



# **“Zionists Off Our Campus!” Campus Antisemitism in 2017**

**August 2018**

# Contents

<b>I. Introduction</b> .....	3
<b>II. Methodology</b> .....	7
Data Collection.....	7
Identifying Classic Antisemitic and Israel-Related Incidents .....	8
Identifying Intent to Harm.....	8
<b>III. Results</b> .....	9
1. Classic antisemitic incidents outnumbered Israel-related incidents 3 to 1 but showed far less intention to harm Jewish students and staff. ....	9
2. Classic antisemitic incidents with evidence of intention to harm Jewish students and staff were far less likely to show evidence of multiple perpetrators or perpetrators with affiliations to on-campus or outside groups than Israel-related incidents.....	9
3. Genocidal expression was found in three-quarters of the classic antisemitic incidents in 2017, but less than one-fifth of these incidents were identified as having intent to harm Jewish students and staff.....	10
4. Genocidal expression in all incidents of classic antisemitism more than doubled from 2015 to 2016, peaked in 2017 and decreased dramatically in the first half of 2018, but no such trend was found when considering only those incidents of genocidal expression with intent to harm Jewish students and staff. ....	11
5. Nearly all of the Israel-related incidents in 2017 involved behavior intended to suppress pro-Israel expression and/or that specifically targeted pro-Israel individuals or groups for ostracizing or discriminatory behavior intended to exclude them from fully participating in campus life: almost half involved attempts to silence pro-Israel expression, and three-quarters involved the specific targeting of pro-Israel individuals for ostracizing and/or excluding. ....	12
6. While the number of Israel-related incidents involving behavior intending to suppress pro-Israel expression remained relatively constant from 2015 through the first half of 2018, during the same period there was a clear increase of incidents involving the specific targeting of pro-Israel individuals or groups for ostracizing and excluding.....	14
<b>IV. Discussion and Recommendations</b> .....	15
<b>Appendix</b> .....	19
<b>Lead Researchers</b> .....	22

## I. Introduction

In its 2017 audit, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) identified nearly 2,000 incidents of anti-Jewish harassment, vandalism and assault in the United States.<sup>1</sup> This was an alarming 57% increase over the number of incidents reported in 2016, the largest single-year increase since ADL began monitoring such data in 1979. Perhaps even more alarming is that 204 of these incidents occurred on college and university campuses, an 89% increase over the number of campus incidents reported in 2016.

AMCHA Initiative's studies revealed significant increases in antisemitic activity on U.S. campuses in 2015<sup>2</sup> and 2016,<sup>3</sup> and our Antisemitism Tracker,<sup>4</sup> which documents antisemitic incidents on college campuses across the country, revealed an almost identical number of acts of anti-Jewish harassment, vandalism and assault in 2017 – **205**. During the same year our Tracker also documented **71** acts of Israel-related harassment, vandalism and assault.

Tallying these incidents and looking at their change in number over time serves as an important indication of how hostile U.S. campuses in general, and any individual campus in particular, might be for Jewish students. The figures alone, however, are far from conclusive since antisemitic incidents given equal weight in an audit may not have equal impact on Jewish students, either individually or collectively. For example, a small swastika drawn in a bathroom stall will most likely elicit a different emotional response than the same swastika etched into a Jewish student's dorm room door, yet these incidents are equally weighted in both AMCHA's and ADL's tally of incidents.

The idea that not all antisemitic incidents equally affect Jewish students is supported by students themselves, who are much more likely to speak out about and report incidents that personally and directly target them or their fellow students for intentional harm. (See Appendix for a sampling of 2017 testimonials from Jewish students.)

This study, which examined incidents of classic antisemitic and anti-Zionist harassment, vandalism and assault on U.S. campuses in 2017, sought to go deeper than previous studies and look beyond the tallies to better understand how antisemitism affects American campuses today. It started with the realization that many of the incidents in our database showed clear evidence that their perpetrators intended to not only express their bigoted beliefs and opinions about Jews or Israel, but also to cause deliberate and direct harm to Jewish students; other incidents in our database did not show such obvious intentionality. For instance, a swastika etched into the dorm room door of a Jewish student strongly suggests that the perpetrator's intent is to harass or intimidate the Jewish victim, whereas a

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.adl.org/media/11174/download>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Antisemitic-Activity-at-U.S.-Colleges-and-Universities-with-Jewish-Populations-2015-Full-Report.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Antisemitism\\_At-the-Epicenter-of-Campus-Intolerance\\_Report-2016.pdf](https://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Antisemitism_At-the-Epicenter-of-Campus-Intolerance_Report-2016.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://amchainitiative.org/antisemitism-tracker>

swastika drawn in a bathroom stall provides little or no evidence of the perpetrator's intent to do anything more than express an opinion, however odious and offensive.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, a "hostile environment" is created when harassment is sufficiently serious to deny or limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from a school's educational program.<sup>5</sup> While not every incident in our Tracker meets this criterion of harassment, behaviors intended to harm Jewish students and limit their ability to fully participate in campus life are more likely to contribute to a hostile environment than behaviors which do not show such intentionality. Furthermore, being able to distinguish between these two kinds of behaviors can provide a useful tool in assessing to what extent antisemitic incidents affect the campus climate for Jewish students.

This methodological distinction is validated by a similar distinction made by the U.S. Supreme Court in a ruling about hateful expression. In a case involving a state's right to ban the act of cross burning, a practice widely associated with racial hatred, the Court concluded that cross burning done with clear evidence of an intent to threaten or intimidate an individual or group is not protected by the First Amendment and may be banned, but that in the absence of clear evidence of intended malice, cross burning is considered a form of expression protected by the First Amendment, and banning it would be unconstitutional.<sup>6</sup> With this ruling, the Supreme Court affirms that expression intended to harm individuals or groups creates an objectively more threatening environment for its victims than expression with no clear intent to harm.

