



Denying Jewish Self-Definition: The Latest Trend in Campus Antisemitism in America and What Can Be Done About It

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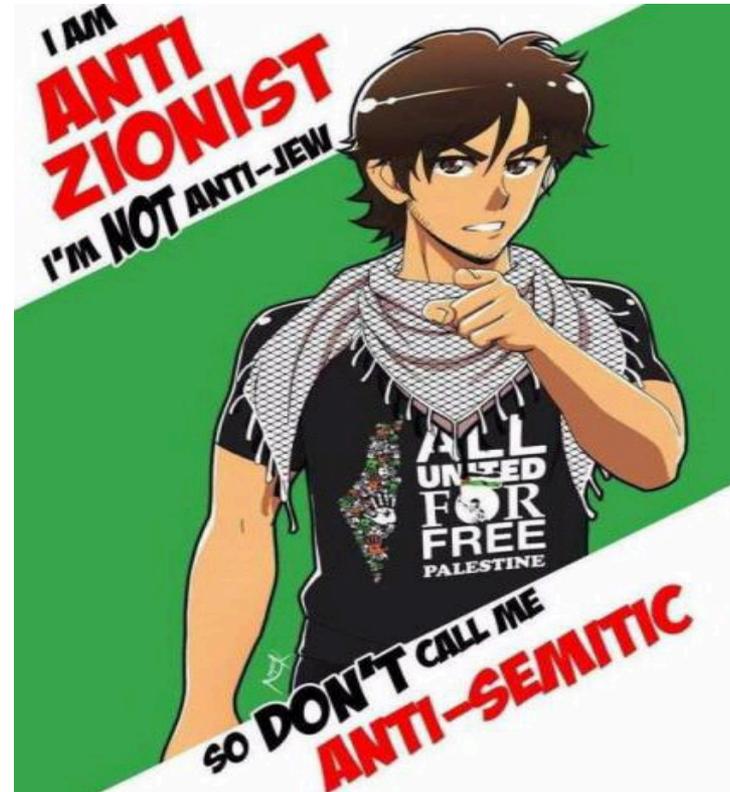
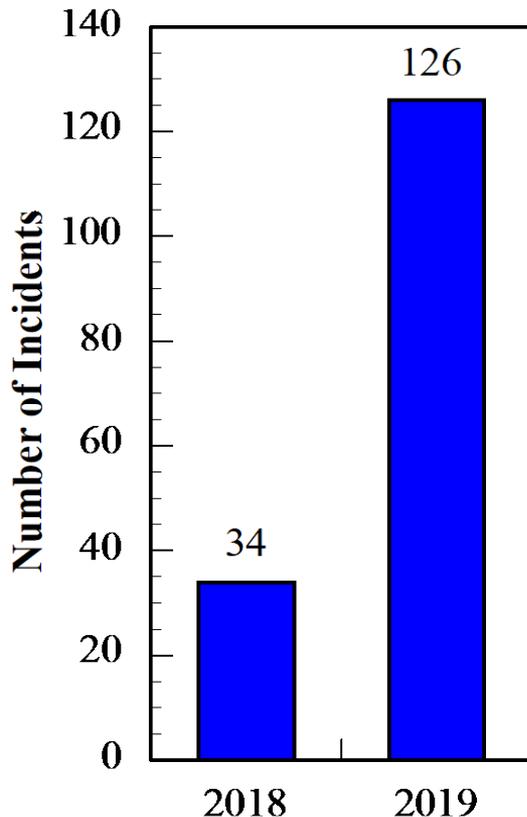
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Latest Trend: Denying Definition of Antisemitism Increases 300% and Linked to Anti-Jewish Harassment

Number of Incidents Involving Expression Challenging the Definition of Antisemitism in 2018 and 2019



Rhetoric denying that anti-Zionism is antisemitism was strongly correlated with acts of anti-Jewish harassment ($R = .68$; $p < .001$)

Overview

1. Summarize what AMCHA's studies have shown about the nature and scope of campus antisemitism and the factors that have allowed it to flourish;
2. Explain why it has been so difficult to ensure that Jewish students are adequately protected from campus antisemitism;
3. Describe recent attempts to ensure that Jewish students are adequately protected; and
4. Offer a new approach to thinking about campus antisemitism and how to address it.

