⁸

Impassioned feelings on all sides has made Middle East debates on the Columbia campus both high profile and hard to defuse.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT IRVINE

AT A GLANCE

Name University of California, Irvine
Location Irvine, California
Student body Undergraduate 21,976
Gender 47% male, 53% female
Self-identification
as students of color 73%
International 2.85%

MICHELLE GOLDBERG

In 2008, The World Jewish Congress published a flier with the headline, “TEN REASONS WHY WORLD JEWRY NEEDS OUR HELP.” Below those words was an annotated map of the world identifying ten countries indicating where, apparently, egregious outbreaks of antisemitism had taken place. In Iran, the flier noted, President Ahmadinejad referred to Israel as a “stinking corpse” that needs to be eliminated. In Hungary, the antisemitic film *Jud Sub* (Jew Süss) was publicly screened by neonazis. And in the United States, the Muslim Student Union at the University of California, Irvine, hosted a program titled “Never Again? The Palestinian Holocaust.”

It is almost axiomatic among members of the American Jewish community that University of California, Irvine (UC Irvine) is a hotbed of antisemitic bigotry. A group of local Jewish activists calling themselves the Orange County Independent Task Force even warned in a 2008 report, “Students with a strong Jewish identity should consider enrolling elsewhere unless and until tangible changes are made.” At a time when conservative groups nationwide are claiming that American academia is awash in hostility toward Jews, UC Irvine would seem to be exhibit A.

To Jewish leaders on campus, this impression is profoundly frustrating. The image of Irvine as a deeply hostile, even scary place for Jewish kids “comes not from the students. I think it comes from the parents and the community, because they don’t see the whole thing, they just see what’s presented to them,” says Rambod Peykar, the president of the local chapter of Alpha Epsilon Pi, the international Jewish fraternity. “I really don’t appreciate people dramatizing the situation,” adds Simon Aftalion, an officer of Anteaters for Israel, the University’s pro-Israel group. “It sucks for them in the MSU (Muslim Students Union), because it makes them look like something that they’re really not, and it sucks for us because it makes it look like we’re subject to something that is really not happening.”

That doesn’t mean that everything is fine at UC Irvine. The Muslim Student Union (MSU) there is one of the more militant in the country and it has sometimes crossed the line from fevered denunciation of Israel into open bigotry. It has brought speakers to campus who say incendiary and despicable things. Meanwhile, some professors, smitten with their

own self-image as partisans of third-world liberation struggles, have been snide and insensitive toward students who support Israel and its policies. These are all real problems. Yet many in the campus Jewish community seem nearly as angered by the outside community’s response as they are by the MSU’s provocations.

Those provocations seem to have peaked a few years ago, though they’ve by no means ended. Tensions have generally been highest during an annual week-long anti-Israel event that has gone by numerous names—“Israeli Apartheid Week,” “Holocaust in the Holy Land,” “Holocaust Memorial Week.” Speakers at these events have repeatedly trafficked in blatantly antisemitic conspiracism. Blaming Jews for the 9/11 attacks, Amir Abdul Malik Ali, a perennial favorite of UC Irvine’s MSU—he has spoken at the campus on six occasions between 2006 and 2010—said in 2007, “That’s exactly what they do—they do things to make people think that it’s Muslims when it is actually them behind the scenes [that is] how they do this in Palestine, how they did this with the World Trade Center, both of them: in 1993 and in 2001.”³²⁹

Ali is an African-American Imam from the Masjid Al Islam mosque in Oakland, California. He is associated with As-Sabiqun, a fundamentalist Sunni movement that is nevertheless supportive of Shia revolutionaries like Hizbullah. Its website lists a grab bag of influences, including Malcolm X; Sayyid Qutb, the ideological father of Al Qaeda; Hasan al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood; and Ayatollah Khomeini. An entertaining and charismatic preacher, Malik Ali draws rapt crowds. Several Jewish students—many never exposed to any sort of criticism of Israel before—reported being stunned the first time they heard him ranting on campus, and were baffled that he was allowed to do so.

Another frequent speaker is Mohammed al-Asi, former Imam of the Islamic Center in Washington D.C. He was eventually removed from his post because of his extremism, but that has not stopped Irvine’s MSU from embracing him. Speaking on campus in May 2008, he addressed pro-Israel students directly. Mentioning an event put on by Anteaters for Israel (AFI), he declaimed, “Those of you who are still poisoned with your Zionist ideology, we don’t know what to say to you. The only place we see you is at the war front. The only thing we know about you is death and destruction ... How are we to interact with you? You leave us no choice.”

It’s not just guest speakers who single out pro-Israel students for condemnation. In January, for example, in the wake of Israel’s assault on Gaza, UC Irvine Professor Mark LeVine published a commentary in December 2009 on Al Jazeera English’s website titled, “Who will save Israel from itself?”³³⁰ There was nothing inherently wrong with LeVine’s primary argument, as much as defenders of Israeli policy might differ from it. “[I]n the US—at least in Washington and in the offices of the mainstream Jewish organizations—the chorus of support for Israel’s war on Gaza continues to sing in tight harmony with official Israeli policy, seemingly deaf to the fact that they have become so out of tune with the reality exploding around them,” LeVine wrote.

LeVine could have found countless rhetorical examples to demonstrate his point, but rather than take on, say, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, he chose to single out a group of UC Irvine students. “The Anteaters for Israel,

the college pro-Israel group at the University of California, Irvine, sent out an urgent email to the community explaining that, ‘Over the past week, increasing amounts of evidence lead us to believe that Hamas is largely responsible for any alleged humanitarian crisis in Gaza,’” he wrote. “I have no idea who the ‘us’ is that is referred to in the appeal, although I am sure that the membership of that group is shrinking.” It seems rather petty for a professor to pick a fight with a student group in an international publication rather than take on other adults, and it’s hard to blame members of AFI for suspecting that they wouldn’t be treated fairly in his classes.

Given all this, it’s not surprising that there’s concern in the wider Jewish community. Nonetheless, those most familiar with the situation on campus insist that there’s a huge gulf between the occasional disturbing incidents they see and the portrait of unrelenting prejudice painted by outsiders. Worse, when Jewish groups that have investigated the situation on campus—including Orange County Hillel and the local office of the Anti-Defamation League—insist that things aren’t that bad, they are accused of being insufficiently pro-Israel.

At schools like University of California, Berkeley that have a tradition of radical activism, anti-Israel agitation is a major part of campus life, and groups such as Students for Justice in Palestine are a significant, popular presence [see related campus profile]. This often leaves students who support Israeli policies feeling ostracized and alienated. UC Irvine’s anti-Israel students tend to be more radical than those at University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley). Their rhetoric is not secular leftist, but rather tends towards theocratic Islamic fundamentalism. Given that they are on a fairly apolitical campus within a deeply conservative surrounding community, they’re relatively marginal. Overall then, UC Irvine may actually be an easier place to be a proudly Zionist student than UC Berkeley.

That doesn’t mean it’s not a problem that the MSU keeps inviting hate-mongers to school. But it does mean that, when questioned, UC Irvine students say that they don’t feel particularly oppressed and are somewhat irritated by the widespread perception that they are. Those close to Jewish life on campus say that things have been improving over time—the MSU is slightly more careful and less radical in its rhetoric, and there have been some preliminary steps to create dialogue among students. In 2007 Jewish, Muslim, Christian, and Druze students even took a trip to Israel and Palestine together to promote mutual understanding. But one wouldn’t sense any of this from the way the campus is discussed in much of the Jewish world and media.

“There are people who are very cause-oriented and finding antisemitism has become their cause,” Jordan Fruchtman, Executive Director of Orange County Hillel, says of the outside Jewish groups who’ve gotten involved in the issue. The Task Force “is so entrenched in proving that there’s antisemitism that they have blinders on.”

Hillel actually helped create the Task Force in 2006, bringing together concerned community members to look into what was going on at UC Irvine. But as it became clear that the Task Force was working with an overly broad definition of antisemitism and listening to only the most alarmed voices, Hillel and AFI both distanced themselves from its

work. As they did, though, outside right-wing Jewish groups moved in. “What happened is the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), they got involved, and it has since become part of their cause to prove that there’s antisemitism on our campus,” says Fruchtman. “I believe it helps with their fundraising and their mission ... it’s very easy to fundraise when there’s a crisis.”

In fact, even before the formation of the task force, the ZOA sued UC Irvine under Title VI of the federal 1964 Civil Rights Law, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which has rarely been accused of being reticent to defend Jews, publicly opposed the lawsuit, which was ultimately unsuccessful.

“Honestly, I think part of it was a bit territorial—all of the sudden this group from New York, without talking to any of the Jewish groups here, sues the University,” Kevin O’Grady, the ADL’s Orange County Regional Director, says of his group’s stance. But he also points out the ZOA’s “initial complaint was just full of factual errors” and it was happening at a time when the campus’s administration was working to address the Jewish students’ concerns. Isaac Yerushalmi, the founder of AFI, also publicly opposed the suit.

The alarmists weren’t chastened by this resistance. Instead, they attacked the more sanguine Jewish groups for being part of the problem. The following year, after the Task Force published a 34-page report on antisemitism at UC Irvine, the issue exploded in the Jewish press once again. Hate speech, the report said, “has been unrelenting.” The problem, it said, was deeper than just the MSU: “The anti-Israel bias on the part of many in the faculty provides a fertile environment for the MSU and its anti-Israel and anti-Semitic rhetoric and actions.” It blamed the administration for abrogating its leadership responsibilities and failing “to educate its Muslim students about citizenship and American values.” And it accused the Jewish Federation, the Anti-Defamation League, Hillel, and the American Jewish Committee of failing to hold “the University and its leadership accountable for its failure to support an environment conducive to all students.”

In response, AFI, The Jewish Student Union, and the Jewish fraternity Alpha Epsilon Pi and sorority Epsilon Phi put out a statement disagreeing with the report’s conclusions. “Jewish students are physically safe and secure on our campus ... (and) Jewish life is thriving more than ever,” it said. “There’s been a lot of misinformation put out about what’s going on at our school,” Isaac Yerushalmi, the president of AFI, told the *OC Register*. “Unfortunately, there are organizations out there that are very passionate and concerned, but they don’t really know what’s going on.” That hasn’t stopped them yet.

THE DRAMA OF THE “IRVINE ELEVEN”

JON SUSSMAN AND MARIA PLANANSKY

On the evening of February 8, 2010, a speech by Israeli Ambassador to the United States Michael Oren at the University

of California Irvine did not go smoothly. Over the course of the lecture, eleven students took turns standing, denouncing him as a war criminal, and demanding to know “how many Palestinians did you kill?” After each interruption the offending student was led peacefully out of the hall and placed under arrest. Oren took a break in the middle of his speech to recuperate and the planned question-and-answer session after the talk was canceled.

The disruption provoked a mixed reaction inside the hall. Some applauded. Others were outraged. Media around the world carried news of the incident, and it was scrutinized in depth in Jewish, Muslim, and Middle East-interest communities. Condemnation came quickly from pro-Israel and anti-Muslim commentators, while support for the “Irvine 11” was voiced by pro-Palestinian groups. Former UC President Mark Yudof referred to the incident as an example of pervasive intolerance on campus and argued that university administrators must “address a campus climate that leaves students feeling marginalized.”

University of California, Irvine administration understood the disruption as a violation of campus policies and undertook an investigation. Officials were under pressure from several sources: Jewish groups argued that doing nothing would encourage an antisemitic environment, while Muslim groups argued that punishment would indicate that Muslims are not allowed to exercise freedom of speech. Investigators discovered that emails planning the disruption had been sent through the Muslim Student Union’s listserv. Despite the Muslim Student Union’s (MSU) protestations, UC Irvine charged that the organization as a whole was behind the disruption. Initially, administrators sought to ban MSU for a year, but after strong protest from Muslim-American groups, this was commuted to a one semester ban and two years of probation.

The issue seemed to have been resolved, but in a surprise move in February 2011, the Orange County District Attorney elected to file civil charges against the students involved. After six of the students were subpoenaed to appear before a grand jury investigating the incident, and only a short time before the statute of limitations was to expire, the students were charged with disruption of a meeting and conspiracy to disrupt a meeting. The students and their supporters protested the charges, arguing that the exercise of free speech should not be criminalized. Some critics of the students, particularly the Simon Weisenthal Center, applauded the DA’s move. Notably, several of the students’ prominent critics, including the Jewish Federation and the UC Irvine administration, stated that they were not in favor of civil prosecution, arguing instead that the University had already applied an appropriate punishment.

The drama of the “Irvine 11” happens at a time of increasing concern about free speech on campus, especially in regards to the Middle East. Up the coastline from UC Irvine, University of California, Santa Cruz is under investigation by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights for allegedly tolerating antisemitic activities. A lecturer at University of California, Santa Cruz (UC Santa Cruz), Tammi Rossman-Benjamin, charged that anti-Israel activists on campus created a hostile environment “tantamount to institutional discrimination against Jewish students, which has resulted in their intellectual and emotional harassment and intimidation.” The investigation of UC Santa Cruz comes in the wake of a successful push by Jewish groups to get the Department of Education to look at incidents of religious discrimination that are at least partly based on ethnicity, which presumably includes anti-Israel or anti-Zionist activities that slide into antisemitism.

MCGILL UNIVERSITY

AT A GLANCE

Name McGill University
Location Montreal, Quebec
Student body Undergraduate 22,523
Gender 41% male, 59% female
Self-identification
as students of color Unknown
International 17%, 136 foreign countries
represented

ILANA ROTHKOPF & MARIA PLANANSKY

Canadian and British universities have encountered many of the same tensions between fostering a pluralistic environment and addressing bigotry and conflict on campus as have colleges in the United States. This has been especially problematic in the context of Middle East tensions. It seems valuable to include at least one example of these tendencies, and so we refer to the recent situation at Canada's McGill University.

McGill University, a public university located in Montreal, Quebec, is justly proud of its international reputation and diverse student body. Established in 1821, it is the academic home of approximately 35,000 undergraduate and graduate students, with nearly 20 percent of enrolled students coming from outside Canada. McGill's extensive academic programs in religion include its Institute for Islamic Studies, Interuniversity Consortium for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies, a Middle East Studies Program, Jewish Studies Department and Jewish Teacher Training Program, and the McGill Middle East Program for Civil Society and Peacebuilding. Both Muslim and Jewish groups have affiliated religious groups, some of which, like Hillel and the Muslim Students Association, are linked to U.S. organizations. Others are specific to Canada, to Montreal, or to the McGill campus.

In 2005, Muslim students expressed their dissatisfaction when space they had been leasing for prayer services was withdrawn for other administrative use. While the administration suggested that the Muslim Students Association (MSA) seek space off campus, as many other religious groups had done, MSA students countered that a space on campus was necessary if devout Muslim students were to both attend their classes and perform their prayers at the requisite times.

Further contention has emerged in the context of Middle Eastern politics. The General Assembly of the Students' Society of McGill University, the forum in which students can directly participate in administrative decisions each semester, has been the venue for controversy stoked by an independently formed campus student group, Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR). In 2009, SPHR motioned for the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) and

university to condemn Israeli "bombings of education institutions in Gaza" and called for the Canadian government to add its voice to this condemnation.

Some students felt that this motion encouraged the SSMU to "take a side" in a complex, many-sided conflict. Others believed that since the motion focused specifically on the bombing of educational institutions, it was an appropriate expression of student identification and concern. Both before and after the assembly, students debated whether this motion should have been allowed at the General Assembly (GA) at all. When the room was physically divided to count votes, many students expressed their discomfort with being separated. Ultimately, the motion was "postponed indefinitely."

The following winter, SPHR was again before the GA, motioning SSMU to issue a statement confirming its commitment to human rights. In the context of asking the GA to expand the mandate of the McGill Financial Ethics Review Board and, should the expansion of the mandate fail, create a Corporate Social Responsibility committee, they singled out Israeli actions in the Palestinian territories. Their language was reminiscent of the international Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions campaign:

WHEREAS McGill University continues to have ties with organizations that engage in and profit from unethical practices including but not limited to profiting from the unlawful occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the occupation of which has been declared illegal by the following organizations: The United Nations Security Council, United Nations General Assembly, International Court of Justice, and the International Committee of the Red Cross, and;

WHEREAS the occupation of The Occupied Palestinian Territories has also been declared illegal by the following UN Resolutions: Resolution 181, Resolution 242, Resolution 446, Resolution 452, Resolution 465, Resolution 471, and Resolution 476, as well as Article 1 of the UN Charter, and the following Covenants: The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, both of which have been signed and ratified by Canada, and [...]

Many Jewish students and faculty found this extraneous preamble to be offensive. Debate and a series of votes ensued, leading to the removal of these clauses in the final document affirming the university's commitment to human rights and ratifying the suggested procedural changes. But the controversy was not over. SPHR brought a complaint against Zach Newburgh, the Speaker of the Council, President-elect of the SSMU, and a former Hillel chapter president, claiming that during the debate he had placed himself in a serious conflict of interest, making it impossible for him to perform his task in an impartial manner.

SPHR alleged in their petition to the Judicial Board that Newburgh, due to his presidency of Hillel-Montreal, was not impartial to the motion. Some cited Newburgh's connection

to his roommate, who, at the time, was president of Hillel Montreal, which led the campaign against the motion.

At the time, Newburgh viewed the SPHR's petition as an attempt to humiliate him as the Speaker of the Council. SSMU president Ivan Neilson said that he and other GA organizers received no indication that members wanted to reconsider Newburgh's role as speaker.

"Considering in [Newburgh's] case that he was the president of Hillel-Montreal, entirely separate from the McGill context ... [and] separate from SSMU, his involvement was separate so we had confidence in his impartiality," said Neilson.

"I think every person has beliefs and that every person has opinions, but you are either impartial or you aren't. Throughout the entire interviews [Newburgh and another SSMU speaker, Lauren Hudak] showed they were capable of that."³³¹

SPHR filed the petition with the Judicial Board on March 17. On June 24, the Judicial Board dismissed SPHR's petition against Newburgh, stating that they found that Newburgh had fulfilled his duties as speaker of the SSMU Council.³³²

In the spring semester of academic year 2010–2011, the McGill administration investigated student Haaris Khan. During a March 8 screening of *Indoctrinate U*, the 2007 documentary film about ideological conformity and "political correctness" in American academia hosted by two campus organizations, Conservative McGill and Libertarian McGill, Khan tweeted, "I want to shoot everyone in this room," adding, "I should have brought an M16."

Khan made the threats using his Blackberry at the back of the screening room. During the screening Khan railed against Jews and Zionists in 10 separate tweets. "I've infiltrated a Zionist meeting," Khan wrote in his first tweet, at 6:04 p.m., shortly after the event began. "I feel like I'm at a Satanist ritual."³³³

Following the film screening, event organizers found out about the tweets and alerted McGill Security. Khan later apologized, explaining that he uses Twitter to vent his emotions. Khan described himself as not very religious, with no deep attachment to Islam. His sister-in-law is Jewish, he added, and he doesn't consider himself antisemitic. "I don't have a

problem with Jews," said Khan.

The threatening tweets were widely covered in Canadian media, with outlets such as *Global* and *Toronto Star* reporting on the campus happenings, as well as Fox News.

Khan later made a public apology in the *McGill Tribune* saying, "My name is Haaris Khan. I am not an anti-Semite. I am not a terrorist. I am not a threat to my fellow students on campus. I can be an idiot sometimes, though."

Khan explained:

*I am anti-Zionist. The Israel-Palestine conflict is a very sensitive subject and it's easy to become worked up about it if you care passionately about the issue. I also realize that anti-Zionism tends to go hand in hand with anti-Semitism because of the complex relationship between the Jewish identity and Israel. This creates a fine line when it comes to criticizing Israel and Zionism. I do not harbour any hatred towards Jewish people. My Jewish sister-in-law, whom I love very dearly, and my niece who is Jewish by tradition are both people that are close to my heart and their cultural or religious backgrounds have nothing to do with how I see them. My objection to the policies of the state of Israel and the treatment of the Palestinians are purely political and in no way reflect how I view Jewish people.*³³⁴

Student response seemed to be tempered, however, with no large outcry claiming that Khan was antisemitic. Instead, some on campus challenged the McGill community to face that "antisemitism was real," and to look at McGill's reaction to Khan's tweets. One campus editorial explained, "There was questioning of whether tweeting about killing Zionists could really be considered to be threatening to Jews; whether a stated fantasy of shooting was tantamount to threat; whether this needed to be taken seriously." Some on campus expressed that this was a "political" issue and not a matter of prejudice. However, campus reaction was mixed. The Khan tweet incident created an incentive for the McGill community to explore the use and justification of violent rhetoric.³³⁵

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY AND GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

AT A GLANCE

Name Temple University
Location Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Student body 27,623 undergraduates
Gender 48% male, 52% female
Self-identification as
students of color 29%
International 121 foreign countries represented

Name George Mason University
Location Fairfax, Virginia
Student body Undergraduate 20,157
Gender 48% male, 52% female
Self-identification as
students of color: 35%
International 129 foreign countries represented

STEVEN WISHNIA

THE STRUGGLE OVER AN ISLAMIC STUDIES CHAIR AT TEMPLE AND GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITIES

In 2007, the International Institute of Islamic Thought offered Temple University \$1.5 million to endow a chair in Islamic studies. The Philadelphia university's religion department eagerly accepted.

The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), based in Herndon, Virginia, says its purpose in working with universities is "bridging the intellectual divide between the Islamic tradition and Western civilization, to promote an understanding of Islam and Muslims in America, and to enhance peace and security at the global level." It would not have had any say in what was taught, says Temple religion professor Rebecca Alpert. However, says Alpert, both parties agreed that the first holder of the chair should be Professor Mahmoud Ayoub, the Lebanese-born author of *The Qur'an and Its Interpreters*, *Islam: Faith and History*, and *The Crisis of Muslim History: Religion and Politics in Early Islam*, who was about to retire.

That fall, four days before the department was scheduled to hold a party to celebrate Ayoub's appointment, the news came down from above: Temple's Board of Trustees had decided to hold off on accepting the money until a federal terrorism investigation of IIIT was complete. That probe,

begun in 2002, was related to the prosecution of Sami Al-Arian, an ethnic Palestinian computer-engineering professor at University of South Florida in Tampa, on charges that he funneled money to Palestinian Islamic Jihad. It encompassed IIIT and several other Muslim groups in northern Virginia. No charges were filed against IIIT, but the investigation was apparently never closed. Al-Arian, who spent five years in jail, has been held under house arrest since 2008 for refusing to testify before a grand jury.

The Temple trustees' decision was "all behind the scenes," according to Alpert. "I had no interest in publicizing it," she says, and neither did IIIT, as "it would have been more hurtful to their reputation to make it a public matter."

Therefore, there was no public debate on campus, she says, until the *Philadelphia Inquirer* broke the story in January 2008. Anti-Muslim activist David Horowitz told the *Inquirer* that he had not heard about the IIIT offer. However, he called IIIT "Islamofascists" and "part of a jihad against the West."

In February 2008, 165 Temple professors signed a petition supporting Ayoub and deploring "the slanderous attacks on him that subsequently appeared on anti-Islamic hate websites," but the deed had been done. IIIT decided not to wait. It offered the chair to George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, which accepted it in the fall of 2008.

DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONS, DIFFERENT CHOICES

Temple, in inner-city Philadelphia, and George Mason, in the Virginia suburbs of Washington, share a distinctive status: They are publicly funded, but independently run. Temple is called "state-related," while George Mason was founded as a branch of the University of Virginia and became independent in 1972.

Both are large institutions, with more than 30,000 students and satellite campuses abroad, but a substantial majority of their students are state residents and commuters. In the fall of 2009, Temple's students were about 15 percent Afro-American, 10 percent Asian, 3.5 percent Latino, and 4 percent international. In 2008, George Mason's were about one-eighth Asian, 7 percent Black, 7 percent Latino, and 5.5 percent international.

George Mason welcomed the IIIT donation. "The gift will allow Mason to build upon the rich Islamic culture present in its diverse student body, faculty and the surrounding communities and position the university as a leading authority in the field of Islamic studies," the university announced in November 2008. More than 2,000 of its students "come either from Muslim American backgrounds or from a country in the Muslim world," Provost Peter Stearns said in the statement.

In October 2009, Mason hired Cemil Aydin, who specializes in the history of the Ottoman Empire, to fill the chair. Turkish businessman Ali Vural Ak, a college friend of Aydin's, pledged \$4 million more to the Islamic studies program, and the university named it after him. In October 2010, the Ali Vural Ak Center won a \$220,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to run a program called "The Legacies of Muslim Societies in the Emergence of Global Modernity, 1300-1900."

"I am convinced that Mason will be a major center of scholarship in Islamic studies," Aydin said in a university press-release interview, citing the campus's "more than 15 scholars researching and teaching on issues related to the Muslim world," its location near Washington, and its significant number of Muslim students. "Moreover, our students come from relatively cosmopolitan backgrounds. Thus, we have an opportunity to move beyond the simple introductory facts and discuss more complex issues related to Islamic tradition and Muslim societies."

George Mason's acceptance of the IIIT donation drew relatively little protest from the Far Right. The *Washington Times* ran a brief story two weeks later stating that the group was "still operating under the cloud of a six-year federal terrorism investigation," but also quoted a university spokesperson who said his understanding was that the investigation was "dormant." David Horowitz's *FrontPage Magazine* [see profile]—which includes among its regular contributors Mason economics professor Walter E. Williams—apparently did not cover the story. Neither did *National Review Online*, which has also attacked IIIT.

BEHIND THE SCENES AT TEMPLE

Temple had run afoul of a network of right-wing activists dedicated to the idea that mainstream Muslim groups are agents of "stealth jihad," using the image of moderation and respectability to worm their way into American society so they can gain a position to do more damage when the call comes to eliminate the infidels.

"Should Islamists get smart and avoid mass destruction, but instead stick to the lawful, political, non-violent route, and should their movement remain vital, it is difficult to see what will stop them," neoconservative Middle East historian Daniel Pipes wrote in "How the West Could Lose." [See profile.]

One subsidiary of Pipes's Middle East Forum, *Campus Watch*, states that its mission is to expose "the politicization and biases of Middle East studies in North American universities." *Campus Watch* celebrated Temple for "making the politically courageous decision to reject IIIT's tainted offer."

"Had Mahmoud Ayoub been allowed to head a newly endowed Islamic studies program at Temple University it would have represented an opportunity for the IIIT to place a trojan horse spreading Islamism inside a respected educational institution," said a Jan. 7, 2008, article written by Beila Rabinowitz and William Mayer posted on *Campus Watch's* site. "This level of cunning and duplicity epitomizes the essence of stealth jihadism." The article suggested that Temple "immediately launch a probe into professor Ayoub's background, associations and ties ... we believe there is a very good reason why the Islamists were willing to spend over a million dollars placing him at the head of this now scuttled program."

Ironically, the objections might apply better to the late Temple professor Ismail al-Faruqi, who founded the university's Islamic studies program and was a cofounder of IIIT. According to Alpert, he refused to teach Jewish students. "He was not exactly my favorite professor," she says.

"If the issue were of a professor who refused to teach Jewish students, that would be a legitimate complaint, but the idea that Temple University should not accept funding from a Muslim group is not," says Professor of Philosophy Lewis Gordon, an African-American Jew. "This is not a case of a documented terrorist group. The donors were considered guilty simply by being accused."

"It seems to me that the accusations leveled against the IIIT are a matter of guilt by association, based more on knee-jerk prejudice and the hysteria that lingers in too many American minds since the tragedies of 9/11," military-history professor Gregory Urwin wrote in an October 2007 open letter to Temple President Ann Weaver Hart. Urwin noted that he had spent ten days in Israel that summer studying counterterrorism.

In the early 1990s, IIIT had given \$50,000 to World and Islam Studies Enterprise, a think tank on Middle Eastern issues that Professor Sami Al-Arian had run at University of South Florida. According to Alpert, IIIT gave Al-Arian the money to hold a conference, but "the relationship turned sour" and, to the best of her knowledge, "they stopped funding him." In any case, she says, "it was very clear that they [IIIT] would have no influence over who would sit in the chair."

Lewis Gordon says Temple trustee Richard Fox, a wealthy real-estate developer in the Philadelphia/South Jersey area, was the main force behind the trustees' decision not to accept the IIIT donation. Fox is on the local board of Middle East Forum. A longtime Republican activist, he was state chair of the 1980 Reagan-Bush campaign in Pennsylvania and cofounded the Republican Jewish Coalition in 1985. Fox chaired the Temple board for 17 years and the university's business school was named after him in 1999. Fox also runs the Jewish Policy Center, which "asserts that Jewish Americans can no longer afford to stubbornly hold on to outdated ideas of the past. This includes optimism over misguided Middle East peace deals, appeasement of dictators, and unrealistic hopes that dangerous realities in the Middle East might simply change without tougher U.S. policies." It also "strongly supports the global war against Islamic extremism" and argues that "Jewish Americans must break with the past" to support smaller government, lower taxes, free trade and related economic policies. The center's Board of Fellows reads like a roll call of leading far-right Jews and neoconservatives. Horowitz and Pipes are both on it, along with William Bennett, Mona Charen, David Frum, Michael A. Ledeen, the late Irving Kristol, and Norman Podhoretz, his wife, Midge Decter, and their son, John.

In an editorial in the February 2008 issue of the *Temple Faculty Herald*, Gordon wrote that Fox had "protested against the chair by appealing to accusations of IIIT supposedly having ties with terrorist organizations." The Department of Religion, he added, "responded by pointing out that the main support for the accusations were from the website Discoverthenetwork.org," where David Horowitz "warns his readers of a Left Wing Conspiracy that includes, among his list of supposedly nefarious organizations, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation."

DAVID HOROWITZ AND IIIT

To David Horowitz, that a Muslim group espouses moderation is not a sign of innocence. The Left, he writes on the Discover the Networks site, “has a long and well-documented history of dissembling about its agendas. In the past, the Communist Party, for example, operated through ‘front’ groups which concealed the radical agendas of those who controlled them.”

He applies the same logic to Muslim groups. The Muslim Students Association, the Council on American Islamic Relations, and the Muslim American Society, he writes, are “all groups which support the jihad against the west and are part of the network created by the Muslim Brotherhood, which is the parent organization of the terrorist groups al-Qaeda and Hamas.” He accuses IIIT of being “controlled by the extremist, Saudi-based Wahhabi movement.”

Horowitz’s specific accusations against IIIT are fairly thin, relying mainly on guilt by association. He cites a May 1991 Muslim Brotherhood document, “An Explanatory Memorandum on the General Strategic Goal for the Group in North America” that lists IIIT as one of 29 American Muslim “organizations of our friends,” that could help teach Muslims “that their work in America is a kind of grand Jihad in eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and ‘sabotaging’ its miserable house by their hands ... so that ... God’s religion [Islam] is made victorious over all other religions.” The main text of the document, a grandiose scheme to recruit American Muslims into a comprehensive movement with a multitude of organizations, does not mention IIIT. The list of the 29 groups appears as an appendix, with the comment “Imagine if they all march according to one plan!!!” Another of the “numerous documented links to terrorism,” Horowitz claims is that “IIIT is also named as a defendant in two class-action lawsuits brought by victims of the 9/11 attacks.”

WHY TEMPLE?

David Horowitz has focused much of his crusade on Temple over the past five years. His book *One-Party Classroom* calls it “Temple of Conformity.” His book *The Professors* lists Lewis Gordon and Temple Geography/Urban Studies Professor Melissa Gilbert among the 101 worst radical professors at U.S. universities, “representative of thousands of radicals who teach our children and who also happen to be alleged ex-terrorists, racists, murderers, sexual deviants, anti-Semites, and al-Qaeda supporters.”

In January 2006, Horowitz came to Philadelphia to urge a state legislative committee to enact his “Academic Bill of Rights,” which would require professors to share a range of views with their students. Critics called it an attempt to force universities to teach right-wing viewpoints. Horowitz claimed that a Pennsylvania State University biology professor had shown Michael Moore’s anti-Bush documentary *Fahrenheit 9/11* in class before the 2004 election. But he told the Inside Higher Ed website that he had no proof that had happened. “I can’t investigate every story,” he said, but added that “everybody who is familiar with universities knows that there is a widespread practice of professors vent-

ing about foreign policy even when their classes aren’t about foreign policy.”

The Pennsylvania legislature did not pass the bill. However, says Gregory Urwin, as a result of those hearings, “a marginal graduate student claimed that I had flunked him because he was a conservative and a veteran.” After testifying at the hearings, the student, Christian DeJohn, sued Temple in federal court, backed by the Christian Right group Alliance Defense Fund. The judge dismissed DeJohn’s claims against Urwin, who had told him he’d have to rewrite his thesis if he wanted to pass. In 2008, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals awarded DeJohn \$1 compensation for his claim that Temple’s former sexual-harassment policy violated his free-speech rights.

“I’m still steamed about it,” says Urwin. “It was a witch hunt. Close to half of my graduate students are veterans.”

In October 2007, while the Board of Trustees was considering the IIIT offer, Horowitz sponsored Islamo-Fascism Awareness Week at the campus, featuring a mix of speakers such as former Sen. Rick Santorum. For Islamo-Fascism Awareness Week (IFAW) at Temple in 2009, Horowitz arranged an appearance by Dutch Freedom Party leader Geert Wilders, who has urged banning the Quran. The Temple College Republicans co-sponsored it.