Using an AMCHA-developed index, the 205 incidents containing classic antisemitism and 71 Israel-related incidents from our 2017 Antisemitism Tracker were each further analyzed to determine whether there was clear evidence that their perpetrators intended to harm individual Jews on campus, Jewish-related campus organizations, or the property of individual Jews or Jewish organizations. In addition, classic antisemitic or Israel-related actions that did not clearly target individual Jews or Jewish-related organizations on campus, but that included credible threats to the safety and well-being of Jews in general, were counted as having an intent to harm Jewish members of the campus community.

Here are some examples of incidents that fit into each designation:

Intent to Harm:

- At Beloit College, an antisemitic note slipped under a Jewish student's dorm room door contained the message: "Kike, you should be gassed for what you say & do on this campus. Be worried C\*\*T." A large swastika was drawn alongside the note's text.
- At University of Houston, protesters disrupted a student group's event with chants of "Zionists off our campus...Zionists off our Campus...Free, Free, Free

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/frontpage/faq/race-origin.html#racehar1>

<sup>6</sup> Virginia v. Black, 538 U.S. 343 (2003).

Palestine,” and one protester additionally shouted, “F\*\*\* Zionists, F\*\*\* all you Zionists!” The protesters continued their demonstration outside the event hall, loudly chanting, “Whose campus? Our campus!...Racists off our campus, Zionists off our campus, Islamophobes off our campus! Fists up, fight back!”

- During a Hillel event to celebrate Israeli Independence Day in the campus square at the University of California Santa Cruz, a protest led by the African/Black Student Alliance filled the square and purposefully blocked Hillel's tables from being accessed for over an hour. Jewish students were, on three separate occasions, subjected to protesters yelling, "Free Palestine" and "F\*\*\* Jewish Slugs." One of Hillel's Israeli flags was also torn down.

#### No Clear Intent to Harm:

- At Kennesaw State University, the phrase “Hitler is God” was displayed on a sign during a free speech demonstration.
- Two swastikas were found drawn on a study desk in the library at Macalester College.
- At Boston University, antisemitic fliers were printed out on campus networked printers. The fliers contained two swastikas and made reference to Jews killing Christ. There were at least 8 separate reports of the printed fliers over a 24-hour period.

Furthermore, according to dozens of student accounts, antisemitic acts intended to harm specific members of the campus community, when carried out by more than one individual or members of on-campus or outside organizations, were major contributors to Jewish students' perceptions of a hostile campus environment. These accounts are consistent with sociological and psychological research on bullying, which shows that bullying by multiple persons or a group, known as ‘mobbing,’ enhances the emotional distress of its victims.<sup>7</sup> They are also consistent with state and federal laws, which impose additional penalties for unlawful behavior involving collusion by two or more people to engage in such behavior. We therefore examined those classic antisemitic and Israel-related incidents identified as showing intentional harm to determine whether the behavior was carried out by a single individual or multiple individuals, and whether the perpetrators were identified as affiliated with one or more on- or off-campus organizations.

This study also analyzed the most prominent features of antisemitic incidents in 2017. Genocidal expression, such as imagery (e.g. swastika) or language that expresses a desire to kill Jews or exterminate the Jewish people, was the most frequently identified characteristic of classic antisemitic incidents. The most frequently identified feature of Israel-related incidents was the presence of behavior intended to suppress pro-Israel expression or to ostracize and exclude pro-Israel individuals from campus life. These included the shutting down, disrupting, defacing or other attempts to interfere with Israel-related events, displays, trips, or announcements on the one hand, and the targeting of individual students and student groups for vilification or attempts to exclude them from participating in campus activities, to boycott interaction with them, or even to expel them

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.kwesthues.com/mobbing.htm>

from campus altogether (e.g. “Zionists off our campus!” was chanted by students at the University of Houston) on the other hand. Finally, the study compared the presence of these prominent features of classic antisemitic and Israel-related incidents on U.S. campuses in 2015, 2016, 2017 and the first half of 2018.

The study’s key findings include the following:

- **Less than one-quarter (47)** of the incidents involving classic antisemitism were identified as showing clear evidence of intent to harm Jewish students, while **94% (66)** of the Israel-related incidents were identified as showing such intent.
- Only **17% (8)** of the classic antisemitic incidents with intent to harm showed evidence of being perpetrated by two or more individuals, while **73% (52)** of the Israel-related incidents with intent to harm showed evidence of having multiple perpetrators. Similarly, while only **15% (7)** of the classic antisemitic incidents with intent to harm showed evidence that their perpetrators were affiliated with an on- or off-campus organization, **69% (49)** of the Israel-related events with intent to harm showed evidence of their perpetrators being affiliated with one or more on- or off-campus organization, with **9** incidents having perpetrators who were affiliated with two or more organizations.
- **Three-quarters (153)** of the incidents involving classic antisemitism in 2017 involved genocidal expression, though **less than one-fifth (27)** of the incidents with genocidal expression were identified as having intent to harm Jewish students or staff.
- Trends in classic antisemitic incidents from 2015 to the first half of 2018:
  - Genocidal expression in all incidents of classic antisemitism rose dramatically from **46** incidents in 2015 to **113** incidents in 2016, and increased substantially to **153** incidents in 2017. However, there were only **39** incidents in January through June of 2018 as compared to **86** such incidents in the first half of 2017, suggesting a possible overall decrease in genocidal expression in 2018 if the trend continues in that direction.
  - The above trend was not evident when considering only those incidents of classic antisemitism with harmful intent. In these, genocidal expression was involved in **20** incidents in 2015, **26** incidents in 2016, **27** incidents in 2017, and **12** incidents in the first half of 2018 as compared to **12** incidents in the first half of 2017.
- In 2017, **94% (67)** of all Israel related incidents involved attempts to suppress pro-Israel expression and/or the specific targeting of pro-Israel individuals or groups for ostracizing or excluding:
  - **44% (31)** of Israel-related incidents involved behavior intended to impede or silence pro-Israel expression.
  - **76% (54)** of Israel-related incidents involved behavior that directly and personally targeted pro-Israel individuals or groups on campus for acts of ostracizing and/or excluding.
- Trends in Israel-related incidents from 2015 to the first half of 2018:
  - Attempts to silence pro-Israel expression stayed relatively constant, with **29** incidents in 2015, **30** in 2016, and **31** in 2017, and it continued into 2018

with **21** such incidents found in January through June, as compared to **21** incidents in the first half of 2017.

