

**From:** Bruce Portnoy

**Sent:** Sunday, August 11, 2019 10:32 AM

**To:** CFIRD

**Cc:** Bruce Portnoy

**Subject:** In the spirit of seeking justice and fairness regarding your proposed ethnic studies program the following is important to consider.

Today, August 11th, Jews world-wide observe *Tisha B'Av*, which reflects upon more than a day of communal mourning for the destruction of Jerusalem's two Temples: the first destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E. and the second by the Roman's in 70 C.E.; but rather, all successive tragedies that targeted Jews, just and only for their beliefs and their vulnerability, as a minority. These heinous actions included the subsequent Diaspora driven, "... Spanish Inquisition, the Crusades, Eastern European and Russian based Pogroms, centuries of Christian blood libels and Easter-Sunday Passion Plays; all encouraging deadly confrontations." These led to the ultimate attempt at ethnic cleansing, the Holocaust during the 1930s-and 40's. Recent hated-base, organized actions, are sadly in the early stages of targeting Jews, as individuals, or in groups on institutions of higher learning campuses, and more recently are testing the waters of such actions in high schools, under the guise of unbalanced, yet to be mandated ethnic studies programs, attempting to gain a foot hold in various states.

Please consider my articles published in various major newspapers involved in the ethnic studies topic you are exploring.

Be Well,

Bruce Portnoy

(see below for my complete contact information)

## **Op-Ed Featured Miami Herald**

November 26, 2016 3:17 PM

# **Jewish students need defense training against BDS movement**

By BRUCE PORTNOY

In 1966, while attending the University of Illinois, Chicago campus, I came across an opportunity to register for the course in "Black-American History" under the direction of Professor Arna Bontemps, a highly respected black poet.

For the first time in my life, I found myself a distinct minority, yet a welcomed addition to the class. Bontemps and I would often discuss the common experiences of oppression and prejudice that African Americans and Jews shared. To ameliorate this, he advocated for strong federal and state laws to assure students of color — and other minorities, by

extension — their opportunity for fair treatment while pursuing the great American equalizer, higher education.

Fast forward 50 years, and I find the hateful behavior once openly practiced against people of color on campuses across the United States, currently directed toward pro-Israel, Jewish youth and the small number of non-Jewish students who share the same philosophy. The result is a visibly hostile college environment to silence Jews and others who openly advocate for Israel, the chief ally of the United States in the Middle East. This injustice must not be allowed to go unrecognized and unchallenged, on any campus, at any time.

Frequently reading about the escalating threat towards Jews worldwide, I see the seeds of such extremism being planted in an ever increasing number of American university and college campuses, little doubt a result of societal inaction.

Even in the presence of this disturbing trend, there are those in the community who believe that pro-Israel, Jewish children and their supporters do not require shelter from the harsh realities of the anti-Israel/anti-Zionist rhetoric they encounter at school. For whatever reason, these representatives overlook the potentially dangerous consequences. Instead, they advocate possessing a strong knowledge base from which to draw logical oral defensive arguments. Yet, this tactic may not be sufficient to enable this minority group to hold their own against the haters, who relish hostile confrontation, especially without the firm and visible support from the educational institutions the pro-Israel Jewish students attend. Many, if not all, of these institutions of higher learning receive substantial funding from both state and federal resources. Yet, the governing bodies appear to be turning a blind eye to this egregious situation.

Knowing what I have experienced, as well as observing what is transpiring on many campuses across the United States, I strongly caution Jewish American parents against sending their children blindly into the current fray, without adequate knowledge, understanding and mandated protection from the educational institutions they are attending.

Bruce Portnoy is the author of “First, the Saturday People, and then the ...”