The Muslim Students Association (MSA) protested, saying that Wilders would create “an unsafe atmosphere where prejudiced, racist and vehemently hateful words will be disguised under the veil of academia.” Horowitz and his co-author responded that the MSA was trying to “censor critics of radical Islam,” and repeated the accusation that it supports “the jihad against the West.” They called the national MSA’s protests against the “nakba,” the Arabic word for “catastrophe” used as a term for the expulsion of thousands of Palestinian Arabs from Israel in 1948, “an act of genocidal hate.”

Wilders told the crowd at Temple, “Where Islam sets roots, freedom dies,” and that “our Western culture is far better than the Islamic culture and we should defend it.” His bodyguards ushered him out of the room after people began heckling him during the question-and-answer period.

“Big universities will protect their professors,” says Cemil Aydin of George Mason. He notes that in 2005, Saudi Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal attracted little controversy when he donated \$20 million each to Harvard and Georgetown to fund Islamic studies at those universities. Aydin says he hasn’t seen “any discrimination about the post or any controversy or any pressure” at George Mason. He dismisses Horowitz and his supporters. “I don’t know any professors who take them seriously,” he says. “They’re like someone who wants to cure the patient with magic, and fire all the doctors because they are ‘terrorists.’”

Temple, says Lewis Gordon, is vulnerable to such pressures because it’s publicly supported and thus entwined in politics, but it lacks the political power of a more elite university. Many of its students are the first in their families to go to college, he says, so “it’s not an Establishment school.” He sees the campaign against the Islamic studies chair at Temple as part of a larger attack on public higher education. As societies swing to the right, he says, “they attack universities. It’s not something isolated.” What is at stake, he says, is the university’s place as an institution where people can develop the

intellectual tools for expert knowledge and critical and reflective thinking. The trustees' action, he contends, "resembled a form of bullying," and it discouraged "risky thought." That, he concludes, served a vision of the university as a place where students "pick up degrees and go into the job market, but stay out of the world of political discourse, which is an important part of citizenship."

For Temple's Rebecca Alpert, the issue is also one of knowledge. "The only way to end hatred is to get people to understand the world's religions," she says, "and the only way to do that is to have people who are knowledgeable teaching about them."

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AT AMHERST

AT A GLANCE

Name	UMass Amherst
Location	Amherst, Massachusetts
Student body.....	21,000 undergraduates, 6,000 graduate students
Gender	50% female, 50% male
Self-identification as students of color	21%
Religious affiliation*	Undergraduate 6% Jewish, 7% Muslim
International.....	70 countries, est. 13% international
<i>Unofficial numbers</i>	

REBECCA STEINITZ, WINTER 2011

The University of Massachusetts, Amherst, popularly known as UMass, is the flagship campus of the University of Massachusetts system. It is located in the town of Amherst, about two hours west of Boston. Amherst is also the site of Amherst College, while Smith, Mt. Holyoke, and Hampshire College are located in nearby towns. Together these schools make up the Five College consortium, which shares libraries, courses, programs, and other educational resources.

University of Massachusetts, Amherst (UMass) is a large state university with almost 21,000 undergraduates and over 6,000 graduate students. Founded in 1863 as a rural land grant agricultural college, the university's name change marks its academic expansion from the original Massachusetts Agricultural College to Massachusetts State College in 1931 and University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 1947. Today, UMass offers 88 undergraduate degree programs and 124 graduate programs in its nine schools and colleges which include Agriculture, Education, Engineering, Humanities and Fine Arts, Management, Natural Sciences, Nursing, Public Health and Health Sciences, and Social and Behavioral Sciences. While the university occupies the same site as it did in 1863 when it had four professors, 56 students, and four buildings, that site, several blocks from the center of Amherst, is now a large self-contained campus with numerous academic buildings, substantial athletic facilities, and six residential areas.

For at least the last decade approximately 80 percent of the undergraduate students at UMass have been from Massachusetts, though that number dropped to 74 percent in 2010, suggesting that there may be some truth to public perceptions that the university is trying to gain revenue by admitting more out-of-state students. 79 percent of undergraduates are White and 21 percent are of African-American,

Latino, Asian, or American Indian descent. The undergraduate population is approximately 50 percent male and 50 percent female. While the university does not collect information on religion, both the Cooperative Institutional Research Program Freshman Survey, administered by University of California, Los Angeles' Higher Education Research Institute, and a 2002 Internal Spiritual Affairs Survey suggest that about 6 percent (or approximately 1,200 to 1,500) of undergraduates are Jewish and 7 percent are Muslim.

The University's Judaic and Near Eastern Studies program offers a major and minor in Judaic Studies, a major and minor in Middle Eastern Studies, and minors in Hebrew and Arabic. It also sponsors the Center for Jewish Studies. The program encourages study abroad and the university operates an exchange program with the American University in Cairo. The program offers 19 Hebrew courses, seven Arabic courses, and four Yiddish courses. This lopsidedness is even more pronounced in the general course offerings which include 53 Judaic Studies courses and only four Middle Eastern Studies Courses (though it should be noted that Middle Eastern Studies is an interdisciplinary program in which majors and minors take relevant courses in a variety of departments, as well as at the other Five Colleges). In academic year 2010–2011, of the program's eight faculty members, seven teach Judaic Studies, while the eighth is Director of Middle Eastern Studies.

UMass provides housing for 12,000 students in 45 residence halls, which range from picturesque old dormitories to high-rise dorms to apartment buildings. One of the goals of Housing and Residence Life is clearly to create community in a large university. There are numerous special residence programs, from all-male, all-female, first-year, and wellness floors, to Residential Academic Programs in which students live and take courses together or share a major, to Cultural Interest Communities, including buildings or floors for Multicultural, Asian-American, Native American, and LGBTQ students, and students of African descent. There is no residential programming for Jewish or Muslim students, though Jewish students can choose to live in Hillel's Jewish Living and Learning Community.

Like most large state universities, student life at UMass offers many opportunities for involvement. There are strong athletic, arts, and Greek programs (including traditionally Jewish fraternities and sororities), many ethnic and political groups, and in academic year 2010–2011, there were 226 registered student organizations, including the Arab Students Club, the Jewish Student Union, the Muslim Public Affairs Council, the Muslim Students Association, and the Student Alliance for Israel. The Office of Religious and Spiritual Life has a Jewish Affairs program which sponsors educational and cultural events including an annual Freedom Seder co-sponsored by the Newman Association, the Black Student Union, the Muslim Students Association (MSA), and the Jewish Student Union (JSU). Hillel has ten staff members including a rabbi, offers social events and courses along with religious activities, and sponsors or co-sponsors organizations like Kolot, a Jewish capella singing group, and Jewish Leaders in Business. The University also has a Chabad House. There is no Muslim chaplain and little other visible programming for Muslims besides the MSA.

ANTISEMITISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA AT UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS, AMHERST

In comparison to 15 or 20 years ago, the campus climate for Jews and Muslims at UMass seems strikingly calm. Jay Berkovitz, a professor in the Judaic and Near Eastern Studies Department and Director of the Center for Jewish Studies, says flat out, “Frankly, I don’t see much of either antisemitism or Islamophobia at UMass,” and when it comes to direct expressions of prejudice, other faculty agree. The Director of the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (ORSL), Larry Goldbaum, formerly the Director of Jewish Affairs, calls the climate “pretty good” and “generally peaceful.” The campus has recently seen little in the way of either major (assault, vandalism, threats, arson) or minor (graffiti) antisemitic or Islamophobic incidents. Whereas in past years, Goldbaum frequently received calls about incidents in residence halls, such as posters and objects being systematically defaced, those calls have trickled away to nothing. Faculty who were once highly active around Jewish-Muslim issues, like Richard Ellis, who chaired the Jewish Faculty and Staff Group from 1994–1998, have moved on to other pursuits; that group itself appears to have dissolved.

Supporting these anecdotal accounts, little evidence exists of antisemitic or Islamophobic activity at UMass. Between 2007 and 2009 (the latest data available), the campus recorded only two hate crimes, one characterized as racial bias and the other as sexual orientation bias. Neither the *Daily Collegian*, the university’s newspaper, nor the local newspaper, the *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, contain references to any specific campus-based incidents. Indeed, most of the references to Jews, Muslims, antisemitism, and Islamophobia in the *Daily Collegian* occur in the context of commentary on off-campus and national events. The single exception is Israel/Palestine activism and conflict, which will be discussed below.

Despite this general sense of calm, the student perceptions revealed in a 2008 Campus Climate for Jewish Students Survey are somewhat more complex. 22 percent of students surveyed felt that antisemitism exists on campus “to a great extent” or “to some extent.” However, approximately 95 percent of students had “never” or “rarely” experienced most of the specific behaviors noted (harassment, stereotyping, graffiti, vandalism, defacement). The only significant outlier was hearing other students make derogatory or stereotypical comments about Jews: 55 percent of students reported that they had “sometimes,” “often,” or “very often” heard such comments. Interestingly, a Jewish student comments on this very factor, reporting that “in my fraternity you’ll hear Jews, Christians, even a few Muslims bounce around jokes about their race. People don’t take it seriously ... we have something else, the power of our relationships, so to make these jokes doesn’t matter. No one takes offense, [though] some of these jokes, if you say them in public, people might get pissed off.” It is worth noting that the survey had a 40 percent response rate, with 236 respondents (i. e., approximately one quarter of the total number of Jewish undergraduates). Given that the Jewish student body at UMass appears to be divided between students who are very actively involved in Jewish life and students who are not involved at all, it is quite possible that

those who responded to the survey were more inclined to notice and/or perceive antisemitism.

This gap between the perceptions and experiences of today’s students may also be related to the past history of conflict between African Americans and Jews at UMass. These communities were significantly at odds during the late 1980s and 1990s, a time of similar turmoil across the country. Race and racism have long been—and continue to be—issues at UMass. In 1988, controversial Jewish, African-American faculty member Julius Lester shifted from Afro-American Studies to Judaic and Near Eastern Studies as a consequence of race- and religion-based conflicts with his colleagues. When African-American students brought Minister Louis Farrakhan to campus in 1994 (for the second time), Hillel organized a protest that drew over 800 students from UMass and nearby campuses; the controversy garnered national news coverage. In 1995, an antisemitic letter from an emeritus professor appeared in the *Daily Collegian*, and the Jewish Faculty and Staff Group, which had organized to protest antisemitic speakers on campus, wrote a response. Overall, there was a strong—and seemingly justified—sense of both antisemitism and racism on campus.

During these years, the university made a concerted effort to respond to these conditions. The Office of Jewish Affairs was established in 1995. Beginning in 1996, with the commissioning of a Diversity Action Plan, the university initiated a long-term, campus-wide Community, Diversity, & Social Justice Initiative that continues today. A Chancellor’s Task Force on Jewish Awareness and Anti-Semitism was instituted (along with similar task forces on the Status of Women, the Status of Minorities, and Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Matters). In 1999 the Office of Jewish Affairs (OJA), the Office of Human Relations, the Department of Afro-American Studies, and the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities collaborated to support the creation of a course on “History of Black/Jewish Relations in the U.S.,” taught by John Bracey, an eminent and highly respected historian in the Afro-American Studies department, and Maurianne Adams, a Jewish faculty member. This course, which was developed out of a faculty seminar, was quite influential and ultimately resulted in a well-received book, *Strangers & Neighbors: Relations Between Blacks and Jews in the United States*.

There is no question that these efforts helped to changed conditions on campus, for both Jews and Blacks. As Goldbaum sums up the resulting shift, “We don’t have those kind of issues we had 15 years ago when...you needed an Office of Jewish Affairs to deal with issues of campus climate.” But UMass undoubtedly also benefited from changing cultural priorities, both nationally and among college students. The identity politics of the 1980s and 1990s flared at UMass, like everywhere, and have calmed down at UMass like everywhere (though race remains a more charged issue than antisemitism). Goldbaum believes that today’s UMass undergraduates are significantly more assimilated than their predecessors. “The fact of their Jewish identity is part of their identity,” he says, “but it’s no big deal in either a positive or negative way.” He uses the fraternity system as an example of how things have changed. Whereas Jews used to have their own fraternities (in part as a result of antisemitism that kept

them from joining other fraternities), today, he says, “the historically Jewish Greeks [are] very mixed. They’re totally comfortable with the fact that they’re historically Jewish and they’re totally comfortable with the fact that lots of non-Jews are there. They’re just like any other Greek.”

The number of UMass students actively involved with Jewish life and politics is quite small; unlike past years, when significant numbers of students were engaged with Jewish issues on campus, today many Jewish students pay little attention. President of the JSU Mike Fox agrees that while “students who are involved with Jewish life are mostly involved with Jewish life,” and the same thing holds true for Muslim students, many Jewish and Muslim students identify more strongly with other aspects of campus life and have little interest in Jewish and Muslim activities and issues.

The significant exception to this rule, and the one place where Jewish-Muslim conflict is highly visible on campus, is in the political arena, especially with regard to Israel/Palestine issues. Recent flashpoints for this conflict have included a 2009 debate on a student government resolution that called for divestment from Israel as part of socially responsible investment policy and the 2010 speech by an Israel Defense Force soldier, which was protested by pro-Palestinian activists. These conflicts are clearly experienced as antisemitic by Jews on campus and Islamophobic by Muslims. For instance, when the protesters at the speech raised their fists in solidarity with the Palestinians, Jewish students interpreted their actions as Nazi salutes.

Both professors and students note that this tension is also highly apparent in the classroom. Laila Alasmar, a 2010 graduate and founder of the UMass chapter of Project Nur, an organization devoted to “fostering a dialogue between Muslim and non-Muslim students,” describes the dynamic: “You get in big arguments in class and it becomes particularly heated, especially in political science classes... You’ll have three types of people: the people who side a lot with Muslims..., the people who side a lot with Jews or Israelis, [and] the ones who are very neutral and go either way. They go for fairness and what they see and what the facts show.” Alasmar specifically points out that “a lot of people do have a fear of Muslims and what Islam promotes especially when it comes to the Middle East.” However, she is very clear

that such discussions are limited to the classroom: “I never experienced anti-Muslim [sentiments] out of the classroom. People were very respectful.... I never saw persecution on campus.” Indeed, both Alasmar and Fox agree that even the pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli activists are respectful and even friendly in non-political contexts.

A concerted recent effort to foster positive Jewish-Muslim relations on campus is probably both a cause and a consequence of this sense of respect. The MSA has become one of the sponsors of the annual Freedom Seder, initially created to bring together Blacks and Jews. In 2010, the JSU and the MSA worked together to organize relief for Pakistan after the summer’s floods and cohosted a screening of the film *Bilal’s Stand*. These projects are an explicitly proactive attempt to counter the anti-Muslim sentiments that have become prominent in the United States since the lower Manhattan mosque was proposed in 2010, and to prevent such sentiments from gaining a foothold at UMass—an attempt that appears to have been largely successful.

The success of these efforts to support campus and local Muslims is also surely rooted in the fact that UMass is a largely liberal campus (in the CIRP Freshman Survey, only 15 percent of students identified themselves as politically to the Right) located in a very liberal area with a strong pro-Palestinian community. It does seem, however, that Muslim students experience—or at least perceive—more bias than Jewish students even if it is not on the scale of recent national outbursts. The fact that there is little campus infrastructure to meet their needs is one sign of that bias, but also makes it more difficult to discern the issues at stake. One example that may illustrate both these concerns is the difficulty Muslim students faced in trying to obtain space for Friday afternoon prayers: the students felt that they were meeting resistance because they were Muslim, but there have also been long-term issues with space assignment at UMass. The new ORSL hopes to begin collecting data on the experience of Muslim students and supporting them in building campus understanding and awareness of their traditions and concerns—much as the OJA did for Jewish students.

In short, UMass Amherst has come a long way, but it still has places to go.

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

AT A GLANCE

Name University of Miami
Location Coral Gables, Florida
Student body Undergraduate 10,368
Gender 48% male, 52% female
Self-identification as
students of color 38%
International 9.21%

ELENA STONE

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE: JEWS AND MUSLIMS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

As a grandchild of Jews who survived the Holocaust, it seemed natural for University of Miami student Shoshana Gottesman to be attracted to a lecture about a Paris mosque that saved Jews from the Nazis during the German occupation of France. Little did she know that her attendance at the February 2008 event would be the catalyst for a groundbreaking effort to strengthen ties between a new generation of Muslims and Jews. It began with a conversation between Gottesman and Muslim students Jehan Feroz and Farah Dosani, who introduced themselves after hearing Gottesman talk about her background during the question and answer period. The young women lamented the lack of contact between Muslims and Jews on the University of Miami (UM) campus, and how little each knew of the other's religion and community. Soon, they decided to tackle the problem head-on—and with fliers, a Facebook page, and outreach to UM's Hillel and Muslim Student Group, a new organization was born. Its mission was ambitious: to bridge the divide that has been fostered by society and Jewish-Muslim relations around the world.

Called simply JAM—for Jews and Muslims—the group built on the spirit of the three founders' initial conversation. The focus was on creating a welcoming atmosphere where Jews and Muslims could learn about each other's traditions and history and get to know each other as friends. The first meeting was small—about eight or nine students, remembers founding co-chair Dosani. “We spent time just introducing ourselves and talked about where we were in our spiritual lives,” she notes. “Some of us were religious, others not at all. A lot of people said, ‘I never had a Jewish (or Muslim) friend before.’ The idea was to create relationships, bringing together groups that have been divided in the larger world. It was very powerful.”

Slowly, the number of participants grew, with meetings continuing to emphasize religious and personal themes. At a gathering called “Living On a Prayer,” for example, the

focus was on understanding Jewish and Muslim practices of worship. Muslim students brought prayer rugs, and performed their evening service with Jews in attendance. Jewish students, in turn, shared their evening prayers and accompanying rituals, with time at the end for questions and discussion. As the organization grew, students continued sharing religious observances, including a Passover seder and breaking the Ramadan fast.

The theme of religious pluralism inspired Jews and Muslims (JAM) to co-sponsor a series of gatherings called “Abraham's Tent,” described in the university's event listings as a “two-way street of teller and listener [that] leads to the understanding of the Other and the healing of the Other.” It brings together Muslims, Christians, and Jews to speak in small groups and pairs about their experience of faith, culture, and discrimination. Started in 2008, Abraham's Tent, co-sponsored with Hillel, Muslim Students at the University of Miami, and the Catholic Student Association, has become a regular fixture of campus religious life, attracting about 30 students per semester. JAM member Alysse Mische notes an important rule at these gatherings—when it comes to concerns like discrimination, stereotyping and hate speech, people need to speak about their own experience rather than respond to issues or incidents in the news.

Mische is one of a small number of Christian students who have taken part in the leadership of JAM. She joined in response to the stereotyping of Muslims stemming from the September 11, 2001 attacks, and brought a sense of kinship with both Muslims and Jews. “Most of the Christians that got involved saw this as ‘they're our family and we need to help them get along,’” she observes.

The broader interfaith theme was the inspiration for “Sounds of Faith,” a groundbreaking concert organized by Dosani and Gottesman in April 2010. “Sounds of Faith,” a benefit for Haitian earthquake relief, was inspired by the work of Shakeela Hassan, whose efforts to build connections between Muslims, Christians, and Jews through sacred sound and music began in Chicago and has spread through concerts in cities around the country. A standing-room-only audience of more than 150 people, many from outside the campus, filled the Chapel of the Venerable Bede for the Miami concert, which included a Christian baroque ensemble playing Johann Sebastian Bach, a Jewish vocal ensemble performing cantoral music, a gospel choir, and Sufi poetry and music. Highlights of the concert included recitations from the Qu'ran, followed by a performance of the Kol Nidre liturgy for the Jewish Yom Kippur. This sonic variety reflected the diversity of the audience, and, notes Mische, the beauty of the music was a powerful connective force. “We were so easily there together, enjoying the music together, worshipping together ... it was a real symbol.”

Gottesman emphasizes that JAM was not formed in response to specific antisemitic or Islamophobic incidents on campus. Indeed, with more than 15,600 students and one of the most diverse student bodies in the nation, the University of Miami points proudly to a campus climate of pluralism that led to its number one ranking for “Race/Class Interaction” in the 2011 Princeton Review. But until the advent of JAM, interaction between the university's Muslims and Jews was a rarity. “We wanted to be proactive and come together

before there was a bigger problem on campus,” notes Gottesman. “If incidents of Islamophobia or antisemitism came up in the news, we would send out a message that would condemn those acts, and try to calm people.”

That proactive impulse paid off at the end of 2008, when the breakdown of the Gaza ceasefire between Hamas and Israel led to heightened tensions between pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian factions on many college campuses. There was no such escalation at the University of Miami. Along with the absence of an active pro-Palestinian group at the school, Gottesman cites JAM’s relationship-building efforts as a factor in the school’s ability to avoid polarization related to the Middle East.

Nevertheless, it took JAM a year and a half to feel ready to directly engage with the Israel/Palestine conflict. “We didn’t want to avoid the rift,” notes Dosani, “but we wanted to get at it more from a human than a political angle.” To do so, the group sponsored an event called “Bridging the Divide,” a presentation by Kobi Skolnick, an Israeli Jew, and Aziz Abu Sarah, a Muslim born in Jerusalem, both of the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University. After losing members of his family to Palestinian attacks, Skolnick had become a member of the fundamentalist Kahana youth movement, which preached violence in defense of Israel. Abu Sarah joined the radical Fatah Youth Movement after his brother was killed by an Israeli soldier. But both men gradually turned their backs on violence and hostility and now travel the United States to promote tolerance and reconciliation as the path to peace between Israelis and Palestinians. More than 50 students came to hear them tell their stories at “Bridging the Divide,” which was also a fundraiser for Ein Bustan, an Israeli-Arab kindergarten program in Tivon, Israel. The event raised JAM’s profile on campus and gave the group the chance to promote its mission to a wider audience.

The success of Bridging the Divide emboldened JAM to go further to address the Israeli-Palestinian impasse. The result was Yad b’Yed—“Hand in Hand” in both Hebrew and Arabic—a national student conference on “A Pluralistic Approach to Peace in the Middle East,” presented in collaboration with the Clinton Global Initiative in October 2010. The conference’s mission was to “provide university students with the connections and tools needed to build trust among religious and ethnic communities in order to establish social change by serving the central needs of the peoples involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.” The conference brochure goes on to elaborate the organizers’ non-partisan approach:

Hand in Hand does not aim to choose a political side, but rather educate students of the many voices that exist within Christian, Jewish, and Muslim communities and provide the tools to utilize these voices for change in a globalized world. Through creativity and interactive experiences at the conference, university students will foster connections with the leading Israelis and Palestinians who promote change through nonviolence, and thus discover how to also instill those values and ethics within the American discourse about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This symbiotic relationship is crucial and demands awareness.

An outreach video featuring two of the conference organizers, Shoshana Gottesman and Muslim student Reem Habash, placed the conference squarely in the context of the floundering Israel/Palestine peace process. After noting their own Middle Eastern origins—Gottesman grew up in Haifa and Habash is from Jerusalem—the two acknowledged the frustration and discouragement that many who care deeply about peace were feeling. “There are days that it just feels so tough,” they said, “but when things get tough, why does peacemaking have to stop? Isn’t that the time when you should be trying even harder? This is the time, when it doesn’t look good in the news ... this is the time to stand up for peace.”

Yad b’Yed attracted more than 100 students over a three-day period. While most attendees were living in Florida, they represented a broad range of national origins, from Israel and Palestine to Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Kuwait and Trinidad. The Dalai Lama gave the keynote address. Among the dozen speakers who followed were Skolnick and Abu Sarah, as well as peace activists, academics, and interfaith organizers. Students listened to presentations, engaged in workshops, volunteered in a service project at a local community center, and attended the groundbreaking for UM’s Student Islamic Center. Each day of the conference was devoted to a different theme: “We’re Not So Different,” focusing on interfaith dialogue; “Current Events,” with an explicit focus on the Israel/Palestine conflict; and “Let’s Bridge the Divide,” which emphasized cooperative efforts in such fields as education and the environment.

JAM’s success in bridging the Jewish-Muslim divide at UM yields a number of lessons for other activists interested in replicating their efforts. Perhaps most important is the primacy of friendship and building trust. “People have said to me that this is naïve, we can’t just have interfaith connections, we also have to look at the differences,” says Gottesman. “But it’s a balance. If you want to sway someone, you can’t just shatter their reality, because then they’ll shut down. People have to be friends in order to have the tough conversations.”

Second is the need to organize before underlying differences get to an unmanageable point. “Even if there were no outward signs [of problems for Muslim and Jewish students], there were underlying tensions,” Mische notes. “But we got organized before anything really negative could happen—we ‘pretreated’ the problem.” By becoming the go-to space on campus for Jews and Muslims to interact and address differences in a spirit of cooperation, JAM addressed a need that might have otherwise been filled by more antagonistic, polarizing forces.

Finally, there is the simple lesson of the power of students to have a vision and, with work and dedication, make that vision real and have a vital impact. “I would say the biggest impact JAM has had on me is just to know that something like this can happen,” observes Farah Dosani. “It wasn’t just talk—we created real relationships and bonds. At times it could be a little intimidating thinking of what we were taking on. But seeing the effect on people, the way JAM grew from just an idea ... it was inspiring.”

UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

AT A GLANCE

Name University of New Mexico
Location Albuquerque, New Mexico
Student body Undergraduate 21,332
Gender 45% male, 55% female
Self-identification as
students of color 50%
International 0.97%

BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT AND SANCTIONS (BDS) HEATS UP AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

ABDELNASSER RASHID

In the last several years, the University of New Mexico has seen increased activity related to the Israel/Palestine conflict. An increase in pro-Palestinian activism is part of a broader national trend that has emerged since the launch of the Global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement. Since 2005, more than 170 Palestinian civil society organizations have signed the call for people of conscience throughout the world “to impose broad boycotts and implement divestment initiatives (BDS) against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era.”³³⁶ Then, in 2006, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter published *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*, which marked the first time a senior U.S. political figure used the word “apartheid” to describe Israeli policies. This was followed by the publication of *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* by Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer, professors at Harvard University and the University of Chicago, respectively. Walt and Mearsheimer’s controversial book explored the extent to which the Israel lobby influences U.S. policy on the Middle East, further legitimizing students’ efforts to find a means of activism that did not depend on the U.S. government to act. These developments, along with Israeli military actions in Lebanon in 2006, in Gaza in 2008–2009, and the Turkish aid flotilla to Gaza in 2010, have been among the catalysts for the resurgence of the Palestinian solidarity movement on university campuses. The feeling among such groups is that Israel has been allowed to act with impunity in all of these cases and that governments, particularly the U.S. government, have demonstrated that they will not hold Israel accountable for its actions.

Many have argued that the international grassroots Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement is the most effective means to end the conflict. However, opponents of BDS, including many Hillels and other Jewish organizations associated with campus life, often describe the movement as engaging in three D’s: demonization, delegitimization, and

applying a double standard.³³⁷ This debate has been played out across the nation, and at the University of New Mexico (UNM) the controversy is ongoing.

ABOUT UNM

UNM, located in the city of Albuquerque, is the largest public university in the state. There are currently 26,098 students at UNM. 18,499 are undergraduates, while 7,600 are enrolled in graduate and other programs. Students of color comprise the majority of the school’s students in the aggregate, led by Latinos, who comprise one-third of the student body, and American Indians, who comprise 6 percent. Forty-six percent of students are White.³³⁸ The Muslim Students Association estimates that there are approximately 150 Muslim students on campus. Hillel estimates that the number of Jewish students enrolled is 250.³³⁹ The number of Muslims and Jews combined is under 2 percent of the total student body.

Student groups involved in the debates around the Israel/Palestine issue include the Muslim Students Association (MSA), Hillel, and the Israel Alliance. The Coalition for Peace and Justice in the Middle East (hereon referred to as the Coalition) on campus describes itself as “a nonpartisan, nonsectarian group whose goal is to educate UNM students, staff, and faculty about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, to raise awareness about how our tax dollars are being spent, and to advocate against continued military aid to the region.”³⁴⁰ As UNM is located in an urban setting, local groups and organizations often work closely with student groups and, as is discussed below, campus life is often shaped by communication and visits by outside parties.

LIFE FOR MUSLIM STUDENTS AT UNM

Danya Musafa is a freshman at UNM and serves as co-president of the Coalition as well as on the executive board of the MSA. “Things are mostly peaceful. We don’t have people yelling at us to go home,” Musafa says, referring to the Yorba Linda, California event in March 2011 where Muslims were verbally attacked outside a fundraising event for an Islamic charity. UNM has a very diverse student body where minorities make up a majority of the student body, making it especially difficult to find tolerance for public displays of racism.

But the peace is occasionally interrupted. “It [anti-Muslim sentiment] seems to come out during Islam Awareness Week,” Musafa says. Every year, the MSA at UNM sets up a tent with educational material on Islam, and Muslim students have come to expect some visitors who will call them terrorists along with other slurs. A member of the MSA was designated to handle the responsibility of speaking to such opponents.

Danya Musafa describes a complicated relationship between the Coalition and the UNM administration. The administration, she says, makes it especially difficult for the Coalition to request funding, which she says is not the case with other groups. Every time the Coalition asks for funding, she says, the administration puts up petty obstacles asking for further documentation. “Each time they would ask for something different,” she says. One time, they asked for a

flier as proof that the event was taking place. “When I went with a flier, the lady said it had to be printed in color, not black and white.”

Muslim students have also pointed to the website of UNM’s Israel Alliance, which contains inflammatory Islamophobic material including a video parody of “Jingle Bells” that the organization posted on Christmas Day called “Jihad Bells”³⁴¹ that portrays a mustached Santa Claus with a false Arabic accent riding a missile and singing, “Oh what fun with a knife or gun/A Christian guy to slay.” This parody was identified as being a product of Latma TV, an Israeli group “created to mock what the members view as Israel’s leftist media.”³⁴²

BDS CAMPAIGN AT UNM

Margaret Leicester, a Jewish graduate student who returned to pursue a degree in Educational Leadership after an extended period away from school, converted to Judaism and visited Israel in 1988. She was eager to make aliyah, or immigrate to Israel, and was able to do so in 1990. But the direction of her life took another turn when she met a Palestinian citizen of Israel, whom she later married and moved with back to the United States. She says the experience allowed her “to see a side of Israel that most people don’t see.” While Leicester had a direct connection to Israel/Palestine for over two decades, she says that the turning point in her activism was Israel’s attack on Gaza in 2008–2009, which “outraged” her. Though she was involved in local Jewish groups, Leicester as a graduate student at UNM became one of the cofounders of the Coalition. Significant accusations of antisemitism were made in 2010 when the Coalition, following the example of University of California, Berkeley divestment campaign [see UC Berkeley profile], called for school funds to be removed from “companies that profited from Israel’s occupation of Palestinian land.” The Coalition campaign requested that the university divest from companies involved in “profiting from illegal, destructive and inhumane behavior” in Israel/Palestine.³⁴³ The call for BDS states that “non-violent punitive measures should be maintained until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people’s inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law.”³⁴⁴

Nada Noor, a spokesperson for the Coalition, told the student paper, the *Daily Lobo*, “Our aim is not to target Israel for the sake of targeting Israel but rather target companies engaging in and profiting from illegal, destructive and inhumane behavior.”³⁴⁵ Members of the Coalition point to the parallels between Israeli policies and those of apartheid South Africa, noting that BDS played a significant role in overturning apartheid.³⁴⁶ They believe a divestment campaign allows them to educate the student body about the Palestinian struggle. Such a campaign is considered especially effective because it brings the conflict close to home by showing students that as members of the UNM community they are stakeholders in a university which has investments in companies it argues are engaged in human rights abuses.

In January 2010, StandWithUs, a cross-campus Israel advocacy organization based in Los Angeles, founded in

2001 “in response to the second Intifada and the misunderstandings about the challenges that Israel faces” and which has a presence at UNM, released a comic book, which on the back cover represented BDS as a venomous snake and said that BDS stands for “bigotry, divisiveness and slander.”³⁴⁷ In October the Jewish Federations of North America and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs launched a \$6-million initiative to oppose BDS across the country, an initiative they called the Israel Action Network. According to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, the initiative is “charged with countering the growing campaign to isolate Israel as a rogue state akin to apartheid-era South Africa—a campaign that the Israeli government and Jewish groups see as an existential threat to the Jewish state.”^{348, 349}

CAMPUS SPEAKERS SPARK CONTROVERSY

Conflict continued in November 2010 when the Coalition invited Ali Abunimah, a Palestinian-American author, cofounder of the *Electronic Intifada* and an outspoken supporter of the BDS movement, to speak at an event titled “From New Mexico to Palestine: The Global Struggle for Human Rights and Equality.” The event was co-sponsored by the American Studies and Peace Studies Departments at UNM as well as a number of student and community groups.³⁵⁰ In response to the invitation, Sara Koplik, director of UNM Hillel and Sam Sokolove, executive director of the Jewish Federation of New Mexico, sent a letter to the directors of the American Studies and Peace Studies departments, Professors Alex Lubin and Les Field, stating:

Abunimah is a representative of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, a global movement intent on destroying Israel and her credibility in the world. It is an adjunct to what Hamas and Hezbollah are doing frontally, and according to the Anti-Defamation League, ‘BDS is about the three D’s: ‘Demonization, Delegitimization, and applying a Double Standard.’ This movement is disinterested in peace, the exchange of ideas or legitimate dialogue. Its tactics deny Israel’s cultural products; deny Israel’s emissaries the right to be heard; delegitimize the Jewish historical ties to Israel; and portray Zionism not as an expression of peoplehood, but as an extension of European colonization. This is all anti-Semitism in its clearest, most noxious form.

