



ISRAEL NEWS
A collection of the week's news from Israel
From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee of
Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation

last week to stand in silence for Holocaust Remembrance Day mistakenly assumed the somber position when they heard the warning of an incoming blitz from Gaza, adults this week are likely to be confused in the opposite direction. The irony is as tragic as the situation is untenable.

Events...

Wednesday, May 22, 8pm
Dr. Mordechai Kedar speaks on "Debunking the Myth of the Expulsion and Occupation," at Shaarei Tefillah.

Commentary...

Jihadi Missiles, Israeli Mourning By Ruthie Blum

Reeling after three days of nonstop rocket barrages from Gaza, and fully aware that the ceasefire with Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorists is temporary, Israelis are preparing for this year's Yom Hazikaron (Memorial Day) ceremonies with particular sadness and no small degree of frustration.

This evening, when the Jewish state enters into a 24-hour mourning period for all the fallen soldiers and civilian victims of terrorism who have been killed since its inception, four new names will have been added to the list. Four new sets of spouses, children, parents and siblings will have earned the dreaded label of "bereaved."

Each will wish he or she could have turned the clock back to the minute before Moshe Agadi, Moshe Feder, Ziad al-Hamamda and Pinchas Menachem Pashwazman were murdered by missile fire that changed the course of their history.

Agadi, a 58-year-old father of four, was killed on Saturday night when a rocket hit his Ashkelon home. He had gone outside to smoke a cigarette and didn't make it back to the bomb shelter in time to avoid being struck by shrapnel in his chest and stomach.

Moshe Feder, a 68-year-old father of two from Kfar Saba, was killed on Sunday while on his way to Erez Thermoplastic Products, the plant near the Gaza border where he worked as head roofer. Feder's car was targeted by a Kornet anti-tank guided missile.

Ziad al-Hamamda, a 47-year-old Bedouin Israeli father of seven, was killed on Sunday by shrapnel to the chest when the factory where he worked in Ashkelon took a direct hit by a rocket.

Pinchas Menachem Pashwazman, a 21-year-old married father of a toddler, was killed on Sunday as well. A dual Israeli-American citizen, he was hit in the chest by shrapnel while running in the stairwell of an Ashdod building towards its bomb shelter.

Four Israelis, whose lives had nothing particular in common last week, are now indelibly linked in death. All slaughtered by bloodthirsty Palestinian jihadists bent on Israel's destruction. All forever connected by virtue of the latest, but by no means the last, onslaught from Gaza.

Four families whose names will always be noted and quoted together by virtue of their shared tragedy over the course of a single fateful weekend.

What they will not be, however, is forgotten. Unlike the terrorists with a grip on Gaza—who have spent the billions of dollars, euros and shekels earmarked for "rehabilitation" on deadly weapons, while using their people as hapless human shields and faceless cannon fodder—Israelis honor every individual casualty of war.

Indeed, reading aloud the names, ages and circumstances of the deaths of each will be part and parcel of the solemn events held in schools, community centers, parks and cemeteries across the country beginning tonight and continuing through Wednesday.

Two sirens will be sounded: the first, for one minute, at 8 p.m. on Tuesday; the second, for two minutes, on Wednesday at 11 a.m. When these sirens go off, everyone in the country will stand in silence, head lowered, to pay homage to Israel's fallen.

Undoubtedly, some people's hearts will jump at the sound, believing it to indicate yet another rocket barrage.

Though air-raid sirens rise and fall, while those used for mourning are monotone, it is hard at times for traumatized members of the public to distinguish between them. Just as many young children who were taught

Yet somehow, in spite of it all, Israelis continue to rank high on the happiness scale, and, according to a new study by the Israel Democracy Institute, a majority believes that the country's achievements outweigh its failures.

This cheer will be in full display as soon as Yom Hazikaron ends on Wednesday evening and the country erupts into celebration for Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israeli Independence Day. Fear of missiles and the act of mourning will be replaced by fireworks and dancing at night, and barbecues the following day.