**[With bipartisan bill, Congress can confront anti-Semitism | "Miami Herald"](#)**

**[Op-Ed:](#)**

## **With bipartisan bill, Congress can confront anti-Semitism**

By BRUCE PORTNOY

November 22, 2017 08:42 PM

This month, I attended, “Kristallnacht, 79 years Later,” a remembrance, hosted by the Illinois Holocaust Museum. Among the honorees were six elderly Jewish survivors, who witnessed the hate and destruction, during the “Night of Terror” orchestrated by the Germans in 1938. Yet, beyond the violence, what disturbed me at a core, were the individual participant readings relaying specific anti-Jewish legislation that began in 1933 Nazi Germany.

The gradual implementation of these laws served to depersonalize Jews to separate them from their neighbors, deprive them of their freedoms of speech and assembly, and rights to certain occupations, schooling, and, ultimately, access to escape, which sealed their fate.

One speaker alluded to events that led to the Holocaust and what is currently transpiring on many college campuses across the United States: targeting pro-Israel Jewish students for ridicule and harm, simply because of their beliefs. They are made to feel unwelcome and unsafe while in pursuit of their education. It’s inexcusable.

On Dec. 2, 2016, U.S. Reps. Ted Deutch and Peter Roskam co-sponsored the Anti-Semitism Awareness Act — H.R. 6421 — along with other members of the Congressional Bipartisan Task Force for Combating anti-Semitism, including Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida. They were soon joined by other Florida Reps. Carlos Curbelo and Debbie Wasserman Schultz. In essence, this legislative initiative would provide for a defensible definition of anti-Semitism that would let the justice system equitably determine guilt or innocence, in situations of alleged abuse.

Jewish students, their families, and many non-Jews have, for far too long, awaited the means to effectively slow down, if not stop the rising tide of threats, assaults and property damage, geared toward marginalizing and then silencing those who openly advocate Israel’s legitimacy.

H.R. 6421 has been stalled in the House Judiciary Committee for almost one year, even though its companion in the U.S. Senate was unanimously approved in 2016.

Still, there is some positive movement. The University of Wisconsin educational system has approved a precedent setting, statewide policy, that calls for the suspension of any student whose disorderly conduct disrupts another’s freedom of speech, on two separate occasions; and expulsion for a third infraction, or should consequential violence result. This action coincides with a Wisconsin State Assembly initiative, passed in June, but awaiting Senate review. These are good first steps, but not a replacement for H.R. 6421, “The Anti-Semitism Awareness Act of 2016.”

Anti-Semitism is, of course, not an exclusively American issue. It has roots in Europe and other nations, as well. To help stem the tide, in May 2016 at plenary meetings held in Bucharest, Romania, Germany and 30 other nations, adopted a working definition of anti-Semitism, ascribed to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. This will help recognize anti-Semitism and then codify the means to eradicate this evil.

I have seen during 72 years of life that waiting for the better angels of haters to rise to the top has proven a futile exercise. With so much at stake, none of us has the luxury to ignore bigotry.

We must be on guard for, and readily challenge, prejudice and intolerance, wherever found.

Perhaps, after implementation of H.R. 6421 guidelines, people with strong differing viewpoints may be able to debate the merits of their positions, without resorting to divisive stereotypes and ugly threats.

Bruce Portnoy is the author of "First, the Saturday people, and then the..."

## **Washington Examiner**

Red Alert Politics

The Right Take on Campus

# **Lawmakers must seek ways to address acts of anti-Semitism on campus**

by Bruce Portnoy | Jan 23, 2018, 8:47 PM

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/lawmakers-must-seek-ways-to-address-acts-of-anti-semitism-on-campus/article/2646893>

[www.washingtonexaminer.com/lawmakers-must-seek-ways-to...acts.../2646893](http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/lawmakers-must-seek-ways-to...acts.../2646893)

*Anti-Jewish extremism is gaining a current foothold on college campuses across the U.S. (screenshot)*

Having experienced anti-Semitism, I was motivated to seek an understanding as to why anti-Jewish extremism is gaining a current foothold on college campuses across the United States.

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Two years ago, I recognized a virus-like, anti-Israel malady targeting pro-Israel Jewish students and faculty members, as well as speakers brought on campus to educate all about Jewish values and concerns.