How AMCHA Identifies Antisemitic Activity

1) **Targeting Jewish Students and Staff/Anti-Jewish Harassment** - Incidents that directly target Jewish students on campus or other Jewish members of the campus community for harmful or hateful action based on their Jewishness or perceived support for Israel:

- PHYSICAL ASSAULT
- DISCRIMINATION
- DESTRUCTION OF JEWISH PROPERTY
- GENOCIDAL EXPRESSION
- SUPPRESSION OF SPEECH/MOVEMENT/ASSEMBLY
- BULLYING
- DENIGRATION

2) **Antisemitic Expression** - Language, imagery or behavior deemed antisemitic by the IHRA definition of antisemitism, or wholly consistent with that definition:

- HISTORICAL (ANTISEMITISM)
- CONDONING TERRORISM (AGAINST ISRAEL OR JEWS)
- DENYING JEWS SELF-DETERMINATION
- DEMONIZATION OF ISRAEL
- BDS ACTIVITY

IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism

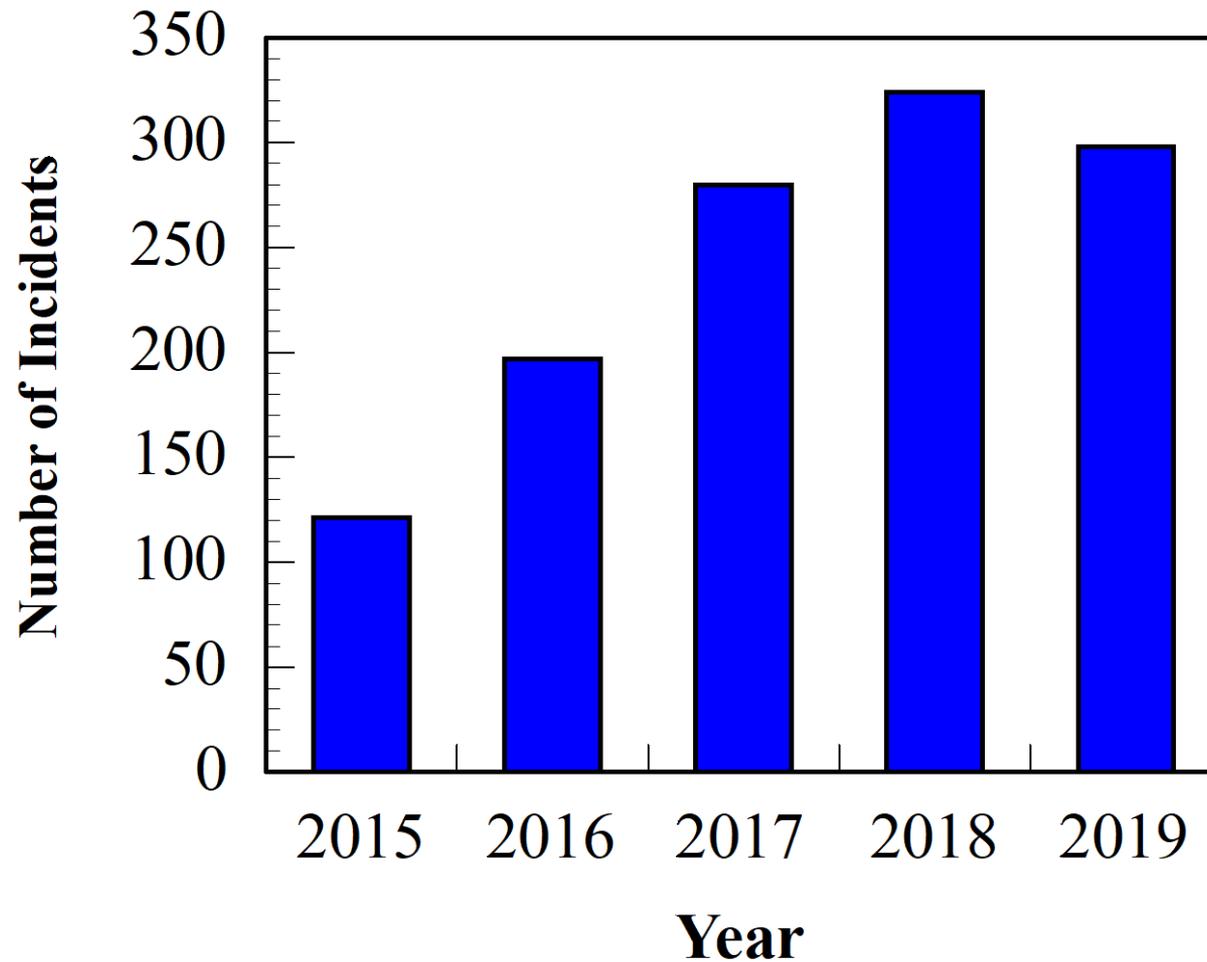


“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

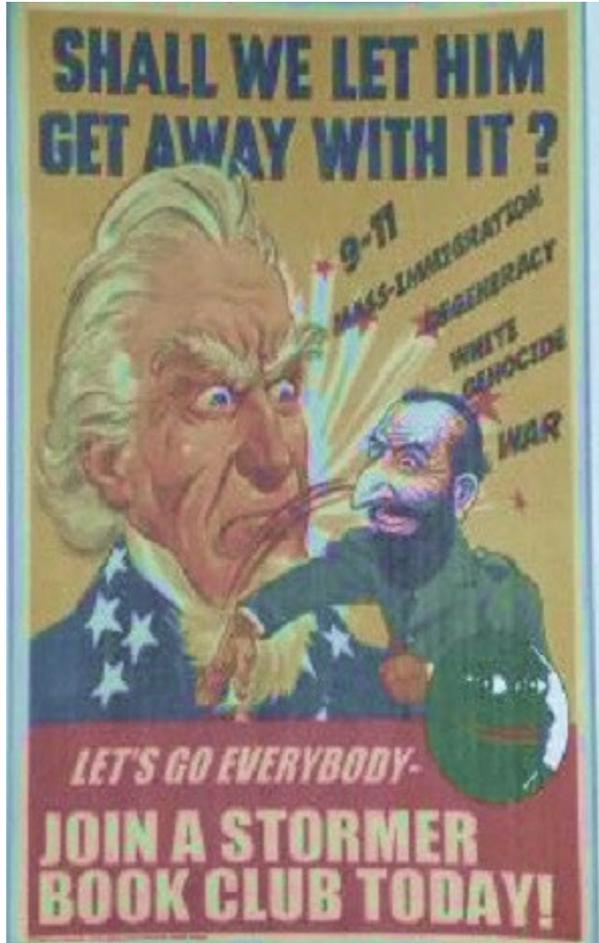
Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- **Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.**
- **Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.**
- **Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.**
- **Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.**
- **Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.**
- **Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.**