While Hamas and Islamic Jihad plot their next assault on the Jewish state from their hell-hole in Gaza, we Israelis will be wishing our thriving democracy a happy 71st birthday with a vengeance. (JNS May 7)

Who's Responsible for Stopping Terrorism in Gaza?

By Jonathan S. Tobin

Israelis have just endured yet another weekend of terror and the reactions, both there and elsewhere, have been predictable. Hamas and Islamic Jihad launched more than 600 rockets into Israel that cost the lives of four Israelis and wounded 10 more.

It's just one more chapter in the long war being waged by the Palestinians on Israel's existence. Were they willing to make peace with Israel, there would be no rockets, no terror attacks and no need for Israel to strike back against the rocket-launchers and their paymasters.

Abroad, the reaction to the assault has evoked many of the usual expressions of moral equivalence from the Jewish state's critics. Many countries have followed the lead of the Trump administration in opposing Hamas's blatantly illegal actions in deliberately targeting Israeli civilians. But while U.S. President Donald Trump has unambiguously denounced the Gaza terrorists—and expressed total support for Israel and its right to defend itself—others, such as French President Emmanuel Macron and the European Union, have qualified that stand, calling it part of a "cycle of violence" in which both parties were by definition at fault and also mentioning their desire for Israeli "restraint."

Cheerleaders for the Palestinians were less even-handed.

Representatives Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) and Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.) took to Twitter to bash Israel. Both treated the rocket attacks as Israelis getting what deserved in return for their treatment of Palestinians. That Omar and Tlaib are lying about Gaza being occupied and the suffering of the Palestinians there being Israel's fault, rather than that of their Hamas rulers, gives the lie to their attempt to claim that Hamas is fighting for their freedom. But what else can you expect from supporters of a BDS movement that—like Hamas and Islamic Jihad—seeks the destruction of Israel?

On the Jewish left, the anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic Jewish Voice for Peace and IfNotNow groups also didn't place any blame on Hamas. Less strident liberal Jewish critics of Israel did condemn Hamas, but stuck to the line about a cycle of violence that ignores that all of this would be unnecessary but for Palestinian intransigence.

In Israel, critics of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are once again wondering why he allows Hamas to periodically terrorize much of the population of Israel without doing anything to put an end to the problem. It's hard to argue with their complaints.

The status quo is intolerable for Israelis. Any time Hamas or Iran (which may be pulling the strings of Islamic Jihad) wants to disrupt Israeli life, they can do so. Israel did hit back with attacks on those shooting the rockets, on Hamas facilities and with targeted strikes on specific Hamas figures, like the operative responsible for funneling money to Gaza from Tehran. Perhaps those moves chastened the Hamas leadership into agreeing to a ceasefire. But if Palestinian terrorists wish to disrupt Israel's Memorial and Independence Day holidays or the holding of the Eurovision song contest in Tel Aviv next week by raining down death and destruction on Israeli towns and cities, they can do so.

What's deterring Netanyahu from putting an end to Hamas's rule over

Gaza?

The answers are obvious. The costs in Israeli and Palestinian blood that would be shed in order to rid the area of Hamas would be terrible. No prime minister—and certainly not one as cautious when it comes to using the military as Netanyahu—wants to send Israeli boys to their deaths in the streets and tunnels of Gaza where Hamas has fortified itself. And he is just as unwilling to be forced to order actions that will result in the deaths of countless Palestinians, who will be staked out as human shields to protect Hamas operatives and leaders.

Just as important in making this decision is that Israel has no desire to rule Gaza, which it would be forced to do if it rid the strip of the terrorist scourge. Nor is the Israeli government eager to go to war in order to try and hand Gaza over to the Palestinian Authority, whose attempts to squeeze Hamas financially is part of the reason the terrorists use these flare-ups to distract Gazans from their economic woes.

That's why the status quo in Gaza persists.

Yet the point most commentators, both Israeli and non-Israeli, miss about this issue is that it isn't really Israel's responsibility to save Gaza from Islamist tyranny. It should be up to the Palestinians themselves to do so, and that's exactly what those who purport to care about them and the cause of peace ought to be encouraging.

