

ADDRESS HATRED

U.S. college leaders must confront anti-Semitism on their campuses

BY MARK B. ROTENBERG
hillel.org



Anti-Semitic incidents in the United States have increased more than 75 percent since early May, according to the Anti-Defamation League, ranging from hate-filled threats to physical beatings of Jews in Times Square and Los Angeles.

This startling upsurge in anti-Semitism against American Jews following Israel's conflict with Hamas in Gaza has been widely condemned by many public officials from both political parties.

What has received far less attention is the insidious rise in attacks on Jewish college students. In New Mexico, a Jewish student was jumped and beaten by attackers shouting anti-Semitic and anti-

Israel remarks. At the University of Chicago, Jewish students leaving Hillel after Shabbat dinner on a Friday evening were accosted by a person repeatedly yelling "F--- Jews" while filming the incident on a phone. A popular Instagram account has been sharing hundreds of instances of hate-filled content by fellow students and even professors..

No wonder Jewish students are the least likely among their peers to view their campus environments as welcoming to people of diverse faiths, according to a recent study.

This dangerous trend has been evident for several years. Anti-Semitic hate crimes and bias incidents on campuses more than tripled from 2012 through 2019, according to the ADL. Government data show that religious-based hate crimes on college campuses roughly doubled between 2009 and 2017.

A majority of these reported crimes targeted Jews.

For many Jewish students, especially those who identify as progressive, the most painful recent episodes are those targeting them for identifying positively in some way with Israel and denying them the ability to voice their experiences with anti-Semitism.

These past few weeks have sharply focused attention on several challenges Jewish students face. Perhaps most significant is the now-dominant hostile narrative connecting U.S. racial-justice imperatives with the Palestinian struggle against Israel.

This ideological linkage has become pervasive on campus. Jewish students across the country have been shamed and marginalized in spaces ranging from student government to sexual-violence support groups for their support of a Jewish homeland.

This is deeply problematic both because it turns Israel into a caricatured stand-in for white racism in the United States and forces Jewish students to disavow any connection

with Israel as the price for joining in racial-justice and other progressive work on campus.

While there is considerable anti-Semitic activity driven from white-nationalist sources, most Jewish students can understand and negate these classic forms of hatred. On the other hand, most of them have never before faced the flood of anti-Semitism online and in social media spaces that ignore or distort historic and current Jewish experiences, marginalizing and silencing students' voices in defining their own Jewish identities and diverse relationships with Israel.

Finally, students have recently witnessed a wave of official statements by university departments making inflammatory assertions about Israeli "genocide" and "ethnic cleansing," and asserting that there is no other perspective on the conflict even worthy of a hearing.

It is one thing for individual faculty to express their personal views about Israel and Zionism as a matter of their own aca-

demic freedom.

It is quite another for university departments formally to declare an orthodoxy of viewpoint. One wonders who is looking out for the academic freedom of Jewish and other students (and faculty, for that matter) who do not accept their academic department's official anti-Zionist creed.

It is time for college leaders to step up and speak out against attacks on Jewish students that shame and exclude them because of presumptions about their identity.

Principles of free speech and academic freedom do not prevent university leaders from condemning anti-Semitic incidents and rejecting the marginalization of Jewish students who identify with Israel.

Universities also must do a better job of recording and reporting all hate crimes and bias incidents. Too often, anti-Semitic incidents go unacknowledged and, therefore, unaddressed. If you don't count it, it doesn't count.

Universities must offer

enhanced educational programming on anti-Semitism for students and administrators to help them understand anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic forms of anti-Zionism and take affirmative steps to address them.

Such steps must be understood as part of a commitment already shared by universities to eliminate all forms of racism, discrimination and harassment.

Finally, schools should create robust opportunities for all students to engage in serious dialogue across differences.

Only through genuine relationship building and inclusive learning can students begin to break down destructive stereotypes and appreciate one another's personal, unique stories.

At this fraught moment on campuses across America, university leaders have the opportunity — and responsibility — to foster understanding between communities and ensure a campus culture that is truly inclusive of diverse backgrounds and beliefs.

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OPEN MIC

MATTER OF TRUST

At the root of much of the anti-vaccine and anti-mask movement is trust. Many of my fellow conservatives believe liberals are pushing these mandates because it feeds their hunger for power, and they will find any excuse to wield that power. That is a straw-man argument, based on the ubiquitous notion on Fox News and elsewhere that liberals are authoritarians in disguise who don't care a whit about the rest of us.

Could it be, however, that they are sincerely concerned about public health and are doing everything to kill this virus for the good of us all?

Let's consider that instead of the insidious caricature of liberals.

Many Black Americans are still mindful of the Tuskegee syphilis study, in which 600 Black men were led to believe they were receiving a free treatment for syphilis when in fact they were not. However, the country has come a long way since then, and that ugly chapter of history should not deter African Americans from getting vaccinated.