Incidence of Anti-Jewish Harassment on US Campuses 2015 - 2019



Decreasing Classical Antisemitic Harassment on Campus



University of Nebraska, Omaha



Columbia University



University of Central Florida



Arkansas Tech University

Increasing Anti-Zionist Harassment on Campus



University of Wisconsin, Madison



Washington University
St. Louis

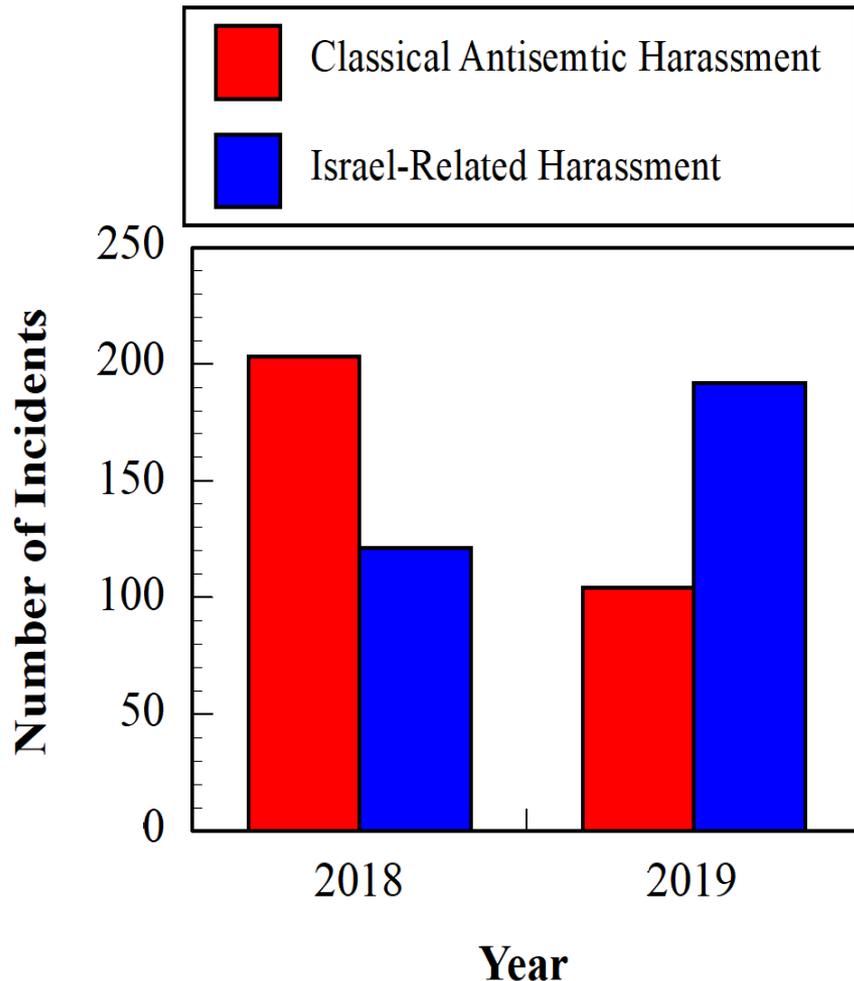


UCLA



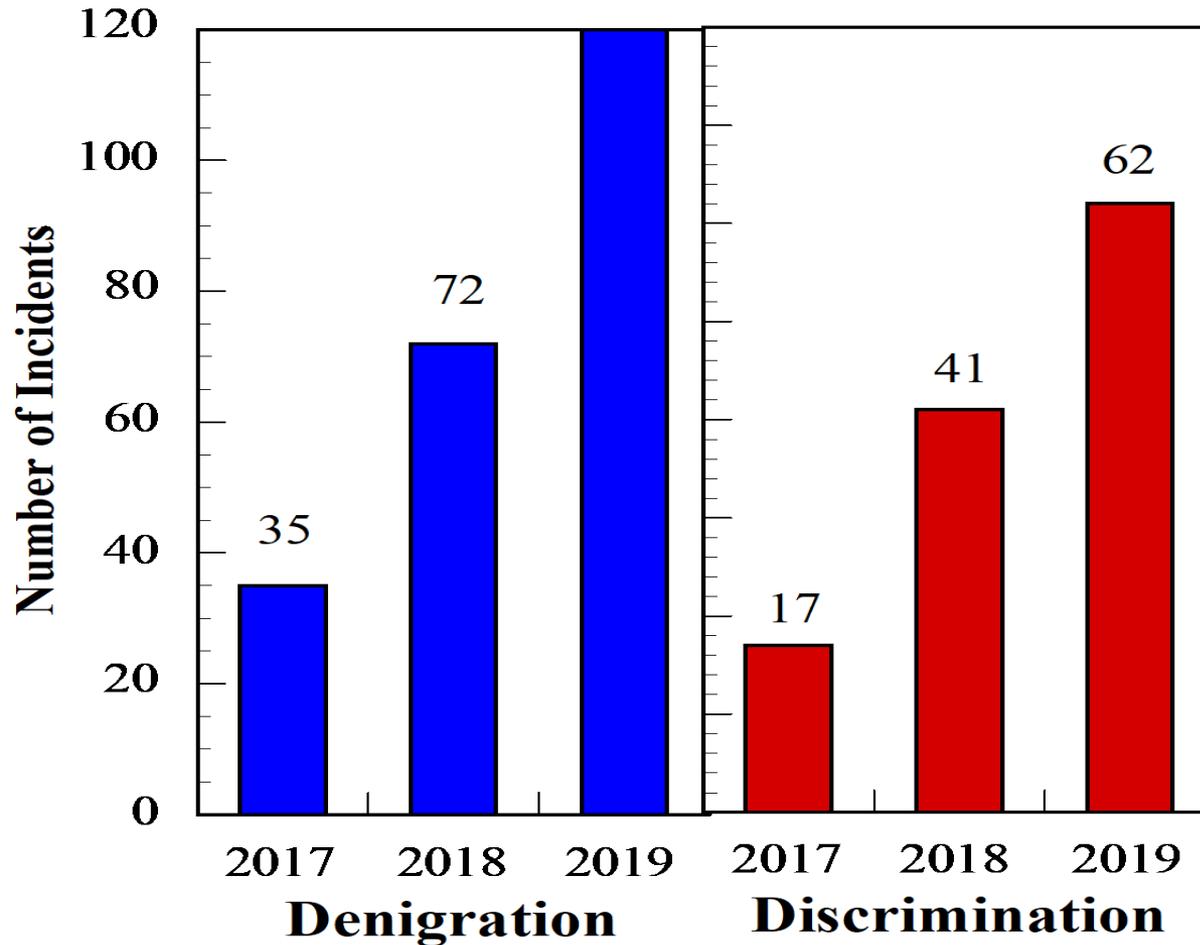