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In the beginning, the confrontations appeared relatively civil. However, as coverage by press and television crews expanded, the rhetoric seemed to intensify. Yet, the occasionally hostile exchanges that followed appeared to be largely ignored by campus authorities.

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Characterized as Israel policy reactions, angry protestors could be heard spouting recognizable anti-Semitic characterizations, some laced with threats. In addition, the demonstrators loudly silenced any perceived challenges to their anti-Israel philosophy, which stifled rare opportunities for rational discussion. Ironically, only the perpetrator's free speech and assembly rights seemed to matter. As time went on, without meaningful recourse, some of the young demonstrators appeared to act as if the First Amendment gave them the entitlement to intimidate fellow students.

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With no agreed-upon legal definition of anti-Semitism from which to draw potential protection, Jewish students on campus became vulnerable to the whims of the protestors. At the same time, they were denied justice traditionally offered to other targeted students under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, simply because it only prohibited discrimination based on race, color, and national origin, not recognizing organized acts of religious discrimination.

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Determining a need for federal intervention, on Dec. 1, 2016, the Senate, led by Sens. Tim Scott, R-S.C., and Bob Casey, D-Pa., passed on its first floor vote, and by unanimous consent, legislative initiative S.10, also known as "The Anti-Semitism Awareness Act." The intent of the act was to codify a definition of anti-Semitism that would permit the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights enforcement division to investigate those suspected of organized anti-Semitic activity on campuses across the U.S. and to hold accountable the academic institutions tolerating such activities. This ultimately would have helped all students enjoy a more safe learning environment.

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On the same day, the House of Representatives' Bipartisan Task Force for Combating anti-Semitism, led by co-chairs Peter Roskam, R-Ill., and Ted Deutch, D-Fla., introduced companion legislation to the adopted Senate bill.

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Yet, the bill, which had so much promise, was never brought to a floor vote and instead was moved to the House Judiciary Committee under the direction of Rep. Bob Goodlatte, R-Va. Subsequently, it was transferred to the House Constitution and Civil Justice Subcommittee, where it was left to languish until the end of the 114th congressional term. It was then voided for lack of follow-through, effectively denying its protection to targeted Jews on campuses across the U.S.

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There were expressed concerns that the legislative language necessary to accomplish the desired goals might encounter First Amendment issues and codifying anti-Semitism might have its own downside risks. Neither of which was sufficient to summarily dismiss the intent behind the anti-Semitism bill.

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Short of reintroducing the anti-Semitism bill, alternate means to address the hostile, if not potentially dangerous, situation on many campuses, must be sought. Perhaps, it might be advantageous to encourage individual states to take on the necessary corrective measures, similar to those used to disarm the "Boycott, Divestment, and Sanction" movement that targeted Israel's legitimacy and viability. Or, perhaps, Congress might investigate amending the Title VI list of discriminations to include organized religion-based persecution. With growing anti-Semitism on campus, the only unacceptable option is inaction.

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*Bruce Portnoy is a retired optometrist and author of the Geo-political, thriller novel, "First, the 'Saturday People', and then the..." as well as a former op-ed contributor to the Miami Herald. He has volunteered with youth offenders at a detention facility and taught high school students.*

<https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/palestinians-in-gaza-require-protection-not-from-israel-but-from-hamas/>

***"The Times of Israel"***

***Palestinians in Gaza require protection, not from Israel, but from Hamas.***

***by Bruce Portnoy***

*Sep 24, 2018, 10:11 AM*

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*U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres recently proposed establishing an armed military presence in Gaza to protect Palestinians from Israel. While the Palestinians do require protection, the Secretary General erred as it is not from Israel, but rather from Hamas. Looking below the veneer of the latter's cleverly orchestrated anti-Israel campaign, it becomes abundantly clear that their end game lies less with improving the welfare of its Palestinian population, and more with eliminating Israel and its Jews from the Middle East map. To keep them out of the spotlight, Hamas continuously reinforces the impressions of Israel as humanity's evil empire. This is accomplished with hate based street theater and contrived news stories readily adaptable to social media, television and hard press. Along the way, Palestinian lives appear the currency that catches the attention of an ever-present sympathetic press; which never fails to capitalize on the "if it bleeds, it leads" moments. All of which is calculated to offend Western sensibilities, as well as to intentionally chip away at Israel's endurance, ultimately to fulfill Hamas' promise of acquiring its land and wealth through violence and sacrifice.*