As long as Hamas is a powerful force in Palestinian life and can use Gaza as a base, any hope for peace is impossible. That's not just because it means control of the Palestinian population is divided between the Islamists and the Fatah-run P.A. It's because Hamas acts as a permanent check on any possible tendency among the Palestinian leadership to discard their century-old ideology of hatred for Jews and Zionism. While there's no evidence that P.A. leader Mahmoud Abbas would make peace even if he wanted to, neither he nor an eventual successor will ever try while Hamas poses a threat to their power and their lives.

That's why it's incumbent on the people of Gaza, their fellow Palestinians and those who claim to wish them well to do everything in their power to aid an effort to overthrow Hamas from within, rather than asking Israel to endure a costly military campaign in order to do it for them.

Rather than chide Israel for defending itself or Netanyahu from refraining from a bloodbath in order to take Gaza, it's time for everyone to speak up to demand that the Gazans and other Palestinians overthrow their Islamist tyrants. Given Hamas's strength and support, that won't be easy. But until it does happen, all talk of peace—from Americans, the Europeans, Israelis or the Palestinians—is just so much hot air. (JNS May 6)

Why Progressive Anti-Semitism — and Why Now?

By Victor Davis Hanson

The New York Times International Edition recently published an anti-Semitic cartoon of a dachshund with the face of Benjamin Netanyahu. The composite animal was leading a hunched Donald Trump who had on dark sunglasses, as if blind, and a yarmulke.

Almost immediately, everyone pointed out that the theme of doglike Jews pulling along their clueless befuddled blinded “Aryan” masters was a favorite in Hitler's Germany. The theme, style, and imagery of the cartoon might have trumped what was often published in *Der Stürmer*, the Nazi megaphone of propagandist Julius Streicher. The latter was hanged after the Nuremberg Trials for two decades of fomenting the Jew hatred that helped lead to the Holocaust.

Stranger still, at first the New York Times merely explained how the sick cartoon got published in its international edition, but without an apology for its publication. Its subsequent second-try mea culpa was rendered a pathetic joke when, a few days later, the paper published yet another incoherent anti-Semitic cartoon of a Benjamin Netanyahu, this time as some sort of blind Moses with selfie stick in one hand and a stone tablet with the Star of David in the other, as he descends from Mount Sinai.

It has been noted that the Times has had a long history of anti-Semitism, dating to before World War II, and, after that, of serial anti-Israel venom. Certainly, if the cartoon had similarly portrayed any other ethnic or religious group (except heterosexual white Christians), the Times would immediately have fired anyone remotely involved in running such trash. Was it any surprise that the Times recently referenced Jesus as a Palestinian rather than Jewish?

The Times in general sees bias such as anti-Semitism and racism in terms of political warfare: The hatred is always a cry of the heart of marginalized people, and always directed at the supposedly deserving. Note that not long ago the Times vigorously defended its hiring of Sarah Jeong, the racist blogger who had a long history of anti-male and anti-white hate speech that included such social-media posts as “Oh man it's kind of sick how much joy I get out of being cruel to old white men” and “Dumbass f***** white people marking up the internet with their opinions like dogs pissing on fire hydrants” and “White people have stopped breeding. You'll all go extinct soon. That was my plan all along.” In other words, the Times

seems to have no innate problem with its progressive employees expressing racist and anti-Semitic tropes, as long as their targets are deemed politically incorrect.

Recently at UC Berkeley, in a now familiar routine, during a student-government meeting, protesters slurred Jewish students with conspiratorial charges that the Israeli military has trained American police how better to kill blacks. Campuses now routinely ignore student anti-Semitic smears; indeed, universities and colleges are becoming the incubators of progressive hatred of Jews.