Koplik also sent an email to Hillel students stating that she was opposed to departmental sponsorship of his talk. She later defended her position as:

- 1) *We are not opposed to Ali Abunimah speaking at the University of New Mexico.*
- 2.) *We are not opposed to any student group sponsoring this talk.*
- 3). *We are opposed to departmental sponsorship of this talk, as we believe that Ali Abunimah calls for the*

destruction of the State of Israel, and thus, it is not appropriate for a department in a public university to condone such language.”

Professor Les Field, the director of the Peace Studies department, has been teaching at UNM since 1994. He is the son of Holocaust survivors and was raised in a “strong Zionist ideological home environment,” which he began questioning in the 1980s when he learned of Israel’s role in supporting Somoza’s dictatorship in Nicaragua. He explains being shocked at receiving the letter from Koplik, who was his neighbor and friend. Instead of being approached by Koplik in person, Field notes that “We just got this letter that says you’re supporting antisemitism, and you shouldn’t do that, and the letter is copied to the dean and the provost of the university. Clearly, it was like ‘we’re going to get you for doing this.’” Koplik had also worked with Field on a political project on environmental work in the past. “Not only was she my neighbor and my colleague,” Field says, “she belongs to the same progressive Jewish synagogue; she gave my daughter a tallis [prayer shawl] for her bat mitzvah. In other words, this is someone who is supposed to be my friend.”

The encounter caused Professor Field to believe “that mainstream Zionist organizations ... think things were not going their way, and they need to react in the most extreme terms to the people that they disagree with.” Before the event, Field was not certain whether he agreed with Abunimah or not. However, he felt that it was important to talk to him.

Professor Alex Lubin, who also received the letter from Hillel and the Jewish Federation, described the situation as follows:

The letter, which you can find on Ali Abunimah’s website, claimed that I was giving legitimacy to a speaker that the authors believed were antisemitic. Their claim was that Abunimah delegitimizes Israel and therefore is antisemitic. I found the letter to be absurd. It not only defamed Abunimah and misrepresented his arguments, but it also defamed me by claiming, in a veiled way, that I was antisemitic for sponsoring the event. The letter was intended to send a chilling message that any and all debate about Israel/Palestine would be monitored and made legitimate through two conservative Jewish organizations.

THE ROLE OF THE UNM ADMINISTRATION

The provost of UNM, Suzanne Ortega, called for a meeting with Professors Field and Lubin. She wanted them to clarify that they had not provided financial support for the event; they confirmed that they had not. This was unusual as it is common for university departments to sponsor talks by providing funding. According to Field, if the department had provided funding for the event they would have been accused of providing funding for an antisemite; the rhetorical impact of such an accusation would be far greater than being scolded for co-sponsorship. This contrasted with an event held ear-

lier that year when Gil Hoffman, political correspondent for the *Jerusalem Post* and a reserve soldier in the Israel Defense Forces Spokesman’s Unit, was invited to speak at UNM.³⁵¹ Hoffman, whose political reporting and positions closely reflect those of the Netanyahu government, was paid to speak and the event received partial funding from the university administration. The UNM Office of International Programs co-sponsored the event.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Because UNM is located in an urban setting, community organizations are often connected to student groups and other parts of the university. Field explains that the provost felt the need to respond to the letter from the Jewish Federation of New Mexico (JFNM) because the Federation ostensibly represents New Mexico’s Jewish community. However, in a letter to the editor of the *Daily Lobo*, Professors Lubin and Field wrote that Abunimah’s talk was organized by individuals and groups from Albuquerque’s Jewish communities as well as the larger community of peace activists.³⁵²

While groups like the JFNM depict themselves as holding a monopoly over Jewish public opinion, Margaret Leicester notes that the Jewish community in Albuquerque does not have a singular voice on Israel. Leicester is a member of Another Jewish Voice-Albuquerque, which she says provides a Jewish perspective that is markedly different from the JFNM. Another Jewish Voice-Albuquerque is a member of the Coalition to Stop \$30 Billion to Israel, which includes another Jewish organization based in Santa Fe, as well as other groups. These groups have frequently interacted with UNM student groups; for example, Abunimah’s talk was supported and co-sponsored by the Coalition to Stop \$30 Billion to Israel.

RESPONSES TO ACCUSATIONS OF ANTISEMITISM

When asked what she thinks of being labeled an antisemite, Danya Musafa laughs. She had been called an antisemite and a Jew-hater in conjunction with Abunimah’s talk and feels that she is an easy target for criticism because she is Palestinian. She points out that many members of the Coalition—including its founder and nearly half of the active membership—are Jewish-Americans. One former member is Israeli. This is consistent with the message of Peter Beinart’s essay in the *New York Review of Books*, in which he describes what he sees as a shift in opinions on the Israel/Palestine conflict among American Jewish youth. According to Beinart, a study of Jewish students by Republican pollster Frank Luntz found that the students held “a belief in open debate, a skepticism about military force, a commitment to human rights. And in their innocence, they did not realize that they were supposed to shed those values when it came to Israel.”³⁵³

UNM’s Musafa stresses that she respects Judaism but rejects Zionism. She visited the Holocaust Museum in Israel last year and says she considers it tragic that the term “antisemite” is abused, which she believes is shameful to the memory of those who died in the Holocaust, Jews who experienced antisemitism in its most deadly form.

In response to claims that Abunimah and the BDS movement are antisemitic, the Coalition wrote:

The Coalition for Peace and Justice in the Middle East and its many sponsors will unambiguously communicate to every single person in the room that denouncing Israel's inhumane policies is not a crime, nor is it anti-Semitic. We will take this opportunity to educate and raise awareness on the UNM campus and in the larger Albuquerque community about the Israel-Palestine issue and the BDS campaign. Abunimah personally invites Jewish Federation and Hillel members to attend his talk on Sunday and "to ask me any questions they want. Join in the dialogue!"³⁵⁴

When the controversy over Abunimah erupted, Professor Field emailed Hillel students inviting them to hear him speak, noting that positions similar to Abunimah's have been articulated by many people in Israel, including academics, activists, and politicians. Professor Field feels that his family history is distorted and exploited when Israeli policies are justified and when criticism of them is labeled antisemitic. "I really resent that they pull [the Holocaust] out of the hat to defend these horrendous policies," he says.

Abunimah responded to the accusations against him by writing that the letter from Hillel and the JFNM used "all the usual defamatory silencing tactics to try to suppress debate and discussion about Israel's apartheid and the alternatives that respect everyone."³⁵⁵ Referring to Professor Field's email to Hillel students, Abunimah wrote:

I wholly endorse Professor Field's invitation. Last night at Stanford I stood for two hours and took unmoderated questions from an audience including many strong supporters of Israel. Instead of scaremongering and making outrageous claims about me, why doesn't Dr. Koplik urge Hillel students to attend my event? I will, as I did at Stanford, answer all their questions and concerns, and I am ready to stand for as long as it takes.³⁵⁶

Another picture that emerges from the events at UNM is the degree to which the opinion of Jewish students and faculty at UNM and in Albuquerque is not monolithic. The two professors who sponsored Abunimah's talk are Jewish, as well as were a significant number of those involved in organizing the event.

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

AT A GLANCE

Name University of Oregon
Location Eugene, Oregon
Student body Undergraduate 19,534
Gender 49% male, 51% female
Self-identification
as students of color 16%
International 7%

J. D. STEINMETZ

CONFRONTING THE STORM: THE POLITICS OF HATE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

After a long day of grading student papers, a graduate student from the University of Oregon named “David” met a friend at a local bar just off of campus.³⁵⁷ The bar was popular with students and busy on this particular Friday night. David recognized one of the bartenders while waiting in line and said hello. “Hey I know you,” the bartender said, leaning against the wall. David realized the bartender was quite drunk. “Hey don’t worry, I’m not working tonight,” he slurred with a smile. “Well that’s a good thing for a lot of reasons,” David said. After a brief pause the bartender began to laugh, looking at David. “I know who you are—you’re Jewish,” he said. David smiled, “Oh yeah, how do you know that?” “Because I work here,” the bartender said, “and I see your last name on the credit card.”

At this point, it was only a little curious to be identified ethnically by one’s last name in such a setting, and David thought little of it, but the situation quickly became uncomfortable. “You wanna hear a joke?” the bartender asked, leaning into David. “I’m not quite sure,” David said with a laugh. “What’s the difference between Lance Armstrong and Adolf Hitler?” David paused, looking at the bartender and trying to make sense of the situation. “Lance Armstrong knows how to finish a race.”

Such encounters perhaps happen every day in America, ending like this one did—without confrontation, anger or any public grievance. David related this story to friends and some questioned whether the bartender was antisemitic at all. He was very drunk. Maybe he thought there’s nothing wrong with Jewish jokes, or that by telling one, he was identifying himself with his Jewish listener—“Hey, I’m down with the Jewish thing, and I can make Jewish jokes to prove it.”

So what makes this story interesting, or for that matter, makes it unique to the University of Oregon (UO)? This story illustrates subtle indicators that exist on the surface in Eugene and in much of the state, a sentiment that is at once casual and threatening. Below that surface, however, exists

a unique intensity to hate politics rooted in a long history of racism and antisemitism. “If you look at hate in Oregon, it always comes back to antisemitism,” notes Greg Rikhoff, Director of Public and Government Affairs at the UO, “even in the post-911 environment, it frames Islamophobia [with] in larger Jewish conspiracies.”³⁵⁸ In order to understand the politics of hate on the UO campus, one must look historically at the state of Oregon as a whole.

Oregon was originally a White separatist state. Sundown Laws—curfews that applied to African Americans—Vagrancy Laws and Exclusions Laws were written into the original Oregon constitution and into the charters of local towns and cities.³⁵⁹ In Eugene, prospective buyers could not purchase property without signing an agreement stating the buyer could not later sell the property to an African-American, a law which is still on the books, though overwritten by other laws, state and federal.³⁶⁰ The intensity of antisemitic sentiment can be traced back to the second wave of the Ku Klux Klan movement in the United States that raged in the 1920s and early 1930s. This second wave of Klan activity was focused primarily on anti-immigrant, anti-Jewish, and anti-Catholic sentiment, and expanded well beyond the south. The Klan was a major political force in the 1920s, with over four million members at its peak and a major swing party in national elections.³⁶¹ Despite having relatively few Jews or Catholics in the state, Oregon was a hotbed of Klan activity, feeding on “already nurtured suspicion and tendencies to vigilante action” in the state.³⁶² By 1924 Oregon had the highest per capita KKK membership in the country.³⁶³ Despite the fact that the KKK movement was effectively over by the 1940s, racist practices in Oregon continue to this day. As recently as 2005 there were Klan taggings in Eugene.³⁶⁴

What about the notion that Oregon, and Eugene in particular, are relatively liberal places to live? Nate Silver, statistician and elections analyst, has stated that liberals in Oregon are among the most liberal in the country, whereas conservatives in Oregon are among the most conservative in the country.³⁶⁵ Translation: Oregon is perhaps the most polarized state in the country politically—a lot of people on the Far Left and a lot of people on the Far Right. An urban-rural divide certainly exists, but there are some solidly conservative urban and suburban areas all along the Interstate 5 corridor and along the coast. Due to its segregationist past, Oregon remains a relatively homogenous state.

The University of Oregon is known for being a medium-sized state university with a relatively diverse and liberal student body. The 2010 incoming freshman class was the largest and most diverse in school history, with big increases in the number of self-identified Hispanic and African-American students.³⁶⁶ The university was ranked 15th nationally in graduation rates for minority students.³⁶⁷ With a total student enrollment of over 23,000 at the UO in an urban area of over 300,000, Eugene has a classic university town feel with a lively nightlife, active alternative culture, and large youth population.

Students of the Islamic faith are well represented on campus, and there are popular UO study abroad programs to Oman, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, and Turkey. The Muslim Student Association has over 700 active students on campus, 75 to 80 percent of which are undergraduates,

and a growing budget.³⁶⁸ The Muslim Student Association (MSA) promotes interfaith dialog on campus and in the community by sponsoring roundtables that bring together Jewish, Muslim, and Christian scholars, activists, and clergy. In addition to holding prayer groups and Koran readings, the MSA focuses on education for non-Muslim students as well, promoting awareness of Islam and unity in peace. "It's difficult to understand each other," says Kamal Ararso, a senior in political science who is from Ethiopia, "when we simply don't know each other, so MSA is an organization that bridges the divide. It's our duty to reach out to others." When asked if he personally ever experienced Islamophobia in Eugene or situations revolving around his faith that made him uncomfortable, "Definitely no," he responded. "Eugene and the UO have been great—opening and friendly—and I'm a socially conscious person. If there were such a situation, I would have remembered."³⁶⁹

But the university has not been without its problems, and the Pacifica Forum controversy is perhaps the best evidence of that. Orval Etter, former UO professor of planning, public policy, and management, started the Pacifica Forum in 1994 to provide a platform for various points of view on war, peace, U.S. politics, and history. Etter, a complicated man, has been an active conscientious objector and war protestor for every American military engagement since World War II. His pacifist beliefs have been embraced by Quakers, and as a musician he is well regarded for his dedication to the arts in and around Eugene.³⁷⁰ This brief outline, however, only touches on the surface, like a bad Jewish joke at a bar. The Pacifica Forum has stoked controversy by inviting a number of neonazis, Holocaust deniers, and radical right-wing speakers to talks on the University campus. One speaker was noted Holocaust denier David Irving, as well as the virulent anti-semitic and White separatist Valdas Anelauskas. In December 2009, the Pacifica Forum invited neo-Nazi Jimmy Marr to give a presentation titled "National Socialist Movement: An Insider's View of America's Radical Right," during which Marr encouraged the audience to participate in a Sieg Heil salute.

Students were naturally outraged. The Pacifica Forum events galvanized the student body and led to protests, flyers, Facebook groups, and a huge turnout of protestors to the Pacifica Forum events. The UO Hillel and other student groups called on the university to put a stop to the Pacifica Forum talks. There was palpable tension between students and administration that reached a fever pitch in the winter of 2009–10 when Pacifica Forum speakers and student protestors engaged in some powerful confrontations. Students charged the speakers with hate speech, verbal intimidation, sexual harassment (one speaker threatened a female student with rape), and incitement to violence. Student groups were overwhelmingly in favor of banning the Pacifica Forum but the opinions of individual students were mixed. Some felt that the protests simply raised the Pacifica Forum's profile. The UO administration by and large upheld the group's free speech rights, despite internal conflict over the issue and some very difficult meetings. The university struggled with what to do about the Pacifica Forum, much like students did. One aspect that complicates the issue is that Oregon has the strongest free speech laws in the nation, laws that carve out protections for what other states regard as hate speech.³⁷¹

The Pacifica Forum is aware of this unique position Oregon has with regards to free speech, and uses it to its advantage.

Charles Martinez, the former vice president of equity and diversity at the university, attended every meeting and acted as a spokesperson for the administration's stance on the controversy. "Was there hate speech at the university? Yes, of course. Was there intimidation? Definitely. There was an environment in which students were threatened." But the issue, for Martinez and the UO administration as a whole, is a difficult one. "There is a need to balance the obvious presence of hate speech with what should be done about it. [The university] has an obligation to respond when students feel threatened, but not necessarily to censor." The university did respond: they moved the Pacifica Forum talks out of a UO classroom ("It looked like a professor giving a talk, and we cannot give groups the voice of the university"), to the ERB Memorial Union building, and finally to a location far from the center of campus.³⁷² But the talks have remained, the Pacifica Forum continues to be active on campus, and many students continue to feel threatened. If anything, the controversy has shown that a community response to hate is not straightforward, and inter-community dialog is necessary in order to mobilize a meaningful response.

As a professor on campus, Martinez often brings up the Jena 6 controversy in class, when six Black students at a high school in Louisiana were arrested for beating up a White student in response to racial intimidation. At the center of the controversy was a tree outside the high school, from which nooses were hung in order to intimidate black students. What is so important about the tree for Martinez is that the school later cut it down. "I show my students a before picture of the tree and an after picture of the stump," says Martinez, "because cutting down that tree is a metaphor for erasing a problem without dealing with it. The Pacifica Forum is like that tree—it's a venue for hate. We are confronted with hatred and we don't face it directly, we want to step around it and cover it up." For Martinez, the university as a public entity should not establish a "content test," since protections of the First Amendment simply don't allow it, but the community can. "This is a challenge to the community's identity, and the community needs to respond."³⁷³

For Martinez and many others involved, the Pacifica Forum controversy has been a mixed blessing. "Looking back, I feel indignant about it. I'm happy with the outcome, the struggles, the way anti-hate sentiment was galvanized on campus, the way students stood up and spoke for their community. But watch these hateful speakers and think, 'do I really want our students to sit through this? Is it worth the trauma?'" He is also deeply concerned for the future, stating, "These instances of hate are growing. I honestly feel that we are more vulnerable than before."³⁷⁴

Where does this increasing vulnerability come from? Greg Rikhoof has pointed out the complex nature of hate politics in Oregon, a view reiterated by author and scholar Mark Harris, an expert on hate politics in Oregon. It is a misnomer to call it simply Far-Right hate politics. Historical tendencies toward anti-government, anti-establishment sentiment complicate certain distinctions between the Far Left and Far Right, and active bigots in Oregon, moreover, are prominent

in urban areas, with a significant youth population. Unlike the rural right-wing militias of northern Idaho, for example, Oregon's community of extreme hate builds on disaffected urban youth and the prison population. The Volksfront is an active prison program that recruits inmates into the politics of neonazism.³⁷⁵ The manipulators are those who speak at Pacifica Forum events. These manipulators prey on the young and those living on the margins, hoping they buy into the myths of nazism or the KKK so they can be loyal foot soldiers. While students on campus battle one front of bigotry, others are challenged by religious groups, community activists, and non-profit watch groups, but the hate remains, and in some corners, it's growing.

The complete picture on how Oregon hates remains a mystery. Martinez attributes some of this to what he calls

insularity in Oregon's political groups. There is a distinct lack of awareness of Oregon's political makeup. Far-Right ballot measures can become very tight electoral decisions, despite the perspective of the average liberal voter in Portland or Eugene, who may think such measures will be easily defeated in a landslide. Nationally and locally, many underestimate the strength of the Far Right in Oregon. One solution to combating hate is awareness and education. It is crucial for Oregonians and UO students to be aware of the depth and complexity of hate in their local communities and on campus. Shining a light on acts of hate may be difficult to endure, but the alternative is living with hate that lies below the surface, at once quiet and threatening.

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

AT A GLANCE

Name Wayne State University
Location Detroit, Michigan
Student body 19, 448
Gender 42% male, 58% female
Self-identification
as students of color 41%
International 70 foreign countries represented

SAEED A. KHAN

Does a large university located in a major American city with a large Arab/Muslim population have a climate of intolerance within its student body? Do events happening half a world away affect the relationships between students of different ethnic, religious, and cultural persuasions? Do such events then manifest themselves on campus by making Islamophobia and antisemitism part of the ideological and rhetorical culture of student life?

Wayne State University is an institution with a large Arab and Muslim population as well as an identifiably visible Jewish student body in Detroit, Michigan. Founded in 1868, Wayne State University has almost 30,000 students, making it the third largest university in Michigan after Michigan State University in East Lansing and the University of Michigan (main campus) in Ann Arbor. 90 percent of Wayne State students are from Michigan, with most of the remaining students from neighboring Ohio and Indiana. International students enroll primarily from Canada, just across the Detroit River, with a small but visible contingent from overseas, mostly from India and China.

Among the undergraduate students almost two-thirds are full-time attendees, while just under 50 percent of the graduate students are full time. Until recently, Wayne State was primarily a commuter campus, but ambitious projects over the past decade have gradually moved the university toward a residential college environment. The university, located in the heart of Detroit's cultural district with its science and art museums and the Charles H. Wright Museum of African-American History, has created an oasis of urban renewal in the middle of one of America's most challenged major cities. Wayne State fields a first-tier law school and the nation's largest single-campus medical school, enrolling over 1,000 students.

The Muslim community in the Metro Detroit area is not synonymous with the Arab community, nor does the converse readily apply. Detroit, more specifically Dearborn, is known as the epicenter of Arab-American life, a population that has a five-generations-old presence in the region. Although it is the largest Arab community outside the

Middle East, it is also a very diverse one. For example, most Arabs in the Metro Detroit area are Christian, not Muslim. Many of them hail from Lebanon (Maronites) and Iraq (Chaldeans). Among the Muslim Arab population, every part of the Middle East is well represented: Lebanese Muslims, both Sunni and Shi'i, share the region with Muslims from Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Yemen and Egypt. There are also Palestinian Muslims along with some from the Gulf States.

The majority of Detroit-area Muslims do not trace their heritage to the Arab world. There is a large representation from the Indian subcontinent: Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, as well as from Turkey and Iran and, in smaller numbers, from Southeast Asia, North and West Africa, and Somalia. In addition, the Detroit-area Muslim population includes a considerable community of Muslims from the Balkans: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, and Kosovo. Finally, an often overlooked segment of the Muslim population constitutes one of its largest and most sustained groups: African-American Muslims.

The Jewish population in the Metro Detroit area numbers approximately 100,000. Dispersed throughout the region, most community members reside in Detroit's many suburbs, especially Southfield, Oak Park, and the affluent northern suburbs of West Bloomfield and Bloomfield Hills. By contrast, the Muslim population is estimated to be between 300,000 and 400,000. It is a far more diverse and diffuse population with immigrant and indigenous Muslim populations, the former spread out across Detroit's suburbs as well as located in Dearborn and the Detroit enclave of Hamtramck, and the latter largely located within city limits.

FACTORS INHIBITING HIGHER ENROLLMENT OF JEWISH AND ARAB STUDENTS

Wayne State's challenge regarding the cultivation of an amicable atmosphere for Jewish and Arab students has less to do with ideological passions on campus than it does with competition from other institutions. Were costs and credentials not issues, most parents would rather their children attend the University of Michigan (UM). Ann Arbor is the site of a world-class institution, and its Dearborn campus has considerable appeal, especially for prospective Arab and Muslim students from Dearborn itself.

Wayne State has its special benefits. At the undergraduate level, National Merit Scholars have their full tuition expenses, room and board, a laptop computer, fees, and study abroad programs covered. Students from both ethno-religious communities matriculate into Wayne's graduate and professional schools, especially its medicine, engineering, law, and allied health programs.

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES AT WAYNE STATE: RECEPTIVITY TO THE CURRICULUM

The reception to Wayne State's undergraduate courses in Middle East, Islamic, and Jewish studies provides helpful insights to student attitudes toward these topics—and to the university's perception of their importance. Given the interdisciplinary nature of these subjects, course offerings

are invariably dispersed throughout several departments on campus, but are cross-listed. Prior to 2008, Wayne State had a Department of Near Eastern and Asian Studies. Though initially focused on Arabic language, the department added courses on Arab cultural studies in response to student demand, and over time these courses were cross-listed with the History Department. In time, and to accommodate student interests, the department began to offer courses in Hebrew language and Israeli film and culture. Responding to budget constraints, these offerings were eventually merged with the Department of Classical and Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures. The History Department has courses which focus on Jewish life in Europe, such as the Holocaust and Modern Europe, while Political Science has a course on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Since September 11, 2001, interest in the Middle East and Islamic studies has risen dramatically. Driven by a sense of curiosity and students' motivation to understand the region better, as well as the prospect of leveraging such knowledge into newly developing job opportunities, especially in the public sector, Arabic has seen exponential growth and is the most popular language course at Wayne State. Over the past seven years, for example, enrollment in Arabic classes has tripled, causing the department to expand beyond core courses to such electives as Media Arabic and Business Arabic. Similarly, courses on Islamic and Middle East History, Islamic Law, Islam & Modernity as well as Political Islamic Thought reach capacity very early in the course registration period. At the same time, however—perhaps due to the lack of occupational and/or popular cultural interest for them—enrollment in courses on Hebrew and Israeli cultural studies has remained static or decreased. While first semester Arabic may have to offer up to four sections a term with 40 students each to meet demand, the corresponding class in Hebrew is typically a single section with fewer than a dozen students. Arabic is taught by three professors, four lecturers, and a few teaching assistants but there is only one instructor responsible for teaching Hebrew and that person also covers Israeli film and cultural studies courses.

The overwhelming interest in Arabic and Middle East/Islamic studies and the lack of attraction to Hebrew studies seems to be a function of market forces rather than any ideological biases and prejudices toward a particular group. In the current social and political climate, being able to understand and read Arabic is a much desired skill, especially in certain government occupations. Similarly, cultural, political, and historical literacy about the region and Islam in general allow students to promote themselves effectively in relevant job sectors. As a result, Wayne State's Arabic program has made the university a destination for high school graduates and prospective graduate students interested in pursuing it as a field of study. While the university administration has certainly welcomed the enrollment numbers, the increased tuition revenue, and the visibility the curriculum brings to Wayne State, there have been administrative efforts to bolster a similar response to Hebrew and Israeli studies. Some in the administration worry that the Jewish community, long-time and generous patrons and benefactors of the university, have become wary of funding the campus while perceiving a less than comfortable environment for their own

children or other members of their community. With public funding being a tenuous source in light of recent economic challenges, it is understandable that university officials would be concerned that existing private sources of support might be jeopardized. Recommendations have included funding more professorships and increasing course offerings to attract both current and prospective students.

However, such an approach is perceived to be a gamble and has been met with skepticism and resistance. The strategy assumes that increasing supply would increase demand for Hebrew and Israel studies courses. This assessment, however, does not recognize that student demand for Arabic and Middle East/Islamic studies, driven by national and international events, was behind Wayne State's expansion in this area. Such a disparity of interest does not infer a privileging or marginalization of one ethno-religious community over another.

CAMPUS RELATIONS BETWEEN ARAB/MUSLIM AND JEWISH STUDENTS

Jewish and Arab/Muslim students do not engage on the organizational level very often. Political issues that may be occurring thousands of miles away prevent cooperation and collaboration between these groups, though this is not accompanied by any visible acrimony.

Controversial speakers on campus have offended both Arab and Jewish students in turn. Wayne State has played host to Harvard Law professor Alan Dershowitz as well as the noted critic of Islam, Daniel Pipes. Both have made public statements that have been deemed offensive to Arab and Muslim sensitivities. Similarly, a lecture delivered by political scientist and critic of Israeli policy Norman Finkelstein was seen by many Jewish and pro-Israel members of the university community as an affront. [See profiles associated with this report.] Whether these talks were officially hosted by student organizations of one persuasion or the other often mattered less than each group's perception of complicity or commendation for the speaker's views. Such incidents, though few in number, have done little to foster a sense of common purpose and potential for cooperation between student groups.

One notable exception to this chasm occurred in 2008 when noted Muslim American comedian Azhar Usman and his Jewish counterpart, stand-up comic Rabbi Bob Alper, shared the stage on campus as part of their "Laugh in Peace" national tour. The Muslim Students Association and the campus Hillel worked together to sponsor and promote the well-received event. At the same time, while engagement between student groups may not occur often, there is no paucity of interaction at the individual level between Jewish and Arab/Muslim students. This is particularly evident among pre-medical students, who serve as mentors to younger peers. Beyond the sharing of valuable information about courses, instructors, and study habits, these relationships furnish vital emotional support while students deal with the pressure of their coursework.

One would assume that any tension and antipathy between groups would reach its highest level in the context of

a course on modern Middle East history. These courses focus on the development of the region since World War I and chart the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the region as a whole, including the development of the circumstances leading to the creation of the State of Israel from the Balfour Declaration to the present day.

I have taught this course in several semesters over the past six years. Selecting academically sound textbooks, adhering to a non-polemical discursive style, and teaching with strict adherence to the historical record and facts has served to reduce students' anxiety and suspicions that one side of the narrative is being privileged over the other. It has been essential to separate and distinguish between the invariably politicized public debate and the academic, scholarly approach. This method is oftentimes quite a departure from what many students are used to hearing, whether they are Arab, Jewish, or from some other background.

An instructor setting the climate within the classroom goes a long way to ensuring civility by students discussing this difficult subject. In six years, I have never experienced any incident where students have become rude, acerbic, or insulting toward me or toward one another. Even after the 2006 Lebanon War and the 2008–2009 Gaza invasion, students maintained their decorum despite the fact that some were personally affected by the conflicts, either with family and/or friends in the region.

Of course, history doesn't suspend itself during the course of the semester, and given the fluid nature of the Middle East, it is quite common for a new episode of controversy to emerge as the course progresses. These matters must be addressed, as they are on the minds of the students who feel a great urgency to comprehend the causes and consequences of an event as it unfolds.

ADMINISTRATION RESPONSES TO ARAB/MUSLIM AND JEWISH ISSUES

Some members of the Metro Detroit community believe that Wayne State is not a welcoming destination for Jewish students. The Dean and Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, hoping to dispel this sentiment, launched a new initiative in 2008 for a Middle East Discovery program designed to cultivate a greater awareness and understanding of the Middle East. The hope was that students who enrolled in this program would then communicate with their classmates and rectify the purportedly toxic environment on campus. The structure of the program was ambitious, especially considering the speed at which it was initially implemented (the program was proposed during September 2008 and was in place by May 2009). It involved a three-credit course for the Spring/Summer term, whereby a dozen students would receive two weeks of coursework on campus before embarking on a three-week trip to Israel and the Palestinian territories. The students would stay at Ben Gurion University and Al Quds University, respectively, where they would receive classroom education supplemented by several field trips, including visits to a kibbutz and a Bedouin Arab village in addition to more conventional sightseeing locations. Upon their return to campus, the students would be responsible

for writing a paper and making a presentation to their Wayne State instructors, who had lectured them on the history, politics, and culture of the region as preparation for their travels.

The Middle East Study Abroad program has been in place for several years. Approximately twenty students have participated thus far. Although Arab and Jewish students have been part of the program, most students have in fact belonged to neither of these communities. By and large participants have been either open-minded to the "opposing" side's narrative, as has been the case for the Arab and Jewish students, or curious and ambivalent. With few exceptions, the returning students' accounts bear considerable similarity. Many students who had prior knowledge of or experience in the region returned with a rather jaundiced view of Palestinian treatment by Israeli authorities. Those without any predilections beforehand almost invariably harbored negative perceptions of Israeli conduct in the region. In neither case, however, was a sense of antisemitism or Islamophobia expressed. The program yielded a better understanding of the complexities of the issues regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict—the most dominant issues regarding these communities—and this appreciation of complexity minimized any tendency to reduce the conflict to mere stereotyping or ethnic aspersions.

CURRENT EVENTS AFFECTING STUDENT ATTITUDES

Occurring in the heart of the summer, the 2006 Lebanon War was a difficult and deeply personal episode for many in the Metro Detroit area. Lebanon is a popular destination for many Lebanese-American students at Wayne State who either journey to the country while on extended break from campus, or have family members who make the trip. When the war began, some Wayne State students were stranded in Lebanon or had parents or siblings caught in the conflict. At the very least, anxiety loomed about extended family who lived there year-round. Tensions and emotional pressure manifested themselves with almost daily demonstrations in front of Dearborn City Hall, where several members of the Arab American community, joined by other Muslims, protested the Israeli air strikes and perceived American support for Israel. At the same time, there were Jewish families in the Detroit area for whom the war was felt on a personal level too, with concern for children or other relatives visiting Israel over the summer, family and friends residing there, or because of strong emotional ties to the country and its history.

Relations between the Arab and Jewish community, tepid under ordinary circumstances, suffered greatly during the campaign. Even those at the forefront of interfaith and trans-communal outreach efforts in each respective community assumed a cautious, reticent posture. The status quo ante was only restored after the passage of many months.

Cessation of hostilities in Lebanon coincided with the start of the fall 2006 semester on campus. Some students, particularly among the Arab-American student body, continued to feel resentful and emotionally taxed by what had transpired over the summer. Yet there was no discernible

expression towards other students, faculty, or Jews in general that could be described as antisemitism. Some graffiti appeared in front of the Undergraduate Library on the center of campus but all of it was directed at Israel and Israeli policy without stressing the country's Jewish identity. No threats or even slurs were reported against Jewish students.

The 2008–2009 Gaza incursion, known as Operation Cast Lead, and the May 2010 raid on the Gaza flotilla also affected student attitudes on campus. The former began prior to the start of the Winter 2009 term, but was still underway when students returned for classes. Once again, emotions ran quite high, with pro-Palestinian groups, Arab and non-Arab, Muslim and non-Muslim, demonstrating against Israeli policy. Jewish students similarly rallied to show their support for Israel as well as asserting their defense of Israel's actions in light of missile attacks from Gaza. While the passion and fervor displayed during these episodes was quite strong

there was no behavior which could reasonably be construed as antisemitic, anti-Arab or Islamophobic. Campus graffiti written in pastel chalk in the main quad included slogans such as "Free Palestine," "Stop Israeli Aggression," or "Israel = Terrorist State." While some argue that such messages, especially the latter two, are indicative of an anti-Jewish fervor, this assertion is made only by equating criticism of Israel and Israeli policy per se with anti-Zionism and antisemitism. By and large, the campus community has not inferred any ethnically-based hostility or danger to Jewish students from these signs, nor have any charges of ethnic intimidation been invoked, either by student groups, community members, or by the university or law enforcement authorities. The Jewish student population seems no less vocal, active, and passionate about asserting its identity, heritage, and political opinions.