San Francisco State University

Classical Antisemitic vs. Anti-Zionist Harassment on US Campuses

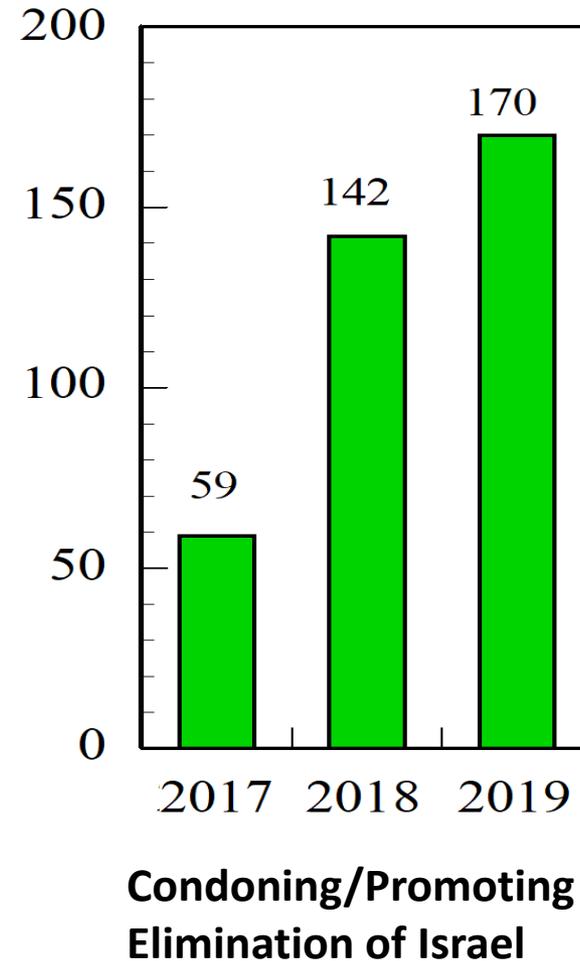
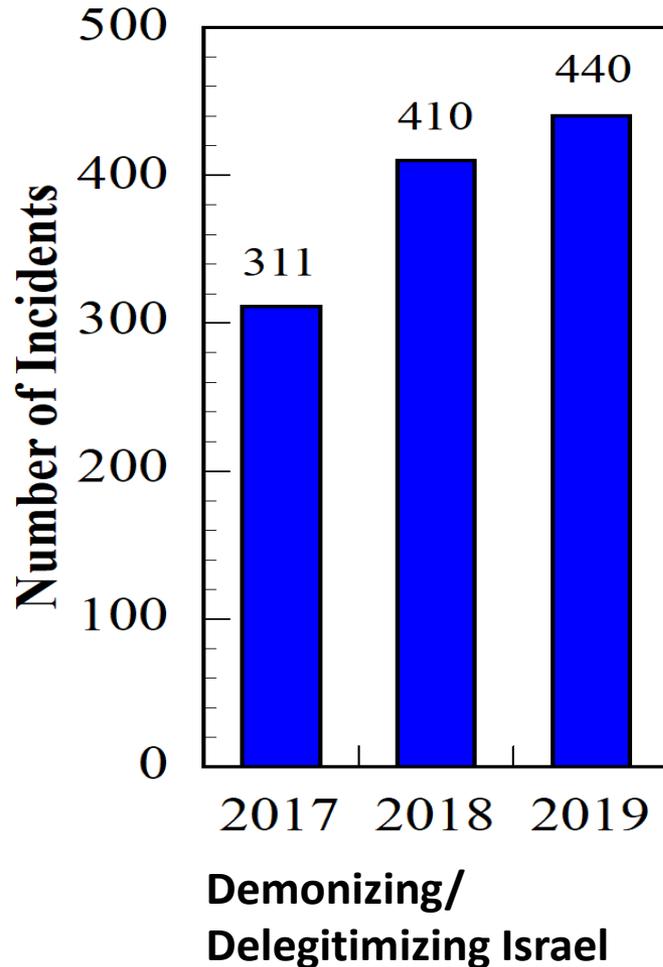


- **INTENT TO HARM:** Less than **25%** of classically motivated acts of anti-Jewish harassment were directed at specific individuals on campus. **94%** of incidents of anti-Zionist harassment were directed at specific students or student groups.
