

# Advocates for Civil Liberties: Countering the Mounting Madness on Canadian Campuses

Doris Strub Epstein

As of late, our universities have become battlegrounds, spreading the poison of Israel hatred, and a supposed Zionist/Jewish conspiracy.

Torrents of hatred, lies and dangerous prejudice are apparently given a forum at schools, while the Iranian and Arab worlds burn with uprisings against their brutal regimes – all of which is seemingly ignored or underplayed on our campuses. And the students are on the front lines.

A conference titled “When Middle East Politics Invade Campus” was held last

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-Prof. Gil Troy

week. It featured a stellar array of international scholars, academics and students who didn’t just provide commentary, but pressed for initiatives to combat the “madness” and bring universities back to where they should be – the arbiters of enlightenment and safe civil discourse.

It marks the launch of a brand new organization, Advocates for Civil Liberties, established to advocate for civil liberties protection in Canada, particularly in universities, to counter “unbalanced anti-Israel messages from organizations whose real goal is to promote propaganda against the state of Israel...” reads the mission statement.

“It plans on taking initiatives to broadly advocate civil liberties; in particular, counter anti-Semitic activities from individuals or organizations,” said Lorne Saltman of ACL, as he opened the conference.

A panel of students kicked off the daylong event, describing the “hostile, unsafe” environment, primarily at York U., with no protection from the administration, even with threats from representatives on campus from the Iranian government. Sara Akrami is an Iranian human rights activist and president of the Human rights Activists Association at York. “The University [York] uses our money to bring speakers who support terrorists, like George Galloway, speakers who promote violence and terror, in the name of free speech.”

As a result of the British universities’ boycott of Israeli academics, Andrew Roberts,

noted British historian, author, lecturer, and founder member of the Friends of Israeli Initiative to counter the mounting tide to delegitimize Israel, said: “Purely on the grounds of nationality, it [the boycott] was a morally despicable thing to do. Israel is fundamentally important to peace in the West.” He talked about the speakers brought in at “old respected centres of learning” – speakers that deny the Holocaust, Islamic radicals, all of whom have a direct effect on the students. Roberts’ speech has been reprinted internationally.

Richard Cravatts is the author of *Genocidal Liberalism: The University’s Jihad Against Israel*. “Aided and abetted by professors and student groups, with funding for Middle East study centres coming by the millions from outside countries, Israel’s ‘brand’ has been hijacked,” he said.

A segment from a movie depicting hate speech on American campuses had the audience scarcely breathing. They watched in horror as speakers spewed twisted tirades against Israel, attacked Jewish students and whipped up mobs shouting, “down, down with Israel!”

“Would attacks like this against Blacks or gays be permitted today by universities?” he asked. “Jews are not considered to be victims.” He compared the tactics and uproar to “Munich beer halls before the war.”

For Elliot Chodoff, a political and military analyst and major in the reserves in the IDF, all the tactics - boycotts, demonstrations, blaming Israel – have one objective: to destroy Israel. He cites the Wall, proven to protect Israelis, has been denounced by the UN, in spite of Article 51, which states that every state has the right to defend itself.

“The new anti-Semitism,” declared author and academic Phyllis Chesler, “is genocidal anti-Zionism.” She mentioned the new fea-

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tures, abetted by technology, false photos, “horrendously hateful” propaganda beamed by satellite to the masses, which the Western media mostly swallows without analyzing.

“The Arab propaganda machine hitched its wagon to the star of the Jewish state, with massive amounts of money. Such propagan-



Professor Gil Troy. Photo: Greg Tijkema

da leads to murder.”

With her denouncement of honour killings, Islamic “gender apartheid” and “misogynist barbarism,” she has lost her place as the feminist icon she once was. “Feminists should be crying out, but they’re not. Many non Muslim women have been cowed by doctrines of political correctness, cultural relativism, and misguided beliefs about religious tolerance of fear. If they oppose the burqa [she does] they will be branded racists, Islamaphobes.”

Catherine Chatterly, at the University of Manitoba, has founded this past summer the Canadian Institute for the Study of Anti-Semitism. She addressed Israeli Apartheid Week, which began at the University of Toronto and now takes place in over 55 cities worldwide. “The concept is part of a global, political strategy to dismantle the Jewish state,” she said. She pointed out their strategy, to not only talk about the “victimization” of Palestinians by Israelis but to connect them with persecuted groups worldwide enhancing their credibility.

Outspoken professor of political science at the University of Western Ontario, Salim Mansur, talked about the need to confront bigotry and extremism on campus. “The campus is the world,” he said, noting the importance of Muslims and Jews getting familiar with each other’s history and culture.

But it was Gil Troy, professor of history at McGill University and author of ‘Why I Am a Zionist’, who galvanized the audience with his impassioned call for action. “If one student is afraid, we are all diminished. If one is unsafe, we’re all unsafe.” To the students he said: “Take control of your university. Don’t run for help. Professors should take responsibility and work with the students.” And we must all fight “to rescue academia from corrupt academics and fight educational malpractice.”

Over 400 people attended the day-long symposium held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. It was moderated by National Post columnist Jonathan Kay. International lawyer Jacques Gauthier, on the board of ACL, said he hopes to take their message directly to the students on Canadian campuses.

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