PROFILES OF KEY ORGANIZATIONS

ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE

MARIA PLANANSKY

The Anti-Defamation League is the self-described “premier civil rights/human relations agency” in the United States. Founded in 1913, its mission is to “fight anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry, defend democratic ideals and protect civil rights for all” through education, legislation, and advocacy. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has 29 offices in the United States and three offices in other countries, with headquarters located in New York City. Its activities range from helping Latinos counteract bigotry to addressing instances of Holocaust denial. It is a strong supporter of the State of Israel.

The ADL positions itself as an ally to Arab and Muslim organizations as well as to interfaith and human rights organizations. Its record on relations with the American Muslim community is mixed. Mainstream U.S. Islamic organizations have appreciated the ADL’s leadership in initiating an Interfaith Coalition on Mosques; the initiative defends Muslim communities whose places of worship are threatened, and asserts that freedom of assembly and religion apply equally to American Muslims. At the same time, the ADL has taken positions that trouble many in the Muslim and liberal community.

The most visible recent case of conflict was the ADL’s 2010 objection to the construction of Cordoba House (or Park51, the so-called “Ground Zero” mosque), an Islamic community center in lower Manhattan a few blocks from the World Trade Center site. It was not lost on Muslim observers that this seemed to be a repudiation of the ADL’s earlier commitment to fight “a disturbing rise in discrimination against Muslims trying to legally build or expand their houses of worship, or mosques, across the United States.”³⁷⁶

In October 2010, the ADL published a controversial list of the Top Ten Anti-Israel Groups in America. The list singled out campus organizations, such as the Muslim Students Association and Students for Justice in Palestine. It equated human rights organizations, such as the Council on American Islamic Relations and Jewish Voice for Peace, with groups such as Act Now to Stop War and End Racism, which has arguably compared Zionism to nazism, and Alison Weir’s organization If Americans Knew. [See related profile of Weir.]

The list garnered well-deserved criticism. Journalist Michelle Goldberg wrote, “ADL has ... shown itself willing to smear human-rights activists when it thinks Israel’s interests demand it.” Goldberg continues:

The Council on American Islamic Relations made the list even though, according to spokesperson Ibrahim Hooper, it has no official position on the Middle East conflict “other than to say there should be a just and comprehensive resolution based on the interests of all parties.” Though the ADL says that CAIR has “a long record of anti-Israel rhetoric, which has, at times, crossed the line into anti-Semitism,” some of the examples it gives are laughable. For instance, the ADL informs us, “In response to the Israeli Navy’s raid of a flotilla of ships heading to Gaza in May 2010, the executive director of CAIR-Chicago accused Israel of a ‘failure to apply Jewish values.’” If this is one of the worst quotes the ADL can rustle up, it gives one faith in the strength of American interfaith relations.³⁷⁷

The ADL is unapologetic about its unwavering support for the Jewish state and advocates for Israel by, among other things, explaining political and security issues and the complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian/Israel-Arab conflict to U.S. policymakers and the general public. Campus life is a special focus. The ADL actively monitors and publicizes what it believes to be “anti-Israel activity on American college campuses.” Oren Segal, the director of the organization’s Center on Extremism notes that many Jewish leaders, including those at the ADL, worry that Jewish youth are losing their connection to the Jewish state and the pro-Israel establishment. To that end, the ADL provides a range of resources for students and campus groups, such as “Fighting Back: A Handbook for Responding to Anti-Israel Campaigns on College and University Campuses” and the “Immediate Response” program, which “employs unique and substantial methods to protect, investigate, and educate by delivering proactive and reactive programs in response to immediate needs of the campus.” When anti-Israel incidents take place, says the ADL, students typically want to react with counter-rallies and protests. Instead, the ADL advocates a thoughtful and rational approach. Not all instances, it advises, call for demonstrations; there are times when other means of communication, such as publishing articles in the student newspaper, are more effective. ADL resources explain the laws regarding student speech on campus and in class, how institutional codes of conduct come into play, and the role of outside speakers on college campuses—all of which have been hot button issues.

The ADL also runs workshops on campuses “to [equip] university administrators, students, faculty, and community members with the tools they need to fight bigotry on campus.” Its initiatives include the Campus of Difference program, in which administrators, faculty members, and students learn to examine stereotypes, expand cultural awareness, explore the value of diversity, and combat bigotry. Such a program is as valuable to supporting Muslim students as it is to Jewish students who may be experiencing campus bias or intolerance. The ADL also sponsors Campus Leadership Missions to Israel, allowing politically active undergraduates and aspiring journalists to travel to Israel to learn about Israeli-Palestinian relations and other regional issues from politicians, decision makers, journalists, students, and ordinary citizens.

The ADL website tracks instances of what it considers anti-Israel activity, including instances in which Jewish students were verbally harassed or threatened and Jewish property (such as Hillel buildings) vandalized or tagged with graffiti.³⁷⁸ The ADL's dealings with local Muslim Student Associations (MSA) (as distinct from the national umbrella organization) have been fraught. Some campus MSAs, the ADL warns, have linked the Palestinian cause to the war in Iraq, muddying debates about the war.

The ADL has also found problematic activity within university programming. In March 2011, the ADL weighed in with a letter condemning "Litigating Palestine," a conference at the Hastings College of the Law at the University of California addressing issues in international law related to Palestinians asserting human rights violations. Originally publicized as including welcoming remarks by Dean Frank Wu, participants on the program included faculty from the University of Pittsburgh, Georgetown University, and Willamette University, plus lawyers from the ACLU and National Lawyers Guild and others. The ADL would later describe this list "a veritable who's who of the anti-Israel movement," and said that the conference was "designed to delegitimize and unjustly cast Israel as a pariah state under the guise of academic freedom."

The ADL's condemnation, combined with an outcry from a group of Hastings alumni, led the Hastings Board to call an emergency meeting. Following the meeting, the board announced it would withdraw its "name and brand" from the conference materials, and continued its involvement to a much lesser degree providing online streaming of the conference. Describing the ADL's objections, ADL San Francisco Director Dan Sandman wrote, "This conference is especially troubling coming at a time when there is a coordinated global campaign to isolate Israel politically, economically and culturally through boycotts and the perversion of international legal principles."

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

JON SUSSMAN

American Jewish Committee is one of the oldest and most venerable American Jewish communal organizations. Established in 1906 in the wake of Russian pogroms, the American Jewish Committee (AJC) describes its mission "to enhance the well being of Israel and the Jewish people worldwide, and to advance human rights and democratic values in the United States and around the world."³⁷⁹ Although it does some cultural and interfaith work, AJC mostly operates as a pro-Israel and center-left social advocacy organization. AJC does less Congressional lobbying than its more well-known counterpart, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. Instead, AJC cultivates relationships with leaders ranging from the local to the international levels, releases information and editorials in support of its policy goals, and advocates on behalf of Jewish communities worldwide.

An interesting snapshot of AJC's role within the Ameri-

can and Jewish communities is its relationship with *Commentary* magazine. Founded by the AJC in 1945, *Commentary* was designed to appeal to a broad, liberal-leaning American Jewish audience that was rapidly assimilating into mainstream society. The AJC used *Commentary* as a vehicle to hold together a community at risk of losing itself within the larger society. At the same time, *Commentary* would be an explicitly anti-Communist publication that bolstered the aims of American foreign policy, earning mainstream legitimacy by disassociating itself from the radical political legacy with which many American Jews were identified. (This trend within the Jewish community was only accelerated by the espionage case of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg in the 1950s.) However, in the 1960s and '70s, *Commentary* became a major incubator of the neoconservative movement under then-editor Norman Podhoretz. The relationship between the organization and the magazine continued despite their different orientations: according to historian Edward Luttwak, the right-leaning magazine sought to influence public opinion, whereas AJC wanted to reflect an American Jewish community that was overwhelmingly liberal. The two entities officially split in 2007.³⁸⁰

AJC has been involved in some of the debates concerning Israel on college campuses. AJC generally reflects the opinion of other mainstream Jewish organizations: antisemitism on campus is a growing concern and that anti-Israel activity requires a response. At the same time, AJC does not intervene nearly as often as other groups and tends to take a middle-ground approach to dealing with these issues. For instance, AJC has long accused the Muslim Student Union at University of California, Irvine for putting on programs critical of Israel that AJC claims shade into antisemitism. In 2006, they were among a coalition of groups opposed to a week of Muslim Student Union (MSU) events titled "Holocaust in the Holy Land" that lambasted Israeli policies towards Palestinians. AJC Executive Director of Orange County Rabbi Marc Dworin described political scientist and pro-Palestinian activist Norman Finkelstein, a featured speaker, as "way extreme" and "a constant Israel basher." [see profile] In 2010, a University of California, Berkeley student union initiative calling for the university to divest from Israeli businesses linked to the occupation was condemned by many Jewish organizations. AJC officials wrote a letter to University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley) Chancellor George Breslauer urging him to condemn the resolution which it claimed "unfairly targets the State of Israel while also marginalizing Jewish students on campus who support Israel." The letter was signed by other pro-Israel groups representing a range of political orientations including Hillel, J Street, the Anti-Defamation League, the Israel Campus Coalition, and the New Israel Fund. The resolution was vetoed by the student body president and failed to secure the votes to override the veto.

At the same time, AJC has sought dialogue with campus leaders in an effort to reduce antisemitism. University of California, Irvine (UC Irvine) Chancellor Michael Drake has long been criticized by Jewish groups for refusing to condemn MSU events that target Israel, preferring to express a general revulsion for hate speech directed against minorities. AJC's invitation for Drake to speak at an awards dinner was condemned by other Jewish and pro-Israel organizations,

in particular the Zionist Organization of America. In 2008, Mark Yudof, the new chancellor for the UC system, embarked on a tour of Israel to meet university presidents abroad. The tour was sponsored by AJC's Project Interchange.

In 2006, AJC published an essay by Alvin Rosenfeld entitled "'Progressive' Jewish Thought and the New Anti-Semitism." The essay charged, first, that movements and opinions critical of Israel, including those on the Left, were guilty of promoting a new wave of antisemitism by questioning whether Israel should even exist.³⁸¹ Second, Rosenfeld charged that liberal and left-leaning Jews were complicit in this wave of anti-Zionist sentiment by refusing to challenge its legitimacy. AJC Executive Director David Harris argued in his preface to the essay that his organization's work is grounded in "assuring the right of Jews to a national collective self-expression through the existence of the State of Israel," work that must be defended from those who would give "a Jewish imprimatur... to the questioning of Israel's legitimacy."

The essay sparked great debate in the Jewish community and in the broader U.S. society, especially from the intellectuals Rosenfeld personally criticized, such as historian Tony Judt, poet Adrienne Rich, and columnist Richard Cohen. Some praised Rosenfeld's handling of a sensitive but urgent subject; others argued that the essay was divisive of the Jewish community, unfairly lumped together a range of individuals and views, and conflated necessary criticism with hateful delegitimization.

COUNCIL ON AMERICAN-ISLAMIC RELATIONS (CAIR)

JON SUSSMAN AND DAN DEFRAIA

Founded in 1994, the Council on American-Islamic Relations is the largest nonprofit Muslim civil liberties advocacy group in America. Its mission is to "enhance understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding."³⁸² A national grassroots organization, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) promotes a positive image of Islam that is in line with American ideas and values. Since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, CAIR has more than doubled in size and has marshaled impressive resources in its ongoing struggle against Islamophobia and discrimination.

CAIR operates as a traditional civil liberties advocacy group, creating, promoting, and distributing educational information. CAIR provides legal services to victims of discrimination and immigration services, raising awareness about bias incidents. As part of its mission to mainstream Muslims within U.S. culture, CAIR educates local communities about the history and practice of Islam, as well as contemporary issues (such as the Muhammad cartoons controversy). The organization's officials appear often on Fox, CNN, MSNBC, and other news outlets, spreading their message through the

mass media.

Antidiscrimination and civil rights advocacy are at the top of CAIR's agenda, particularly issues of profiling, religious discrimination, and bias crimes. One of the most high-profile cases they have worked on is the "flying imams" incident of 2006, when six Muslim religious leaders were removed from their plane and interrogated for several hours after being observed praying. An FBI investigation conclusively stated the imams had done nothing wrong. After pursuing the matter in the courts, CAIR has made progress in forcing the companies involved to institute sensitivity training and to ensure the civil rights of Muslims while flying.³⁸³ The situation at airports has improved, but still continues,³⁸⁴ although ironically enough, a recent May 2011 incident occurred the same day a different airline removed three Jewish passengers from a flight because their prayers before take-off alarmed crew members. CAIR was a vocal opponent of a 2010 Oklahoma ballot initiative which sought to preclude courts from applying Sharia law and is opposed to pending legislation around the country that seeks the same. CAIR has also supported the construction of the Park51 Islamic cultural center near the site of the World Trade Center, arguing that opposition to it is based on fear and misunderstanding of Muslims.³⁸⁵

CAIR has found itself at the center of many controversies, the vast majority of which have little merit. Critics allege that CAIR's founders were members of the Islamic Association of Palestine, an Islamist organization in support of the Palestinian cause. Many of CAIR's critics also point to the prosecution of the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, a Texas-based Islamic charity that was indicted for providing funds to Hamas. In the government's indictment, CAIR and 300 other Muslim and Arab-American organizations were listed as unindicted co-conspirators, meaning that CAIR had not been charged with any crimes. The label is applied to enable prosecutorial strategy so that, for example, the prosecution can submit statements from an unindicted co-conspirator as evidence in a case without that information being dismissed as hearsay.³⁸⁶

In October 2009, four Republican representatives sent a letter to the Sergeant at Arms to investigate CAIR placing interns into the offices of Congress members who sat on the judiciary, homeland security, and intelligence committees. A letter was also sent to Attorney General Eric Holder asking the Justice Department to brief every member of Congress, telling them why CAIR was listed as an unindicted co-conspirator in the Holy Land Foundation case. In regards to the latter charge, Holder argued that the decision not to prosecute was made by the Bush administration, and subsequently confirmed by the Obama Department of Justice.³⁸⁷

Despite the negative results of federal investigations, critics still attack CAIR as a terrorist front group, aided in no small part by the ambiguity of the label of unindicted co-conspirator. Noted bigot Daniel Pipes [see profile] refers to CAIR as "moderate friends of terror," accusing them of intimidating moderate Muslims, embracing murderers, and promoting antisemitism and anti-Zionism.³⁸⁸ Anti-Muslim bloggers Robert Spencer (Jihad Watch) and Pamela Geller (Atlas Shrugs 2000) frequently refer to CAIR as linked to Hamas and Hezbollah, despite limited evidence. In 2009, conserva-

tive activists Paul Gaubatz and Paul Sperry published *Muslim Mafia: Inside the Secret Underworld That's Conspiring to Islamize America*, a book which alleged CAIR was a "criminal conspiracy" dedicated to "violent jihad," with the goal of destroying Western civilization.³⁸⁹ Material for the book was compiled by Gaubatz's son, who posed as a Muslim college student, interned at CAIR, and obtained access to its archives; CAIR has since sued the authors for theft of proprietary information.³⁹⁰

CAIR has clashed with many pro-Israel groups over Middle East issues, particularly the Anti-Defamation League. This is somewhat ironic, since CAIR is clearly cut from the same mold as the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) as a civil rights, education, and advocacy organization. The ADL has put CAIR on their list of the top anti-Israel groups in the nation, accusing it of past affiliation with terrorist organizations and of providing a "platform to conspiratorial Israel-bashers and outright anti-Semites."³⁹¹ CAIR as an organization is not focused on the Israel/Palestine conflict, but it advocates the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, condemns Israeli settlements and military action, and demands that the United States act as a "fair broker" in establishing a peace deal. A blog post by Jewish Voice for Peace vociferously denounces the ADL's accusations, arguing that its background article on CAIR does not "offer a shred of evidence to support the accusation that CAIR is anti-Semitic, that CAIR supports terrorism, or even that CAIR questions Israel's right to exist."³⁹²

On campus, CAIR has largely worked on antidiscrimination cases, but increasingly has been drawn into the campus debate over Israel/Palestine. The case of the "Irvine 11" is a case in point. In February 2010, students at University of California, Irvine disrupted a speech given by Israeli Ambassador Michael Oren, charging him with defending war crimes; the students were arrested after the speech, and a year later were charged with "conspiracy to disrupt a meeting." [See related story for further details.] CAIR has vocally defended the students' right to free speech and has condemned University of California, Irvine's (UC Irvine) decision to shutter the campus Muslim Student Union, which allegedly coordinated the protest. A CAIR-Los Angeles official decried the prosecution of the students, stating, "Such excessive and unprecedented steps by the Orange County District Attorney's office against the 'Irvine 11' not only chill free speech on college campuses but also send a public message that any legitimate criticism of Israel will be dealt in a heavy-handed manner."³⁹³

The extent of CAIR's presence on college campuses is usually less dramatic, limited to guest lectures on discrimination and civil rights. Ahmed Rehab, CAIR's Chicago executive director and national strategic communications director, speaks at colleges around the nation. In 2005, Amir Normandi's art exhibit at Harper College, titled "No Veil is Required," showed nude photographs of women wearing hijabs. The photos offended Muslim students, who then contacted CAIR-Chicago to support the college's Muslim Student Association. Ahmed Rehab visited the school to facilitate a discussion with students, teachers, and administrators.³⁹⁴ In 2010 at University of California, San Diego and in 2011 at University of California, Berkeley, CAIR was invited to discuss issues pertaining to contemporary Islamophobia.

COLLEGE REPUBLICANS

JON SUSSMAN

College Republicans is a federation of student Republican organizations that has dozens of chapters on college and university campuses across the nation. The College Republican National Committee is the youth arm of the Republican Party and assists the party in its initiatives at the local, state, and federal level;³⁹⁵ it is distinct from the larger Young Republican National Federation, which also includes young professionals.

Formed in the early twentieth century, the popularity and number of College Republicans chapters exploded in the 1980s after the election of Ronald Reagan. A remarkable number of operatives in the Republican Party and the conservative movement have passed through the College Republicans, including Karl Rove, Lee Atwater, Grover Norquist, Rick Santorum, and Jack Abramoff. In recent years the College Republicans have also vastly expanded their fundraising efforts, raising more than \$17 million in 2004.³⁹⁶

One of the more controversial initiatives that the College Republicans have undertaken in recent years is "Islamofascism Awareness Week." The Islamofascism Awareness Week (IFAW), organized by the Terrorism Awareness Project of the David Horowitz Freedom Center [see related profile], was intended to be an annual event, although it seems to have largely fizzled out since its peak in 2007 and 2008 when it was observed on over a hundred U.S. campuses. According to the Terrorism Awareness Project (TAP), the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 were performed by "a vast global network of religious fanatics who have declared Holy War on the United States and the West and, as part of their Jihad, pronounced a death sentence on every man, woman and child living in our borders."³⁹⁷ TAP suggests that this global fundamentalist Muslim group is encouraged by American "passivity," defined as anything less than total military and civilian engagement with the threat of "Islamic terror attacks." IFAW is meant to prove that this anti-Western movement exists in a stable and recognizable form as "Islamofascism" and that disparate Muslim groups, including Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Iranian government, are committed to a genocidal agenda.

College Republicans groups have been involved in sponsoring the event and hosting several high-profile speakers. Many conservative figures have headlined at these events, including Horowitz, Ann Coulter, and Rick Santorum. They have also hosted film screenings such as *Obsession: Radical Islam's War Against the West*. Not unexpectedly, events held for the IFAW have inspired voluminous counterprotest and indignation on campuses nationwide. This appears to have been partly by design: organizer Horowitz argues that he wants to challenge political correctness, and to challenge university environments that are awash in leftist opinion to the point of conspiracy against conservatives: "The left has all these political activists pretending to be professors at the universities, who help them...A large section of the liberal-arts community are really just political operatives."³⁹⁸

Muslim, antiracist, and antiwar student groups have held competing events such as Islam Awareness Week and Week of Tolerance and Respect.

IFAW relies on a number of recognizable themes. It portrays the West and Islam as unitary, distinct civilizations in an epic battle for survival. As much as the Week's spokespeople are careful to make a distinction between "radical Islam" and "moderate Islam," the title of the event and its national rhetoric imply that Muslims as a group are responsible for terrorism. This perception is bolstered by the assertion that the Muslim Students Association, a national federation of Muslim student groups, operates a "stealth jihad" on campuses in conjunction with the Muslim Brotherhood.³⁹⁹ These presumably destructive groups are joined by "the academic left," a fifth column goaded by political correctness to "create sympathy for the enemy and to fight anyone who rallies Americans to defend themselves."⁴⁰⁰ This is an example of "countersubversion," the idea that some radical groups are attempting to subvert a community (college students) from the inside, and only a concerted effort by patriots can turn the tide.

At the same time that the organizers of IFAW decry political correctness they also argue that they are motivated by the human rights violations of women and sexual minorities in Muslim countries. Not only does this erase the agency of Muslim women and queer persons, it is also an example of "pinkwashing," the use of women and gay concerns to shield the real intentions of a political campaign—in this instance, encouraging hatred against Muslims.

HILLEL FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CAMPUS LIFE

RUTH ABRAMS

Hillel has been in existence since 1923 and provides Jewish programming at 550 universities in North America. The international Hillel office in Washington, D. C. serves campuses in the U. S. and Canada, and has offices in Israel, mainly to serve North American students. On many campuses a local Hillel House or Jewish center is a space for Jewish religious services, holiday celebrations, and Jewish cultural life. The mission of the organization is to promote Jewish students' engagement in Jewish life, with a broad definition of what that means, including participation in religious and cultural activities. Individual Hillel Houses have their own mission statements, all of which reflect the organization's commitment to fostering Jewish identity and engagement.

On college campuses with relatively large Jewish populations where Hillel has a building or student center, Hillel provides many of the Jewish experiences available in a moderate-sized city. They may provide kosher dining options for all meals or for just Sabbath and/or Jewish holidays, depending on the population of observant Jews on the campus. If there are many Jews on campus, Hillel may house Orthodox, Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist denominational

prayer options. On campuses with smaller Jewish populations, Hillel may host a single Jewish prayer service that must meet the needs of students from a variety of backgrounds.

In addition to religious programming, Hillels also offer cultural experiences like Jewish choral singing, theater, or dance. They may co-sponsor speakers and host concerts or other cultural events. This is part of Hillel's internal goals, to be "a valuable addition to the campus community" by creating programming that's accessible to every student. [See Hillel's Standards of Excellence document, linked here.]

In the last decade Hillel has been emphasizing social justice and charitable programs, some student-founded, like Challah for Hunger, and some initiated by Hillel on the local or national level, such as the Alternative Spring Break. The Alternative Spring Break idea started at individual Hillel chapters in 2000 and was adopted by the international office in 2005 when the Hillel Foundation sent students to aid in the reconstruction of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Hillel makes most of its programs available to non-Jewish students who want to participate; each year there is a small population of non-Jewish students who choose to join Hillel's Alternative Spring Break.

Hillel may also house student branches of Jewish charitable or political organizations, such as the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, the Joint Distribution Committee, Rabbis for Human Rights, or the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. Hillel maintains a full alphabetical list of partner agencies that may have rooms in the Hillel building or work with Hillel on various campuses. This varies from campus to campus—a chaplain at Rutgers Hillel explained that her Hillel doesn't house partner agency groups.

On campuses with small Jewish populations, Hillel provides funding for Jewish life through the Soref Initiative. This initiative includes leadership development for students and faculty founding their own Jewish groups on campus and grants funding to support programs.

Hillel does not have a strong organizational focus on combating antisemitism. As Jeff Rubin, Hillel's associate vice president for communications explains, Hillels deal with antisemitism on campus from a pastoral perspective—Hillel professionals are trained in social work. To a limited degree Hillel also deals with antisemitism from a policy perspective. Hillel did co-sponsor a manual on "Fighting Holocaust Denial in Campus Newspaper Advertisements" but doesn't link to it on the Hillel website. When it does discuss antisemitism in public, Hillel uses the draft European/EUMC definition. This draft definition was adopted without public discussion or Congressional oversight by the U.S. State Department.⁴⁰¹

Though antisemitism is not an organizational focus per se, Hillel professionals and student leaders invariably are called on to respond to antisemitism on campuses. As Rabbi Esther Reed, Associate Director at Rutgers Hillel, put it, "Hillel sees itself as the Jewish address on campus. Our mission isn't fighting anti-Semitism on campus. We aren't a watchdog group, we are the home address for the Jewish community." As many campuses' most visible Jewish presence, Hillel and its staff on some campuses have been the first responders to antisemitic incidents and even targets of such incidents themselves.

For example, in December 2010, an employee of Indiana

University vandalized Hillel along with the Hasidic Jewish outreach organization Chabad and the Judaic Studies department. The Hillel director was quoted in local newspapers and by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency reassuring students and parents about the safety of the campus for Jewish students. In March 2010, Wisconsin University Hillel responded to the student newspaper's inclusion of a Holocaust denial advertisement with a demonstration and a panel on journalistic ethics.⁴⁰² In 2008, unidentified attackers threw two Molotov cocktails into the apartment of a Brown Hillel staffer, who was also a representative of the Jewish Agency for Israel. (The incendiary devices did not explode and the staff member was not harmed.)

Like many other mainstream Jewish organizations in North America, Hillel works on the implicit assumption that Jews are safer in an environment where there is general tolerance for religious and cultural difference. Though Rubin explains that Islamophobia isn't something Hillel deals with on a consistent basis, outreach to Muslim students is part of Hillel's overall efforts to connect with non-Jewish students through their programs. Some Hillels have regular joint programming with Muslim student organizations including joint Iftar dinners to break the fast during Ramadan. In recent years, there were many of these programs when Ramadan overlapped with the major Jewish holidays in the fall, so Jewish and Muslim students could exploit the similarities in the holidays and even share an evening meal to break the fast on Yom Kippur. On some campuses, Hillel's kosher dining halls are an option for Muslim students observing halal rules. At the University of Pennsylvania, University of Michigan, and other campuses, local Hillels have created Alternative Spring Break programming as a joint venture with Muslim student organizations and with other religious student organizations as well.

Rabbi Reed described how, when Westboro Baptist Church came to picket Rutgers Hillel, she and her student leaders were able to organize a large counterprotest that included the participation of many non-Jewish allies. Westboro Baptist Church (WBC) is a small independent church known for picketing funerals and gay and lesbian organizations; in recent years, they have begun traveling the country to picket synagogues and other Jewish institutions.⁴⁰³ Some estimated the number of students demonstrating against the six WBC members at a thousand.⁴⁰⁴ Forming alliances with non-Jewish groups resulted in a demonstration of solidarity. Though many Jewish institutions chose not to acknowledge the hateful messages of WBC, several Hillels have chosen the vehicle of counterprotest as a positive expression of inter-faith solidarity, celebration of diversity and LGBT students, and Jewish pride.

North American Hillel has a new program called Facing Change to support Jewish undergraduates who want to coordinate student-led programs with those of non-Jewish student groups. One of the goals of the program is to promote civil discourse. The program piloted in academic year 2010–2011, kicking off with a Washington conference that included speeches by many well-known leaders including Eboo Patel. [See related article.]⁴⁰⁵

Hillel's emphasis on civility in the Facing Change program is an artifact of a particular facet of Jewish life on campus,

the discussion of the State of Israel, and the rights of Palestinians. Hillel's role in these discussions has been complex. Hillel is committed to supporting Israel and to "provid[ing] every Jewish student with the opportunity to explore and build an enduring relationship with Israel." Hillel was one of the first organizations to take advantage of the Birthright Israel funds for sending Jewish college students on first-time trips to Israel. At the same time, Hillel sees itself as a big tent organization welcoming to all Jewish students and open to non-Jewish students interested in its programs. One slogan Hillel has used to articulate its commitment to both Israel and ideological diversity is "Wherever we stand, we stand with Israel."

In a new set of Guidelines for Campus Israel Activities, the organization expresses a commitment to political pluralism welcoming a "diversity of student perspectives."⁴⁰⁶ At the same time, these guidelines set limits on who can partner with or be housed by its member local Hillel houses. It explicitly excludes groups and speakers that:

- *Deny the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish and democratic state with secure and recognized borders;*
- *Delegitimize, demonize, or apply a double standard to Israel;*
- *Support boycott of, divestment from, or sanctions against the State of Israel;*
- *Exhibit a pattern of disruptive behavior towards campus events or guest speakers or foster an atmosphere of incivility.*

As the movement for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanction has extended its reach to include some Jewish peace groups, this has meant that several university Hillels have excluded Jewish peace groups from the umbrella of Hillel even when those groups consider themselves pro-Israel.

Within the Jewish community, Hillel's policy on who can and cannot speak on Israel for Hillel is fraught. There is no policy that will not attract criticism from some quarter. Current Hillel policy draws a clear line between the groups Hillel will partner with and house, and those it will exclude, yet it has still attracted criticism for being insufficiently supportive of Israel.⁴⁰⁷ This same policy has meant excluding some groups that might have previously been part of Hillel. Most recently, when Brandeis Hillel voted to exclude Jewish Voice for Peace, some segments of the Jewish community were critical of the exclusion.⁴⁰⁸

In addition to the national policy, there is a lot of variation on individual campuses in how Hillel staff and students deal with discussions of Israel and the rights of Palestinians. To the extent that discussions of Palestine and Israel are flash points for the rehearsal of classical antisemitic tropes as well as Islamophobic language and imagery, Hillel's position on Israel is important, but because of the structure of the organization, it is not a single, easily summarizable position. Hillel strives to be a big tent organization so that it can serve the diverse needs of Jewish students and, at the same time, it allows local chapters a degree of autonomy.

ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

MARIA PLANANSKY

The Islamic Society of North America is an independent umbrella Islamic organization that aims to better the Muslim community through its commitment “to freedom, to eradicating prejudice and to creating a society where Muslims can live peacefully and prosper alongside other Americans from all walks of life and diverse traditions and faith.” Accepted by many non-Muslim agencies and organizations, the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) is considered by many as the primary voice of Islam in the United States.⁴⁰⁹

ISNA developed out of the original Muslim Student Association [see profile] formed at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Following the establishment of the national Muslim Student Association (MSA) in 1963, it became clear that many international Muslim students served by the MSA would not be returning to their home countries. There became a need for a national organization that would be distinct and separate from the MSA, to cater to Muslims living as a minority in the United States and Canada. In 1975 a large headquarters was built in Plainville, Indiana; it would come to be the organization now known as the Islamic Society of North America.⁴¹⁰

While many consider the umbrella organization to speak with an authentic Muslim-American voice, some criticize the organization for a tendency to enforce a conservative religious philosophy that does not adequately adapt to the needs of its current constituency. Detractors point to ISNA’s “Women-friendly Mosque” brochure and a lack of women on the ISNA’s board of directors. Proponents argue that diverse voices and requests are indeed being heard. For instance, they note that there has been discussion about women’s involvement at the General Assembly of the organization’s annual convention.

While many mosques and organizations are affiliated with the ISNA, the ISNA does not enforce its policies on individual mosques. Indeed, the ISNA says it “promotes a pluralistic approach to the diversity of Islam.” It is an original signatory to the Amman Message, which calls for tolerance in the Muslim world and recognizes the validity of Islam’s different theological and legal schools, including Sunnism, Shiism, and Sufism.⁴¹¹

In the decade since September 11, 2001, the ISNA has come under heavy scrutiny. In 2001, the U.S. Treasury designated the Holy Land Foundation (HLF), once the largest Islamic charity in the United States, as a terrorist organization. The government charged five leaders of the Holy Land Foundation with financing terrorism, saying that the foundation sent more than \$12 million to charitable groups, known as zakat committees, which build hospitals and feed the poor. The prosecution said these zakat committees were controlled by Hamas, the Palestinian political party designated as a terrorist organization by the U.S. government. The foundation, the federal government claimed, contributed to terrorism by helping Hamas spread its ideology and recruit supporters. The U.S. Treasury Department and FBI froze its assets in a

legal effort to shut down “American financing for terrorist organizations in the Middle East.”⁴¹² Defense lawyers told the jury that their clients did not support terrorism, but provided legitimate aid programs for poverty-stricken Palestinians. The HLF may have given monies to Hamas, but that was before 1995, prior to its designation as a terrorist organization. Treasury officials conceded that a “substantial amount” of the money raised by the foundation went to worthy causes, but argued that nonetheless, HLF’s primary purpose had been to subsidize Hamas.

The first criminal trial brought against the foundation in 2007 deadlocked and was declared a mistrial. The jury in the 2008 retrial found the HLF guilty on all 108 charges, including conspiracy to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization and providing material support to a foreign terrorist.⁴¹³

During legal discovery, a 1991 memorandum surfaced allegedly laying out the Muslim Brotherhood’s “plan for conquering America.”⁴¹⁴ An appendix to that memorandum listed 29 U.S.-based organizations as the Brotherhood’s “friends” in North America; the list included the ISNA, MSA, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, and the Muslim American Society.⁴¹⁵ Based on this document, prosecutors named the ISNA, as well as the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the North American Islamic Trust, as unindicted co-conspirators in the case; the list of unindicted co-conspirators included more than 300 organizations and individuals.⁴¹⁶

The unindicted co-conspirator label is a legal designation that, while the organizations and individuals are not formally charged, is used for pragmatic considerations, and evidentiary concerns. According to the United States Attorneys’ Manual, federal prosecutors generally should not identify unindicted co-conspirators.⁴¹⁷

ISNA’s inclusion on the list of unindicted co-conspirators in the HLF case has allowed for myriad theories about the ISNA’s connection to the Muslim Brotherhood and its presumed secret plan to take over the United States government. The ISNA vehemently rejects these theories, saying, “ISNA is not now nor has it ever been subject to the control of any other domestic or international organizations including the Muslim Brotherhood.”