- **ONLINE ADAPTABILITY:** Only **12%** of classical antisemitic harassment occurred online or in campus forums that have been routinely held online since the onset of the pandemic, while **72%** of anti-Zionist harassment occurred online or in online-adaptable forums.

Anti-Zionist Harassment Increasingly Hostile 2017 - 2019



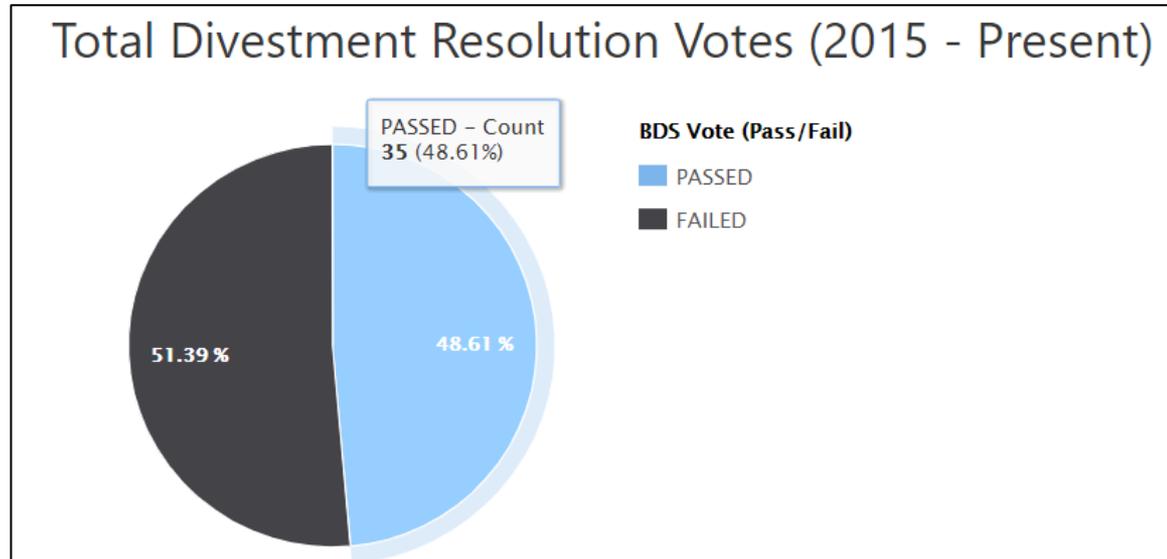
Incidence of Anti-Zionist Rhetoric on US Campuses 2017 - 2019



