

I rejoice that my sons attend a college that stands with Israel

A little more than a decade ago, hundreds of students at FAU in Boca Raton found fake eviction notices in their dorms from “Students for Justice in Palestine” (SJP). This terrorist supporting group destroyed the campus tranquility with scare tactics and fear mongering to promote its false claim that Israel was evicting Palestinians from their land.

As a graduate of FAU, I took offense at this anti-Semitic action at my alma mater and led protests to support the right of Jews to attend the university of their choice in peace. The SJP website claims that they promote public dialogue about the plight of Palestinians in Israel, which they slander as apartheid, racist and oppressive. However, when I challenged them to debate their spurious claims, they refused, indicating that not only do they spread lies about Israel, they also lie about themselves to gain entry into citadels of higher learning by feigning belief in rational discourse.

Jews have maintained a physical presence in Israel with Jerusalem as our spiritual capital for over 4000 years despite repeated forced exiles, while there has never been an Arab nation of Palestine. In recent centuries, the land was controlled by Ottoman Turks and then the British. When Palestine was partitioned in 1947 to create a two-state solution to the competing claims of Jews and Arabs, Jews welcomed the proposal with open arms and Arabs took up arms to destroy Israel, vowing to finish the job that Hitler started by exterminating those Jews who managed to escape the Holocaust.

The repeated vilification of Israel as an apartheid, genocidal state is particularly heinous when falsely used against the victims of global genocide and apartheid in Gaza where Jews cannot live. After the Holocaust, when anti-Semitism is no longer in vogue and prejudice is unfashionable, hatred of the Jewish state is the new form of hatred of Jews. Not all who criticize Israel are anti-Semitic, as most Israelis criticize their government, which is expected in a democracy. However, as observed by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., criticism not of the actions, but the existence of the only Jewish homeland in a world with dozens of Christian and Muslim nations, is anti-Semitism dressed up in modern garb.

We also see anti-Semitism in the appalling double standard of the UN which targets Israel, the one bastion of human rights in the Middle East for repeated condemnation, while remaining silent about Israel’s Arab neighbors who often enslave women, execute gays and stone non-believers. Ironically, the walls of the UN are adorned with the quote from Isaiah who dreamed of nations not lifting up sword against nation, while Muslim nations often use the sword symbolically and literally against Jews and others; while the holy sites of Jews, Christians, Muslims and Bahai are located and honored in Israel.

Today, we see an ominous resurgence of anti-Semitism on many college campuses following the barbaric cruelty unleashed by Hamas against innocent Israelis on October 7. Ironically, many of the slain and hostages are Jews working for peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Since the Hamas charter rejects peace, Jewish peace activists also deserve to die according to Hamas, because like the Nazis, Hamas views all Jews as a contagion who must be exterminated.

As a civil rights attorney and environmentalist, I share many views in common with liberals regarding abortion, guns, the environment, science and other issues. Thus, I am constantly disappointed, though not surprised, when my colleagues in other battles mindlessly blame Israel for the conflict with the Palestinians. Islam’s intolerance for Israel is fueled by the Koran, in which God commands Muslims to kill non-believers, which is derived from God’s command in the Torah to kill those who

did not believe in the Jewish God. Hamas combines ancient anti-Semitic tropes from humanity's dark past with Nazi propaganda and the forged "Elders of Zion" to come up with a toxic brew of Jew hatred.

Following the barbaric attack by Hamas against Israel, it was predictable, but no less disheartening to see college students supporting terrorists, with the Presidents of America's colleges adopting a variety of responses to student protests against Israel. Many Ivy League colleges continue their cynical support of Israel's enemies or remain silently complicit to terrorism. I am thrilled that my sons attend the University of Florida whose President, like the President of the United States and the Mayor of New York, speaks with moral clarity against Hamas in support of decency, dignity and democracy.

The University of Florida has a stellar academic reputation as an incubator of great leaders to help guide humanity into the future. We can also be proud that its President refuses to go along with bigotry and terror and has the back of Israel and students who rally to support freedom. As parents, we should not have to feel conflicted about suggesting that our children be proud to reveal their Jewish identity, while fearing that our parental advice could lead to their death.

The goal of Hamas and its supporters in America, such as Students for Justice in Palestine, is to spread fear and terror among the Jewish people, to isolate Israel and facilitate its destruction. Their reign of terror, based on belief in an imaginary genocidal tyrant in the sky, who commands such treatment of "the other" on Earth, shows that those who follow an illogical path often become "pathological".

While I am appalled that Governor DeSantis has destroyed New College and made it over in his reactionary image, and mingles church, state and education to promote right wing political and religious indoctrination, rather than education, I give thanks for political, religious and educational leaders who stand with Israel, who oppose terrorism and who provide a safe haven for Jews on the college campus.

Those university Presidents who allow the college campus to be swayed by political correctness, partisan politics or anti-Semitism, rather than the scholarly pursuit of wisdom and knowledge, should be removed from their sinecures of power. As for me, I am proud to send my sons to a school where the Florida Gators speak out against Florida's haters, and where the Florida Gators stand as miti"gators" of violence, promul"gators" of truth and propa"gators" of peace.

Finally, in any discussion of this issue let us remember this adage. "If Hamas lays down its arms, there will be no war, if Israel lays down its arms, there will be no Israel."

Standing with Israel and against anti-Semitism.

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