- Incidents involving the specific targeting of pro-Israel students and staff for ostracizing and/or excluding **more than doubled** over a three-year period, from **25** incidents in 2015 to **35** incidents in 2016 to **54** incidents in 2017. The upward trend continued into the first half of 2018, when **42** incidents of ostracizing and/or excluding were identified, as compared to **33** such incidents in the first half of 2017.
- Israel-related incidents involving the ostracizing or excluding of pro-Israel students or groups also became more flagrant over time, with the number of incidents including open calls for the boycott or expulsion of actual on-campus students or student groups increasing from **3** incidents in 2015 to **4** in 2016 to **14** in 2017. And in the first half of 2018 alone there were **18** such incidents.

## II. Methodology

### Data Collection

AMCHA's Antisemitism Tracker contains incidents culled from submitted incident reports, campus police logs, media accounts, social media postings and on-line recordings, which have occurred on U.S. college or university campuses and been identified by AMCHA personnel as having antisemitic content. In determining what constitutes an antisemitic incident, a qualitative distinction is made between behaviors that are, in whole or part, directed at or disproportionately affect Jewish members of the campus community and cause them some degree of measurable harm (e.g. assault, harassment, destruction of property), and behaviors, primarily speech or imagery, that are expressions of classic or contemporary antisemitic tropes,<sup>8</sup> but which are not specifically directed at Jewish members of the campus community and do not cause them measurable harm. The former set of incidents are the ones included in this study, with each incident identified as involving one or more of the following behaviors:

- **Physical Assault** – Physically attacking Jewish students or staff because of their Jewishness or perceived association with Israel.
- **Discrimination** – Unfair treatment or exclusion of Jewish students or staff because of their Jewishness or perceived association with Israel.
- **Destruction of Property** – Inflicting damage or destroying property owned by Jews or related to Jews.

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<sup>8</sup> AMCHA Initiative employs the U.S. State Department definition of antisemitism, which includes forms of anti-Zionist expression.

- **Genocidal Expression** – Using imagery (e.g. swastika) or language that expresses a desire or will to kill Jews or exterminate the Jewish people.
- **Suppression of Speech/Movement/Assembly** – Preventing or impeding the expression of Jewish students, such as by removing or defacing Jewish students’ flyers, attempting to disrupt or shut down speakers at Jewish or pro-Israel events, or blocking access to Jewish or pro-Israel student events.
- **Intimidation** – Frightening Jewish students or staff in order to force them into or deter them from some action because of their Jewishness or perceived association with Israel.
- **Bullying** – Tormenting Jewish students or staff because of their Jewishness or perceived association with Israel.
- **Denigration** – Unfairly ostracizing, vilifying or defaming Jewish students or staff because of their Jewishness or perceived association with Israel.

### **Identifying Classic Antisemitic and Israel-Related Incidents**

Incidents identified as containing classic antisemitism were those that demonstrated anti-Jewish animus on the part of the perpetrators, either through their use of language or imagery containing anti-Jewish messages, or through actions targeting identifiably Jewish individuals (e.g. a student wearing a kippah) or objects (e.g. vandalizing the mezuzah on a Jewish student’s doorpost). Israel-related incidents were those that demonstrated anti-Israel animus on the part of the perpetrators, either through their use of language or imagery containing anti-Israel messages, or through actions targeting identifiably pro-Israel individuals (e.g. a student wearing an IDF t-shirt) or objects (e.g. vandalizing a banner for a pro-Israel student event).

Incidents could be identified as having both classic antisemitic and anti-Israel aspects. For example, a voicemail message on a university staff member’s phone that included classic antisemitic Holocaust denial, referring to the Holocaust as a “Holohoax,” also accused Jews of “extorting Palestine for a century.” Such incidents would be counted as both classic antisemitic and Israel-related.

### **Identifying Intent to Harm**

Actions were identified as having an intent to harm Jewish members of the campus community if they were clearly directed toward individual Jews on campus, Jewish-related campus organizations, or the property of individual Jews or Jewish organizations. In addition, classic antisemitic or Israel-related actions that did not clearly target individual Jews or Jewish-related organizations on campus, but that included credible threats to the safety and well-being of Jews in general, were counted as having an intent to harm Jewish



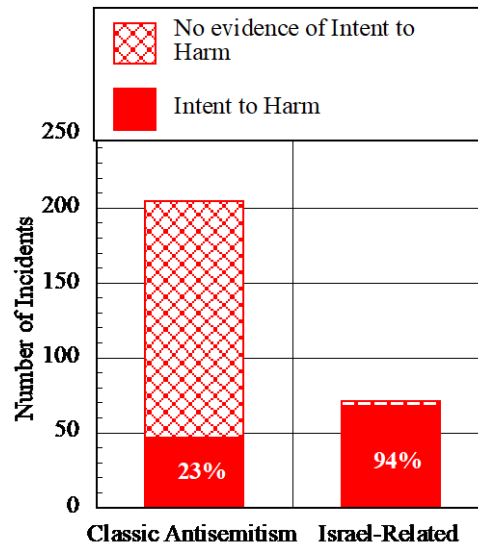
members of the campus community. For example, an anonymous email sent to all the students in a class under the subject line “Jewish Student Diversity” included the message, “Hi you f\*\*\*ing filthy Jews, I just wanted to say the SS will rise again and kill all of your filthy souls.”

### III. Results

#### 1. Classic antisemitic incidents outnumbered Israel-related incidents 3 to 1 but showed far less intention to harm Jewish students and staff.