ISNA explained its position this way:

ISNA has always maintained an open, collaborative working relationship with government at all levels, and was very disturbed in May [2007] when the Department of Justice named ISNA on a list of “unindicted co-conspirators” in the federal terrorism prosecution of the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development. ISNA has engaged legal counsel to protect its rights and maintain its organizational integrity and credibility by immediate removal of ISNA from this list. We understand that ISNA is not a target in this prosecution or any pending investigation, and that the listing of ISNA was not to imply that ISNA was part of a criminal conspiracy or that it acted with any criminal intent, but rather, it was a legal tactic to permit the government to seek the admission of

evidence that would otherwise be excluded. ISNA is confident that its name will be removed from the list so that the organization's reputation is cleared. ISNA remains consistent in its rejection of terrorism and violence. ISNA rejects all acts of terrorism, including those perpetrated by Hamas, Hizbullah and any other group that claims Islam as their inspiration. ISNA has encouraged and continues to encourage a just and fair settlement of disputes between Israel, the Palestinians and their neighbors through diplomacy and other peaceful means.

In 2008, the ISNA released the document, "The Truth About ISNA: Past, Present & Future," which highlights coalition work, its moderate position, and its position on terrorism. The American Civil Liberties Union and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Texas filed a legal challenge to clear the ISNA and North American Islamic Trust's being labeled as "unindicted co-conspirators." The motion argued that the public branding of ISNA and NAIT as participants in a criminal conspiracy violates the organizations' Fifth Amendment rights.⁴¹⁸

Following the summer 2010 when the Park51 community center spurred heated anti-Muslim rhetoric and attacks, ISNA met with Attorney General Eric Holder and other U.S. faith communities to address the upsurge in anti-Muslim rhetoric and hate crimes.⁴¹⁹

MUSLIM STUDENT ASSOCIATION (MSA)

The Muslim Students Association of the United States and Canada is a nonprofit organization that helps Muslim students establish and maintain local Muslim Students Association chapters. Established in 1963 at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, Muslim Students Association of the United States and Canada (MSA National) now has more than 200 chapters across the United States and Canada. These college and university chapters may go by other names such as the "Muslim Student Union" or "Islamic Students' Association."

Originally, Muslim Students Association (MSA) membership was restricted to men, and conversations and prayers were held exclusively in Arabic. Today the membership of MSA chapters is primarily comprised of North American-born Muslims, and the chapters no longer exclude women. In fact, the president of MSA National for academic year 2010–11 was Iman Sedique, a recent female graduate of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.

Today, MSA National is diverse in its viewpoints. Within chapters there is a range of practices and beliefs regarding issues such as co-ed mingling. According to its website, msanational.org, and to its Link publication, MSA National and its chapter affiliates are developing ties with local communities by encouraging interfaith understanding and volunteerism. Such projects include the "Peace...Not Prejudice Campaign," which seeks to foster understanding on college campuses between students of all religions and

racism; Islamic Awareness Week, which promotes awareness and understanding of Islamic principles and ideas through a variety of resources, activities, and events; Project Downtown, a volunteer effort to feed the homeless and poverty-stricken; and the annual Ramadan Fast-a-thon, a fundraiser to eradicate hunger and homelessness.

MSA National has a task force devoted to political activism, and MSA chapters across the country have engaged in political organization and debate around the Israel-Palestine conflict. In 2009, following the January attacks on Gaza by the Israel Defense Forces, MSA members joined a "Let Gaza Live" March on Washington, D.C., participated in a National Day of Fast in Solidarity with the People of Gaza, and contacted their elected officials through writing and call-in campaigns. MSA National's official stance is to end the occupation in Palestine, and stresses a peaceful solution to the humanitarian crisis.

The national group is aware that emotions around these political circumstances often run high. In the Spring/Summer 2009 *Link* newsletter/magazine, an article noted, "Human emotions are a natural reminder that we are in fact, human. When uncontrolled, we may have the tendency to be blinded and enraged. But when channeled and focused, they can be the greatest tools in any arsenal to change the world we live in."

Those strong feelings have resulted in public conflict. After Muslim Student Union (MSU) members disrupted a speech by Michael Oren, the Israeli Ambassador who was speaking at University of California, Irvine in February 2010, university officials recommended suspending the MSU for academic year 2010–2011. MSU protested, claiming repeatedly that the students protested on their own accord and not on behalf of the organization. Nonetheless, University of California, Irvine (UC Irvine) suspended the MSU for the Fall 2010 semester, contingent on its members completing 100 hours of community service and put the organization on probation for the following two years. While critics have expressed fears that MSU chapters are fronts for terrorist organizations, citing as evidence the membership of one of MSU's founders in the Muslim Brotherhood in 1963, MSU members are quick to challenge that assertion as a smear on a peaceful student organization that articulates its mission of "networking, education, and empowering the students of today to be citizens of tomorrow's community."

YOUNG AMERICA'S FOUNDATION

MARIA PLANANSKY

Young America's Foundation (YAF) is a national organization which aims to bolster and advance a conservative agenda among young people at both the high school and college levels through a variety of outreach programs, including conferences, seminars, educational materials, internships, and speaking engagements. Unlike the College Republicans [see associated profile], YAF is not a chapter-based organization,

though it does have its only chapter on the George Washington University campus. Noteworthy for its annual list of Top 10 Conservative Colleges, YAF circulates a conservative campus activism guide and has a membership rewards club. This "100 Club" allows individuals who bring YAF programming, events, and speakers to campus to acquire points and participate in special conferences and events.

In 2003, YAF began its 9/11 Never Forget Project.⁴²⁰ Activities included erecting American flags in memory of those killed by the terrorist attacks, holding a moment of silence or prayer on campus, and bringing conservative speakers to campus. YAF-approved speakers under the "Radical Islam" track have included David Horowitz, Nonie Darwish, Robert Spencer, and Tom Tancredo. YAF also has a lengthy recommended reading list, with a militant Islam track. Its recommendations are:

Hatred's Kingdom by Dore Gold

Militant Islam Reaches America by Daniel Pipes

The Cube and the Cathedral by George Weigel

Islam Unveiled by Robert Spencer

The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam
by Robert Spencer

Al Qaeda's Armies by Jonathan Schanzer

PROFILES OF KEY INDIVIDUALS

JEFFREY BLANKFORT

NAN RUBIN

BACKGROUND & HISTORY

Jeffrey Blankfort is a self-styled Middle East analyst who freelances in print and radio. He writes frequently and is an occasional radio host on community radio station KZYY in Mendocino, California, and on KPFA, the Pacifica flagship station serving the San Francisco Bay area. Blankfort earned a modest reputation in the sixties as a photojournalist active in the anti-Vietnam War movement and as a supporter of the Black Panther Party. Raised in a non-Zionist Jewish family, he has been a militant anti-Zionist and pro-Palestinian activist since 1970, when he visited Jordan and Lebanon. In 1987 he co-founded the Labor Committee on the Middle East and served as editor of the quarterly publication *Middle East Labor Bulletin* from 1988–95.

POSITIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST

Blankfort's reputation rests on three major positions:

Zionist/Jewish Conspiracies Controlling U.S. Policy

Blankfort is a consistent, strident, and outspoken voice promoting a conspiracy of "Jewish and Zionist lobbies" who control U.S. policy in biased support of Israel and with hostility toward the Palestinian cause. As he has written, Blankfort identifies the Israel lobby as "much more than AIPAC (American-Israel Public Affairs Committee)... Its other more visible components are the biggest Jewish organizations, the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee, and the American Jewish Congress, but there are also a number of others... [like] the extreme right wing Zionist Organization of America... All of these organizations form part of the Council of Presidents of Major Jewish American Organizations... At the grass-roots you have hundreds of local Jewish federations and councils... While not officially part of the lobby, since the establishment of Israel in 1948, the AFL-CIO has been one of its most solid cornerstones."

For more than 30 years, Blankfort has been writing essays with titles such as "An Act of Censorship: American Library Association Becomes Another Israeli Occupied Territory" (1993); "AFL-CIO Still in Israel's Pocket?" (1996); "The Pro-Israel Lobby as a Fifth Column within the United States" (2003); "The Influence of Israel and its American Lobby over US Middle East Policy Explained" (2006); and "Joe Biden: In Israel's Service" (2010).

Being Spied on by the ADL

Because of his outspoken anti-Zionism and hostility towards Israel, Blankfort was a target of a local surveillance operation by an investigator retained by the San Francisco branch of the Anti-Defamation League. In 1993, the San Francisco District

Attorney's office released a slew of documents implicating the local Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in an extensive effort to spy on activists who opposed Israel's policies in the Occupied West Bank and Gaza, and also individuals organizing against the apartheid policies of the government of South Africa. The ADL agent then passed on information to both governments. Targets of the domestic surveillance included thousands of Arab-Americans, labor organizations like the San Francisco Labor Council, International Longshore Warehouse Union Local 10, and the Oakland Educational Association, and civil rights groups like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples, Irish Northern Aid, International Indian Treaty Council, and the Asian Law Caucus. A lawsuit filed by a number of these targets, including Blankfort and two of his colleagues, was finally settled in 2002. The plaintiffs received \$50,000 each, and refused to sign a non-disclosure agreement, leaving it open for them to talk about the case and its outcome. This remains one of Blankfort's major political topics and supports his theory that U.S. Zionist organizations control foreign policy in service to Israel.

Challenging Chomsky and "Liberal Zionists"

Blankfort is a noted critic of Noam Chomsky over what he calls Chomsky's "refusal to recognize the influence of the Zionist Lobby over U.S. Middle East policy." Blankfort takes the position that Chomsky, the MIT linguist and one of the most influential foreign policy critics on the Left, downplays the influence and impact of America's "Israel Lobby." In Chomsky's opinion, the power of Jewish influence on administration decision-making is "overestimated," but Blankfort insists that Chomsky refuses to accept the true role of the "Israel Lobbies," because he is sympathetic to Zionists and is pro-Israel. Blankfort also challenges Chomsky because he "dismisses the many questions that have been raised about the official narrative of the Bush administration on the attack on the World Trade Center."

To Blankfort, support for Palestinian rights is not sufficient; only an overt rejection of any position recognizing legitimate concerns of Israel or Israelis is acceptable. By extension, Blankfort uses this argument to condemn the various peace groups and activists who mobilized against the many Gulf Wars for not including positions that clearly called for the end of Israel, because too many Zionists and Jews were involved in these movements. This position is laid out in his 2003 essay, "The Israel Lobby and the Left: Uneasy Questions" and elaborated in a 2006 interview, "The Anti-war Movement Has Failed" where Blankfort explicitly states that "the war in Iraq was not a war for oil, but was a war conceived by the neo-cons and the pro-Israeli lobby in the United States to benefit Israel..." According to Blankfort, the antiwar movement failed because of its inability to understand the importance of this lobby and therefore did not recognize the overwhelming influence of Zionists on United States policy.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

Blankfort appears to operate alone. He does not have his own website or any organizational or institutional base, and he does not seem to do much speaking on college campuses. He does maintain an "extensive mailing list" to distribute his

own articles, and something of a current bibliography exists on the website Palestine: Information with Provenance . His essays are published in the anticapitalist magazine *Left Curve*, an occasional “artist-produced journal that addresses the problem(s) of cultural forms emerging from the crises of modernity that strive to be independent from the control of dominant institutions and free from the shackles of instrumental rationality,” and his writings show up with some frequency in Alexander Cockburn’s *CounterPunch* as well as a number of anthologies and anti-Israel and pro-Palestine websites. Topics include continuing attacks on Chomsky and the antiwar Left, ongoing exposure of the control of the “Israel Lobbies,” critiques of Obama’s Middle East policies, his own victory over the hated Zionist ADL, and closely related topics. In addition, numerous radio commentaries and podcasts are available, and there are a handful of videos, including a July 2010 panel at the International Spy Museum in Washington, D. C. on “Israel’s Nuclear Arsenal: Espionage, Opacity and Future” sponsored by The Institute for Research: Middle Eastern Policy.

Ongoing events in the Middle East—the Israeli attack on Gaza; the international debate over the Goldstone report; the election of Barack Obama and his efforts at diplomacy between Israelis and Palestinians; the attempts to break the Gaza sea blockade and the Israeli Defense Forces attack on the Mavi Marmara; the rise of Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions campaigns on campus; and many related developments—provide plenty of grist for Blankfort’s conspiracy mill. Because of his attacks on Chomsky and single-minded analysis that lays all U.S. foreign policy positions on manipulation by Israel, Blankfort appears somewhat marginalized. He seems to be embraced by a narrow sector of radical sectarian leftists, but non-sectarian leftists are skeptical and they frequently challenge him in written and verbal debates.

*Editor’s Note**: The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) notes its objection to the description of its actions in San Francisco contained in this profile. ADL has continuously maintained that there was no misconduct on its part. Nonetheless, we stand by the profile as written by Nan Rubin. In 1993, author Berlet and journalist Dennis King wrote an op-ed in the *New York Times* criticizing ADL for its surveillance activities. In a rare decision, the *New York Times* ran a response by ADL National Director Abraham H. Foxman in the same edition on the same page. Berlet and King later expanded their criticism in an article in *Tikkun Magazine*. The *Tikkun* article fully supports the summary by Nan Rubin contained in this report.

ALAN DERSHOWITZ

NAN RUBIN

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Alan M. Dershowitz, a Brooklyn native, is the Felix Frankfurter Professor of Law at Harvard Law School. Dershowitz graduated from Brooklyn College and Yale Law School and

joined the Harvard Law School faculty at age 25, one of the youngest faculty ever hired, after clerking for Judge David Bazelon and Justice Arthur Goldberg.

Dershowitz is a popular pundit and public intellectual who speaks on many topics, ranging from history, philosophy, psychology, and literature, to mathematics, theology, music and sports. He is a prolific writer, with hundreds of articles in such publications as the *New York Times Magazine*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New Republic*, *The Nation*, *Commentary*, *Saturday Review*, and *The Harvard Law Review* and *Yale Law Journal*, as well as syndicated columns in 50 daily newspapers and online for sites such as *The Huffington Post*.

He is author of 27 books, both fiction and nonfiction, with a worldwide audience in the millions. Nonfiction titles include: *The Case For Peace: How the Arab-Israeli Conflict Can be Resolved*; *Rights From Wrongs: A Secular Theory of the Origins of Rights*; *The Case for Israel*; *Blasphemy: How the Religious Right is Hijacking the Declaration of Independence*; *Why Terrorism Works*; *Shouting Fire*; *Letters to a Young Lawyer*; *Supreme Injustice* and *The Case For Moral Clarity: Israel, Hamas and Gaza*. His novels include: *The Advocate’s Devil* and *Just Revenge*. Dershowitz is also the author of *The Vanishing American Jew*; *Chutzpah* (a #1 bestseller); and *Reversal of Fortune* (which was made into an Academy Award-winning film).

Considered an outspoken liberal on many social issues, Dershowitz built his reputation defending pornography and the First Amendment, and as a criminal attorney representing unpopular and controversial figures. His high-profile clients have included Natan (Anatoly) Sharansky, Claus von Bülow, O.J. Simpson, Patty Hearst, Harry Reems, Leona Helmsley, Michael Milken, and Mike Tyson. He continues to represent indigent defendants and takes half of his cases pro bono.

DEFENDING ISRAEL

Dershowitz has written extensively about his experiences as a Jew and his opinions about antisemitism, Israel, and anti-Israel Jews have engendered a great deal of controversy. *The Case for Israel*, published in 2003, was a series of essays aimed at identifying and then refuting some of the strongest accusations and myths about Israel, such as “Israel is the ‘prime’ human rights violator in the world” and “Israel is the cause of the Arab–Israeli conflict.” Each chapter presents “The Accusation,” a common criticism of Israel; “The Accusers,” listing quotes from critics supporting the accusation; “The Reality,” presenting a short statement contradicting the accusation; and “The Proof,” revealing Dershowitz’s own viewpoint. A documentary film based on the book—*The Case for Israel*—was released in 2008, featuring Dershowitz and other prominent pro-Israel representatives.

Overall, the book asserted both the practical and moral justification for the continued existence of Israel as the Jewish state and demonized opposition views, Edward Said’s and Noam Chomsky’s in particular. The historical rationale in the book was strongly rejected by a broad range of liberal to left scholars and critics, with the most serious challenge coming from Norman Finkelstein [see profile]. Finkelstein’s own 2005 book *Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism*

and the Abuse of History was a direct attack on Dershowitz, alluding to the 1992 book *Chutzpah*, in which Dershowitz shared thoughts about discrimination against Jews and his own Jewish identity.

After *Beyond Chutzpah*, Dershowitz responded by labeling Finkelstein “antisemitic,” a “pseudo-scholar and a propagandist” and “a clown,” sued the publisher and apparently was behind a successful campaign that resulted in Finkelstein’s being denied tenure at DePaul University. The hostility between them continues.

Dershowitz continues to write about and identify “enemies of Israel,” naming many in his 2009 book *The Case Against Israel’s Enemies: Exposing Jimmy Carter and Others Who Stand in the Way of Peace* and singling out liberal Jews such as Michael Lerner, editor of widely-circulated liberal Jewish magazine *Tikkun*, whom Dershowitz has “long criticized for spewing hatred against Israel.”

DEFENDING TORTURE

Following the September 11, 2001 attacks, Dershowitz began raising the issue of legally permitting the use of torture if certain legal rules were in place. In 2002 he published an essay in the *San Francisco Chronicle* entitled “Want to Torture? Get a Warrant” in which he argued that, although personally against the use of torture, he believed that authorities should be permitted to use non-lethal torture in emergency circumstances by means of special warrants. Circumstances should permit using torture on terrorism suspects if there is an “absolute need to obtain immediate information in order to save lives coupled with probable cause that the suspect had such information and is unwilling to reveal it.” He revisited this position in more detail in *Shouting Fire: Civil Liberties in a Turbulent Age* (2002) and brought it up again in *Why Terrorism Works: Understanding the Threat, Responding to the Challenge* (2003).

A more comprehensive argument was made in *Preemption: A Knife That Cuts Both Ways* (2006), in which he suggested that religious zealots who “believe that their mission has been ordained by God ... may be more difficult to deter than those who base their calculations on earthly costs and benefits.” Unable to influence such irrational motives with deterrence, he argued that there are appropriate times when using torture—within a legal framework—is justifiable to “prevent future harms” by such global actors as terrorists. As such, even a democratic society such as the United States can construct a philosophy of “pre-emption” to justify torture when weighed against the greater public good of preventing violent and destructive actions.

This position on torture, tied as it is to fear of the violent actions of Muslim religious extremists, is consistent with Dershowitz’s hostility to enemies of Israel, but contradicts his reputation as a political progressive who is a strong defender of First Amendment free speech rights. Apart from the moral and legal questions Dershowitz raises in these essays, his torture-is-acceptable position triggered strong debates from both sides, in particular from liberals and progressives who saw him as an important and influential legal scholar giving credibility to a reprehensible and illegal practice. It also reinforced his standing as an uncritical supporter of Israel.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

Dershowitz is a popular speaker on college campuses as a fierce defender of Israel and opponent of anti-Israel faculty and activists. Dershowitz’s current targets are the campus-based Boycott, Divest, Sanctions (BDS) campaigns, which call for actions to be taken against Israel to support ending the occupation of Palestinian territories. He strongly opposes the positions promoted by Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions groups which he feels are “aided by radical anti-Israel professors” and instead demands that a broader picture of the Middle East be presented where Israel is not the sole player and the “real” villains in the region are Hamas, Saudi Arabia, and other radical anti-Zionist entities.

Dershowitz maintains his own website, which features columns, essays, commentaries, reviews, book promotions, bibliographies, and similar materials. In addition, a wide range of other documents, interviews, critiques, articles, and videos from both supporters and critics are readily available.⁴²¹

NORMAN FINKELSTEIN

NAN RUBIN

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Norman Gary Finkelstein is an American political scientist and author whose primary fields of research are the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the politics of the Holocaust. His parents were both Holocaust survivors and he credits them with imparting his sense of “support for left-wing humanitarian causes” and moral outrage at such events as the Vietnam War. He is a graduate of Binghamton University and has a Ph.D. in Political Science from Princeton University. He has had a checkered history in academia, having held faculty positions at Brooklyn College, Rutgers University, Hunter College, and New York University. Most recently, he taught at DePaul University where he was an assistant professor from 2001 to 2007, but left amid a major scandal surrounding his denial of tenure.

Finkelstein characterizes himself as an “old-fashioned communist” who is a “forensic scholar.” A prolific writer, commentator, and speaker, he has made his reputation by sharply criticizing a number of prominent Jewish writers and scholars whom he accuses of misrepresenting the historical record, challenging popular notions of the history of Israel and the occupation of Palestine, and of the representation of the Holocaust. He has produced a steady stream of books, articles, lectures, and interviews reflecting his positions on these topics. Beginning with his doctoral thesis, his career has been marked by controversy and public rivalries, most notably with attorney Alan Dershowitz.

CRITIQUE OF FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL

Controversy began as early as Finkelstein’s doctoral thesis, where he challenged the claims made in Joan Peters’s 1984

book *From Time Immemorial: The Origins of the Arab-Jewish Conflict over Palestine*. Peters claimed that at the time Israel was created in 1948, the Arabs in Palestine were not long-term subjects of the Ottoman Empire, as was the accepted history of the time. Instead, she argued, waves of Arab immigrants actually arrived much later, in the 19th century and through the period of the British Mandate. Peters concluded that the picture of a native Palestinian population overwhelmed by Jewish immigration was little more than propaganda describing two almost simultaneous waves of Zionist Jewish settlers and Palestinian immigrants who arrived at the same time in what had been a relatively empty land.

Finkelstein's dissertation accused the book of being nothing other than fraudulent history. He challenged enthusiastic reviews of the book and immediately earned the suspicion of being anti-Israel. Even so, by 1986 such recognized experts in the field as Yehoshua Porath, Professor Emeritus of Middle East History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, were calling the Peters's book "sheer forgery" and supporting Finkelstein's position.

EXPOSING THE "HOLOCAUST INDUSTRY"

Finkelstein's book *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering*, published in 2000, reinforced his reputation as a public anti-Zionist and to some, an antisemitic "self-hating Jew."

The book argues that the American Jewish establishment exploits the memory of the Nazi Holocaust for political and financial gain and to further the interests of Israel. This "Holocaust industry," he says, has corrupted Jewish culture and the authentic memory of the Holocaust (as embodied by both his parents) by casting Israel as a perpetual "victim state" despite its militarization and poor human rights record. Finkelstein also accuses the American Jewish establishment of funding a broad range of questionable institutions and individuals who profit from legal settlements and restitution payments rather than passing funds directly to Holocaust survivors. In this context, he has provided a level of credibility to Holocaust deniers, such as David Irving, whom Finkelstein says "serve a good function in society" as a "devil's advocate."

The book was a bestseller in Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America and was translated into 16 languages. However, it was panned in the United States, where critics charged that it was poorly researched and allowed others to exploit the Holocaust for antisemitic purposes. Finkelstein did have among his supporters Raul Hilberg, considered by many to be the founder of Holocaust studies, who agreed that such exploitation exists and said of Finkelstein, "his conclusions are trustworthy ... and [he] has come up with the right results."

BEYOND CHUTZPAH: TAKING ON ALAN DERSHOWITZ AND THE CASE FOR ISRAEL

In 2003, Alan Dershowitz published *The Case for Israel*, a book presenting a series of essays on what he identified as the most common accusations and myths about Israel, rebutting them chapter by chapter. Shortly after publication, Finkelstein derided it as "a collection of fraud, falsification,

plagiarism, and nonsense," and based on extensive passages taken from other writers including Joan Peters. He publicly repeated the plagiarism charge when both he and Dershowitz appeared on a live radio debate on "Democracy Now!." Elena Kagan, then dean of Harvard Law School, asked former Harvard president Derek Bok to investigate the plagiarism charge. Dershowitz was eventually exonerated.

To counter what he considered Dershowitz's unsupportable claim that Israel had an excellent human rights record, Finkelstein published *Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History* in 2005. In this book he analyzes "The Not-So-New 'New Anti-Semitism,'" arguing that a "new anti-Semitism" was invented by supporters of Israel to brand any serious criticism of Israel's human rights abuses as antisemitism and provide a cover for that country's expansionistic policies in the Palestinian territories. He also elaborated his charges of plagiarism against Dershowitz, who retaliated with a lawsuit against the publisher, University of California Press, that was eventually dropped.

BEING DENIED TENURE BY DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

In early 2007 DePaul's political science department voted to award Finkelstein tenure, but the University Board on Promotion and Tenure rejected his bid and placed him on administrative leave for the 2007–2008 academic year. At the same time, the university also denied tenure to Assistant Professor of International Studies Mehrene Larudee, a strong Finkelstein supporter, despite unanimous support from her department.

Dershowitz had openly admitted that he strongly lobbied faculty, administrators, and others to derail Finkelstein's tenure recommendation. An official statement from DePaul praised Finkelstein as a scholar and outstanding teacher but strongly defended the tenure decision, stating that outside influence played no part. The incident sparked weeks of student protests supporting the two faculty members, support from DePaul's Faculty Council, and a flurry of letters from academic organizations such as The American Association of University Professors, which stated, "It is entirely illegitimate for a university to deny tenure to a professor out of fear that his published research ... might hurt a college's reputation." By September 2007 Finkelstein had resigned, fearing that as a result of this "blacklisting" he would be "barred from ever entering a college classroom again."

RECENT ACTIVITIES

Finkelstein maintains his own official website—with his speaking schedule and a comprehensive list of publications, video and audio materials, reviews, critiques, and correspondence to and about him. He is a prolific writer who continues to turn out a stream of materials; his most recent book is *Knowing Too Much: Why the American Jewish Romance with Israel Is Coming to an End*. A documentary film about him—*American Radical: the Trials of Norman Finkelstein*—was released in 2009.

Because of the feud between them, Finkelstein presents himself as a David against the Goliath academic heavyweight Dershowitz. He is in demand on college campuses by pro-Palestinian groups, both for his consistent defense of

Palestinian independence and anti-Zionist critique of Israeli policy; and for the messy process that apparently killed his tenure bid and made him a martyr in the hostile campaign against him by Dershowitz. At his public events, he often faces pro-Israel protesters and his speaking engagements are frequently cancelled.

Most recently, material posted on Finkelstein's website played a significant role in a debate around the granting of an honorary degree to Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Tony Kushner. In May 2011, a trustee of the City University of New York, Jeffrey Wiesenfeld, said that Kushner had disparaged the State of Israel, an assertion he said came from Finkelstein's website, and objected to the City University of New York's (CUNY) proposal that Kushner be granted an honorary degree.⁴²²

Kushner, who is Jewish and on the advisory board of Jewish Voice for Peace, said that he was "dismayed by the vicious attack and wholesale distortion of my beliefs." He argued that while he has criticized Israeli policies, he has never supported a boycott of Israel, believes in Israel's right to exist, and in a "negotiated conclusion to the Palestinian-Israeli crisis."⁴²³ In the ensuing furor, CUNY had to deal with a public relations scandal and the trustees' decision to table Kushner's nomination was reversed with chair Benno Schmidt calling it "a mistake of principle, and not merely of policy." The incident led to claims of intolerance and restrictions on the exercise of free speech all around.

DAVID HOROWITZ

PAM CHAMBERLAIN

*With material from the Free Exchange on Campus Coalition, and Campus Progress, a project of the Center for American Progress, used with permission.*⁴²⁴

Ex-leftist David Horowitz is currently one of the most infamous conservative critics of American universities. A prolific writer of books, op-eds and blog postings, an active and controversial public lecturer, and a skilled and dogged debater, his work is regularly posted on his websites www.frontpagemag.com and www.discoverthenetwork.org.

Horowitz spent his college years in the late 1950s at Columbia University, where he was involved in American Communist political organizations. He went on to receive his Master's degree at the University of California, Berkeley. He has said that his politics changed "when the Black Panthers murdered my friend Betty Van Patter in 1974. I have described this event, along with the transformation of my politics at length in *Radical Son*," published in 1996.

By 1985 Horowitz had launched an assault against his erstwhile leftward compatriots, whom he now calls "violently, fervently committed to their unholy war to tear down American democracy and replace it with their version—an Americanized version—of communism."⁴²⁵ In 1992 he

co-founded *Heterodoxy*, a magazine whose mission was to expose campus "political correctness." In 1988 with conservative philanthropic funding, he and a long-time collaborator Peter Collier established The David Horowitz Freedom Center.

In recent years, Horowitz's concerns with racial rights and the representation of the history of slavery have morphed into a focus on supposed liberal bias on college campuses through his organization Students for Academic Freedom (SAF), which he founded in 2003 and which claimed nearly 200 chapters just two years later. Students for Academic Freedom members were enjoined to uncover political bias on the part of individual faculty members and report incidents to SAF, which in turn would mount intense media campaigns against specific faculty members.

Horowitz and others like him have contributed to a campus climate where some students feel their teachers are fair game for ad hominem attacks. The attacks have been skillfully focused on a few major frames that remain barely altered over decades: our colleges are on the decline because of the Left's influence; protecting higher education is all about freedom. Horowitz has been notorious in crafting a series of campus-based campaigns, from calling for a student bill of rights on campus to trying to enact what he calls "Academic Bill of Rights" legislation at the state and national levels, an attempt which has been considered, and failed to pass, in 24 states. Calling for such an Academic Bill of Rights is both redundant and misleading, as most colleges already have rules ensuring political and other types of free expression.

Horowitz has implied that progressives (whom he sometimes calls "campus fascists"), who are not in agreement with him, are aligned with radical Islamist terrorists. In 2005, for example, while speaking at Columbia University, he passed out a pamphlet that bore a picture of Noam Chomsky with a turban and beard, under the heading, "The Ayatollah of Anti-American Hate." Later he would argue, "I have never called for Chomsky to be fired or to be barred from classrooms. I wrote a pamphlet showing what an ass he is. How is this anti-diversity?"⁴²⁶

In 2006, Horowitz published *The Professors: The 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America*, charging academics with indoctrinating students with leftist and radical political views and implicitly attempting to create a McCarthyish blacklist of liberal professors. The Free Exchange on Campus Coalition analyzed the book with a report called "Facts Count" where the authors noted:

*Mr. Horowitz's research is sloppy in the extreme and, we believe, manipulated to fit his arguments. Mr. Horowitz's book is characterized by inaccuracies, distortions, and manipulations of fact—including false statements, mischaracterizations of professors' views, broad claims unsupported by facts and selective omissions of information that does not fit his argument.*⁴²⁷

While Horowitz's thematic concerns range from feminism to colonial studies, he has made strong claims regarding both what he sees as antisemitism and anti-Zionism on campus and as insufficient attention or appreciation of a radical Muslim threat against American and Jewish interests.

For example, “Facts Count” asked Professor Bettina Aptheker of the University of California, Santa Cruz to respond to Horowitz’s claim that she “authored an article in *The Wave* pledging support for Palestinian terrorists, whom she euphemistically described as ‘antioccupation activists.’” Professor Aptheker responded, “I have never, ever supported or called for the support of terrorists, Palestinian or otherwise. The reference quoted was not to Palestinians but to Israelis active in the effort to end the occupation of Palestinian territories.”

In another example, “Facts Count” compared Horowitz’s Islamophobic assertion with the evidence he, himself, had provided to back his claim:

Mr. Horowitz quotes Professor Mark Ensalaco as saying, “I see that our student are angry and hurt about what happened in New York and Washington [regarding the 9/11 attacks], and as important as it is for us to promote learning here at the University, I think it’s also important to promote tolerance.” Mr. Horowitz then writes, “By tolerance, Professor Ensalaco meant tolerance for those who appear to be America’s enemies.” [...] Mr. Horowitz goes on to claim, “Professor Ensalaco regards the United States as responsible for the 9/11 attacks on itself.”

Mr. Horowitz bases this claim on this quote from Professor Ensalaco: “I’d like our students to understand the historical context of the attitudes that caused the attacks. If the students understand the complexities involved, perhaps they’ll avoid the conception that all people of Islam or all Arabs are terrorists.” Mr. Horowitz seems to provide no evidence, other than his own interpretation, that what Professor Ensalaco actually meant is that the United States is “responsible for the 9/11 attacks on itself.”

Three years later, the Free Exchange on Campus Coalition (FECC) followed up with “Facts Still Count.” It argued that his book *One Party Classroom*, coauthored with Jacob Laskin (who would later post his own refutation of the FECC reports⁴²⁸), repeated many of the same methodological errors and ideological biases.⁴²⁹

Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence, evidence derived using recognized and rational methods that can be replicated and verified. In One-Party Classroom, David Horowitz does not meet even minimal standards for sound research methodology (as outlined in our document, The “Faculty Bias” Studies: Science or Propaganda. He presents an unrepresentative sampling of institutions, departments and courses in higher education. Upon that shaky foundation, Horowitz then plugs in distorted and inaccurate data, and makes a series of logical leaps that would make any reader, much less an academic researcher, cringe.

The authors point to errors, deliberate misquotations, and outright fabrications in the case of University of Cali-

fornia, Santa Cruz (UC Santa Cruz) Professor Bruce Larkin. Larkin teaches a course called “The Politics of the War on Terrorism,” exactly the kind of course listing that could have been expected to inflame Horowitz’s imagination. Horowitz did not disappoint.