BDS Activity on US Campuses 2015 - 2019

- **Economic Boycotts**

- Since 2015, there have been **72 anti-Israel divestment votes** by student governments or the student body on **44 campuses**, with students approving such resolutions in 35 cases.



Portraying Israel as Worth of Elimination



From PACBI/USACBI Guidelines for the Implementation of Academic BDS



Faculty and students are directed to:

- Refuse to write letters of recommendation for their students who want to pursue studies in Israel;
- Work toward the closure of their own university's study abroad programs in Israel;
- Sabotage their colleagues' collaborative research efforts with Israeli universities and scholars;
- Cancel or shut down campus events or activities that "normalize Israel in the global academy"; and
- Carry out "common sense boycott" that targets Israel's supporters for opprobrium.

Implementing Academic BDS: Refusing to Write Letters of Recommendation



September 2018

University of Michigan Professor of American Studies refused to write a letter of recommendation for student wanting to study in Israel

Implementing Academic BDS: Shutting Down Study Abroad Programs



November 2018

**Pitzer College Faculty Senate voted to shut down
the school's study abroad program in Israel**

Implementing Academic BDS: Sabotaging Faculty Collaborations



May 2019

New York University's Department of Social and Cultural Analysis voted to cut all ties with NYU's Tel Aviv program, including by refusing to sponsor faculty who want to teach or do collaborative research there

Implementing Academic BDS: Anti-Normalization Efforts



Disruption of Pro-Israel Event at Oregon State University

Implementing Academic BDS: “Common Sense Boycott”

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By **Michael Janofsky**

August 6, 2020 | LOS ANGELES

Image by Daily Trojan



BDS Activity on US Campuses 2015 - 2019

- **Economic Boycotts**
 - Since 2015, there have been **72 anti-Israel divestment votes** by student governments or the student body on **44 campuses**, with students approving such resolutions in 35 cases.
- **Academic Boycott (Academic BDS)**
 - Faculty and student **attempts to boycott** or impede student participation in educational programs in Israel **increased by 100%** from 19 incidents in 2018 to 38 in 2019.
 - Behaviors in compliance with academic BDS's guidelines for anti-normalization efforts and a "common sense boycott" increased in 2019:
 - **Denigration** of Jewish students **increased by 67%**
 - **Suppression of Expression** increased by **69%**
 - **Discrimination** increased by **51%**

Factors Strongly Linked to Anti-Jewish Harassment

- **Anti-Zionist Student Groups**: Schools with an SJP or similar anti-Zionist student group were **7 to 8 times** more likely to have anti-Jewish harassment.
- **Faculty Boycotters**: Schools with one or more **faculty boycotters** were about **4 to 5 times** more likely to have anti-Jewish harassment.
- **Anti-Zionist Expression**: Schools with **anti-Zionist expression**, including the promotion of BDS, were **4 times** more likely to host incidents of Israel-related harassment.

The Two-Part Problem of Campus Antisemitism

- **Part One**: Anti-Zionist harassment of Jewish students has been increasing rapidly in both number and degree of hostility and is strongly linked to anti-Zionist student groups and faculty as well as to anti-Zionist expression, including BDS promotion and implementation.
- **Part Two**: University administrators have been unwilling to adequately and fairly address acts of anti-Zionist harassment of Jewish students. Behavior that would be addressed promptly and vigorously when directed at members of some minority groups is ignored or downplayed when it's linked to Israel and directed at Jewish students.