In 2017, AMCHA documented **205** incidents involving classic antisemitism at **125** schools, and **71** Israel-related incidents at **45** schools. However, only **48 (23%)** of the classic antisemitic incidents showed evidence of intent to harm Jewish students or staff, whereas **67 (94%)** of the Israel-related incidents showed such intentionality. This suggests that while classic antisemitic incidents outnumber Israel-related incidents three to one, Israel-related incidents are actually more likely to contribute to a hostile environment for Jewish students. These data are displayed in Figure 1.

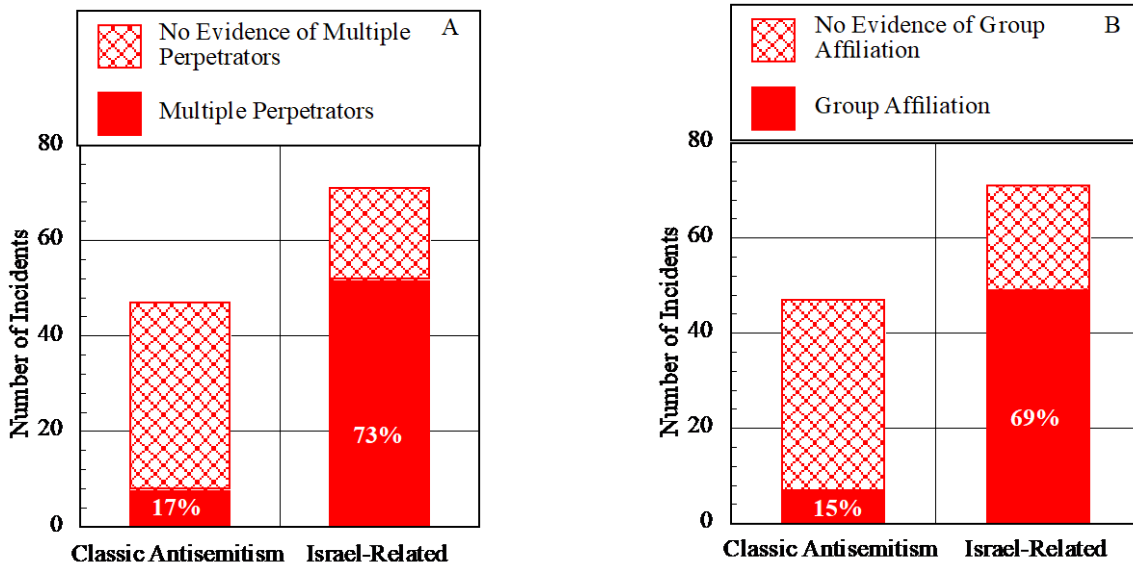
**Figure 1**  
**Number of Classic Antisemitic and Israel-Related Incidents With Clear Intent to Harm Jewish Students and Staff in 2017**



#### 2. Classic antisemitic incidents with evidence of intention to harm Jewish students and staff were far less likely to show evidence of multiple perpetrators or perpetrators with affiliations to on-campus or outside groups than Israel-related incidents.

Of the classic antisemitic incidents in 2017 identified as showing evidence of intent to harm Jewish students or staff, **17% (8)** were clearly perpetrated by two or more individuals, while **73% (52)** of the Israel-related incidents with intent to harm showed evidence of having multiple perpetrators. Similarly, while **15% (7)** of the classic antisemitic incidents with intent to harm showed evidence that their perpetrators were affiliated with an on- or off-campus organization, **69% (49)** of the Israel-related events with intent to harm showed evidence of their perpetrators being affiliated with one or more on- or off-campus organization, with **9** incidents having perpetrators who were affiliated with two or more organizations. This again suggests that Israel-related incidents are more likely to contribute to a hostile environment for Jewish students than classic antisemitic incidents. These data are displayed in Figures 2.

**Figure 2**  
**Number of Intentional Classic Antisemitic and Israel-Related Incidents in 2017**  
**With (A) Multiple Perpetrators or (B) Affiliations with On-Campus or Outside Groups**



**3. Genocidal expression was found in three-quarters of the classic antisemitic incidents in 2017, but less than one-fifth of these incidents were identified as having intent to harm Jewish students and staff.**

In 2017, the predominant feature of classic antisemitic behavior was genocidal expression, which was involved in **153 (75%)** of the incidents containing classic antisemitism on **92** campuses. Swastikas were the most common form of genocidal expression, with **104** instances of swastika graffiti. Other forms of genocidal expression were contained in neo-Nazi/white supremacist informational and recruitment flyers, written missives, emails, on social media, graffiti and other displays, and included the following:

- “Kill all Jews” was written on a lectern at St. Cloud University.
- A Jewish student at the University of Minnesota found an antisemitic message on a whiteboard inside his dorm room. The message read "Nazi's Rule," and was accompanied by a swastika and a drawing of a concentration camp.
- A Jewish student at the University of Connecticut was wearing a kippah and walking away from a Hillel event when a woman in a passing car yelled at him, "Go to the f\*\*\*ing ovens!"
- At the University of Washington, neo-Nazi fliers with swastikas were found on campus. One of the posters said, “Look out! The Nazis have come to town!”, and another said, “Where will you be when the race war begins? When the world burns? Join your local Nazis. Congregating near you.”
- About 100 leaflets with hand-drawn swastikas were found strewn across the lawn of the campus Chabad Jewish Student Center at Virginia Polytechnic Institute. The incident came a day after the center announced it would bring Holocaust survivor Rabbi Nissen Mangel to campus for an event to honor professor Liviu Librescu, a Holocaust survivor who was killed in the Virginia Tech massacre in 2007 when he helped block his classroom door so students could escape.
- Antisemitic posters were found on several campus buildings at Cornell University. The posters contained a modified swastika next to the words "Solar Cross Society, Join the White Gang," along with a snake appearing to choke the globe and a Jewish star over the image, with the text, "Just say no to Jewish lies!"

However, only **18% (27)** of all incidents including genocidal expression were identified as having intent to harm Jewish students or staff.

