

Has Anti-Semitism Become an Epidemic on American College Campuses?

Mitchell Bard

Description: Anti-Semitism on American college campuses has been growing in recent years. While the Arab-Israeli Conflict and the BDS movement have been major themes in this rise, they are by no means the only ones. This talk will examine the specific threats that anti-Semitism poses on today's college campus and will frame them within the context of a resurgent global anti-Semitism.

Mitchell Bard is the Executive Director of the nonprofit American Israeli Cooperative Enterprise (AICE) and an authority on U.S. Middle East policy. Dr. Bard is also the director of the Jewish Virtual Library (JewishVirtualLibrary.org), perhaps the most popular and comprehensive online resource on Jewish history, politics and culture. Bard holds a Ph.D. in political science from UCLA, a master's degree in public policy from UC Berkeley, and a B.A. in economics from UC Santa Barbara. In 2013, Dr. Bard was named one of the "top 100 people positively influencing Jewish life" by the *Algemeiner* newspaper. He has written and edited 24 books, including *After Anatevka: Tevye in Palestine* and *Death to the Infidels: Radical Islam's War Against the Jews*.

A 2010 study by the Reut Institute reported that a well-organized, well-funded international network with hubs in key cities, such as London and San Francisco, was managing an international delegitimization campaign against Israel.

The report set off alarm bells in Jerusalem and Jewish communities around the world.

Five years later, however, in the United States, at least, the campaign is poorly organized, marginally funded and has failed to effect U.S.

policy, public opinion or university relations with Israel.

The perception remains, however, that the anti-Semitic boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) octopus has tentacles throughout the country and has spread them to more and more college campuses where activists are intimidating and sometimes endangering Jewish students, turning students against each other, exposing the hostility of faculty toward Jews, and Israel and threatening U.S. support for Israel by poisoning the minds of future voters and leaders.

Facts from the last 10 years 2005-2015:

- In 2005-6, four BDS resolutions were proposed, two passed and two were defeated; the next five academic years combined had only five more and three of those were defeated.
- The campaign began to take off in 2012-13 with 10 resolutions (six were defeated), followed by 19 in 2013-14 (12 were defeated) and 27 in 2014-15 (20 were defeated).
- A total of 70 votes have been taken on BDS measures.
- Those votes were limited to a total of 44 schools, a meager 2 percent of all the four-year colleges in the United States (I count the California Community College Association as one college and exclude the UC Student Association which has no power and represents no individual schools).
- Only 18 schools have passed one of these in the last 10 years (.009 percent of universities).

- Of the 44 campuses, 9 are part of the University of California (20%); 24 of the resolutions were proposed on these campuses (34 percent), 15 were defeated (63 percent).
- Overall, BDS measures were defeated 64 percent of the time (45 out of 70 votes) and were adopted 36 percent (25 out of 70).
- This is not a recurring problem on most campuses. Only seven schools have had three or more votes and only Michigan Dearborn, UC San Diego, UC Irvine and UC Davis have passed BDS resolutions more than once.

What are we to make of these statistics?

The movement has grown, but it is not sweeping the nation, and it definitely is not winning since even the handful of divestment resolutions that were adopted by students have no authority and administrators have repeatedly made clear they have no intention of divesting from Israel. In fact, many of the same schools (e.g., UCI) dramatically increased cooperation with Israel.

Some people have responded to the small numbers and few victories of the BDS movement by arguing that it is far more influential than the statistics suggest because these campaigns are primarily taking place on the nation's elite campuses. Again, the statistics tell a different story:

- Only seven elite schools (top 20 ranked) or 16 percent have had votes and BDS lost 7 of 8.
- If we expand the list to schools in the top 50, a total of 14 schools (32 percent) have been roiled by BDS resolutions, but those have been defeated in 19 of the 29 votes (66 percent).