Despite Horowitz’s assertions to the contrary, Larkin had never denied that al-Qaeda planned the attacks of Sept. 11. What the actual syllabus said was something much more subtle, and arguably the genuine focus of Horowitz’s ire:

How did Bush and Cheney build the fiction that Iraq was a participant in the 9/11 attacks, raising a question about what, if any, connections existed between Iraq and al-Qaeda before the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

Notably, the bigoted internet site *jihadwatch.com*, while written primarily by Robert Spencer and Hugh Fitzgerald (but not containing articles bylined by Horowitz), is a program of the David Horowitz Freedom Center.⁴³⁰

This pattern of inflammatory statements and misrepresentations has clear significance for the debate over policy differences regarding conditions in the Middle East as they are debated on campus. [See related campus profiles for reports on incidents in which Horowitz has been involved.]

AMIR ABDUL MALIK ALI

NAN RUBIN

BACKGROUND: THE AS-SABIQUN MOVEMENT

Amir Abdul Malik Ali is a leader of the As-Sabiqun movement, an American-Muslim organization under the leadership of founder Imam Abdul Alim Musa. The name As-Sabiqun is translated from Arabic as “the vanguard.” It aims to “enable Islam to take complete control of ... the lives of all human beings on Earth.” The group’s paramount goal is the establishment of a modern Islamic state, or Caliphate, governed by shariah (Islamic law).

Based on developing a model Islamic community and dedicated to economic self-sufficiency, a major goal of the organization is to become “one of the main suppliers of Islamic books, media, fragrances, and other products in the United States.” Another organizational goal includes “uncompromising outspokenness against the injustices perpetrated locally and globally by Zionists and imperialistic governments.” The organization has branches in Oakland, Los Angeles, San Diego, Sacramento, and Philadelphia. Alim Musa, an African-American convert to Islam, is based in Washington. Although he is Sunni, he has been very visible and public in his support for the Islamic Republic of Iran and governance by their Shia supreme religious leaders.

MASJID AL-ISLAM—THE OAKLAND MOSQUE

Malik Ali is the head of Masjid Al-Islam, the organization’s mosque in Oakland. A devoted admirer of the late Malcolm

X, Malik Ali strives to “direct the society toward Islamic revolution.” Malik Ali is also part of the Al-Masjid movement, which is dedicated to creating an Islamic revolution in the United States. “...We must implement Islam as a totality [in which] Allah controls every place—the home, the classroom, the science lab, the halls of Congress.”

Theologically, Malik Ali promotes the position of Islam as a non-religion, the underlying argument being that Muslims must be involved in political life because Islam is a “deen” or “way of life.” He shares this thesis with others who do not consider Islam to be a religion, but rather a kind of “political awakening movement,” a concept gaining acceptance in the Muslim world. He also focuses on distinctions and points of conflict between Islamic and Western world views.

The mosque itself has a small community associated with it. It operates a school and owns a few properties in the Oakland neighborhood, but it does not appear to be very well off financially and its building is in need of repair.

In June 2010, the Masjid sponsored a fundraiser for the Islamic Institute for Counter Zionist American Psychological Warfare, which seems to be a creation of Alim Musa, to “happily fight the Zionist American monster.” Imam Musa was also the featured speaker.

His talk that evening was on “The De-Israelization and Re-Africanization of the Islamic Movement in North America.” Alim Musa’s position, highly critical of moderate Muslims, is that mainstream Islam “has been taken over by the well-intentioned but naïve immigrant Muslim community.” Specifically that every Islamic group in the United States has been thoroughly infiltrated by the FBI, CIA, military intelligence, Mossad, Saudi intelligence, Egyptian intelligence, Jordanian intelligence, and Syrian intelligence.

This extreme analysis has resulted in the As-Sabiqun movement being isolated and removed from mainstream Islam, and Alim Musa being marginalized as a religious leader.

MALIK ALI ON CAMPUS

Malik Ali has been speaking to student groups on campuses around California for a number of years, notably University of California, Riverside and University of California, Irvine, where he is almost a regular. The Muslim Student Union at University of California, Irvine (UC Irvine) has invited him on numerous occasions, apparently to speak specifically about the condition of Palestinians. His appearances on campus are seen as provocative and are often met with protests.

During his talks, Malik Ali describes the U.S. government, the economy and the media as being part of a corrupt global super-structure that is controlled by “Zionist Jews” and used against Muslims. He has praise for Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Iranian regime, and denounces the Palestinian national leadership as “Uncle Tom Palestinian leaders.” He also expresses support for the conspiracism that Israel was responsible for the 9/11 attacks. He encourages students to see their campus activism as part of a larger struggle against Israel, as well as against what he calls the “American empire.”

After attending one of his campus speeches, a local blogger (who is not a supporter) reported that he was an “excellent speaker, full of fire and passion,” but was disorganized

and wandered a lot. The most serious critique was that he did not propose any solutions or concrete activities to address the litany of problems he raised. “It was a typical anti-establishment speech. (Israel was not discussed and Islam only briefly.)”

LIMITED PUBLIC VISIBILITY

Neither Malik Ali nor Masjid Al-Islam in Oakland has a website, but As-Sabiqun does have a blog. A number of videos of Malik Ali’s speeches are online, some supporting him but many posted by people opposing him. One can also hear an eight-part series of his sermons called “Thugs in the Masjid.”

The Anti-Defamation League keeps an eye on Malik Ali and monitors his campus appearances, as does Daniel Pipes, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and others like David Horowitz and his Jihad Watch group. His extreme rhetoric appears to make him an easy target for critics, who not only savage his positions but frequently ridicule them, such as when he wrongly cited Rupert Murdoch as an example of “Jewish control of the media.”

DANIEL PIPES

NAN RUBIN

Daniel Pipes is an American academic, writer, and political blogger who focuses on criticism of Islam and the threat of Islamism in the United States. Pipes is the founder and president of the Middle East Forum, a conservative think tank, which includes Campus Watch, a controversial project that claims to critique poor scholarship concerning the Middle East but which is seen by many to be a vehicle for harassing scholars critical of Israel.

Pipes is considered a very hardline, pro-Israel neoconservative with views that are very hostile to Muslims and which are often characterized as “Islamophobic.” He was named one of “The Dirty Dozen: Who’s Who Among America’s Leading Islamophobes” by Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting’s “Smearcasting: How Islamophobes Spread Fear, Bigotry and Misinformation” (2008).

A graduate of Harvard with a Ph.D. in Medieval Islamic History, Pipes also studied in various parts of the Middle East, including spending two years in Cairo where he learned Arabic and studied the Quran. In 1986 he became director of the Foreign Policy Research Institute, a conservative Philadelphia-based think tank that built its reputation promoting anti-Communist policies during the Cold War and later focused on Islamic terrorism. The position moved Pipes out of academia and pointed him towards foreign policy, including involvement with a number of U.S. and Israeli agencies.

MIDDLE EAST FORUM

The primary outlet for Pipes’s political commentary is the think tank Middle East Forum (MEF). Founded in 1990 as a spin-off from the Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI), MEF “works to define and promote American interests in the

Middle East and protect the Constitutional order from Middle Eastern threats." MEF sees the region "as a major source of problems for the United States. Accordingly, it urges active measures to protect Americans and their allies." Its activities focus on "fighting radical Islam; working for Palestinian acceptance of Israel; robustly asserting U.S. interests vis-à-vis Saudi Arabia; developing strategies to deal with Iraq and contain Iran; and monitoring the spread of Islamism in Turkey." It strongly supported the Iraq War and advocates for other military actions in the region such as bombing Iran. MEF produces a steady stream of articles focusing on internal threats posed by Islam in the United States, such as "Keith Ellison's Secret Jihad" in its publication *Middle East Quarterly* and similar outlets. Another program of MEF is Islamist Watch, which "combats the ideas and institutions of nonviolent, radical Islam in the United States" because lawful Islamism is a threat that "seeks hegemonic control via a worldwide caliphate that applies the Islamic law in full." A third initiative is The Legal Project, set up "to protect researchers and analysts who work on the topics of terrorism, terrorist funding, and radical Islam from lawsuits designed to silence their exercise of free speech."

The MEF's Campus Watch defines its mission as "monitoring Middle East Studies on campus." It specifies that it "mainly addresses five problems: analytical failures, the mixing of politics with scholarship, intolerance of alternative views, apologetics, and the abuse of power over students." In 2002, Campus Watch encouraged students to submit reports critical of professors who did not support Israeli policy on Palestine. These reports were compiled into "dossiers" and published on the Campus Watch website which called for a blacklist of eight scholars and 14 universities singled out in these reports. Needless to say, the dossiers sparked fierce criticism and charges of McCarthy-like intimidation and "attempts to silence and muzzle dissenting voices." More than 100 academics asked to be added to the list in solidarity with those already named. Although the dossiers were removed within two weeks, Campus Watch remains highly controversial. It continues to collect information about "suspect" faculty and to circulate accusatory assessments of their political leanings.

According to a 2002 article in *The Nation*, Campus Watch was identified as the successor to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee Political Leadership Development Program, created in 1979. In American Israel Public Affairs Committee's (AIPAC) program, it enlisted 5,000 students on 350 campuses to collect information on so-called pro-Palestinian professors and student organizations. The findings were published in 1984 as "The AIPAC College Guide: Exposing the Anti-Israel Campaign on Campus," which also instructed students on how best to counter a "steady diet of anti-Israel vituperation." (The current AIPAC Leadership Development Program no longer includes such activities.)

Daniel Pipes's own website at www.danielpipes.org is a comprehensive collection of his commentaries, articles, reviews, audio, and blogs. He has a steady schedule of speaking dates on campuses, commentary in the media, and he writes regular columns for such newspapers as the *Washington Times*, *National Review Online*, and *Jerusalem Post*.

PROMINENCE AFTER 9/11 TERRORIST ATTACKS

Pipes became prominent for his extreme pro-Israel, anti-Muslim positions after the destruction of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. Campus Watch was set up not long after this event and it attracted enough attention in 2003 that the House of Representatives passed HR 3077, a bill that would have established an advisory board to "study, monitor, appraise, and evaluate' university area studies programs." The bill did not pass in the Senate, but the attempts to stifle debate on Israel, Palestine, and Muslim terrorism created a chilling atmosphere which remains in place on many campuses.

The same year, Pipes was nominated by then-President George W. Bush to a four-year term on the largely ceremonial Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace. However, the nomination was met with forceful opposition from a broad range of voices that included Democratic senators, American Muslims and Arabs, liberal Jews, and significant members of the academic community, and the Bush administration sidestepped the controversy by naming him with a recess appointment.

OPPOSITION TO DOMESTIC ISLAMIC INSTITUTIONS

In keeping with his position that even moderate and legal Muslim institutions constitute a threat to the United States, in 2007–08 Pipes was a vocal critic of the proposed Khalil Gibran International Academy in Brooklyn, the first public school "dedicated to the study of the Arabic language and culture and open to students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds." He spoke out against Debbie Almontaser, an Arab-American woman who was the school's founder and would-be principal, as a "jihadist," and she was eventually removed and replaced with a Jewish woman who does not speak Arabic.

Similarly, in 2010 he declared that Cordoba House (Park51), the Islamic community center proposed to be built in Lower Manhattan, "carries the unmistakable odor of Islamic triumphalism," and therefore the Center should be barred from opening because it "will spread Islamist ideology."

OBAMA AS A MUSLIM

Pipes has been a central figure in the ongoing accusation that President Obama is a secret Muslim. In December 2007, at the very start of Obama's campaign to become the Democratic Presidential nominee, Pipes published a piece in David Horowitz's conservative *FrontPage Magazine* called, "Obama and Islam." In it he strongly hinted that Obama is a Muslim because he "was born a Muslim to a non-practicing Muslim father and for some years had a reasonably Muslim upbringing under the auspices of his Indonesian step-father."

This premise was expanded in a second article, "Barack Obama's Muslim Childhood" and has since been picked up by a broad group of anti-Obama activists. Pipes himself continues to promote this position, when as recently as September 2010 he implied that Mr. Obama was, in effect, enforcing aspects of Islamic law in "a precedent that could lead to other forms of compulsory Shariah compliance" because Obama spoke against the public burning of Qurans threatened by a Christian fundamentalist pastor.

LOSING INFLUENCE?

Pipes remains an active campus speaker and popular conservative pundit on cable news programs and other media. However, an August 2010 interview in the *Washington Post* identified Pipes as a “controversial Islam scholar (who) says he’s now in the middle.” There, Pipes himself stated he has fallen off the radar because of more strident anti-Islam bloggers and activists such as Pamela Geller and Newt Gingrich, and he appears willing to appear slightly less hardline in the company of these newer high-profile Islamophobes by drawing the distinction that “we understand the nature of the problem differently.”

ALISON WEIR: IF AMERICANS KNEW

SPENCER SUNSHINE

Editor’s Note: This profile is different from the other profiles because it was commissioned as a piece of investigative journalism and analysis on an individual for whom there is very little mainstream coverage.

Few political writers today appear in the publications of both the Left and the Far Right. One rare exception is Alison Weir, the founder of If Americans Knew (IAK). Her denunciations of the vast power that Israel and its supporters in the United States allegedly wield resonate on the Far Right with figures like former Klansman and politician David Duke, the Holocaust-denying Institute for Historical Review, antisemitic talk radio host Clay Douglas, and the Pacifica Forum at the University of Oregon, which the Southern Poverty Law Center lists as a hate group.

At the same time, she can be found on the Left in the pages of *Z Magazine*, *Project Censored*, and *CounterPunch*. She has been praised by *Socialist Worker*, broadcast on affiliates of the Pacifica radio network, and spoken at the Left Forum conference.⁴³¹

Weir is a regular speaker on college campuses. She has appeared at Harvard Law School, the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, Stanford University, American University, the University of Chicago, Vassar College, and elsewhere. In 2003, she received death threats after she and Hatem Bazian debated with David Meir-Levi and Eric Sirkin at the University of California, Berkeley about how to achieve peace in the Middle East.⁴³² Alison Weir blogs at www.alisonweir.org and edits “Israel-Palestine: The Missing Headlines” (<http://israel-palestineneeds.blogspot.com>). While there is no editor listed by name at the site, it seems that she is also editor of the new IAK blog <http://israelpalestineanalysis.wordpress.com>. Weir is president of the Council for the National Interest and sometimes hosts its radio show, “Jerusalem Calling.”

At first glance, Weir seems like a typical Palestine solidarity activist. She says that she founded If Americans Knew (IAK) after she visited the Occupied Territories in 2001 and witnessed numerous human rights violations that were not

covered in the United States press. IAK is sometimes portrayed as a media watchdog group and its tagline is “What Every American Needs to Know About Israel-Palestine.”

But a closer inspection of Weir and IAK reveals disturbing elements. The main focus of their work is not on Palestinian conditions or rights, but on the power of the so-called Israel lobby in the United States. Weir describes the U.S. media’s tilt toward Israel as possibly “the most monumental cover-up in media history.”⁴³³ While she admits that a number of factors may account for this alleged pro-Israel bias, she consistently targets the Jewish backgrounds of editors and reporters.⁴³⁴ Even if they think they are unbiased, she says, unconscious family influences are likely to sway their opinions.⁴³⁵

IAK’s criticisms of Zionism and Israel dovetail with traditional antisemitic narratives, and Weir often cites antisemitic writers and publications as her sources. When asked if the work of antisemitic authors including Israel Shamir, Gilad Atzmon, and Kevin MacDonald were truly legitimate, she replied, “Yes. I suggest people read their work for themselves.”⁴³⁶

In 2005, IAK analyzed the coverage of deaths in the Israel-Palestine conflict in the *New York Times* and other newspapers, and concluded the outlets had a pro-Israel bias.⁴³⁷ It met with *New York Times* Public Editor Daniel Okrent, who did not accept their findings.⁴³⁸ The Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America, a pro-Israel media-watchdog group, criticized IAK’s report for methodological errors.⁴³⁹

In 2008, another controversy erupted after the public library in Greenwich, Connecticut cancelled a talk by Weir that had been scheduled by a member of IAK in one of the library’s public meeting rooms. Under pressure from free-speech advocates, such as the American Library Association, the talk was rescheduled. The controversy received national media attention.⁴⁴⁰

In 2009, based on stories that had appeared in a Swedish newspaper, Weir published articles in *CounterPunch* and the *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* accusing Israel of harvesting organs from Palestinians.⁴⁴¹ Weir’s claim was widely denounced as a modern version of the antisemitic blood libel—the myth that Jews use the blood of sacrificed Christian children to make Passover matzos.

Weir says “Israel’s core identity is based on ethnic and religious discrimination by a colonial, immigrant group,” and that it has an “exclusionist identity.”⁴⁴² She describes the 1948 founding of Israel as “one of the modern world’s most successful ethnic cleansings,” and a “holocaust” for Palestinians; elsewhere she implies this holocaust continues today.⁴⁴³

She has also said that “Israel struck first in all its wars except one. Historically, it was the initiator of conflict.”⁴⁴⁴ IAK writers such as Mazin Qumsiyeh, Jeffrey Blankfort [see profile], and Kathy Christison and the late Bill Christison claim that the U.S. invasion of Iraq was planned and executed by groups that are identified as being overwhelmingly Jewish. Weir has been on the board of *NewPolicy.org*, an offshoot of the New Policy PAC, whose mission is “to work with citizens, lawmakers, and administration officials to implement longstanding American positions on the Arab-Israeli conflict in the interest of enhancing American security”⁴⁴⁵ whose

antisemitic website <http://windowintopalestine.blogspot.com/> includes assertions that Israel was behind the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. In one radio interview, Weir also referred to “the significant role that Zionists played in pushing the U.S. into World War I,” and said, “these same groups [are] trying to push us into a war with Iran.”⁴⁴⁶

IAK claims that Israel, together with its supporters in the United States, controls many aspects of the U.S. government. Weir says, “The Israel lobby became far more powerful than those who originally tried to oppose it: the State Department, the Pentagon, the oil lobby.”⁴⁴⁷ IAK board member Paul Findley (a former Republican congressional representative from Illinois) describes the United States as in “bondage to Israel’s misdeeds.”⁴⁴⁸ Weir summarizes the situation by saying, “What Israel says, our media repeat. What Israel demands, our government gives. What Israel wants, its well-greased lobby delivers.”⁴⁴⁹

IAK is careful never to blame “the Jews”; instead it consistently refers to subsets of Jews such as “the Zionists,” “the Israel lobby,” or “the neocons.” American neoconservatives in particular are specifically identified as being overwhelmingly Jewish.⁴⁵⁰ Jewish subgroups are described consistently as elites who subvert national sovereignty. The “dual loyalties” of these subgroups is a common theme on the IAK website. “Neocons” in the United States and “oligarchs” in Russia receive special attention. Weir says that IAK “is opposed to discrimination in all its forms,” and one of her articles is subtitled “Antisemitism is Wrong.” However, the article does

not address the issue other than to say that people should not be dissuaded from criticizing Israel because they fear being called antisemitic.⁴⁵¹ When asked about what constitutes an antisemitic view that she would oppose, she identified statements which refer explicitly and collectively to “the Jews.”⁴⁵²

IAK narratives are consistent with the antisemitic conspiracisms of the past century, including the claims that Jews are clannish and cabal-like, have dual loyalties, control the media and the government, steal the body parts of non-Jews, and start wars, often in countries where they are a minority and where the wars are against the country’s interests. Following a classic populist narrative, Weir says that the American people must be informed about this situation to start “reclaiming our nation, our principles and our souls.”⁴⁵³ One email sent by the Council for the National Interest and signed by Weir even deploys one of the most famous antisemitic images, claiming that liberal J Street and the conservative American Israel Public Affairs Committee are “two tentacles of the same lobby.”⁴⁵⁴

Like many populist and conspiratorial narratives, some of IAK’s information is true and has potentially important things to contribute to public discourse; some of it is misleading, biased, or suffers from serious omissions; and much of it repeats traditional antisemitic conspiracisms. Alison Weir is not a recognized scholar on Middle East affairs, and campus groups and activists working for recognition and rights for Palestinians would be well advised to seek out more legitimate sources of information on the conflict than IAK.

INTERVIEWS WITH LEADERS IN CHALLENGING CAMPUS BIAS

TALKING TO STUDENT LEADERS

JOEL PRATT, HILLEL PRESIDENT, UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT BOULDER

BERLET: *I think there is a widespread perception that every MSA [Muslims Students Association] chapter and every Hillel chapter across the country are identical on every campus. Traveling around the country, visiting different Hillels, what's your perception of what they are like?*

PRATT: In general ... first, people think that minority groups are all the same, so people outside of any sort of minority group will say "well that group does its thing and we do our thing." But experience across the country has definitely shown that student-run organizations are really focused on the students. The more say students have—the more well-tailored it is—the more unique it is to each student environment.

BERLET: *One of the dilemmas for folks who maybe even have passionate views about U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East is that they often conflate Judaism the religion with Israeli state policy, and with the views of Jews in the U.S. That makes it difficult to have conversations about antisemitism and Israeli policy, and the boundaries get blurred. Is that what you've found?*

PRATT: I've definitely experienced that. I think people have a tendency to conflate what American Jews believe with what the Israeli government believes, and I think that is ... the fault of people who don't take the time to talk to American Jews and understand that there's quite variety of difference of opinion. I think that's a feature of our culture, our institutions which all tend to stress support for Israel and those types of things without thoughtfulness or regard for political ... whatever. So, I think it's probably a dual problem in that both other people see that—but we tend to put ourselves in that boat sometimes too.

BERLET: *In talking to folks at Hillels around the country, and the MSAs, in many questions they're quite careful to draw a distinction between their role as a religious and ethnic-oriented campus organization with their role supporting students outside the organization with political issues. Does Hillel find a balance?*

PRATT: Absolutely. Hillel students are involved in all sorts of political life in different ways, and our goal is to facilitate spiritual life on campus and not dictate political opinions. We do have to find a balance, in terms of both being able to support Israel (as a Jewish organization that wants to sup-

port the Jewish state), and making sure that we don't support things that go against Jewish values ... We make sure we don't get involved politically [so] that people feel welcome ... We continue to provide cultural experience without negative political connotations [being] at work.

BERLET: *So there would be a range of political views within Hillel?*

PRATT: Absolutely...there's definitely a range of views. From the hawkish people who believe Israel should always pursue military policy against Palestinians; [to] the doves who often believe that Israel shouldn't be pursuing military policy at all. That range definitely exists within Hillel, and hopefully within all cultural organizations on campus.

BERLET: *Clearly after [the] 9/11 [attacks] there was an increase in Islamophobia in the United States [but] I also saw an increase in antisemitism, especially on the political Left. Have you seen this on campus or off campus? [Situations] where you see people [who] are progressive or left-wing who take positions in support of Palestine, but don't know where the boundaries are when it comes to criticizing Israeli policies and [what is] historic antisemitism?*

PRATT: I think that that's a common problem. And that is something both Israeli activists and Palestinian activists have wanted to work hard to combat. But I think that oftentimes the rhetoric gets so confused and tensions run high. People start equating Jewish culture in Israel [and] the negative things Israel does with the way Jewish people are—and I think vice versa. People post-9/11 [attacks] tend to talk about Muslims being terrorists ... It's easy to fall prey to that, to [become] complacent with that, we see it everywhere. But you know Islam is a peaceful religion just like most [religions], but people fail to make those distinctions. I think it is a collective responsibility to try to draw those boundaries.

BERLET: *And the same would be true of antisemitism...*

PRATT: Absolutely.

BERLET: *Tell me about that.*

PRATT: I think there's a significant difference between criticizing political policies in Israel and making antisemitic remarks. But I think that even some professors here tend to miss that distinction, tend to lump it all into one category: "the Jews are doing this" or "the Arabs are doing this," and when those distinctions aren't drawn anymore then we have issues with antisemitism and Islamophobia.

BERLET: *So you're seeing that on a campus that's relatively peaceful like [here at the University of Colorado] there's more work to be done in terms of Islamophobia and antisemitism?*

PRATT: I think that could be said almost anywhere, but definitely there is room for improvement.

MOHAMMAD AZIMI, MSA PRESIDENT, UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT BOULDER

BERLET: *Have you found in talking to students who want to [discuss] issues regarding Islam or American foreign policy in the Middle East that some students are relatively uneducated about the differences between Muslims and Arabs, whether or not all Muslims share the same positions on Middle East struggles?*

AZIMI: Definitely. In my major [molecular, cellular, and developmental biology], the people I know—most students in my classes, when the subject comes up ... it is really disappointing to see the level of knowledge about the issue. With more liberal arts [or] humanities [students] ... they're trying to distinguish the two, and they're getting more educated about it. But there's still a belief that all Muslims share the same beliefs about some issues.

BERLET: *In your experience within MSA [Muslim Students Association], do you find that there's a wide range of views within your membership?*

AZIMI: Definitely. We have different ideas about everything—within religion, politics, everything.

BERLET: *Very often, in interviewing students around the country, there's an attitude among adults that students need help figuring [stuff] out—whether its political issues or religious issues. Have you found yourself under pressure from outside groups to take any sort of line regarding religion or politics? Or are people on campus comfortable making up their own minds?*

AZIMI: I think people are comfortable making their own minds. [There are] different factors that influence ... their thoughts, but I think that they absorb everything and decide for themselves People that can't distinguish the ideas that are right and the wrong ideas—those people are the people that disappoint you; and their ignorance is what makes you angry.

BERLET: *You were saying that lack of information disappoints you, but people who claim to have a whole lot of knowledge but don't seem willing to understand the issues make you a little more angry. Explain the distinction.*

AZIMI: A lot of the time people basically just don't know about something, because they haven't had the experience of facing that issue. That is disappointing because they haven't absorbed that knowledge But the people who think they know something and basically they have their minds set on the issue, [when] there's no logic behind what they believe in (they only believe it because they've been told what that is), they've basically absorbed the ideas and thoughts and analysis ... those are the people who make me angry. Because they're so set in their ideas and they're so stubborn, there's no logic behind what they're saying.

BERLET: *Some literature [says] that all MSAs are alike across the country, they are all hotbeds of radical Islam. Could you react to that?*

AZIMI: I don't know how to react to that. It is so ridiculous. I don't know if you're aware of this or not, last year the College Republicans hosted an event on campus, "Why We Want To Kill You." That was the title of the event. It was two ex-terrorists came here to talk about their experience and how they found their way. It was so much hatred thrown out there towards the Muslim Student Association.⁴⁵⁵

The ex-terrorists lacked even the simplest knowledge of Islam. They were talking about the Caliphs, and they were saying that Umar was the fourth Caliph and [Ali bin Abi Talib] was the second Caliph. I [challenged] them on that in the Q and A session [and] I told them [they were wrong]. Umar was the second Caliph and Muhammad was the first Caliph ... and they said "no."

Then the entire event ended with one of our [MSA] students ... asking what their point was with the entire event. And the speaker basically said that "my point is for you to shut up." This is the logic we have to deal with here. These are the people who basically say that MSAs are hotbeds for terrorism, the people who lack the simplest understanding of Islam, the people who think all Muslims have the same ideas.

BERLET: *Have you ever heard of Islamo-Fascism Awareness Week?*

AZIMI: Yes, we have it on campus every year ... We have an Islamo-Fascism Awareness Week every year on campus. It's usually in the humanities building.

BERLET: *Who sponsors it, do you know?*

AZIMI: I don't exactly know. I think it's an organization that's around throughout the entire United States, and they have a chapter here and they do it.

BERLET: *I understand that sometimes when you drive around you listen to right-wing radio just because you find it...*

AZIMI: It's pretty entertaining...

BERLET: *What are some shows you listen to?*

AZIMI: Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck ... Sean Hannity.

BERLET: *Do they make any sense?*

AZIMI: Maybe? I just don't understand their logic. But millions of people listen to them, so they must say something that has some—[long pause]—knowledge?— [long pause]—in it? [laughter].

BERLET: *Well let's turn the question around. ...Does it trouble you that there are millions of Americans who get their information about Islam from Fox News and right-wing radio? It's got to trouble you as someone who takes their religion seriously.*

AZIMI: It is very troubling, but [I] think that they lack the basic levels of understanding and analyzing what comes to their mind. Those aren't the people who are ever going to have a lot of influence, they're not going to be very well educated. So it doesn't alarm me. It disappoints me, but it doesn't alarm me. This is a free society, there is access to so many sources of information, but the people who listen to these right-wing ultra-conservative radio stations, these are

the people who don't want to listen to other ideas because they've been brain-washed and ideas have been implanted into their minds, and they don't want to come to the realization that their ideas are wrong.

BERLET: *There are also many members of Congress who have these same ideas ... But it would appear that there are some influential people in the country who have these Islamophobic ideas, and really whip up sentiment against Islam around the world, and they shape U.S. foreign policy. That has got to be more scary and troubling.*

AZIMI: It is very disappointing. Those are the people who have made it hard for public policy relations [between] the U.S. and the Muslim world ... We can't do much except for trying to teach people ... to show them new sources of information. Other than that, there's not much we can do. I think that [in] a few years these ideologies will be gone. Hatred never stands, this is another kind of hatred we've gotten in these few years. We are just hoping ...

FAITH ON CAMPUS: BRIDGE BUILDERS

EBOO PATEL

Eboo Patel is the founder and Executive Director of Interfaith Youth Core, a Chicago-based institution building the global interfaith youth movement. Author of the award-winning book *Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim, in the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation*, Patel is also a regular contributor to the *Washington Post*, National Public Radio, and CNN. He is a member of President Obama's Advisory Council of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, and holds a doctorate in the sociology of religion from Oxford University, where he studied on a Rhodes scholarship.⁴⁵⁶

PRA: *What do you see as the differences between campus and community interfaith organizing for coexistence? Are there key determinants of health community interfaith practices that have special applicability in the work of developing healthy campus life?*

PATEL: IFYC [Interfaith Youth Core] is working to make interfaith cooperation a social norm. That means that when two people of different religious identities, or non-religious identity, encounter one another, their first impulse will be collaboration, rather than the distrust or fear that so often define the way people of different religious backgrounds interact. We want cooperation to be a norm, rather than an exception to the rule.

While we've always had a focus on young people leading this charge, when we first started, we worked with a variety of people of different demographics who were excited about the idea. Over the last 18 months or so, we started asking what kind of measurable impact we were having,

which challenged us to think about focusing our work on one particular sector. Colleges and universities have always been a natural partner for us. They're diverse spaces where students are taught to think critically and constructively about identity. They're also a place where students may first encounter religious diversity, and for many students it's the first time they may have the chance to embrace or reject a religious identity.

We began to think about what kind of impact this movement could achieve if colleges and universities tackled this topic. We looked to the multicultural movements in higher education as an example of how campuses addressed issues of identity in a holistic way, and thought about what it would look like for campuses to engage religious diversity in a similar fashion.

Some questions we asked were: What kinds of religious diversity training would happen for student leaders? Would faculty and staff be expected to have competencies specific to religious diversity? What kinds of major, minors, interdisciplinary concentrations might explore religious diversity and engagement in the classroom? What sort of commitment might the president of a university make to fostering interfaith cooperation on campus?

Our work is now increasingly focused on working with campuses in longer-term partnerships to build a sustainable, measurable climate of interfaith cooperation on campus, and to fostering a broader conversation within higher education about religious diversity. We've also launched a new student leadership and interfaith action campaign called "Better Together."

Much of our campus work is derived from social science research on how communities mitigate the challenges of diversity and remain strong in the face of tension and outright conflict. In particular, we draw from Ashutosh Varshney's work on conflict and peace between Muslims and Hindus in India, and Robert Putnam's work on the adverse effects of diversity on social capital in America. For more on how we think about this, see a recent piece that I wrote with a colleague from IFYC in *The Journal of College and Character*, "The Civic Relevance of Interfaith Cooperation for Colleges and Universities."⁴⁵⁷

PRA: *What makes an interfaith initiative able to weather dissent and conflict?*

PATEL: Campuses are a place where students often encounter religious diversity with a greater intensity than ever before, while simultaneously thinking critically (maybe for the first time) about their own identity, the identities of others, and their relationships to others. Many interfaith efforts on campus begin with dialogue on tough issues. For example, bringing together the Hillel and the Muslim Student Association (MSA) to talk about Israel/Palestine, or hosting a theological debate on the nuances in different conceptions of the divine. While these are deeply important conversations, when substantial relationships don't exist between the groups in conversation, divisions are sometimes amplified by the dialogue rather than bridged.

Rather than focusing on theology or politics, IFYC takes an action-based approach that begins with shared values

between different religious and non-religious perspectives. What values do students have in common—like mercy, justice, compassion—that they can actually work on together? Although this conversation begins with talk about commonalities, it opens up space for recognizing real difference. Students might work together in a local soup kitchen, but in doing so they discover that one does it because she believes Jesus Christ is her Lord and Savior, and another does it because he's practicing out the value of mercy he sees embodied in the Prophet Muhammad. In other words, focusing on shared values doesn't water down truth claims or religious distinction. Instead, it opens up a way to talk about those differences building on existing networks of engagement and social capital, so that relationships are able to weather those differences and even lay the groundwork to tackle tougher disagreements.

PRA: In our research on especially well-publicized incidents, we're finding that campuses have special vulnerability to deliberately provocative speakers on both the Right and Left. At the same time, campuses thrive on not just free speech but the airing of competing points of view. What's your sense of the most productive way to handle such visits?