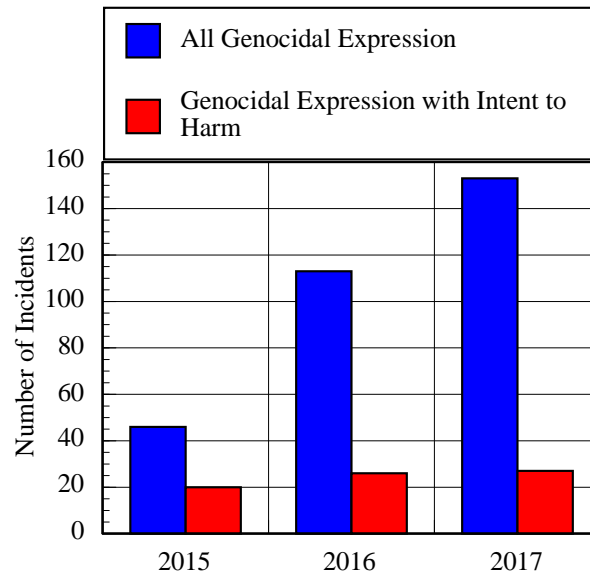
**4. Genocidal expression in all incidents of classic antisemitism more than doubled from 2015 to 2016, peaked in 2017 and decreased dramatically in the first half of 2018, but no such trend was found when considering only those incidents of genocidal expression with intent to harm Jewish students and staff.**

Genocidal expression in all incidents of classic antisemitism rose dramatically from **46** incidents in 2015 to **113** incidents in 2016, and increased substantially to **153** incidents in 2017. However, there were only **39** incidents in January through June of 2018 as compared to **86** such incidents in the first half of 2017, suggesting a sharp decrease of genocidal expression in 2018.

The above trend was not evident when considering only those incidents of classic antisemitism with harmful intent. In these, genocidal expression was involved in **20** incidents in 2015, **26** incidents in 2016, **27** incidents in 2017, and **12** incidents in the first half of 2018 as compared to **12** incidents in the first half of 2017.

See Figure 3 for a comparison of the prevalence of genocidal expression in all classic antisemitic incidents and in only those incidents with intent to harm, in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

**Figure 3**  
**Annual Number of Incidents of Genocidal Expression in all Classic Antisemitic Incidents and in Only Those with Intent to Harm Jewish Students and Staff 2015 – 2017**



- 5. Nearly all of the Israel-related incidents in 2017 involved behavior intended to suppress pro-Israel expression and/or that specifically targeted pro-Israel individuals or groups for ostracizing or discriminatory behavior intended to exclude them from fully participating in campus life: almost half involved attempts to silence pro-Israel expression, and three-quarters involved the specific targeting of pro-Israel individuals for ostracizing and/or excluding.**

In 2017, **94% (67)** of all Israel related incidents involved either attempts to suppress pro-Israel expression or the specific targeting of pro-Israel students and staff for ostracizing and/or excluding.

- a. 44% (31)** of Israel-related incidents involved behavior intended to impede or silence pro-Israel expression. For example:
- At Columbia University, an event featuring Israeli Ambassador Danny Danon was disrupted seven times by student protesters, who loudly chanted anti-Israel slogans, including support for BDS, and blocked the entrance to the auditorium, physically preventing people from entering and intimidating those who were able to enter.

- At the University of Maryland, Students for Justice in Palestine, the Muslim Political Alliance and other student organizations carried out a boycott protest of the Jewish Student Union-sponsored event "IsraelFest," at which they asked people "to turn away from the festival [IsraelFest] and not participate in any of the festivities."
  - At the University of Texas Austin, Jewish students attempting to table to raise funds for an Israeli non-profit called "Save a Child's Heart" were impeded when two other student groups 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 impede their efforts for two days.
  - At the University of Washington, an educational display promoting peace that was set up by a pro-Israel student group was vandalized when an individual ran up to the display, yelled "F\*\*\* you guys" at the Jewish students who had set up the display, ripped one of the display's posters and then ran off.
  - At the University of California Santa Barbara, a pro-peace mural by Students Supporting Israel and Artists4Israel was vandalized twice within 5 days. The mural was repaired after the first vandalization, which occurred within 24 hours of its being erected. The second vandalization was irreparable.
- b. 76% (54)** of Israel-related incidents involved behavior that personally targeted pro-Israel individuals or groups for ostracizing and/or excluding. Examples include:
- At Pomona College, an SJP member posted a photo on Snapchat and Twitter of the Claremont Progressive Jewish Alliance student president with the caption 'Her name is Kate \_\_\_\_\_ and she is a proud racist.' The post was favorited and retweeted by SJP members.
  - At St. Olaf College, Oles for Justice in Palestine created a petition asking the College to remove an alumnus from the Advisory Board of the Institute for Freedom and Community at St. Olaf College, claiming, "Arne Christenson is a key member of the Apartheid lobby and an outspoken Christian Zionist. He ought to have no position at any institute for "freedom" or "community" and certainly no position at St. Olaf."
  - At Tufts University, a widely shared student activist-created handbook entitled "Tufts University Disorientation Guide" described Hillel as "an organization that supports a white supremacist state" that "exploit[s] black voices for their own pro-Israel agenda." The handbook was posted by students on two official Class Facebook pages.
  - At San Francisco State University, the General Union of Palestine Students, who were on the organizing committee of a university-sponsored event for campus organizations entitled "Know Your Rights," insisted that the

deadline for participating in the event be cut off specifically so that Hillel would be excluded from participating.