*A subtle victimization lies hidden within the Palestinian children's educational system. Funds managed by the United Nation's Relief and Works Agency for Palestine-Refugees (UNRWA), have come under scrutiny, alleging the textbooks supplied, demonize Israel and Jews, and imply that Palestinian statehood is achievable through violent confrontation. This is disturbing as UNRWA exerts influence on roughly 340 schools within Palestinian controlled territories, including an estimated student population of 250,000, within Gaza and the disputed West Bank. It remains unclear as to how many young, impressionable children may yield to martyrdom, simply by being repetitively taught, year after year, grade after grade, class lessons that blame Palestinian woes entirely on Israel and Jews.*

*In an effort to defuse provocations, the U.S. Congress is asking the State Department to investigate and make known if U.S. foreign aid is being directed in any manner to foment hate through educational materials or intimidation. European lawmakers are also jumping on this band wagon; concerned about the effects of incitement and the impediment towards tolerance it poses.*

*UNRWA's responsibility was and is to assist with food aid, raising the level of healthcare and providing social services to better the lot of the millions of dependent Palestinians across the Middle East, certainly not to politicize hate within academics. The United States is tapering financial assistance, until recognized reforms are forthcoming. This comes not that long after Congress passed the Taylor Force Act mandating cuts of U.S. dollars to the Palestinian Authority, until it stops paying financial tributes to convicted or killed Palestinian terrorist's families.*

*Hamas similarly, is alleged to have similarly awarded its Palestinians who sustain wounds (\$500), and if killed (\$3000), while in their efforts to breach Israel's Southern Gaza security fence with the intent of spreading mayhem, murder and terror. Old tires are placed near the fence and burned, creating dense, frightening clouds of smoke, masking breach attempts. This combined with the launching of numerous kites and balloons, each toting incendiary chemicals that set Israeli fields ablaze, destroying homes and harming farm animals; and the firing of rockets and mortar shells emanating from Gaza, clearly defeats disingenuous*

*impressions of Palestinian "peaceful" demonstrations. Add to this, Hamas allegedly setting aside \$200+ million dollars for tunnel construction and repair, the stock piling of offensive weapons, and the camouflaging of rocket launch sites located proximate to populated areas; shows a lack of regard for the safety of its vulnerable Palestinian civilians. Having benefited from multi-millions, if not billions of charitable dollar grants over the years, geared to improve the daily health and welfare needs of Gaza residents, where is verifiable proof that anything positive and lasting has been accomplished? If not, the U.N. Secretary General should ask himself why not, and where the well-meaning money has gone.*

*Although Israel is conveniently labeled the root cause of all problems in the Middle East, yet, it never ordered bombs strapped to its citizens' bodies to murder its enemies. If fact, just the opposite, as it actively seeks ways to minimize its enemies' casualties, even at the risk of its own citizen-soldier' lives. Prior to expected attacks targeting its southern defensive fence positions, Israel dropped thousands of leaflets into Gaza alerting Palestinians of the dangerous consequences with their attempts to gain access into Israel. Even with the harsh realities of consequential death and property damage, still the moral dilemma of firing upon Palestinian civilians prompted the Israel Defense Forces to request a Supreme Court decision regarding the justification of deadly force under the above circumstances. This, plus Israel's continuous efforts to medically treat wounded Syrian refugees puts to question why U.N. Secretary-General, Guterres ignores Israel's reality, while turning a blind eye to the actual purveyors of hate?*