The strange thing about the now predictable anti-Jewish and anti-Israel social-media outbursts of Representative Ilhan Omar (D., Minn.) was not that Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez (D., N.Y.) and Representative Rashida Tlaib (D., Mich.) defended Omar's slurs. (Tlaib herself recently demanded cutting off aid to Israel, claiming it did not reflect American values.) Rather, what's striking is that the Democratic party in general could not even muster a vote condemning the anti-Semitic and anti-Israel statements of one of their own House members.

The examples of progressive hatred of Jews could be multiplied endlessly, but the key question is: Why in this generation and why on the Democratic left?

There, are of course, always white nationalists who voice reactionary anti-Semitism, but most are pathetic fringe groups easily identified and ostracized. For all the invective lodged against Donald Trump, no president has proved more sensitive to Jewish issues and more committed to the survival of Israel. The anti-Semitic extreme alt-right has received no sanction from the Republican party, and it remains a tiny, mostly irrelevant group of losers. In contrast, progressive Jew-hatred is expressed at the nation's premier institutions, such as UC Berkeley, the New York Times, and the U.S. Congress. Again, why?

The far Left is intertwined with Islamist activists. Both share a hatred of the U.S. and see the Middle East as a postcolonial victim of Western imperialism. Students and urban youth bond with radical Islamists in their shared dislike of the Western countries (such as Israel) in general and the United States in particular.

Radical Muslims and the Left disguise their hatred of Jews by claiming that they are only championing downtrodden Palestinians. Few bother to ask them why a tiny democracy in a sea of autocracy is always singled out any time global attention turns to the question of refugees, disputed territories, or treatment of supposed religious minorities. In other words, the hater of Jews always says, “I have no problem with the Jewish people, but I do not like the imperialist and colonial policies of the Jewish state of Israel.”

But if so, why not extend such universal empathy for refugees to the last of the East Prussian Germans, or those who are left of the Volga Russians, or the octogenarians still alive from the nearly 1 million Jews who were ethnically cleansed from their ancestral homes in Jordan, Syria, Egypt, and throughout the Islamic world? Why pick only on tiny Israel? If the rub is disputed land, why not agitate for the northern Cypriot Greeks who suffered (and do suffer) terribly from the occupation of Turkish overseers, or the Tibetans, whose lands were simply expropriated by Chinese Communists?

If the youth of today are anxious about the treatment of religious minorities, why not at least confess that 1 million Arab speakers in Israel cherish freedoms found nowhere else in the Middle East? They also are certainly freer and more secure than Muslim minorities in either India or China. So there is no reason to fixate on a tiny constitutional society — except that it is a Jewish state.

Anti-Semitism, to be frank, is deeply embedded also among the elite black progressive community. Numerous contemporary African-American national leaders — Jesse Jackson (“Hymietown”), Al Sharpton (“If the Jews want to get it on, tell them to pin their yarmulkes back and come over to my house”), the Reverend Jeremiah Wright (“Them Jews aren't going to let him [Obama] talk to me.”) — have at some point trafficked in anti-Semitism.

The Jew-hating Louis Farrakhan is no outlier. He has been prominent in the progressive Women's March, has had his picture taken with a then-smiling Senator Barack Obama (the photo was repressed until after Obama left the presidency), and he was once close to former Democratic National Party vice chairman Keith Ellison. Representative Hank Johnson (D., Ga.), like Farrakhan, has compared West Bank Jews to “termites” — another sick metaphor and, like those used in cartoons appearing in the New York Times, one with a disgusting pedigree from the Third Reich. In such old-new binaries, Jews and Israelis are now recast as “privileged whites.” So their frequent attackers expect immunity from condemnation; they seek refuge as marginalized people for whom charges of bias or privilege do not so readily apply.

There is also the insidious suggestion by those on the left who traffic in anti-Semitic language and symbolism that most American Jews are assumed to be loyal Democrats. In passive-aggressive style, the new anti-

Semites enjoy poking fellow party members on the left, in the expectation that they can do so without warranting the odium that like-minded Nazis and Klansmen would earn.

Like teenagers who rant against their parents on the expectation that, as members of the same family, they are exempt from rebuke, the progressive anti-Semites expect fellow Democrats to contextualize their animus, tolerate it, and even excuse it for the greater good of party and ideological unity.