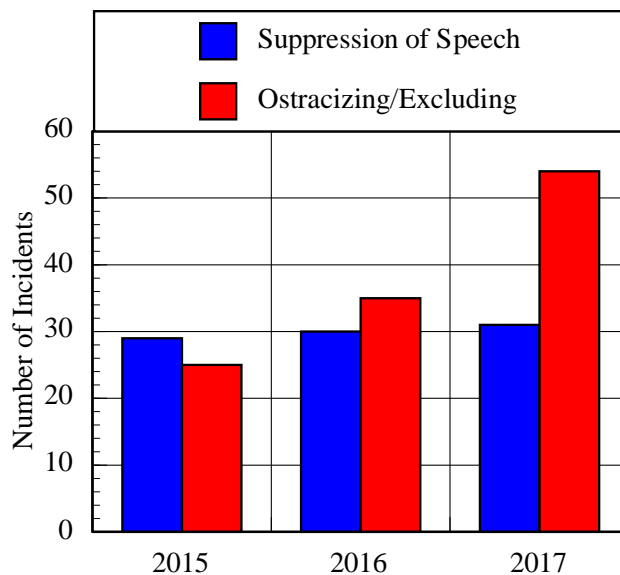
**6. While the number of Israel-related incidents involving behavior intending to suppress pro-Israel expression remained relatively constant from 2015 through the first half of 2018, during the same period there was a clear increase of incidents involving the specific targeting of pro-Israel individuals or groups for ostracizing and excluding.**

The number of Israel-related incidents involving behavior intended to impede or silence pro-Israel expression found in 2017 (31) was similar to that found in 2015 (29) and 2016 (30). In addition, there were 21 such incidents identified in the first half of 2018, which is consistent with the 21 incidents found during January to June of 2017. These data suggest that the stifling of pro-Israel expression is a prominent and stable feature of Israel-related antisemitic incidents.

In contrast, the number of incidents involving the specific targeting of pro-Israel individuals and groups on campus for ostracizing and/or excluding rose steadily from 25 incidents in 2015 to 35 incidents in 2016 to 54 incidents in 2017. The upward trend continued into the first half of 2018, when there were 42 such incidents, as compared to 33 incidents in the first half of 2018.

See Figure 4 for a comparison of the numbers of Israel-related incidents involving suppression of pro-Israel expression and the targeting of pro-Israel individuals or groups for ostracizing and/or excluding in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

**Figure 4**  
**Annual Number of Israel-Related Incidents Involving Suppression of Pro-Israel Speech and Ostracizing/Excluding of Pro-Israel Individuals 2015 - 2017**



In addition, Israel-related incidents involving the ostracizing or excluding of pro-Israel students or groups became more flagrant over time, with the number of incidents including open calls for the boycott of pro-Israel students or student groups or their total exclusion from campus life going from **3** incidents in 2015 to **4** in 2016 to **14** in 2017. And in the first half of 2018 alone, there were **18** such incidents, including the following:

- At New York University, 53 student groups pledged to boycott NYU's pro-Israel clubs and refuse to co-sponsor events with them. The president of SJP at NYU was quoted in the student newspaper as saying, "Our point is to make being Zionists uncomfortable on the NYU campus."
- The Black Student Union and various other student organizations at California Polytechnic Institute San Luis Obispo issued a list of demands that included "an increase in ASI funding of ALL cultural clubs, with the exception of organizations that are aligned with Zionist ideology."
- SJP at SUNY Stony Brook issued a statement saying, "We will always stand against any Zionist group and to eradicate this practice...and fight against it." An SJP member was quoted in the student newspaper as saying, "We want Zionism off this campus, so we want Hillel off this campus."
- A University of Virginia student leader said that for the school's Jewish Leadership Council to be eligible for inclusion in the Minority Rights Coalition, "they must denounce their ties to Zionist groups."
- The University of Maryland Pride Alliance published a statement saying, "We are steadfast in our commitment to create spaces for marginalized queer students on campus, specifically Palestinian and non/anti-Zionist Jewish students."
- The Director of a program at San Francisco State University posted to her program's Facebook page a message stating that welcoming Zionists to campus is "a declaration of war against Arabs, Muslims, [and] Palestinians." Soon after her message was posted, numerous flyers and graffiti messages showed up all over campus stating, "Zionists Not Welcome."

## IV. Discussion and Recommendations

By applying new AMCHA-developed indices to our database of antisemitic incidents on U.S. campuses in 2017, we were able to better understand the factors that contribute to a hostile environment for Jewish students. First, we found that although classic antisemitic incidents outnumbered Israel-related incidents three to one, there were actually 45% more Israel-related incidents with intent to harm Jewish students or staff than classic antisemitic incidents with such identifiable intent. In addition, Israel-related incidents with intent to harm Jewish students or staff were 6.5 times more likely to have multiple perpetrators than classic antisemitic incidents with harmful intent, and 7 times more likely to have perpetrators with affiliations to on-campus or outside groups. Taken together these data suggest that in 2017, Israel-related antisemitic incidents were considerably more likely to

contribute to a hostile environment for Jewish students than incidents involving classic antisemitism.

An analysis of the incidence of genocidal expression, the most prominent feature of classic antisemitic incidents in 2017, revealed that while three-quarters of incidents involving classic antisemitism contained genocidal expression, in only 18% of these did the perpetrator intend to harm members of the Jewish campus community. Moreover, while the number of incidents of total genocidal expression dramatically increased from 2015 to 2016, peaked in 2017 and dramatically declined in the first half of 2018, a comparison of only those incidents of genocidal expression with intent to harm showed a much flatter profile, with a mild increase in incidents from 2015 to 2016, and no significant difference in the number of incidents in 2016, 2017 or the first half of 2018. We speculate that the reason for the sharp increases in total numbers of genocidal expression from 2015 to 2016 with a peak in 2017 is because of the Fall 2016 presidential election, which on many campuses sparked a considerable amount of hate speech and imagery, not only directed against Jews. However, the fact that this trend was not found in our analysis of only those events with intent to harm suggests that the election-linked increases in genocidal expression may not have contributed significantly to a hostile environment for Jewish students.

Further analysis of the anti-Israel incidents in 2017 revealed that nearly every incident involved behavior that impinged on the rights of Jewish and pro-Israel students to express themselves freely or to fully participate in campus life, whether by attempting to suppress pro-Israel expression or by targeting pro-Israel individuals and groups for ostracizing or excluding.