PATEL: One of the most successful ways we've seen students respond is by not engaging the speakers at the combative level that they primarily operate. For example, students at one university invited a well-known, conservative anti-Muslim speaker to campus as a part of "Islamofascism Awareness Week," whose talk focused on the alleged oppression of women within Islam. [See related profile on David Horowitz in this report.] Rather than staging a protest, or going to his talk and arguing against him, a clever female Muslim student organized "Islamofashion Awareness Week" as an opportunity to talk about female fashion within Islam and open up conversation about the rich diversity of female experiences within the tradition. Her events were a huge success, and helped to reframe the campus atmosphere from one of combat to mutual respect and learning.

We've seen students organize interfaith service projects and solidarity gatherings in response to similar speakers; all of these work to build upon existing and increase social capital, rather than exaggerating lines of conflict and division. Again, pointing to Ashutosh Varshney's work, it is exactly these kinds of "networks" of engagement that ensure a community will incline towards peace—rather than tension—when an agitator is on campus.

PRA: Circumstances in the Middle East often serve as "flash points" for expressions of both Islamophobia and antisemitism on campus and elsewhere. Have you identified any factors that lead to handling this volatile situation productively?

PATEL: Again, focusing on common action is one of the key strategies we've identified for constructively tackling divisive issues. If there's tension around the Middle East, we've seen interfaith organizers successfully reframe those relationships by bringing together, for example, the MSA and the Hillel to work on a local service project and then taking on the tough conversations. It's not to say those conversations won't still be difficult, but it does mean they'll start from a space of shared experience, common commitments,

and social capital rather than the typical "Us vs. Them" narrative.

PRA: Can you give a few examples of successful campus interfaith projects?

PATEL: We are endlessly impressed with the creative and innovative ideas students come up with to build interfaith cooperation. This year we had nearly 10,000 students on 97 campuses participating in our Better Together campaign, an interfaith action campaign focused on amplifying interfaith work on college campuses around the country.

As a part of the campaign last year, students at Hamline University (MN) adopted and helped to settle refugee families to the Twin Cities area; they filled the house with donations collected by students from the local communities and threw welcome dinners for the new families. At Wesleyan University, students started an annual "Fast-A-Thon" where they encourage students to give up their cafeteria meals and raised thousands of dollars for a local food-related charity. The event encouraged reflection and intentional dialogue on the value and practice of fasting in different religious and non-religious traditions.

PRA: When we speak of campus life we usually are speaking of a young population. Are you seeing any particular trends in interfaith practices and commitments among young people?

PATEL: Young people grasp the need for interfaith cooperation and action in an immediate way. They've grown up with a best friend of a different religious or non-religious perspective; they were in high school during the 9/11 attacks. What they're often lacking is constructive language to talk about how this desire to have friends of different backgrounds can be harnessed to make positive change in the world, and to mitigate much of the antisemitic and Islamophobic language that they hear. In the same way that young people played a key leadership role in building other social change movements (like the role of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in the Civil Rights Movement), college students may be the ones who help us make interfaith cooperation the norm and reality we are hoping for.

CHARLES COHEN

COHEN: I'm Charles Cohen, professor of History and Religious Studies and Director of the Lubar Institute for the Study of the Abrahamic Religions at the University of Wisconsin, (LISAR). The institute was founded in 2005 and our mission is to conduct research on and stimulate conversations about the Abrahamic traditions, most notably Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

BERLET: The Lubar Institute has a goal of looking at the similarities and differences among the Abrahamic religions. Embedded in that is also a goal of expanding understanding among the various religions and especially working with students. Can you talk a little bit about that?

COHEN: There are at least ... two centers of activity and I

think they are intimately related. At one level, I'll call it academic, is an enterprise to think about research about the historical cultural religious interactions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as parts of a larger tradition rather than as individual religious traditions, and to see them always as in dialogue with each other, in contest with each other if you will—which has certainly often happened—but not in isolation. That then carries into practice [the interaction among] Christians, Muslims, and Jews at a variety of levels.

There's a scholarly level [where] we try to engage religious leaders as well, members of the laity and non-members of these communities. That includes students. We encourage [people] to learn about one another's traditions and simply meet each other to discover each other as living members of those traditions and as human beings.

BERLET: I was on the advisory board to the PBS series *With God on Our Side* [with] George Marsden. He's a scholar of religion, a very well-known person who takes his scholarship quite seriously. One of the things that came out was [that some] people of faith were also scholars. There are a number of people who don't understand how that can even be.

Marsden went on to write an essay about how tired he was of having people ask how he could be a scholar and practice a religion. Have you run into [the situation where] people come up to you and say "you're an intellectual, you're a rational person, how can you believe in a faith which is by definition irrational?"

COHEN: Well interestingly, the most pointed queries I got about that happened ... in of all places Kazakhstan. I went with a group of University of Wisconsin faculty because we're involved in trying to develop a relationship with a new university there. In any case, as part of the visit I was delegated to give a lecture to a group of high school students. The religious policy of Kazakhstan is interesting. I won't go into it, but that was why I was chosen to do it. So I gave a talk on religion in the university, suggesting that religion is an important part of our societies and that a university is a very important place in which it should be discussed. I was prepared for the kinds of questions that American students would give me or I would like to think—but instead what I got was "do you believe in God?" and when I said yes, it was "how can you have any theory of causation?" (I'm [paraphrasing] in a little more sophisticated [way]).

In some ways it was both an expected, post-Marxist response; at another level I thought it was a kind of sweet ignorance or at least innocence about how can you put these two things together? I realized given who the audience [was] and what we were trying to do, I had better answer as directly and as personally as I could, which is not something I usually do or talk about in that kind of situation.

I think more normatively around the academy ... there's an epistemological bias that is very real—and to a great degree understandable—that underlies and also subdues certain kinds of tensions. My sense is ... is that there are more practicing believers of a variety of traditions on universities [campuses] than they let on. I'll put myself in that category for a large part of my career. When I was a graduate student early in my career and went on prattling about something

and one of my professors said "that sounds very religious" and I said "no, it's metaphysical." Because I felt that if I were targeted or labeled as somehow religious it would ruin my career, whereas metaphysical ... philosophical speculation [was] utterly [acceptable]. It's interesting that you mentioned Marsden, because he's really pushed the envelope here.

Research universities are built—and I'm enough of a child of the Enlightenment to think that they really need to be built—primarily on epistemological grounds, reason and a bias against supernatural causation. The thing is that to bring up religious belief as the students in Kazakhstan reacted would seem to suggest that if you believe you therefore must subscribe to some kind of supernatural epistemology, or that in any case you cannot make the kinds of statements that are part and parcel of normative intellectual life. And I think that the culture of rationalist epistemology in universities is so powerful that other thoughts sort of flow in a subterranean way and very, very seldom break out.

BERLET: That implies that there is a management that goes on for people of faith. I'm looking at students on a modern university campus and when they are students who are part of a spiritual or religious belief system, they have to manage their devotion, their adherence to particular belief structures. In a pluralistic society and a university [community] that does demand a kind of rationalist explanation for things, and this creates tension for students. When you add into that conflict between Muslims and Jews and Christians, and especially differences of [opinion] on the Middle East, this would seem to be a readymade environment for conflict.

COHEN: Well, it might be phrased a couple of different [ways], let me try and sort them out. The first is, any religious student who (depending on one's traditions) has a certain religious regimen, [engaging in] a university [or] any imposing impressive discipline structure in modern life ... could be your job. So that's one set of conflicts or at least demands. How does one manage to function religiously in a pluralist and rather secular or at least normatively secularist society? The second is, what about tensions among believers on various issues?

Let me just go to the first one first. Actually, I shouldn't say that in my opinion that the culture or the religious culture is absolutely neutral. Christians got to the United States first and they set the rules: Sunday is the holiday, so is Saturday. I've become most aware of that now in dealing with Muslim students and faculty ... particularly because of the [religious requirement] that they pray five times a day, [I've become] impressed that [they] take the time and have the discipline to carry out their faith commitments under circumstances that are at least inconvenient, if not more so. In adjusting your schedules—your prayer schedules, your class schedules to all of the other demands that are put on you—is just taxing, even if no one is trying to keep you from doing that. I haven't had ... really any experience of Jews having difficulties with that, and Christians I haven't either. But of course the schedule that we live in, the official schedules are centered around the Christian calendar and everyone else has to adjust a little bit.

At a place like [University of Wisconsin] we're recognizing that the Eids are important for Muslims, so now that gets on

the university calendars. Instructors are always told when religious observances and classroom policies conflict. Years ago, when I was running Religious Studies, we came up with a calendar that we tried to be all-inclusive—we had Zoroastrians and Wiccans and everyone we can think of, along with an evaluation to give to an administration—"Here are the holidays and here's what we think is the policy that you should follow." An obvious one, on Yom Kippur anyone claiming to be Jewish should get that day off. Now, the eighth day of Hanukkah, if someone is really, really observant and they claim [they cannot attend classes] then you should take that seriously, but for most students that's not going to be a good enough reason for missing classes. So all of these adjustments and discussions go on constantly.

One other anecdote. I've been involved as Hillel ... in a discussion with the Dean of Students' office about [establishing] a prayer space for Muslims. Some time ago a Muslim graduate student came to me and said she'd been trying to secure a place. [She said] that Muslim students just pray wherever they are, and sometime they have to go to bathrooms [for private prayer space] and find it uncomfortable. So I've been going to meetings, with first one student and now another student has taken that student's place, just to talk about these things and to help the campus accommodate to this situation. On this campus, I think impressively, Hillel stepped in and offered space, or at least said that any Muslim students who wanted to use Hillel to do one of their daily prayers would be welcome. These kinds of conflicts or tensions I think are built into our social framework, but on this campus anyway I think generally they are pretty well handled.

So now the other conflict that you mention about students within traditions. I think that those conflicts tend to be more about politics than religion. Religion plays a part but if we're talking about the Middle East we're not talking about Jewish conceptions of God as opposed to Muslim conceptions of God, which actually I think are pretty close. What we're talking about is the wall between Israel and Palestine and the occupation and settlements and terrorism and etc. etc. So, like any other campus in the United States or like any other institution or any place in civil society, these kinds of issues rub up against each other. I'd like to think that at UW we are fairly sensitive to these things. Again, if the flashpoint right now is between Jewish and Muslim students more generally, and at UW-Milwaukee they've come to blows that hasn't happened here. Indeed, to go back to Hillel, they've hosted Iftar dinners during Ramadan. There's been a real effort on the part of the various communities, or at least parts of those various communities to really engage. I like to think [LISAR] plays its part as well. Our fellows ... consist of Jews, Muslims, and Christians. For that matter, anyone who is interested in talking about those traditions [is welcome] and need not be a member—we've had agnostics, we've had atheists [attend events], and that's fine. You just need to want to be part of the conversation, but we don't care from what perspective you enter into the conversation.

BERLET: Here, at the University of Wisconsin, there has been leadership to build conversations which I think logically one could argue would play a role in reducing the escalation of disagreements into confrontations, and confrontations into

physical assault. Leadership can play a role by anticipating tensions and finding ways for people to talk to one another. Is that subconsciously part of the Lubar Institute agenda? Having done the research, it's clearly an aspect of how the University of Wisconsin looks at these issues. How conscious is that?

COHEN: Oh, I think it's absolutely conscious. The idea for the Institute was proposed by Sheldon Lubar, a Milwaukee businessman back in 2002. This is his post-9/11 moment, and he'll say that. He went to the chancellor and said he had an idea. The chancellor sent him to me and over a number of years we began to work it out. These kinds of conversations are very, very important for me. My interest is overdetermined, as a scholar who is running [a] Religious Studies [department] and as a Jew married to a Catholic who entered into rather complicated negotiations regarding our marriage, so these kinds of conversations for me are deeply important. So yes, ... I didn't search [out] the idea for the institute, it found me. But when it fell in my lap, I thought OK, this is something I think is really important and I'd like to try to make it work.

The campus has been very supportive, at least in principle. As you can imagine there's a lot of paperwork one has to do to develop something like this inside a large bureaucracy. At no point in the development [of LISAR] did anyone say "Stop, we shouldn't be doing this." Indeed, the opposite was true.

Initially we had to reach out to all of the communities on campus. [...] I think leadership, reaching out, being willing to take other people's beliefs seriously and to learn about them [is important]. It's not always easy and not everyone is particularly interested, and one meets a variety of resistances, but I'd like to think that at this point, five years on, enough people on campus know about us that should disagreement pop up, the first impulse would not be "to the barricades!", but rather "wait a minute, can we sort of talk about this first."

BERLET: The perception, especially in the Jewish community but also in the mainstream media, is that campuses are a place where Jews and Muslims are at each other's throats. We have found that Jewish and Muslim students on some campuses, on somewhat of a regular basis, hear comments that are accurately called slurs. But that's different from people in fist fights. The norm for Jewish and Muslim [students] is separation—they don't interact. When they do interact, it is generally around some demonstration around the Middle East. So there are confrontations, but this is isn't the day-to-day experience of most Jewish and Muslim students. How do we unravel that package for people? On one hand, antisemitism and Islamophobia are problems in America today—and people tend to diminish that antisemitism is still a problem, unless they are studying left-wing rhetoric on the Middle East. I am a left-winger and I am horrified at what I hear at some meetings where people use [antisemitic] stereotypes. So there's a mess here, made more difficult to unravel by public perceptions that are false, but you don't want to minimize the fact that both antisemitism and Islamophobia still exist in the U.S., especially Islamophobia in terms of political gains being made by certain political forces.

COHEN: How do you start unraveling that? I guess you start providing information. ... Is there antisemitism in American society? Sure. Maybe it's where I get my information. I'm more concerned about traditional antisemitism from the Right. If Jews have been killed in the past ten or twenty years, and there are very, very few of these [murders], the hate crimes have come from the Right, [not] from the Left. So Christian Identity groups, neonazis, etc. etc. I'm still aware—when Jews pray on the High Holy Days [at] every synagogue I've ever gone to there's been a policeman outside for our own protection, not that anything's ever happened. I haven't noticed that ... at churches, not even mosques.

Is there antisemitism? Is it the daily fact of life of students on campus? This is the campus I know best, and I don't see it at all evident regularly. Do individual [incidents] occur? Of course. I think they occur on racial grounds, on ethnic grounds.

Sometimes Jews like to think it's worse for us, and there's a certain sensitivity that's hardwired into Jewish history and that the Holocaust reinforces, that makes Jews sensitive. That's not to diminish the reality of all of that, it's to say that sometimes—I can say this as a Jew—we get very hypersensitive about that.

Is there Islamophobia? Islamophobia at the political level is very, very real. Muslims I know say to me that they're more nervous and more concerned than they have been in a long time. But again, on campus I'm less aware [of problems]. Are there encounters where one student may say something to another student? Inevitably. I'm not aware that they've risen to a level beyond the normal background noise. Does it happen to Christian students? I'm sure it does, perhaps less in part because they may be less ethnically or racially or [observably] religious. So [Christians] are less targeted. But I think that this low-level sneer at certain kinds of beliefs—if they are brought out in conversation—is there.

So, yes there are realities of prejudice and dislike. I suspect we will always have them. The issue is how do we discern, at what point do they get to levels where some kind of intervention is necessary? At places [like] Milwaukee where Jewish and Muslim students have gotten into fistcuffs, in California [...] now you're dealing with political issues ... with, demonstrative behavior.

So things have moved to a certain level but again [these incidents are] about politics ... The only time [Jewish and Muslim students interact] are in circumstances where they tend to be in disagreement, in passionate disagreement. There's no preparation for how to deal with that except that Jews will "know" that Muslims support the Palestinians and therefore support terrorism, and Muslims "know" that Jews support Israel and are therefore in favor of the occupation and so on. And the conversation begins there. I think the first thing is to have the students talk to each other, or just meet each other, and Christians as well. I'm not saying that meeting people will necessarily change political positions, or that it will solve the Middle East crisis, [but] it may give students a little better sense of themselves as member of the American civil polity. That, to my mind, is one of the most important things that we can be doing.

BERLET: I've [met with] a few Hillel and [Muslim Student

Association] MSA leaders, and I've always found time to ask this one question: what aggravates you the most? The most common answer from both ... is that they really wish people would not assume that they know what they think about the Middle East, because within their chapters there's a wide range of opinions. To say that a Jewish student affiliated with Hillel or a Muslim student affiliated with the MSA has a party line on the Middle East question is absurd. I think that there is a kind of stereotyping that then creates a kind of angst within both Jewish and Muslim communities about their children going to campuses where they perceive the environment to be unwelcoming.

COHEN: Right. I get a sense (and not always from students) that even the idea of talking to them is itself [a question]—why would you do that? And yet it seems to me if you don't [meet and talk] the most that can happen is you can reinforce stereotypes on each side. You're not acting with the full range of information that's available.

Again, I don't think that talking with people will necessarily change political positions, but it may give a sense that there are more possibilities [beyond] a sort of bipolar model, [that] might lead ... to creative thinking we very much need. I think American Muslims have a very difficult but absolutely critical role to play both within the American polity and abroad. I think we've reached a time in the history of the various traditions, in terms of globalization and so on, where American Muslims have to explain Islam to the rest of Americans. They have to learn that they have to do that and they also have to explain America to the rest of Muslims. Now American Muslims are a very tiny percentage of both the American population and the worldwide Muslim population, but because they've achieved a certain prominence and I would say overall a well being, (although they have to fight through the current winds of Islamophobia,) what they tell their fellow Americans about what it means to be Muslim will be very informative for helping the rest of us grapple with issues of bringing in another religious group. This is a dynamic that's gone on for three or four centuries.

At the same time, I think [American Muslims] can start telling Muslims around the world different views of what America is, and that Islam can live quite comfortably within American religious culture. Those statements, broadening and strengthening American civic culture on the one hand, and [conveying] a different way for Muslims to think about [...] America and their own societies on the other, are very important. Now these changes aren't going to happen overnight—it will take at least a generation or more, I think. But I think that this is an enterprise that is very, very important and very, very well worth doing. And it's not advanced by just keeping ourselves apart from each other.

BERLET: I have to tell you, how impressed I have been in hearing the LISAR fellows ... they represented themselves and the Lubar Institute very well...

COHEN: Thank you.

BERLET: ...and they come in so nervous, saying "I don't know why you'd want to talk to me, I'm not articulate," and then they are, in a variety of ways. Implicit in all of the interviews I've done so far is a kind of charming optimism and hope,

not a credulous, “we’re all going to get along, there’re no disagreements.” Every single person has said, “this is hard, I still don’t understand some things, I have some questions, I need answers.” And yet everyone involved in this project is at least implicitly optimistic that there is a future where, despite continual disagreement, peace among the communities is possible. Even if it takes a generation, LISAR fellows seem committed to the idea that at least part of their job is to change things.

COHEN: Yes, and I think that all of us involved in the Institute feel that way. I’m glad to hear you say that about the fellows, observing them independently. Now to be sure, people with a certain kind of inclination present themselves to be fellows. But I think that sense of optimism or at least goodwill is imperative. I’d like to think that in a generation down the line the United States will have passed through the worst excesses of [its] Islamophobia. My wife will tell you that I’m an extremely depressive and pessimistic personality so I don’t express optimism lightly, though my sense as a historian does suggest to me that there is a dynamic in American religious life. I think among global societies we are very, very good at hewing to our stated ideals of religious freedom and letting people in. That doesn’t say that they come in easily, and Puritans hanged Quakers in 17th century Massachusetts. There were occasionally fatal, bloody battles between Protestants and Catholics in the 19th century. Every group that comes here gets bruised, and they have to throw elbows. Elbows not bombs, though there have been a few of those—a century ago Jews were anarchists and communists and some of them were [perceived as] dangerous to the polity. But in the end, everyone who had wanted to come [to the United States] has won acceptance. What I like to call the better natures or better angels of our civic natures have prevailed and I would like to think they will prevail again.

Muslims will have to help themselves. I’ve heard some students say, why do we have to explain [Islam to everyone else]? Well, in an ideal world you don’t, but in this one you do. And a lot of that is because there are not a lot of people who go as far as the guy who stands up with the sign saying “everything I learned about Islam I learned about on 9/11,” but there are people like that. There are [also] people who say, “Everything I know about Islam you could put in a thimble.” There are a lot of people who are simply uninformed. They’re not going to become informed without some Muslim help in explaining [Muslim beliefs and practices]. I don’t want to put this all on Muslims—this is on a lot of us as well—but Muslims are the best explicators of their own traditions and they will need to make that case, as indeed I think they’re doing.

What the Institute strives to do is to allow every [faith tradition] to make its case in an environment that we hope promotes these kinds of conversations. Will there be disagreements? Absolutely; the goal is not some sort of perfectionist utopia where no one ever disagrees. The only place we get that is an asylum where everyone’s drugged. Even then, they’re probably disagreeing with the doctors about something—but that’s not the goal. The goal is a strong civil society where people may agree to disagree, but they also agree to agree.

So, again, I’m intrigued to hear about the fellows through your interviews because you interact with them differently than I [do]. The fellows have been a part of the Institute from the very beginning. Indeed, when I started the Institute in 2005, there was me and an empty room, then I hired an administrator and then I got fellows. The first year [consisted of] talking with students and saying, “What should we do? What should this Institute do?” and their talking to each other and to me. The fellows interacting [among themselves] is as much as anything what the Institute does. [...] We are Jews, Muslims and Christians, people of strong faith commitments, people of weak faith commitments, people of no faith commitments but an interest in the enterprise. I think that the doing of it rather than the proclamation, is the most important thing, and I am delighted to have students along.

APRIL ROSENBLUM

April Rosenblum is a progressive human rights activist who wrote *The Past Didn’t Go Anywhere: Making Resistance to Antisemitism Part of All of Our Movements*, a highly-regarded guide for Leftists on how to avoid antisemitism while paying attention to challenging other forms of bigotry.

BERLET: What did you study at Temple University, and did your coursework help shape your thinking about antisemitism on the Left?

ROSENBLUM: I started out as a sociology major, and I also minored in Spanish. I had been involved in grassroots activism since high school, and I took time off before starting college to work and do activism, on issues like U.S. political prisoners and police brutality, antiracism, reproductive rights, and economic justice. But when the 9/11 attacks happened, I felt an urge to reach out to the Arab and Muslim students and try to show some support if I could. I had known about how Japanese Americans were interned during World War II and I felt worried that there was going to be a similar popular outbreak of hatred against them, and in fact, I found that they were really worried, too. When I first ventured into the student life area after 9/11 to drop by the Muslim Students Association, there was a huddle of female students together crying.

I could really relate to the fear that they felt and I think on some level I knew it was because I’m Jewish and I grew up hearing and reading stories of everything being normal, and then one day a nation turning on you and coming to get you. One of the ways I felt like I could connect with those students was to study Arabic, so I started to study that at Temple and later in Morocco, and made a lot of friends at school whose opinions and experiences were very important to me.

Throughout all this, I was getting more curious about the most prominent issues these days where Jews and Arabs are in the news, which is Israel/Palestine politics and Middle East politics. It started out as a very knee-jerk, guilt-based thing where I wanted to prove that there were Jews in this country who don’t agree with and will speak up against

what is happening to Palestinians. Although I don't think I capitalized on antisemitic stereotypes in my activism, I was definitely that person who was trying to distance myself from other Jewish students and make myself look better than the Jewish students who had more right-wing views than mine. I was angry at other Jews and I had a lot of distinct memories of negative experiences as a child around the Jewish community that colored that, specifically around class and experiences of exclusion. So there was no instinct in me when I started out to be in solidarity with Jews AND Arabs and Muslims.

But pretty quickly I got that if I wanted to do my activism around Israel and Palestine from a real place, I needed to learn about who I was as a Jew. That's how I started to study Jewish history. And that became totally fascinating to me pretty much immediately. I was able to change my major so that it was essentially a customized major in global Jewish history, and the next few years were filled with learning about my people and Jewish culture until I felt really at home there and I had attained a level of fluency that made up for the ways I had been on the margins as a kid.

My growth as a scholar and an activist during this time was indebted to some really amazing professors I had—Jewish, Muslim, and white, gentile professors. These professors were really an example to me of how you could speak out with integrity on the policies that you opposed, from a place of firmness and dignity and also genuine intellectual curiosity instead of dogmatism, and they had a very collegial atmosphere together that modeled something really good for us as their students.

BERLET: Did you encounter situations while at Temple that led you to decide to challenge antisemitism on the Left and/or on campuses?

ROSENBLUM: The situation that first jolted me awake about antisemitism on the Left occurred on my campus, but it wasn't student activism. It was 2001 and there was a local community organization that held a panel discussion on the World Conference on Racism in Durban, South Africa, and co-sponsored it with a number of other local activist groups. Both Israel and the U.S. had pulled out of this conference, purportedly because of an antisemitic atmosphere—and there was problematic stuff that happened at that conference—but both governments' decisions to leave were probably in large part to shield themselves from criticism for their policies.

In the course of the event, one particular speaker ended up going from criticizing Zionists to saying intensely, unmistakably anti-Jewish things—for instance, that Germans had been the victims of Jewish control, that Jews were controlling America today, and that oppressed people in the U.S. should rise up against Jews the way the Germans had. Two people in the room stood up and challenged what was being said: a non-Jewish woman of color and a close friend of mine who was Jewish.

It was really frightening for me to hear about blatant, old-style antisemitism being voiced in an event that was supposed to be about social justice. But what really stayed with me and my friend was that we had many friends in the audi-

ence, fellow white antiracist activists who we had known well for years, yet none of them stood up and said anything when this happened. In fact, they didn't even approach my friend about it afterwards to check in—it was like they were paralyzed about it.

This was a turning point for me in many ways. It was, unfortunately, just the first of a lot of similar incidents in grassroots Left spaces that I either witnessed myself or learned of as I got into researching for my pamphlet. But what it taught me was that for many people on the Left—probably the majority of us—when we don't say anything to counter antisemitism that's right in our face, it's not because we are comfortable with those messages. It's because when it comes to this particular issue, we don't know how to stand up. We don't know what to say. We've never been given the tools to confront it, the way for instance antiracist activists have developed formal trainings to give white people the tools to challenge racism in their daily work. We have self-doubt about saying anything, because the people spouting antisemitic rhetoric seem very sure of themselves, whereas the rest of us have never been given a radical perspective on this issue.

I was able to see this because these particular activists, who hadn't stood up for my friend, were people I knew and loved. I trusted them on any other issue. So what came out of it was something really amazing and valuable to my education. I proposed to them that they should be the members of a monthly class that I would design on antisemitism and how to oppose it from a radical perspective. We called this group "Allies to Jews." The members were very dedicated, they really thought deeply about the issues we discussed and about what made anti-Jewish oppression operate somewhat differently than the other oppressions we were more familiar with, and they acted as a focus group for the work that went into my pamphlet. Running this group built a lot of faith in me in the capacity of non-Jewish activists to stand up on this issue when they are given the tools to put their real values into action.

The last assignment for the group members was to have a conversation with a fellow activist, who did not already share their understanding of antisemitism, about why they were in this group. This was a major personal challenge for my friends, who didn't consider themselves very expert on this issue or able to casually defend their views. They took it on with a great deal of heart and I admired their commitment to do it despite their fear. I was afraid of conversations like that too—that's why I wrote a pamphlet that I can just hand to someone instead of having to have a scary conversation with every person who says something offensive!

But in general, I think it's the job of Jewish activists to get up the courage to reach out and help our closer non-Jewish colleagues cultivate an understanding of this so that they can be our allies—and it's the job of those allies to confront the more egregious offenders.

BERLET: Did your work on human rights issues during and after college demonstrate to you that there was still a problem of antisemitism on the Left?

ROSENBLUM: Most definitely. There were a lot of particu-

larly blatant incidents at that time in a number of different movements, among anti-globalization activists and at anti-war demonstrations, where a lot of old antisemitic canards were getting recycled into new versions of the “Jews controlling the banks,” or the media or wars. At the same time Israeli military actions were getting a lot of news coverage, and the grassroots pro-Palestine movement was getting a big boost of energy and becoming more vibrant.

In some of these incidents, the people who perpetrated the most virulently antisemitic things were white activists with either very confused understandings of progressive politics, or with actual disingenuous intentions. The views they were spouting were actually straight-up white supremacist propaganda or old-school antisemitic mythology that they had heard elsewhere and were now bringing into these progressive environments. But the atmosphere in a lot of these social justice demonstrations and campaigns was such that these kinds of ideas were able to seep in, and some casual observers would either agree with them, even cheer them on, and others would not agree but simply not see it as important to contradict them.

At the same time, there were many incidents of plain old traditional antisemitic violence around the world. These weren't things that were happening on the Left; they were perpetrated by the same kinds of racist organizations, institutions and individuals that have targeted Jews for a long time. They ranged from big things like attempts in Russia's parliament to ban all of the country's Jewish organizations, to individual attacks like the torture and murder of a young, working-class Jewish man in Paris by thugs who targeted Jews for kidnapping. The social justice movements I was a part of did not have an understanding that anti-Jewish oppression is a present-day reality, not something that spontaneously disappeared from the world after the Holocaust ended. And that affected their ability to comprehend antisemitism when it happened in our circles.

BERLET: *In the booklet you highlight the fact that a number of groups other than Jews also face issues of oppression, including Muslims and Arabs. Have colleges done enough to confront the issues of bigotry and oppression as a way to help build civil society?*

ROSENBLUM: Confronting bigotry is hard enough, but colleges have a particular challenge on their hands when it comes to these particular issues, where multiple oppressed groups get wrapped up in a conflict and position themselves against each other. Colleges can put a lot of effort into promoting an atmosphere of peaceful dialogue on campus, but at the end of the day they exist in a world where there are many, many forces trying to divide their students.

I think a lot of the anti-bigotry work that needs to happen on college campuses really rests with the students. Professors can create a climate that nurtures this work. And I think both students and university staff have to be wary of well-funded political organizations that sometimes try to situate themselves on college campuses by financially sponsoring student activities or even department efforts, and who have a political agenda in mind that is not about bringing students of all backgrounds together, but about lending their own divisive ideas legitimacy.

I went to Temple at what felt like a really special time. Some of us as Arab, Muslim, and Jewish students were able to build connections that really presented a different option for how student approaches to intergroup conflict could work. As I got to know the Arab and Muslim kids a lot better, I started to have a strong sense that Jews have much more in common culturally and an easier kinship with Muslim and Arab culture than with a lot of American culture. We played with an idea of creating an Arab-Muslim-Jewish mutual defense group, which is something that I still would really like to see develop, where people from these different groups make a commitment to each other that if one of the groups is attacked—in speech or in action—the other is ready to take action to protect them. It becomes very hard to fuel tensions between groups if they have come to count on each other as the people who are going to be there to defend them when something really bad happens.

For a lot of students, whether they live on campus or commute, going to college is the first time in their lives where they've had an oasis that allowed them to think about what they really believe in and what they really want for the world. Having that space away from the everyday, at a time in your life where you are willing to hope for something better than what you see around you, offers a really powerful chance for transformation. I believe in students, and what they can do with that chance.

MOHAMMAD JA'FAR MAHALLATI

Mohammad Ja'far Mahallati is the Presidential Scholar of Islam at Oberlin University. He studies the cultures and traditions of Mediterranean and Near East civilizations, especially that of Iran, which he represented at the United Nations as Ambassador.

BERLET: *You come from a family of Islamic clerics and scholars that traces back over 300 years. Yet you live in a country where major media figures, politicians, and even well-known professors say outlandish, inaccurate, and biased things about the role of Muslims in societies around the world. Surely you must find this at least tiresome?*

MAHALLATI: I come from a background that gives me a bit of knowledge about the cultures on both sides of the globe. It makes me feel sad to see the sheer misunderstandings or lack of accurate information that is behind much of the controversies and clashes we see from time to time. A good part of it is based on some other factors that are not the real factors behind these confrontations. When religion or history or certain cultures are the object of severe criticism, of course it will add to these misunderstanding.

There are two points here. One is that when we speak of Western or Eastern or Islamic civilizations without much background understanding or knowledge, it creates more problems.

The second problem is that when we only talk about a clash of civilizations, we are avoiding real questions and cover-

ing up real factors that we don't want to talk about. A lot of people like myself, who have faced these problems on this side of the globe, have had the same experiences on the other side of the globe. So these are mutual misunderstandings. We need to see beyond the usual misunderstanding on both sides and get deeper into the issues.

Let me go deeper into this. All the misgivings and misunderstandings about Islamic culture for example—so much of it comes from sheer ignorance about the past. What exactly do you mean by “Western civilization?” Why do you think there is an inherent deep clash between Western culture and Eastern culture or Islamic culture? In reality, Jewish culture, Christian culture, and Islamic culture have been like sisters from the same family—living in the same family and the same space, having grown up together.

For example, a good part of Jewish theology is produced in places where there were a majority of Muslims. So a part of Jewish theology is a reflection of Islamic civilizations, just as Islamic theology is impressed by Biblical sources that existed prior to Islam—so Jewish, Christian, and Islamic culture and theology are much intertwined across the course of history. When somebody derides Muslim cultures, it is as if that person is cursing their mother or father.

So there is no inherent clash within this family—no inherent clash between Islamic and Western civilization. I don't know if you can even talk about this in separate terms. When you study about the history of civilization on both sides of the globe you come to the conclusion that you can talk about only one civilization: Judeo-Christian Islamic civilization. It is one civilization with different branches. They are not different civilizations in a clash. These are branches from the same stem, the same trunk, and the trunk is so big and so solid that it cannot be ignored.

With just a little bit of knowledge you can see the essence and say “wow.” These all come from the same ideas, the same dream, the same goals, the same religious concepts. When we teach about religions as scholars, we talk about the monotheistic religions. It is monotheism that is the trunk. It is the central theme for all the branches of the Abrahamic faith. The rest of the differences are rather ancillary questions around it and commentaries around that central theme. So I deny there is an inherent clash of civilizations. Some scholars have called it a clash of ignorance.