Add in that a new generation of younger Jewish Americans is not inclined to push back against left-wing anti-Semitism. These fourth- and fifth-generation American citizens are often increasingly secular; they don't have much knowledge about or interest in the history and nature of Israel, and they're keen to avoid conflict with fellow hipster students and urban progressives. Like the former and now largely inert Greek-American "lobby," the next generation of Jewish Americans is less interested in traditional Jewish concerns and likely to defer to fellow progressives in matters of "woke" issues such as the alleged "colonialism" of Israel.

Anti-Semitism is only going to intensify. Both in America and Europe, it is naturally at home among the multicultural Left. The media, popular culture, universities, and left-wing political parties either cannot or will not stop it.

Trump's unwavering support for Israel and keen support of Jews also encourages leftists, in Pavlovian fashion, to attack anything that Trump favors. Prominent progressive Jews lack either the ability or the inclination to call out members of their own political persuasion — a fact that only encourages even more overt anti-Semitism.

So here is the near future: Every time the New York Times runs another anti-Semitic cartoon (and it will), each time a left-wing member of Congress questions the patriotism or morality of American Jews (and one will), and on every occasion Jewish students are harassed on campus (and they will be), we go another mile down the road to the well-known historical disaster that is looming ahead. (National Review May 7)

Get Out By Liel Leibovitz

When I immigrated to America, 20 years ago this fall, I had just over \$2,000 in my pocket that I'd saved working as a night watchman at a factory back home in Israel. I also had an inflatable mattress on the floor of a friend's one-bedroom in White Plains, New York, and a promise that I could stay for two weeks, maybe three, until I found a place of my own. But most importantly, I had a story about my future.

As soon as I woke up that first morning, I took the train to 116th and Broadway, got off, strolled through the gates of Columbia University, and stood there gazing at the bronze Alma Mater sculpture guarding the steps to Low Library. Her face was serene, her lap adorned by a thick book, and her arms open wide, to embrace, or so I imagined, folks like me who were reasonably smart and wildly motivated and ready to work as hard as was needed to make something of themselves. In a year, maybe two, I thought, I'd find my way into the ivied cloister, and when I emerged on the other end I'd no longer be just another impoverished newcomer: A Columbia degree would accredit me, would validate me and suggest to those around me, from members of my family to potential employers, that I was a man in full, worthy of my slice of the American pie.

It wasn't a story I had made up on my own. It was, in many ways, the foundational story of American Jewish life in the 20th century. Surveying the student body in major American universities between 1911 and 1913, the newly founded intercollegiate Menorah Association discovered 400 Jews at Cornell, 325 at the University of Pennsylvania, and 160 at Harvard; by 1967, The New York Times reported that 40% of the student body in both Penn and Columbia were Jewish, with Yale, Harvard, and Cornell lagging behind with a mere 25%. For a minority that today is still just three or four generations removed from the deprivations of the old continent and that never rose much further above the 2% mark of the population at large, education—especially at renowned universities—was a magical wardrobe that led into a Narnia of possibilities. All you had to do was open the door.

Sadly, that door is now closing. It's not just that the number of Jewish students in the Ivies are plummeting—Harvard's class of 2020, for example, is only 6% Jewish. It's that the universities themselves, responding to a host of larger cultural, social, and political trends, have divested themselves of the values and practices that have made them mighty engines of American intellectual and economic growth as well as a springboard for striving Americans, Jews and non-Jews alike.

Jewish students from well-heeled American families may still vie for places at Yale or Princeton; proud Jewish parents may still giddily direct the family minivan to Cambridge while touring prospective colleges; and wealthy Jewish philanthropists may still give generously and gratefully to the institutions that helped make their success possible. These people are well intentioned, but the evidence has become overwhelming that they are now throwing good money after bad: The century-long relationship

between American Jews and the nation's elite universities has rotted away. Now is the time for all of the good people involved—students, parents, donors—to get out, and fast.