*In any case, Secretary General Guterres, before implementing any plan to put an armed United Nations presence in Gaza or elsewhere within the territories, please weigh the above and reconsider, who needs protection from whom?*

#### *About the Author*

*Bruce Portnoy, is a published op-ed contributor to the "Miami Herald," "Washington Examiner," and "The American Thinker"; as well as the author of the Geo-political thriller, "First, the 'Saturday People', and then the..."*

[February 23, 2019 Tuesday 21 AdarI 5779](#)

[10:33 IST](#)

[\*\*Is a perfect storm brewing against Israel? - Opinion - Jerusalem Post\*\*](#)

<https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Is-a-perfect-storm-brewing-against-Israel-581556>



Is a perfect storm brewing against Israel?

By BRUCE PORTNOY  
02/23/2019

Since the 1975 United Nations General Assembly voted to adopt the “Zionism Is Racism” resolution (3379), numerous other forms of anti-Israel condemnations were forthcoming and continuous.

One of the most heinous was the Boycott, Divestment and Sanction anti-Israel tactic. Actually, BDS was initiated and perfected in pre-World War II, Nazi Germany.

The intention then was to marginalize their Jews socially, politically and economically, until they were reduced to poverty and became categorically insignificant. At which point, it led to unopposed state-sanctioned elimination, an action that has not gone unrecognized by today’s generation of organized haters of Israel and Jews.

An unwelcome byproduct of the present day contempt toward Israel is the heretofore unexpected enmity connection shared between Islamic extremists, far-right neo-Nazis and white supremacists, elements within the far-left – including some newly elected freshman Democrats, and a suspect Republican or two, as well as the never ending anti-Israel sanctions spewing forward from the United Nations.

This is a particularly dangerous combination when supplemented with organized hostility and agitation from Students for Justice in Palestine, Jewish Voices for Peace, American Peace Now, and J-Street, each with an agenda that ironically does not appear to endorse peace and justice for Israel and Jews.

Within the past four years, incidents of property damage as well as threats of actual and implied violence targeting Jews – particularly pro-Israel, Jewish students, and their non-Jewish supporters – have dramatically escalated on campuses across the United States.

Meanwhile, the administrations of the affected institutions of higher learning appear reluctant to intervene against obviously discriminating and dangerous behavior.

Recognizing the potential for deadly consequences, and understanding that the provocateurs do not speak for the majority of Americans, Congress initiated the 2016 Antisemitism Awareness Act (ASA).

This initiative passed the Senate floor vote virtually unopposed. Among its key elements, was the codification of “antisemitism,” necessary to hold accountable those who pursue group focused, hate-based, repetitive attacks.

The singling out of Jews or other faith-based groups on campuses, simply because of religious beliefs, would no longer be ignored or tolerated.

These confrontations then morphed into “anti-Zionism” political actions, to make them appear more palatable, and deflect attention away from the often spewed antisemitic verbiage. In this format, the press proved more sympathetic to the protesters, especially when Zionism was presented in terms of a David-verses-Goliath struggle, with Israel painted as the brutal aggressor.

With the threats of First Amendment Free Speech issues to be raised during the House hearings, the House initiative was relegated to committee, until it was eventually voided for lack of follow-through within the designated time period allowed. Score one victory for the purveyors of hate.

In 2018, another version of the ASA, the HR 5924 Initiative, was introduced, but sadly this legislation seems unlikely to also reach the House Floor for a vote, for the same free-speech issues that brought down its predecessor. Score two victories for the purveyors of hate. Add to this list, the recent Strengthening America’s Security in the Middle East Act of 2019 (S.1), which like the 2016 ASA act successfully passed the bipartisan Senate test but is expected to encounter fierce challenges within the new Democratic-controlled House of Representatives. This is mainly due to a provision included that is intended to curb malicious legal challenges to individual states and local governments’ rights to pass anti-BDS legislation.

