

A CUFI PRIMER:

The Rising Tide of Anti-Semitism in the US

On October 27, 2018, a gunman opened fire in the Pittsburgh Tree of Life synagogue, killing 11 worshippers and wounding two others, while shouting, “All Jews must die.” It was the deadliest attack against Jews on US soil, ever.

That day, the United States watched in horror, at a loss to pinpoint what precipitated such a heinous and atrocious act of terror. Yet, however shocked Americans were, this was not an isolated incident; the world’s oldest hatred had simply reared its ugly head yet again.

Accounts of anti-Semitism had been rising globally for several years. While the US and Israel continue to enjoy a longstanding, warm friendship, a 2019 study by Tel Aviv University’s Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry found that of the 387 anti-Semitic attacks recorded worldwide in 2018, over 100 cases occurred in the United States.¹



Record Highs of Anti-Semitism in the US



In fact, the Anti-Defamation League reports that anti-Semitic attacks in the US doubled in 2018 from the previous year. Overall attacks, including harassment, vandalism and physical assault, amounted to 1,879 incidents—near record-high levels. The third highest count since the ADL began tracking these incidents in the 1970s, these attacks are more than numbers: they are evidence of the dangerously changing tides in the United States toward Jews and Israel. In 2018, an American Jewish Committee survey found that a majority of Jews considered the status of Jews in the United States to be less

secure than the year before.²

At the start of 2019, a gunman killed an elderly woman and wounded two others when he opened fire in the Chabad of Poway synagogue in San Diego. Occurring six months after the Pittsburgh shooting, the tragedy at Poway was another horrific and painful reminder that anti-Semitism in the US has not gone away. Instead, it has continued to rise.

Anti-Semitism’s New Mask

Of the 1,879 anti-Semitic incidents in the US counted by the ADL in 2018, 140 were found to reference Israel or Zionism. The ADL is cautious against conflating cases of general criticism against the State of Israel or instances of anti-Israel activism with anti-Semitism. However, according to the ADL’s report, when attacks “invoke or are accompanied by classic anti-Semitic stereotypes and tropes” or when “they target Jewish religious or cultural institutions or...they are expressed by groups or individuals who consistently express anti-Semitic ideas,” they are considered anti-Semitic.³

The connection between references to Israel or Zionism in anti-Semitic attacks demonstrates that anti-Semitism is seeking to don a new mask. Disguised as a hatred for Israel, anti-Zionism is a thin shroud for the age-old hatred of Jews that once hid behind religious teachings and racist ideologies and now often cloaks itself as ferocious political opposition to the world’s only Jewish state.



On the Frontlines: College Campuses



AMCHA, a nonprofit organization dedicated to documenting and combating anti-Semitism at institutions of higher learning in the US, tracked anti-Semitism on college campuses in 2018 and recorded 238 anti-Semitic incidents. For example, a Jewish student attending Beloit College in Wisconsin had an anti-Semitic note slipped under his dorm room door which said he “should be gassed.” At Virginia Tech, the Chabad Jewish Student Center announced plans to host a Holocaust survivor and, a day later, around 100 leaflets were found scattered across campus featuring hand-drawn swastikas.

Often, anti-Semitism on campus is also masked by anti-Israel activity and intolerance for pro-Israel activism. Of the 238 instances of anti-Semitism on campus, AMCHA recorded 121 Israel-related incidents of anti-Semitism, a 70% increase from the previous year.

At the University of Texas Austin, for example, Jewish students supporting the Israeli humanitarian organization, Save a Child’s Heart, were hindered from tabling by two other student groups that “moved their tables to flank them, began yelling, chanting and waving a flag over the Jewish students’ heads, and drowned out their calls for donations. When the Jewish students relocated to another part of the campus square, the disruptors followed them and continued to harass them - impeding their efforts for two days.⁴

On many campuses, Jewish students are also subjected to:

- “swastikas and other anti-Semitic graffiti in residential halls, public areas on campus and Hillel houses;
- physical aggression, harassment and intimidation by members of student or community groups in student-sponsored protests, rallies and agitprop held on campus;
- speakers, films and exhibits sponsored by student, faculty and community groups, that engage in anti-Semitic discourse or use anti-Semitic imagery and language to falsely describe Israel, Zionists, and Jews, including that Israel is a racist, apartheid or Nazi state, that Israel is guilty of heinous crimes against humanity such as ethnic cleansing and genocide, that the Jewish State should be destroyed, that violence against Jews is justified, that Jews exaggerate the Holocaust as a tool of Zionist propaganda, and that Jews in America wield excessive power over American foreign policy;
- student and faculty-sponsored boycott, divestment and sanction campaigns against Israel that are a means of demonizing Israel and seek to harm the Jewish state;
- suppression and disruption of free speech that presents Israel’s point of view.”⁵
- Students involved with Christians United for Israel’s campus program, CUFI on Campus, have been bullied,
- harassed, screamed at and suppressed when involved in pro-Israel advocacy on their campuses. One student
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CUFI's Efforts to Combat Anti-Semitism

Since our inception in 2006, CUFI has been committed to fighting anti-Semitism wherever it is found. To combat the anti-Semitism that is prevalent and spreading on American college campuses, CUFI worked tirelessly to advance the Anti-Semitism Awareness Act for two years, collaborating with allies in Washington, including at the White House, and on Capitol Hill. In 2019, CUFI made this policy our top legislative priority, and thousands of CUFI members attended CUFI's 14th annual Washington Summit to lobby in support of this critical

piece of legislation. In December 2019, when it became clear, despite this policy enjoying widespread bipartisan support, Congress would not move it forward, President Trump issued an executive order mirroring and expanding upon the *Anti-Semitism Awareness Act*. This significant and historic move by the administration will protect Jewish students on campus where anti-Semitism is so prevalent.

In light of the shocking uptick of anti-Semitism in our nation, CUFI is currently focused on prioritizing both educating the next generation about the Holocaust—the deadly result of ignoring anti-Semitism—and preventing further sickening attacks on Jews today through increased security. The *Never Again Education Act* which ensures educators have all they need to be successful in Holocaust education and the call to quadruple the funds provided by the Nonprofit Security Grant Program administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency are commonsense policies that CUFI fully endorses.

In 2019, CUFI also launched the Shine the Light campaign in which over two million people pledged to expose anti-Semitism in all its forms; educate their friends and elected officials about how to identify and condemn the anti-Semitism that hides in plain sight; fight those who would use opposition to Israeli policy as a thin veil to hide their hatred for the Jewish state; and support our Jewish neighbors should they ever be victimized by anti-Semites. In addition, CUFI distributes two educational booklets, *The War Against the Jews* and *The Sin of Silence*, that cover the history of anti-Semitism and the horrors of the Holocaust. Finally, every month, CUFI holds over 50 events in churches, communities, and college campuses across the US to educate people on the dangerous evil of anti-Semitism and ensure it does not continue to grow.



CUFI founder and Chairman Pastor John Hagee noted in an op-ed last year, “God and history will judge harshly those bigots who espouse hatred of Jews. But make no mistake, God and history will be no less kind to those who sit by and watch that ancient hatred spread once again. As Americans, as people of faith and conscience, we must be intolerant of intolerance. And regardless of how uncomfortable or hard we may find it, we must never hold our peace.”

Conclusion

Anti-Semitism is an insidious and growing problem in the United States, often masquerading as anti-Zionism, and resulting in unspeakable acts of evil toward Jewish people. Students, in particular, encounter virulent anti-Semitism on their campuses. Awareness is the first step toward ensuring that the US continues to be a safe place where Jews and other minorities can coexist securely and without fear. Action, both individual and state, is the next and only logical, moral step to stemming the rising tide of anti-Semitism across America.

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¹ "Antisemitism Worldwide 2018 Report is Released" (1 May 2019), Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry, <http://www.kantorcenter.tau.ac.il/event/antisemitism-worldwide-2018-report-released>

² "AJC 2018 Survey of American Jewish Opinion" (10 June 2018), AJC, <https://www.ajc.org/news/survey2018>

³ Michael Kunzelman, Report: Violent anti-Semitic attacks in US doubled in 2018 (30 April 2019), AP News, <https://www.apnews.com/488db75fdadc4109b85c1a1a69a2af04>

⁴ "Zionists Off Our Campus!" Campus Antisemitism in 2017 (August 2018), AMCHA Initiative <https://amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Campus-Antisemitism-2017.pdf>

⁵ Campus Antisemitism Information, AMCHA Initiative, <https://amchainitiative.org/campus-antisemitism/>