American universities are openly breaking their bonds with the Jewish community by embracing active discrimination against Jewish students and rejecting their intellectual, emotional, and moral attachments to the values of equal human dignity, universal rights, critical inquiry, and rational thought. Last month, the student-run College Council at Williams, one of the nation's top-rated liberal arts colleges, denied the request of a new student-run group to be recognized as a Registered Student Organization. The group, Williams Initiative for Israel, is dedicated to promoting Israeli culture and the Jewish state's right to exist. The council provided no reason for its refusal, and, breaking with protocol, allowed anonymous voting, scrubbed names of participants from the protocol, and disabled the livestream of the council's meeting, deeply compromising the transparency of the voting process. The decision violates Williams' own Code of Conduct, which states that the school shall be "committed to being a community in which all ranges of opinion and belief can be expressed and debated. ... The College seeks to assure the right of all to express themselves in words and actions, so long as they can do so without infringing upon the rights of others or violating standards of good conduct or public law."

Jewish students should take note. What the undergraduate Jacobins at Williams hate isn't Bibi Netanyahu, or "the occupation," or even Zionism. What they hate are the values that used to make American universities great, and that made Jews such a great fit for American universities. In an intellectual environment increasingly governed by fear—adopt our rigid worldview or be labeled racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, Islamophobic, ableist, or worse—and living almost entirely in the shadows, away from public scrutiny, the true intellectual seeker is not an asset but a liability. There's nothing Jewish students, at Williams or anywhere else, can do to change that. They should realize, as many already do, that they're not disliked and targeted because of the views they hold, which they might conceivably change; they're disliked and targeted because of who they are. Paying for teenagers to be subjected to this kind of rejection and abuse is an act of communal self-destructiveness that we would be smart to eschew.

If this sounds like needless histrionics, consider the case of NYU. After seven years of hard work and good fortune, I graduated with a Ph.D. from Columbia in 2007, and was thrilled to find employment teaching at the downtown campus of New York's other great university. It didn't take long for me to realize that no amount of effort or excellence—not even a teaching award I had won a few years into my career—would absolve me of the original sin of failing to conform to my colleagues' rigid worldview, a zealous outlook that anointed all the world's minorities as inherently and irredeemably oppressed and condemned the Jews to play the comically ahistorical role of privileged white oppressors.

Believing that a great university was nothing if not an arena for the free and unfettered exchange of ideas, I tried to engage in conversation and debate, only to find that those presumably shared values were no longer on the menu. When I asked to attend a colleague's seminar on boycotting Israel, my request was declined. Instead, I was told bluntly that only those who supported singling out the world's sole Jewish state for calumny might attend. I understood that my days by Washington Square Park were numbered. I left NYU and the teaching profession a short while later. When I think back on that time, which is often, I am struck not so much by personal anger as by an unbearable sadness for a formerly great institution that, having once nurtured everyone from Judy Blume to Alan Greenspan, is now inhospitable both to Jews and to the larger intellectual tradition that helped Jews flourish in America.

Just how inhospitable that place has become was evident this month, when the university's branch of Students for Justice in Palestine won the Presidential Service Award, one of the highest honors NYU bestows on members of its academic community. The decision shocked and angered many in NYU's Jewish community, who noted that the group's actions frequently veered into the violent and the anti-Semitic: In 2014, for example, the group targeted Jewish students by handing out fake eviction notices in what it argued was a protest of Israel's policies, and in 2018 two SJP members were arrested after forcefully crashing a campus celebration of Israel's Independence Day, seizing Israeli flags, and setting them on fire. Most recently, several of the group's members accosted Chelsea Clinton at an NYU memorial to the victims of the deadly shooting at a Christchurch, New Zealand, mosque, accusing her of stoking murderous Islamophobia due to her questioning earlier this year of Rep. Ilhan Omar's anti-Semitic statements about Jewish money purchasing political influence. How, many on campus and off wondered, could such a bigoted bunch win a major award at any university, let alone one whose most celebrated schools are named for the well-known Jewish families who paid for them to be built?