The Problem of Inadequate Protection for Jewish Students

UC Berkeley Harassment Policy

Harassment is defined as conduct that is so severe and/or pervasive, and objectively offensive, and that so substantially impairs a person's access to University programs or activities, that the person is effectively denied equal access to the University's resources and opportunities on the basis of the person's race, color, national or ethnic origin, alienage, sex, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, physical or mental disability, or perceived membership in any of these classifications.

Behavioral
Threshold

Identity/
Motivation
Threshold

Anti-Discrimination Law: Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act

- Title VI is a federal law that prohibits any entity that receives federal financial assistance (such as grants or student loans) from discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin.
- Under current OCR policy, Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of a person's actual or perceived shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics, including membership in a religion that may be perceived to exhibit such characteristics (such as Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh individuals).
- Several Title VI complaints of anti-Zionist motivated discriminatory harassment were dismissed by the OCR, in part because such harassment was not deemed to be directed against students because of their Jewish ethnicity.

2019 Efforts to Ensure Government Agencies and Universities Use IHRA Definition of Antisemitism

- Pro-Israel student activists on several campuses sought to enshrine the IHRA definition in resolutions considered by their student governments.
- The Florida state legislature passed a bill that contained the full IHRA definition and mandated that the state's public schools and universities use it.
- The US Congress considered, for the third year in a row, the Anti-Semitism Awareness Act, requiring that the U.S. Department of Education use the full IHRA definition in adjudicating Title VI cases.
- President Trump signed an executive order directing “all executive departments and agencies charged with enforcing Title VI” to use the full IHRA definition of antisemitism.

Challenges to the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism in 2019

- **300% spike in campus expression challenging IHRA definition's identification of anti-Zionism with antisemitism in 2019**
- **94% of all challenges to the definition linked to anti-Zionist students and faculty boycotters, with members of anti-Zionist Jewish groups like JVP playing a prominent role.**
- **Strong link between challenges to the definition of antisemitism and anti-Jewish harassment.**



Student at UC Berkeley protest

A New Approach to Protecting Jewish Students

Current View:



Protecting Jewish Students as Members of Protected Identity Group

- Understands harassment as identity-motivated discrimination
- Considers the identity of the victim and the motivation of the perpetrator
- Is only actionable if the harassment reaches an objective threshold of harm, the victim is a member of a protected group, and the perpetrator is motivated by prejudice against that group

New View:

Protecting Jewish Students as Individuals with Equal Rights

- Understands harassment as behavior that suppresses expression
- Does not consider the identity of the victim or the motivation of the perpetrator
- Is actionable when any individual is subject to harassment that reaches an objective threshold of harm, irrespective of the identity of the victim or the motivation of the perpetrator

Key Steps to Implementing New Approach

- Publicly acknowledge the **equal** rights of **all** students to self-expression and full participation in campus life, as well as the **equal** rights of **all** students to protection from behavior that violates those rights.
- Recognize that that their school's current harassment policy does **not** protect all students from harassing behaviors, and establish robust bullying and cyberbullying policies that use the same behavioral threshold as harassment policies and are equally well-enforced.
- Develop fair and consistent protocols for handling speech that's "uncivil" or "offensive" but still protected by the First Amendment, that do not depend on the motivation of the speaker or identity of those offended by the speech.

Advantages of New Approach for Protecting Jewish Students

- Eliminates the need to define Jewish identity or prove that Israel-related harassment is motivated by antisemitism before providing Jewish students with fair and adequate responses to harassment.
- Invalidates the accusation that Jewish students are using the charge of antisemitism to silence all criticism of Israel, and even proves the hypocrisy of the accusation.
- Encourages Jewish students to proudly express their identity and beliefs without fear of harm.
- Fosters a healthier campus climate by decreasing the sources of inter-group conflict.



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