It is important to point out that these behaviors are consistent with the official guidelines of the Palestinian Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI).<sup>9</sup> The PACBI guidelines call on faculty and students “to boycott and/or work towards the cancellation or annulment of events, activities, agreements, or projects involving Israel academic institutions or that otherwise promote the normalization of Israel in the global academy,” as well as to discredit and/or boycott faculty, students or campus organizations for their “individual complicity in, responsibility for, or advocacy of” Israel’s actions or existence. The fact that almost all of the Israel-related incidents in 2017 were compliant with the guidelines of an international campaign to shut down all pro-Israel expression and harm Israel’s supporters emphasizes the intentionality of these incidents and the extent to which they threaten the civil rights and safety of Jewish students.

In addition, an examination of the prevalence of these prominent features of anti-Israel incidents over time revealed a disturbing trend. While incidents involving behavior that attempted to suppress pro-Israel expression remained relatively constant over the last three years, those involving the direct and personal targeting of specific pro-Israel individuals or groups for ostracizing or excluding more than doubled during the same time. Moreover, this behavior has seemed to grow more flagrant over time, with public calls for the boycott

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<sup>9</sup> <https://bdsmovement.net/pacbi/academic-boycott-guidelines>



of Zionists or pro-Israel groups or their exclusion from campus life increasing significantly from 2015 through the first half of 2018. These trends suggest that anti-Israel campus activists are not only intent on harming Israel, but increasingly, and alarmingly, they are intent on harming pro-Israel members of the campus community.

Despite the fact that acts of Israel-related antisemitism appear to be the larger contributor to a hostile environment for Jewish students, university administrators have generally been far less likely to adequately address these Israel-related incidents than they have acts of classic antisemitism. In large part, this is due to university administrators recognizing that classic antisemitism may violate state or federal anti-discrimination law and most schools' peer-on-peer harassment policies, which prohibit the harassment of students based on characteristics such as race, color and gender, as well as religion or ethnicity. However, university administrators rarely recognize anti-Zionist harassment as a form of unlawful discrimination, because they see it as motivated by political considerations rather than ethnic or religious ones. In addition, when acts of classic antisemitism occur on campus, many in the campus community are sympathetic with Jewish students and stand in solidarity with them, but this is not the case when acts of anti-Zionist harassment occur. Few in the campus community are sympathetic to the plight of pro-Israel students, and many are even complicit in creating a hostile environment for them.

The reality for students, however, is that harassment is harassment. The effect of intolerant and exclusionary harassing behavior on students is the same, regardless of the motivation of the perpetrator or the identity of the victim. And the abhorrent behavior that prevents students from an education free from harassment must be addressed, and addressed equitably. Students cannot freely express themselves and learn from their professors or each other if they face ongoing and pervasive intolerance, as Jewish and pro-Israel students do now. The fact that anti-Zionist harassment is not treated as other forms of harassment and that few on campus are sympathetic to pro-Israel students' concerns creates increased vulnerability for many Jewish students. Although efforts are afoot to ensure that Jewish students are protected from anti-Zionist harassment by ensuring that a definition of antisemitism that includes anti-Zionism is used in interpreting federal and state anti-discrimination law, these efforts will take time, and they may or may not succeed.

In the meantime, we believe there is an immediate, easy and equitable solution to the problem, that starts with urging university administrators to consider that peer-on-peer harassment is not only a form of identity-motivated discrimination. As our data on Israel-related incidents suggest, peer-on-peer harassment is also behavior that violates every student's fundamental rights to freedom of expression and full participation in campus life. And while Jewish students may be particularly vulnerable to such behavior, in the highly polarized atmosphere that has pervaded many campuses in the last few years, Jewish students are not the only ones to suffer from harassing behavior that suppresses speech and denies students equal access to campus life. Only once university administrators focus squarely on the deleterious effects of *all* peer-on-peer harassment, irrespective of the motivation of the perpetrator or the identity of the victim, can the civil rights and the safety and well-being of all students, including Jewish students, be guaranteed.

We therefore offer the following recommendations for university leaders:

- Issue a public statement assuring all students that they will be equally protected from intolerant behavior that violates their freedom of expression or their right to full participation in campus life;
- Amend university policies to include the prohibition of peer-on-peer harassment that suppresses any student's freedom of speech, association or assembly, or unduly interferes with any student's access to educational opportunities or benefits;
- Institute procedures for enforcing the amended policies equitably, without regard to the motivation of the perpetrator or the identity of the victim;
- Develop educational programs to teach about the importance of freedom of expression to university life and to encourage the expression of a wide range of views in a productive and respectful manner.

## Appendix

### 2017 Student Testimonials Recorded by AMCHA on its Student Voices Page<sup>10</sup>

“There’s a lot of little stuff that occurs on campus. For every swastika, there’s a million little conversations that go on that are much more harmful than that. Everyone can get behind, ‘Alright, there’s a swastika. That’s ridiculous, that’s not OK. But for the little conversations that are more political in nature people just assume that it’s OK to say, ‘Well, you’re a Zionist, so I don’t like you,’ and that’s part of our culture.” (College of William and Mary)

“Events hosted by Students Supporting Israel (SSI) are disrupted, its speakers heckled and attendees harassed. When Israel’s ambassador to the UN, Mr. Danny Danon, came to speak at an SSI event, BDS activists blocked the entrance to the auditorium, physically preventing people from entering and intimidating those who managed to get in. During the ambassador’s 25-minute speech, the BDS activists disrupted him seven times with calls to Boycott Israel...the BDS activists’ message was clear: The only freedom of speech worthy of protection is their own. Those who disagree, or dispute their view of the world, would be violently disrupted. (Columbia University)

“[It is frustrating for Jewish students] when our events, especially ones that aren’t political at all, are protested”. (Cornell University)

“This entire [anti-Israel divestment referendum] campaign and entire sit-in going on in the SAC (Schmitt Academic Center) is totally unsafe for Jewish students and I have had a lot of Jewish students text me and call me today and tell me they are not comfortable walking through that part of our campus, which is really disheartening.” (DePaul University)