The question proved surprisingly difficult to answer. The Presidential Service Awards, according to the university's website, "are given to students or student organizations that have had an extraordinary and positive impact on the university community." Just who decides what accounts for "positive impact," however, was unclear: A university spokesperson replied that the awardees are chosen by a volunteer committee of faculty, administrators, and student representatives, but would divulge neither the nomination process nor criteria, nor the identity of any of the committee's members.

Attempts to find an answer to these seemingly simple questions proved futile. Emails to several officials at the office of the SVP of Student Affairs, which administers the awards, went unreturned. Enlisting the help of several of my former colleagues who still teach at the university proved equally futile: Even those currently employed by NYU could not get their colleagues to say precisely who gets to decide for the university what passes for award-worthy merit.

Concerned by these developments, a handful of NYU's Jewish trustees and donors began exchanging emails and phone calls, wondering what to do. Their obvious address, according to several people who participated in these exchanges or are familiar with them, was the university's president, Andrew Hamilton. The president, according to one donor who spoke to him but prefers to remain unnamed, "said all the right things," reiterating his commitment to keeping Jewish students feeling safe and welcomed at NYU.

"Had it been up to me," Hamilton wrote last month in a letter to *The Wall Street Journal*, "SJP would not have received the award—not because of its politics or NYU's opposition to its pro-boycott, divestment and sanctions positions, but because SJP's behavior has been divisive."

But just what can one university president do to affect the nature and tone of life on his or her campus? The answer, it seemed, was not much: After Hamilton skipped the award ceremony, NYU's Department of Social and Cultural Analysis decided to escalate the fight against Israel and pledge noncooperation with the university's study-abroad program in Tel Aviv. No sanctions were proposed against NYU's satellite campuses in Shanghai or Abu Dhabi, nor was an explanation given as to how or why the department chose to take the unprecedented step of promulgating its own policy, directly contradicting those of the university at large. The department's website currently states that it "encourages its faculty and student members to act in the spirit of noncooperation outlined in the Resolution," but several department officials failed to return emails asking what measures, if any, would be taken against students who choose to exercise their right to study in Tel Aviv. It remains unclear what, if anything, President Hamilton or anyone else at NYU can or will do to discipline the department.

The problems that the scuffles at NYU or Williams present far transcend the specific bureaucratic entanglements and leadership issues at a handful of particular academic institutions. Similar stories occur in universities throughout the nation, raising the question of what, if anything, future Jewish involvement with American academia should look like. On the most basic level, Jewish donors must ask themselves why they should continue to financially aid and abet institutions that offer very little by way of accountability or transparency, while incubating hate. But the question runs deeper than that, touching on the very role the university currently plays in American life, and its utility for Jews or any other minority group wishing to make it in America.

For nearly a century, universities proved central to American Jewish life because they offered two assets without which few, particularly among the children or grandchildren of immigrants, could succeed. The first was knowledge. The second was accreditation, the lifeblood of any meritocracy; a graduate of a good university could depend on her diploma translating into a good job in an industry of her choice. Neither of these assets are available today: In the past 20 years, if not earlier, American universities have dramatically increased the cost of tuition while dramatically reducing the quality of product they deliver. In 2001, for example, the cost of a university education was 23% of median annual earnings; by 2011, the number soared to 38%, causing student debt to double. Around the same time, a federal survey tested the literacy of college-educated citizens—defined as "using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals and to develop one's knowledge and potential"—and found that only a quarter were deemed proficient.

The startling failure of American universities to teach basic skills in advertised areas of competence is due to a host of factors, including the emergence of identity-politics-related fields of study devoted to the promulgation of sectarian dogma rather than to independent thinking and research. It is also closely related to the shifting identity of those doing most of the teaching: In 1969, for example, about 78% of faculty members in American universities and colleges held tenured or tenure-track positions; today, that number is roughly 20%, with all other classes, including at elite institutions, being taught by poorly-paid adjuncts. At NYU, for example, a majority of classes—55%—are taught by adjunct

professors who earn as little as \$800 a month per class. Many of these adjuncts—I speak from experience here—are excellent and dedicated teachers, but their compensation makes it impossible for them to invest any real time in their students, or to risk even the glancing disapproval of activist students or faculty, which might deprive them of their meager stipends.