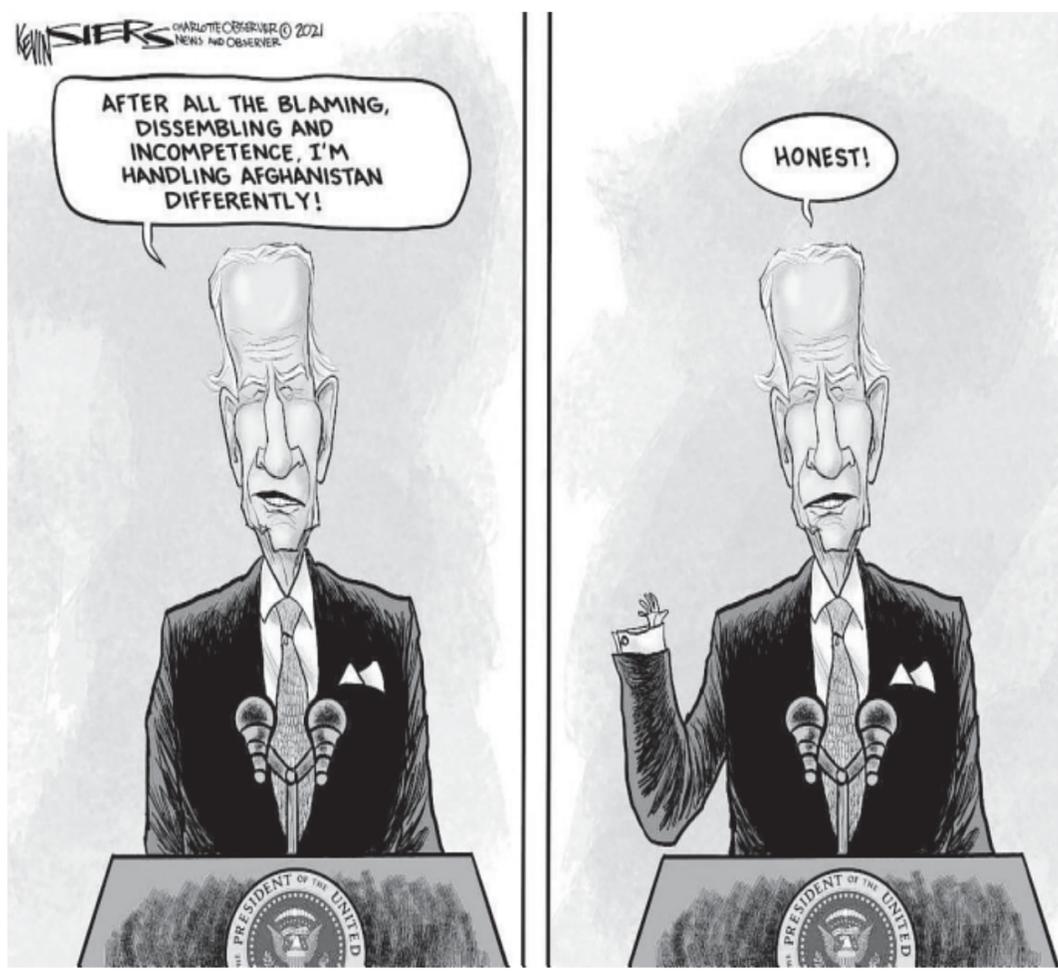
— Arthur Harley, Margate

AFGHAN FIASCO

Obviously, the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan has been tragically mismanaged. As to Sen. Rick Scott's call for President Biden to be removed for incompetence, he forgets that our withdrawal was planned by former President Trump, with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo twice meeting with the Taliban leader to discuss our departure.

Perhaps it's just a coincidence that the page on Scott's website, complimenting Trump in ending our involvement in Afghanistan, was removed, allegedly for maintenance. Politics as usual.

— Leonard Rubinstein, Aventura



BEACH IS FINE

Re the Aug. 12 online story "South Beach is the most polluted popular swimming spot in the U.S., study says." I'm a resident, Realtor and public-relations consultant enjoying life in Miami Beach. I was shocked and saddened that South Beach had been declared a public health menace because of polluted water.

I wrote to Elizabeth Wheaton, Miami Beach's environment and sustainability director. She responded that the study, promoted by the nutritional supplement and clothing company MyProtein, did not use scientific data when making the claim. She also said that Tripadvisor ratings were used to determine popularity and then cross-

referenced with details of unrefined Environmental Protection Agency data for water-quality at specific locations.

She added that Florida Department of Health conducts a weekly water sampling at popular swimming locations in the county, including the city's beaches. Based on the results, there has been no indication of any pollution concerns in South Beach.

— Charlotte Tomic, Miami Beach

DIFFERENT STYLE

The situation in Afghanistan is horrible. President Biden's plan has been a mess, even if you grant him the excuse that it would be the same if someone else were in the Oval Office. However,

"mess" is not a sufficient description, if one imagines the nightmare of Donald Trump being in charge.

— Jeff Haller, Cutler Bay

SILENT SENATORS

While Gov. Ron DeSantis continues to play politics with the lives of our children, with his ignorance about the value of mask mandates and the importance of quarantine after exposure, where are our senators?

Rick Scott and Marco Rubio remain silent, afraid to alienate the governor and Donald Trump's Republican base. Silence is complicity, and it is appalling.

We elected them to protect and serve all Floridians. They should be out front, encouraging resi-

dents to get vaccinated, encouraging everyone to wear masks and supporting mask mandates in all schools to protect our vulnerable children. Shame on them for staying silent.

Let's all remember to vote them out when the time comes.

— Barbara Hochman, Miami

WORSE FATE?

Kudos to the Florida Board of Education and its anti-mask crusade. Now, whenever a child gets COVID-19 in school and is admitted to the ICU or dies, the board members can stick their chests out with pride and proclaim, "At least we saved them from Critical Race Theory."

— David R. Hoffman, South Bend, IN

“BARS SHOULD START DOING 'SAD HOUR' DRINKS ARE HALF-PRICE IF YOU COME ALONE AND YOUR EYES ARE RED.

Trash Jones, on Twitter

DON'T PLAY DOCTOR

Floridians are fortunate to have Ron Santis as governor. He graduated from Harvard and Yale with honors.

Somewhere along the way, however, he must have spent time at Trump University. Florida has among the highest number of COVID cases, and DeSantis has banned mask mandates.

However, this is a public-health emergency, not a time to play politics. If Donald Trump or DeSantis had a bad tooth, would they call a carpenter to pull it?

No, and we don't want politicians to pretend they know better when it comes to our health.

— Kenneth Chaitman, Aventura

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