It is important to understand that the Boycott, Divestment and Sanction anti-Israel tactic, if not vigorously opposed, may at least in theory lead to the economic collapse of our only friendship and trusted military ally in the Middle East.

For a third time, even with its other well-defined security provisions, the chances of this act passing is slim at best. Score yet another “potential” victory for the purveyors of hate.

INVOLVEMENT OF Congress might not have been necessary had Title VI of the US Civil Rights Act of 1964 not limited its list of prohibited forms of discrimination to race, color, and national origin. By religious discrimination’s omission, both overt and covert acts of such hate became difficult to confront on campus and elsewhere.

Yet, this oversight may lend itself to be corrected by amending said Title VI, to include acts of religious discrimination. When accomplished, all individuals – Muslims, Christians, and Jews, as well as other targeted religious minorities – who currently suffer these indignities in silence, could avail themselves of such protections.

For far too long the rights of dangerous provocateurs appear to trump those of their victims. American society is gradually becoming insensitive to the actual threats posed by hate-motivated groups who feel empowered to deprive others of their basic rights and to get away with it, simply because they can.

As a cumulative result of the above, we appear to be entering another dangerous era where attacks against Jews and Christians are proceeding effectively unchallenged and thereby gaining some level of validation, most especially within Europe.

Perpetrators employ the same tactics to gain legitimacy as did the earlier Nazi regime when they targeted Jews: employing half-truths, misconceptions, misdirection, boycotts, as well as demonizing, delegitimizing and double standards.

They have elected easy to mold, frustrated, gullible, already angry individuals into the ranks of existing haters. Readily, they succumb to nefarious propaganda that Israel – and anyone who supports Israel (Jews) – are the primary cause of discontent worldwide, particularly in the Middle East.

Although a sophisticated society such as ours should be highly suspicious of a hostile group's labeling practices and should be totally intolerant of religious scapegoating, too many prefer to shut their eyes and close their minds to what is going on, until they find themselves on the receiving end of such ugly behavior.

Meanwhile, sympathies have been shifting, away from Israel and Jews towards the Middle East Arab and Palestinian populations.

Frequently labeled as the new underdog, they have been repeatedly indoctrinated to believe that they will never succeed as long as they are continuously oppressed by Israel and its Jews, adding that violence is an acceptable means to achieve parity.

This emulates the philosophy of Nazi leaders Goebbels, Himmler and Goering: "Tell a lie big enough and repeat it often enough and people will start to believe and rely on it. Suppress the truth as it is the mortal enemy of the lie and construct a visible enemy upon which to focus resentment."

Lastly, in Iran's repeated vow to wipe Israel off the Middle East map, one can sense the building of the perfect storm to challenge the existing balance of power.

This threat should not be trivialized, especially as it is firmly entrenched within the psyche of terror organizations Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza. Each acquires a seemingly endless supply of ever-more sophisticated missile armament.

With the IRGC's access to billions of dollars – courtesy of the prior American administration – in

exchange for vague and hard-to-verify promises to cease Iran's history of enriching weapons-grade fissionable material, the risk to Israel and Jews rises, more so as they continue perfecting their ICBM payload delivery systems.

An understanding for the wise and a reality for the foolish: Israel is not going to sit passively by in the face of repeated existential threats to its people and to their tiny refuge in the Middle East. Possessing nuclear weapons and the means to reciprocate, if ever necessary, and living by the code, "Never Again," Israel's enemies would be best served to not write them off.

The memory of the Holocaust and what led up to it is fast fading, yet the same evil that brought it about so many years ago is as much present today as it was in pre-World War II Germany. The question on the table remains: Are Jews doomed to endure another Holocaust?

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Among my Rabbi's/ educator (Morris Zimbalist) many words of wisdom as relates to conflicting beliefs includes "... Our challenge is to use the past as both a foundation for and springboard towards the future so that change broadens our understandings of ...betterment for ourselves, our families and our community."

Thank you and good luck in your pursuit of equity,  
Bruce Portnoy  
Indian Creek, Illinois