This rapid decline in the quality of the education that American universities offer might not have impacted the value of their diploma had the tech industry not disrupted all aspects of life, giving birth to an economy that values a highly specialized skillset that can be just as easily learned on YouTube or in a six-week coding class. Stories of famous billionaires dropping out of college abound (see under: Zuckerberg, Mark), as do tales of renegades paying young Americans to forgo college and go into business instead (see under: Thiel, Peter). But you needn't go to extremes to evaluate the profound crisis of accreditation that American universities are experiencing these days: If you'd like a job and haven't a degree, you can find employment not only at Costco and Chipotle but also at Google, Apple, IBM, and the Bank of America. With colleges, for the most part, teaching very little by way of remunerative skills, it's safe to assume that many other employers will follow suit, making the requisite college degree a thing of the past, the equivalent of a gold-embossed certificate from the Che Guevara Finishing School.

The rapid decay of American universities as purveyors of useful or profound knowledge impacts all Americans, not just Jews. But Jews suffer from some particular drawbacks that make universities not just an inane waste of time and money but downright hostile environments. The evolution of even the finest American universities into hotbeds of dogmatic identity politics and very little else make them increasingly inhospitable to Jews and to Jewishness, an identity that privileges the questioning and challenging of majority dogmas. It took well over a thousand years for Western civilization to allow open challenges to the metaphysics that painted Jews and the values of questioning and difference that they embodied as inherently offensive to God; it took even longer for societies to see that those values might be a powerful engine of human intellectual and social development, and to insist that all citizens should at least theoretically be equal under the law. While it is hard to say how long it will take to reverse the headlong retreat of American universities into medieval sectarian idiocy, it is unlikely to happen anytime soon. In the meantime, though Jews may be unable to reverse this calamity on their own, there is no reason why they should be footing the bill for it, either.

So here's my advice: Put that felt Harvard pennant back in your closet, and file those fundraising letters from your alma mater in the garbage can, where they belong. Why? Because she just doesn't love you anymore. If you're a young Jew who is thinking about tagging your parents with the bill for a famous college or university, don't bother—you'll do just as well, if not better, in today's America without an expensive diploma, and you'll get a much better education by getting a job, renting an apartment, and seeing how Americans actually live these days, outside of safe spaces and ideological echo chambers, while reading great books and educating yourself away from the dogmatic madness of the modern-day academy. If you must apply to a college or a university, in order to learn a specific technical skill that is somehow unavailable on the internet, refuse to subject yourself to any environment that displays, even remotely, the sort of ugly symptoms on display at Williams or NYU. An institution that does not demand basic civility and true respect for intellectual diversity isn't worth your time as a scholar.

And finally, Jewish communal machers: Please stop offering up lavish new buildings and campus centers and multimillion-dollar bequests in honor of your fathers and mothers, who would probably be rolling over in their graves if they could see and hear what goes on inside the buildings that bear their names. Any Jewish donor invested in any institution in which Jewish students regularly live in fear of retribution from classmates or teachers for asserting their own basic human dignity and attachment to the values of free inquiry and critical reasoning should demand her or his money back. Let the Qataris or the Saudis be the suckers who pay for the hatred and gibberish in which so many American university students are being forced to major.

American universities, their faculties, and their student activists are of course at liberty to exercise their academic freedoms in whatever ways they choose; they can turn their institutions into radical chic summer camps and publish all the books they want about the IDF harvesting Palestinian organs. In a world premised on free choice and open inquiry, many individuals—and institutions—may embrace ideas that are utterly idiotic and vile. Freedom also means that Jews should not be expected to pay for turning their children into second-class citizens, or for the destruction of the values that have made our lives as Americans possible. (Tablet May 6)