And the same kind of ignorance you can observe on the other side when some Muslim activists talk about Western civilization. They mix the concept of civilization with the concept of colonialism and the history of the colonial era which is relatively new in terms of history. So you come to the conclusion that when someone can only talk about the clash of civilizations they really do not know what they are speaking about.

BERLET: If you are talking to students who disagree about the Middle East, what advice would you give them to help them find ways to disagree other than a confrontation?

MAHALLATI: Just today I was reminded of this when one of the students raised a question. They asked, “What is your perspective and view of a Palestinian state?”

Well, of course this question is highly controversial in class

and I know that there are students on both sides of this issue. So I began by addressing the question from a different angle. I referred to the question of nationalism and how Europeans after fighting two major world wars with millions of casualties came to the understanding that perhaps this nationalism is not a very good idea. So they ended up in a European Union.

And now we are talking about creating new nationalisms and new states. How about thinking about it from a different angle? What about thinking of the opportunity cost both for Palestinians and Israelis—what has been the opportunity cost for both in the last 50 years of encounter and conflict? What have been the achievements by fighting over issues like nationalism in the name of religion, in the name of ethnicity, or whatever? I say to both sides that everybody has been on the losing side ... that nobody has won because we have had a wrong approach.

I was suggesting to them that if I want to invite a major figure to speak on campus, why speak about this very controversial issue? [What about not] asking somebody to come to talk about the history of Palestine or the history of Israel, or whether according to biblical sources the land belongs to one group or another? I would invite an economist, and I would ask about the cost in terms of the huge loss in human resources or of natural resources. What has been the opportunity cost in that part of the world on both sides? Why are we not talking about it from that angle?

Then I said to the students that the next village to Oberlin is Illyria. These are small towns. I said, “You know I think we should go and fight with Illyria. What do you think of that?” And everybody laughed. So then I said, “Let's go [on behalf of] the state of Ohio and declare war on Pennsylvania.” And again everybody laughed. So I said, “You know you are all laughing. But what you are laughing at is the same thing that is going on somewhere else where people are fighting over ridiculous issues—exactly as ridiculous.”

So compare the situations and see if what we have been fighting for is an illusion or for a universal truth. History is the past, the past has passed. So then I asked this question: “To whom does the American land belong? To the Indians or to us all since so many of us come from many other countries and live here now?”

So if history counts what should we do? What does the quest for justice tell us to do? It is very complicated. Instead of fighting over biblical sources, or history, or in the name of nationalism or Judaism or Islam or Palestine or Israel or ethnicity or faith—let us drop all of that and talk about our common humanity, which is what is at stake. We have all suffered and we need a wiser solution.

Maybe I'm being too idealistic when I tell my students to think about all of this. Yet when I raised these issues in class, I saw students nodding their heads in agreement about what I'm saying. Maybe this is far-fetched or just a dream, but this is how I express it.

Can I talk about a cartoon I saw many years ago?

BERLET: Sure.

MAHALLATI: The cartoonist drew two different pictures.

On the one side there was a scene of the United Nations and representatives of many states were sitting at their desk in the General Assembly. Each sat under their own flag, and each flag carried the symbol of an animal—a lion, an eagle, you know—different animals were there on the flags.

In the second picture all the animals were brought down and sat at the desks and the people were on the flags. The cartoonist wrote down under the second picture “probably this is a more peaceful world.” I agreed with him, this would be a more peaceful world. What are we fighting about? We always look at previous wars from the angle of all those marches and heroes, which [mask] the stupidity of war. The cost for humans and humanity tells us that all wars have been stupid. Maybe that is too extreme, but [in class] I try to represent another perspective of hope.

BERLET: *And you are still an optimist?*

MAHALLATI: I am very much an optimist for one reason. The son of an Ayatollah, a Muslim, has come to Oberlin and found a home here. What does it tell me? What I am thinking is a reality for me. I have seen it. I have seen that it works here. The friendship movement has worked at Oberlin. People don't look at ... my beard, or my prayer beads. I have made many friends because we have been eating with each other, celebrating [together], reading together ... and then we have looked at each other and found our commonalities at our common humanity. The rest are just ornamental differences that are beautiful.

If this is what happened to me here [at Oberlin] it is possible in the world.

THE CAMPUS DILEMMA

THREE MAIN CAMPUS SECTORS APPEAR to support Palestinian rights. These include students with Muslim or Arab backgrounds; Left anti-imperialists; and liberal Christians, Jews, and others who see the Palestinian struggle for rights and/or statehood as a human rights issue.

Several sectors of college students, faculty, and others are involved in supporting Israel. These include: Jews who support Israel and approve of hardline Israeli government policies; Jews who support the existence of Israel but disapprove of hardline Israeli government policies; conservative campus Republicans; and evangelical and fundamentalist Christians, many of whom have idiosyncratic beliefs in an apocalypse predicted in the Christian Bible.

In addition, there are Jewish and non-Jewish students who support Israel as a nation state, but who disapprove of hardline Israeli government policies, and support Palestinian rights and may support the idea of a separate sovereign Palestinian state. Numerous other combinations and shadings in this kaleidoscope of value systems coexist in campus communities.

Islamophobes on campus are exemplified by students who have adopted the idea that Islam threatens the existence of Western culture and that it promotes violence and terrorism against political opponents and infidels. This group appears to consist mainly of very conservative students, some of whom are active in the College Republicans; or who stage events coordinated or inspired by David Horowitz and his many projects defending Israel and denouncing what he characterizes as Islamic religious mandates, culture, and practices.

We want to stress that not everyone who denounces Islam or Muslims on campus is Jewish. Not everyone who denounces Judaism or Jews on campus is Muslim or Arab. Not everyone who denounces Israel or Israelis on campus is Muslim or Arab. Not everyone who denounces Palestine or Palestinians on campus is Jewish. Nothing in this report should be construed to suggest otherwise.

THE MIDDLE EAST AS FLASHPOINT

Islamophobia and antisemitic incidents on campus spike in number and intensity in highly significant correlation with geopolitical events in the Middle East. To a smaller extent, they also spike in number and intensity in correlation to public events in the United States (e.g., the “Ground Zero mosque” controversy, Christian fundamentalist threats of Quran burning, etc.).⁴⁵⁸

At campuses we visited, even where highly publicized incidents have occurred, most Jewish and Muslim student leaders and administrators suggest that on a day-to-day basis, disagreements over the Israel/Palestine conflict and U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, while polarized and passionate, rarely rise to the level of physical altercations or public rhetoric that is clearly bigoted. Jewish and Muslim

student leaders and leaders of campus activist groups protesting policies and events in the Middle East (and especially the Israel/Palestine conflict) are acutely aware that they are being scrutinized for evidence of stereotyping and bigotry. They regularly discuss this issue internally, and urge those they influence to be especially sensitive and avoid even the appearance of antisemitism or Islamophobia.

Criticism of Israel, support for Palestinian self-determination, anti-Zionism, antisemitism, and Islamophobia are now all intertwined in campus debates in an extremely complex way. In our research, we have focused on the fight over definitions and the use of those definitions in highly partisan ways in recent debates.

Conflicts over strife between Israelis and Palestinians can easily escalate to angry hyperbole in which some critics of Israel do not appear to recognize the line between legitimate criticism and the invocation of historic antisemitic claims. This study discusses both campus incidents primarily involving students and conflict within and between departments where Middle Eastern issues are being taught and where academic hires are made and supported. Campus resolution and student government initiatives, such as the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement at UC Berkeley and elsewhere, are ripe for manipulation by a small number of interested activist parties. Our reporting offers a nuanced discussion of this issue from a number of different points of view, recognizing that delineating this line is an appropriate subject for ongoing campus debate in the context of a respectful intellectual and civic inquiry.

THE DISTORTIONS OF THE MEDIA LENS

Binary media coverage of antisemitic or Islamophobic incidents on campus is consistently unproductive. It is easy, and lazy, for media to cover deliberately provocative events such as Israeli Apartheid Week where there are two opposing “sides” that can be labeled pro-Israel or pro-Palestinian. We describe an infamous incident at San Francisco State where police were called in to break up a pro-Israel, pro-peace rally and counter-rally by pro-Palestinian students.⁴⁵⁹ Lack of fact checking and general credulity on the part of an understaffed and under-resourced media creates its own problems. We also report on the case of the film documentary *Columbia Unbecoming*, and the reporter who rechecked the film’s accusations and found them baseless.

It may be more important—and meaningful—for journalists to report on the response to confrontational incidents, especially when a campus community calls for discussion. By omitting coverage of response to campus incidents, cases that may qualify as success stories in handling bigotry may be reported in a way that creates the impression that bigotry on campus is on the rise or even out of control. Our profile of Brandeis University includes a description of an illuminating 2010 incident where the newly renovated rooms of the

Muslim Student Association (MSA) in the student center were vandalized and the campus community rallied in broad-based support.

Both the Faculty Senate and the Student Union Senate passed resolutions condemning the vandalism; the University's president, four chaplains, and Associate Dean of Student Life sent an email of support to the entire community; and a solidarity vigil was held, also attended by the president and chaplains.

Campus debate about situations on campus sometimes follows the public reporting and weighing in of partisan voices and is therefore invariably colored by that reporting. We give an example of the controversy over the proposed an endowment of \$1.5 million for a chair in Islamic studies at Temple University in 2007.

IS THERE A ROLE FOR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT?

The U.S. Department of Education and its Office of Civil Rights (OCR), and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (USCCR) have both investigated prejudice and bigotry on campus, but with respect to the subject of this report, their attention has been focused almost exclusively on antisemitism, with few resources devoted to studying Islamophobia.⁴⁶⁰

The USCCR and the OCR were key instruments in allegations that antisemitism was rampant on U.S. college campuses in the 2000s. The OCR, in particular, has had a great effect on the University of California system, which has been targeted through investigations and lawsuits (see profiles of Berkeley, Irvine) with some Muslim Student Associations being shut down. When the OCR investigates college and universities for Title VI violations, the stakes are very high: if antisemitism is included under the Title VI umbrella (which it now is), that has a huge effect on college funding and what kinds of student groups or activity are permitted on campus—as well as on academic courses.

Religious persecution should be a straightforward thing to guard against—but in this case it is not. If the Department of Education's, and its civil rights arm's, definition of antisemitism includes criticism of Israel, which the USCCR and the old OCR contended, this has a chilling effect on academic and campus life—classes, teachers, and student groups may be shut out of a university. The U.S. Department of Education has a large reach: its policy decisions are written and disseminated via "Dear Colleague" letters, which are distributed to virtually all higher ed institutions in the United States. Lawsuits concerning Title VI violations are taken up by OCR, which invokes its investigative power to untangle allegations and issue resolutions. The government's action and intervention has a direct effect on campus life and merits attention.

The contentious public dispute about how the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights should handle campus antisemitism only makes sense if one knows the background of the positions taken by the leadership of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and the small group of angry neoconservatives traditionally supportive of AJC who now reject the AJC leadership's stance on this issue.

In this report, we discuss the conflict among civil libertarians including Kenneth Stern of the American Jewish Committee (AJC), and Cary Nelson of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) who were concerned with the chilling of free speech on campus. Stern and Nelson primarily were directing their concerns at government agencies that claimed authority to sanction incidents of antisemitism on U.S. college campuses.

The intention of the independent U.S. Commission on Civil Rights to stop antisemitism on college campuses was indeed admirable, but we argue in this report that its methods for assessing the problems were flawed. We discuss the troubling methodology and findings of this commission and describe more fruitful research methods that would support productive interventions on campus.

TIMELINE: THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

MARIA PLANANSKY

In October 2004, the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) Center for Law and Justice submitted a complaint to the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), a division of the U.S. Department of Education. The complaint alleged that University of California at Irvine (UC Irvine), a public university receiving federal funds, had violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which protects people from discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance.⁴⁶¹ The letter, written by ZOA's Center for Law and Justice director Susan B. Tuchman, claimed that "for the past three years, the environment for Jewish students at UC-Irvine has been hostile, and at times, threatening."⁴⁶²

The complaint's filing was prescient. In the fall of 2004, the OCR circulated a "Dear Colleague" letter written by then-Deputy Assistant Secretary for Enforcement Kenneth L. Marcus.⁴⁶³ The letter, dated September 13, 2004, marked a sea change for the OCR's approach in enforcing Title VI. In Marcus's letter, the OCR laid out its intention to "aggressively prosecute harassment of religious students who are targeted on the basis of race or gender, as well as racial or gender harassment of students who are targeted on the basis of religion."⁴⁶⁴

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the OCR would pay particular attention to "claims of students who may be targeted for harassment based on their membership in groups that exhibit both ethnic and religious characteristics, such as Arab Muslims, Jewish Americans and Sikhs."⁴⁶⁵ While the OCR's jurisdiction did not include religious discrimination, which falls under the Department of Justice, the presence of religious discrimination, the OCR said, did not divest the office of jurisdiction into investigating into the racial or ethnic components of discrimination, which the office argued, are sometimes intrinsically commingled with religious discrimination.

The Dear Colleague letter staked out a potential reversal from an approach it took in 2003: not only would the OCR aggressively investigate religious students' claims of racial/ethnic and gender discrimination and/or harassment, it would now enforce OCR policy so that free exercise of religion would be a priority, trumping exercise of free speech.⁴⁶⁶

During the Bush administration, the Office for Civil Rights at the DOE was a casualty of controversial nominations, blocked confirmations, and contentious recess appointments. Senate Democrats opposed Bush's vision for OCR appointees who advocated "race-neutral" admission policies, specifically Assistant Secretary Gerald A. Reynolds, and were against affirmative action; the OCR became a point of contention.⁴⁶⁷ Until December 2005, when Stephanie

Monroe was confirmed as Assistant Secretary at OCR, there had not been a Senate-confirmed leader of the office for nearly five years.⁴⁶⁸ While the staff turnover would have implications for the new direction the OCR had charted out in September 2004, those in Washington were not charged with conducting the on-the-ground aspects of the investigation into antisemitism at UC-Irvine. On October 28, 2004, the Office for Civil Rights notified ZOA that it would investigate the complaint;⁴⁶⁹ Arthur Zeidman, director of the San Francisco regional office of the OCR, would head the investigation.⁴⁷⁰

From that point on, OCR's investigation into ZOA's allegations becomes murky. First, in Washington, there were significant staff changes. Marcus, responsible for the new approach in incorporating religious discrimination into the OCR's jurisdiction, was appointed to staff director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in December 2004.⁴⁷¹ Though Deputy Assistant Secretary, he had been leading the office as acting Assistant Secretary. Once in his new position, the US-CCR engaged in its own general investigation into antisemitism on college and university campuses, holding hearings on November 18, 2005 and issuing findings and recommendations in April 2006.⁴⁷²

Meanwhile, the OCR's investigation stalled. Conflicting reports detail infighting between the San Francisco regional office and the OCR's Washington headquarters. In spring 2006, correspondence between the OCR's Monroe and US-CCR was made public in the *New York Sun*, which hinted at a reversal of the OCR's policy change from September 2004.⁴⁷³ Monroe clarified the OCR's policy towards handling antisemitism following a prompt from the commission: "OCR does have jurisdiction to investigate complaints raising allegations of religious discrimination or anti-Semitic harassment if the allegations also include discrimination over which OCR has subject matter jurisdiction, such as, race or national origin (including discrimination based on a person's ancestry or ethnic characteristics)."⁴⁷⁴ Of the correspondence, Monroe said she did not "view this letter as in any way changing policy," adding "the word anti-Semitism doesn't appear in any of our statutory requirements over things we have jurisdiction over."⁴⁷⁵

As of August 2006, OCR had not concluded its investigations and, following prompting by ZOA's Tuchman, resumed its investigation.⁴⁷⁶ It was not until late 2007 that the OCR released its findings. On November 30, 2007, Charles R. Love, program manager at the OCR's San Francisco regional office, wrote to the chancellor at UC-Irvine concluding that there was "insufficient evidence to support the complainant's allegation that the University failed to respond promptly and effectively to complaints by Jewish students that they were harassed and subjected to a hostile environment."⁴⁷⁷

The OCR spelled out that thought "the complainant alleged that Jewish students at the University were subjected to harassment and a hostile environment based on their national origin. In some circumstances, discrimination based on national origin, which is prohibited by Title VI, may be commingled with discrimination based on religion."⁴⁷⁸ However, in a reversal of its September 2004 policy change, the letter stated, "OCR's jurisdiction under Title VI does not extend to allegations of discrimination on the basis of religion." The letter continued, OCR would investigate

allegations “even if” the complaint also has characteristics of religious discrimination.⁴⁸⁰

The OCR had absolved UC-Irvine of Title VI violation, dismissing five of the thirteen allegations as untimely.⁴⁸¹ Of the remaining eight violations, some were found to be outside the OCR’s jurisdiction, some were within the OCR’s jurisdiction, though the university had responded appropriately and sufficiently, and the remaining did not have “evidence to support the allegation that the University’s action was based on the national origin of the complaining Jewish students.”⁴⁸² The response was not met well, especially in light of the USCCR’s findings on college campuses and antisemitism, which was released the previous year.⁴⁸³

When Marcus left the Department of Education, he moved onto the United States Commission on Civil Rights. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency established by Congress in 1957. Among the USCCR’s directives is to investigate complaints alleging that citizens are being deprived of their right to vote by reason of their race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin or by reason of fraudulent practices; study and collect information relating to discrimination or a denial of equal protection of the laws under the Constitution because of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin, or in the administration of justice; and submit reports, findings, and recommendations to the President and Congress.⁴⁸⁴

The USCCR is vested with powers, including the mandate to conduct hearings on critically important civil rights issues, including issuing subpoenas for the production of documents and the attendance of witnesses; and publishing significant studies and reports on a wide range of the civil rights issues that typically include findings and recommendations, to inform and advise policy-makers.⁴⁸⁵

There, in 2005, Marcus led the Commission, which consisted of Gerald A. Reynolds, Abigail Thernstrom, Jennifer C. Braceras, Peter N. Kirsanow, Arlan D. Melendez, Ashley L. Taylor, Jr., and Michael Yaki.

At a hearing on campus antisemitism, the USCCR took up the issue of Jewish students facing antisemitism cloaked as anti-Israel activity on college campuses. They cited Columbia, San Francisco State University, and University of California at Irvine as examples of increasing hostility. Specifically, the commission was interested in antisemitic incidents “fueled by ideologically biased campus programs that receive operating funds from the federal government under Title VI of the Higher Education Act.”⁴⁸⁶

A panel, made up of Gary Tobin, president of the Institute for Jewish and Community Research; Susan B. Tuchman, director of ZOA’s Center for Law and Justice and author of the October 2010 complaint against UC Irvine; and Sarah Stern, director of governmental and public affairs at American Jewish Congress, briefed members of the USCCR on November 18, 2005. Tobin based much of his testimony on his book, *The UnCivil University*.

Susan Tuchman reiterated ZOA’s OCR complaint against UC Irvine and cited the Department of State’s January 2005 “Report on Global Antisemitism.”⁴⁸⁷ Tuchman also said, “the Commission should voice its concern about campus antisemitism to OCR and urge OCR to conduct a thorough investigation of the complaint against UCI, with consideration of all of

the available evidence.”⁴⁸⁸

Stern cited campuses where antisemitic incidents occurred, specifically referring to the documentary *Columbia Unbecoming*.⁴⁸⁹ Stern cited Columbia’s Middle East and Asian Languages Department (MEALAC) as one of 18 Middle Eastern studies programs receiving specific federal funds.⁴⁹⁰ Stern said that “there was specific intent behind this congressional allocation to the university. That intent was to raise students to be well grounded in the knowledge of foreign languages and cultures so that they can best serve the national security interests of our nation.”⁴⁹¹ The findings report that Stern “believes that the original intent has been turned on its head and many of these regional studies programs have become hotbeds of both anti-Israel and anti-American radicalism.”⁴⁹²

The USCCR issued its findings and recommendations on April 3, 2006.⁴⁹³ The USCCR, which later set up a website⁴⁹⁴ devoted to identifying and eradicating antisemitism on college and university campuses, embraced the EUMC’s working definition on antisemitism⁴⁹⁵ Among the USCCR recommendations was a suggestion that the Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights “should protect college students from anti-Semitic and other discriminatory harassment by vigorously enforcing Title VI against recipients that deny equal educational opportunities to all students.” It also recommended that “Congress should amend Title VI to make clear that discrimination on the bases of Jewish heritage constitutes prohibited national origin discrimination.”⁴⁹⁶

When the OCR issued its policy-reversing appraisal of ZOA’s complaint against UC Irvine the following year, it reflected none of the USCCR’s findings or recommendations. This caused much consternation among some of the players, especially Marcus.⁴⁹⁷

Earlier that year, Marcus had published “Anti-Zionism as Racism: Campus Antisemitism and The Civil Rights Act of 1964” in the *William and Mary Bill of Rights Journal*. In the article, Marcus stakes his interpretation of Title VI in regards to antisemitism and the legal authority granted to the Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights. He uses the campuses at UC Irvine, San Francisco State, and Columbia University as case studies. Marcus linked “the recent increase in campus anti-Semitism” as “closely associated with increasing anti-Zionist sentiments and with liberal or left-wing elements at many American universities.”⁴⁹⁸

Marcus lays out the generally accepted guidelines for how to distinguish political antisemitism from legitimate criticism of Israel using material from Natan Sharansky’s 3D approach, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia of the European Union (EUMC), the USCCR, and other agencies.⁴⁹⁹ Marcus then links this burgeoning form of antisemitism with certain forms of liberal or left-wing activism, which have sometimes embraced antisemitism together with support for Palestinian causes both in Europe and in the United States. College campuses have become prime propagators of antisemitism, Marcus writes, due to the “perfect storm” of factors in American universities.⁵⁰⁰

According to Marcus:

- *The politics of many American college campuses have become overwhelmingly liberal.*

- *Extremist voices are disproportionately influential on college campuses and are frequently able to “capture organizational” apparatuses even when they do not command majority support;*
- *Contemporary anti-Israeli and anti-Zionist ideologies mesh well with anti-Western, anti-American, and anti-war ideologies, and ideologies that are also common on college campuses.*
- *Anti-Israel groups have targeted campuses as “an arena for the anti-Israel agenda,” just as, in fairness, pro-Israel groups have targeted campuses for a pro-Israel agenda;*
- *“Since the collapse of the Oslo accords... Israel has been depicted in much of the press as the ‘oppressor.’”⁵⁰¹*
- *Many universities have failed to take appropriate action to prevent the spread of anti-Semitism, largely as a result of bureaucratic inertia;*
- *Many figures who have the authority to stand up to the perpetrators of anti-Semitic incidents (e.g., administrators, trustees, faculty) fail to exercise appropriate leadership for fear of “rock[ing] the boat,” “appear[ing] overzealous, or interfering with academic freedom.”⁵⁰²*

Two months following the DOE/OCR's policy reversal, Marcus left the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights to teach at Baruch College at the City University of New York.⁵⁰³ Soon, however, Marcus was recruited by Gary Tobin, whom he had befriended through his work in government, to come to work with the Institute for Jewish and Community Research (IJCR). Marcus became the group's Executive Vice President and Director of The Anti-Semitism Initiative.⁵⁰⁴ Despite his departure from civil service, Marcus was still committed to a policy change regarding Title VI and antisemitism.

Since joining the IJCR staff, Marcus has often lobbied legislators and has given testimony to the USCCR, usually about the uptick in antisemitism on college campuses. Also while at the IJCR, Marcus wrote *Jewish Identity and Civil Rights in America*, a book that details both his time in civil service (serving at the OCR and at the USCCR), as well as a larger treatise on the question, “what exactly are the Jewish people?” using case law and self-awareness to ask big questions about whether Jews are a race, (or?) an ethnic group, and the meaning of these things. Marcus's book was excerpted into a September 2010 article for *Commentary* magazine and garnered much attention.⁵⁰⁵

On October 26, 2010, OCR assistant secretary Russlynn H. Ali circulated a letter saying that “groups that face discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics may not be denied protection under Title VI on the ground that they also share a common faith.” Marcus was considered to have played “the singular role” in “helping to secure civil rights protections for Jews faced with antisemitic harassment and discrimination on US campuses.”⁵⁰⁶ Organizations such as the American Jewish Committee (AJC), Anti-Defamation League, and the Zionist Organization of America reacted favorably to the policy changes.⁵⁰⁷

The debate on campus antisemitism, however, was far from over. With allegations circulating that antisemitism

was rampant at Rutgers University, UC Irvine, and UC Santa Cruz, among other campuses, the new powers of Title VI were being flexed; as of March 2011, UC-Santa Cruz was now under investigation by the OCR for Title VI violations.⁵⁰⁸

While antisemitism and bigotry must be taken seriously, said AJC's Ken Stern and AAUP's Cary Nelson, many of the recent suits were a misinterpretation of the new reach of Title VI and the EUMC's working definition on antisemitism. This interpretation, the two said, allows and necessitates the opposition to any and all anti-Israel events in order to protect Jewish students—which is misguided and promotes censorship.⁵⁰⁹ Those misguided attempts “simply seek to silence anti-Israel discourse and speakers,” the two wrote. “This approach is not only unwarranted under Title VI, it is dangerous.”⁵¹⁰

Referencing the EUMC's working definition, now embraced by the U.S. State Department and the USCCR, Stern and Nelson emphasized:

The “working definition” while clearly stating that criticism of Israel in the main is not anti-Semitic, gives some examples of when anti-Semitism may be in play, such as holding Jews collectively responsible for acts of the Israeli state, comparing Israeli policy to that of the Nazis, or denying to Jews the right of self determination (such as by claiming that Zionism is racism). In recent years the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights have embraced this definition too.

It is entirely proper for university administrators, scholars, and students to reference the “working definition” in identifying definite or possible instances of anti-Semitism on campus. It is a perversion of the definition to use it, as some are doing, in an attempt to censor what a professor, student, or speaker can say. Because a statement might be “countable” by data collectors under the “working definition” does not therefore mean that Title VI is violated. To assert this not only contravenes the definition's purpose (it was not drafted to label anyone an anti-Semite or to limit campus speech), it also harms the battle against anti-Semitism.

Stern's and Nelson's piece was met with strong resistance from Jonathan Tobin.⁵¹¹ Tobin contended that their piece discounted the dangerous happenings on campuses such as UC-Irvine. The trio then embarked on a back-and-forth opinion piece debate, with Stern and Nelson insisting that Tobin had “completely misconstrue[d] [their] piece on campus antisemitism” and had falsely alleged that the AJC was dismissive on antisemitic incidents while Tobin ignored the censorship and free speech element of their piece.⁵¹² Tobin's concern was the Stern and Nelson letter “stakes out a position that makes it unlikely that Title VI of the Civil Rights Act will ever be applied to protect Jews from anti-Semitism on college campuses.”⁵¹³ This was not a debate to create a “hate speech code,” Tobin argued, but to “compel the government to act when academic debate about the issues spills over into hos-

tile actions that serve to suppress free speech and to threaten the safety of Jewish students.”⁵¹⁴ Situations like the one at UC Irvine which incorporated debate on Israel into its events were part of the issue that promoted the Department of Education to investigate, he wrote in *Commentary* magazine.⁵¹⁵

The AAUP, which initially published the statement by Nelson and Stern, removed the letter from their website, and the AJC publicly disavowed the statement, perhaps due to

substantial backlash in the Jewish community.

At stake, now, was if and when the Department of Education’s enforcement of Title VI through its Office of Civil Rights would undermine free speech and debate on college and university campuses in the United States.

Work To Reduce Interpersonal Islamophobia and Antisemitism on Campus

Create settings where students of Muslim, Jewish, Christian, and other faiths can create bonds based on personal stories, specifically around religious and cultural rather than political concerns. This is the strategy being used by Eboo Patel at Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC), and by the Lubar Institute for the Study of Abrahamic Religions at the University of Wisconsin (LISAR).

Create frameworks for shared inquiry in and out of the classroom, where existing perspectives can be interrogated with more nuance and sensitivity.

Challenge Systemic Islamophobia

Information about Muslims and Islam in both its historical and current incarnations should be available in both academic and community settings to offset stereotyping and prejudice.

American Muslims find themselves routinely being asked to act as emissaries, explaining Islam and religiously informed geopolitics to non-Muslims; many also must explain Muslim practice in America's multicultural context to the wider Muslim world. To the extent that campuses can support these efforts they should do so.

Colleges should assert that stereotyping of all Muslims as terrorists or in any other way is not acceptable in public settings.

Colleges may want to engage both members of the local Muslim community and its own Muslim student body or staff in a project to create guidelines for responding to bigoted portrayals of Muslims and Islam.

Further academic and government research must be conducted to assess the impact of Islamophobia on campus and community life, with a special focus on the extent to which bias and bigotry are tolerated in mainstream media corporations, especially those using the public airwaves.

Challenge Systemic Antisemitism

Discussions of the history of antisemitism should be part of not only Jewish and Middle Eastern studies but part of an American Studies curriculum. The goal will be to enable students to recognize antisemitic metaphors and images whenever they appear.

Students who express antisemitic language or engage in antisemitic imagery should be assumed to be doing so unwittingly. Only after careful inquiry should college administrators, reporters and other stakeholders assert that such students subscribe to antisemitic ideology.

More research must be done to systematically distinguish between and among incidents that are clearly antisemitic (based in perceptions of race, religion, and culture) and those that are primarily negative expressions of opinion about Israeli state policy and behavior, no matter how inflammatory. This will aid in helping formulate appropriate responses for

different types of incidents.

Assess the Extent Of Bias On Campus Comprehensively and Systematically

The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (USCCR) should retain qualified social scientists to conduct a national survey of college students to determine the extent of bias incidents they experience based on the identities already used by the FBI for its crime studies. Another valuable aspect of this study would be assessing why students downplay their experience of such incidents.

Allow Students to Take Campus Coexistence Into Their Own Hands

Student-led efforts to combat antisemitism and Islamophobia should be publicized and celebrated campus-wide. The value of such actions exceeds direct conflict resolution.

Student orientation guides and campus codes of conduct should include guidelines on how to respond to antisemitic and Islamophobic incidents, and any other bigotry. Such guidelines should go beyond simply asserting that such behavior is unacceptable.

Student interfaith/intercultural and social action projects (such as raising funds for Haitian earthquake relief or serving meals together at soup kitchens) that are not specifically designed to interrogate antisemitism, Islamophobia, or any other form of bigotry should be encouraged and supported.

Protect the rights of students not to act as "representatives of their faith" or to be expected to take positions on complex geopolitical issues when they would prefer to remain outside those conversations.

Projects that bring students together across religious, racial, ethnic, gender, and other lines should be targeted for increased funding by government and non-government agencies, foundations, and donors.

The DOE and USCCR should jointly sponsor an annual award for bridging divides on campus.

Resist Fanning Conflicts Where The Middle East Is The Flashpoint

Events in the Middle East invariably act as flashpoints for antisemitic, anti-Israel, Islamophobic and/or Arabophobic incidents. It is crucial that college administrators and professors anticipate such eventualities and not allow any one group, whether comprised of students, professors, or outside speakers, to dominate the discussion.

Student groups, university administrators, staff, and faculty should identify and be aware of speakers and organizations—on the Right and on the Left—that have a history of inflammatory behavior and speech. If such speakers are welcomed to campus, particularly under the banner of free speech protections, campuses should anticipate conflict and plan for measured, evidence-based debate.

Jewish and Muslim fears must be taken seriously, not explained away as "over-reaction" to rhetoric or public display (e.g., anti-Israel street theatre). Where necessary, campus

administrators must take active steps to help students obtain a sense of personal and psychological safety.

Suggestions in the joint statement by Cary Nelson of the American Association of University Professors and Ken Stern of the American Jewish Committee should be taken seriously and seen as one constructive path toward illuminating complex issues regarding campus bias, confronting bigotry, and respecting the First Amendment and the tradition of open inquiry in the academy.

Combat Media Distortions

While it may be impossible to change or even challenge initially sloppy or sensational reporting of antisemitic or Islamophobic incidents on campus, deans and campus public relations professionals can insist that journalists report accurately on the response to incidents.

Campuses should send out their own press releases and add information about productive responses to conflict in university-run media, including college websites.

Improve U.S. Government Research with Well-Designed Studies

The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (USCCR), which have both investigated prejudice and bigotry on campus, must invest in properly researched studies of Islamophobia.

Future recommendations by U.S. government agencies should not be generated on the basis of flawed and narrow

information-gathering practices, as was the case with the USCCR's investigation into antisemitism on campus.

In its language and behaviors, the U.S. government must be vigilant to retain the distinction between political ideas and illegal actions.

Use Accurate Terminology

Retire the phrase "hate crimes" and replace it with the more useful and accurate "bias crimes" and "bias incidents" in both legal and scholarly work, since many incidents of bias do not rise to the level of crimes under our legal system. The emerging multi-disciplinary field of "Hate Studies" should consider recasting itself as "Bias Studies."

Political advocacy groups should reduce the use of terms such as "extremism" and "anti-Americanism" in public discourse and strive for more specific language and analysis in their public pronouncements.

The American Sociological Association or other appropriate scholarly organization should produce an accessible briefing booklet detailing contemporary research on people who join social movements engaged in protests and demonstrations. Such research must avoid demonizing students and others who become involved in social movements as a "lunatic fringe," dysfunctional "troublemakers," or simply ignorant. These are outdated concepts.

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