“When someone wrote ‘No n\*\*\*\*\*s, whites only’ on a Black Lives Matter flyer, the Duke community held a march where over a hundred students marched and rallied in support. They did the same thing when someone wrote a homophobic slur in the dorms. When someone wrote anti-Semitic comments on a Duke Friends of Israel flyer, there was no march, rally, or campus outrage.” (Duke University)

“Last spring, numerous fliers for the Georgetown Israel Alliance, a group of which I am the vice president, were defaced and torn down. More incidents go unreported, as when someone drew a swastika on my whiteboard just an hour after I hung it on my freshman dorm door last year.” (Georgetown University)

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<sup>10</sup> <https://amchainitiative.org/student-voices-being-jewish-on-campus/>

“Two weeks ago I found my ‘I <3 Israel’ bumper sticker on my car covered by a Hitler sticker.” (Georgia Institute of Technology)

“Students for Justice in Palestine is using Hate Week as an excuse to carry out a targeted harassment campaign aimed at me, members of my school’s pro-Israel club, the Claremont Progressive Israel Alliance (CPIA), and random Israeli and Jewish students.” (Pitzer College)

“During the weekend of Sept. 16, a giant swastika was constructed in a classroom across from my office on campus. Given my Jewish appearance, the mezuzah on the doorpost of my office, and the small menorah I have on the window sill facing the street — the location chosen for the swastika was not a coincidence. It was not a prank. It was directed at me personally (yet not solely at me). I saw it, and it petrified me.” (Purdue University)

“I’ve become a persona non grata to some. [As the president of the campus Hillel and one of few openly pro-Israel students at a school], [I’ve] grown accustomed to threatening messages on social media, listserv discussions that single [me] out by name, and icy stares and purposeful whispers when [I] pass by...I didn’t want to come back this semester, and my mom really didn’t want me to come back...If I had known what I would face here, I would not have signed up.” (Sarah Lawrence College)

“As a Jewish student, I have seen my fair share of anti-Semitic actions on campus. I’ve had foul and intolerable words yelled at me while I’m studying because I had a sticker of Israel on my laptop. When Arab-Israeli Diplomat George Deek came to speak on campus, anti-Semitic students shouted, ‘Death to Jews’ at my friends and me. I’ve known Jewish students who are afraid to speak up in class against anti-Semitic professors because they’re afraid of what might happen to their academic reputations.” (UC Davis)

“Sadly, we have experienced this rise in anti-Semitism on our own campus. The Illini Chabad menorah was vandalized on Oct. 27; the fourth act of vandalism against it in two years. As a symbol of Jewish heritage, and an important landmark in our community, this malicious act left many Jewish students feeling shaken and afraid.” (University of Illinois at Chicago)

“They specifically called out Zionists and made clear we were not welcome on this campus ... they made it clear I and others like me are the targets. Hillel, IlliniPAC, and all Zionists were called out directly. We were compared to the KKK, to violent fascists and accused of perpetuating white supremacy all because we believe that the Jewish people have a right to self-determination.” (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign)

“So I come into my dorm and I find this on my bedroom door. Yes, it’s a Nazi swastika and a depiction of a concentration camp.” (University of Minnesota)

“Someone in a green hoodie and black backpack came past us and tore down our Pro-Israel, Pro-Palestine Pro-Peace poster and ran away. We have been tabling all week to promote dialogue, negotiations, and cooperation as the best path toward a peaceful solution to the Israeli Palestinian conflict. This man did not stop to talk to us and ask us what we were doing or what we believed in. He just came behind us, said ‘F\*\*\* you guys’ and tore down our sign.” (University of Washington)

“As a Jewish student at UW, I was deeply hurt on April 12 [during Passover], when myself and 12 percent of the student body (approximately 5,000 students) were excluded from the democratic process.” (University of Wisconsin Madison)

“They [100’s of leaflets with hand-drawn swastikas] were all over the [Chabad] property. I was absolutely shocked!” (Virginia Polytechnic University)

## Lead Researchers

**Leila Beckwith** is Professor Emeritus at UCLA and the co-founder of AMCHA Initiative. After receiving her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, Beckwith went on to teach and do statistical research for more than 30 years at the Neuropsychiatric Institute and the Department of Pediatrics at UCLA. She has published more than 80 research publications in scientific, peer-reviewed journals. She is a board member of the California Association of Scholars and Scholars for Peace in the Middle East. A renowned scientist and researcher, she has been an editorial board member of *Child Development*, *Infant Behavior and Development*, and the *Infant Mental Health Journal*, as well as an ad hoc reviewer for research papers submitted to *Developmental Psychology*, and grants submitted to the National Science Foundation and the National Foundation for the March of Dimes. Beckwith served as an appointed member of research review committees for the National Institute of Mental Health, the National Institute of Drug Abuse and the National Institute of Child Health and Development. She was also a prevention research advisory committee member for the National Institute of Mental Health and a principal investigator for research grants from the National Institute of Mental Health, the National Institute of Child Health and Development, and the Center for Disease Control.

**Tammi Rossman-Benjamin** is cofounder and director of AMCHA Initiative, and was a faculty member in Hebrew and Jewish Studies at the University of California from 1996 - 2016. Rossman-Benjamin has written articles and reports about academic anti-Zionism and antisemitism and lectured widely on the growing threat to the safety of Jewish students on college campuses. She has presented her research in scholarly talks and academic conferences at several universities, including Indiana University, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Harvard University and McGill University. Rossman-Benjamin's research has been featured in several volumes on antisemitism. In July 2010, she co-organized a two-week scholarly workshop entitled "Contemporary Antisemitism in Higher Education" at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. Articles and opinion pieces from Rossman-Benjamin have been published in *Newsweek*, *The Hill*, *New York Daily News*, *Los Angeles Daily News*, *San Jose Mercury News*, *Sacramento Bee*, *Contra Costa Times*, *Jewish Journal of Los Angeles*, and dozens of others.