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Unveiling the Chilly Climate:

The Suppression of Speech
on Palestine in Canada

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Rowan Gaudet

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Author Biographies

Sheryl Nestel

Sheryl Nestel holds a PhD from the University of Toronto where she taught sociology and equity studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education from 2000-2012. She is the author of numerous refereed journal articles, book chapters and research reports on race and racism in the health professions and is the author of Obstructed Labour: Race and Gender in the Re-emergence of Midwifery (UBC Press, 2007), winner of the Canadian Women's Studies Annual Book Prize for 2007. She served for eleven years on the steering committee of Independent Jewish Voices Canada where she was instrumental in launching IJV's highly respected campaign against the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism. She lived in Israel/Palestine between 1973-1988.

Rowan Gaudet

Rowan Gaudet holds a BA (Hons) in history from Concordia University. He is currently completing a Master's degree in Global Cultures at the University of Bologna. He has authored research on the effects of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism, and has been a key activist in Independent Jewish Voices' NoIHRA campaign. He has been a member of IJV since 2017.

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Preface

James L. Turk
Director, Centre for Free Expression
Toronto Metropolitan University

For more than four decades, the increasing polarization of Middle East politics has been at the centre of serious threats to academic freedom and freedom of expression in universities and colleges in Canada and around the world. Current flashpoints are the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism.

BDS was initiated in 2005 on the first anniversary of the advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice¹ in which the West Bank barrier was declared a violation of international law. BDS, coordinated by the Palestinian BDS National Committee, calls for boycotts, divestment, and sanctions against Israel to pressure it to withdraw from the occupied territories, remove the separation barrier in the West Bank, grant full equality for Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel, and recognize the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties.

In 2016, the IHRA adopted its Working Definition of Antisemitism² and began pressing governments and non-governmental institutions and organizations to formally adopt it. Controversy centres on several of the “contemporary examples of antisemitism” that are included with the IHRA definition, and which relate to expression about the state of Israel and its policies.

Unveiling the Chilly Climate: The Suppression of Speech on Palestine in Canada, written by Sheryl Nestel and Rowan Gaudet and published by Independent Jewish Voices, is the first broad and detailed examination of the experiences of faculty and students whose work is critical of the policies of Israel toward Palestine and Palestinians or who actively attempt to change those policies through their support of of BDS and opposition to the adoption of the IHRA definition.

While focused primarily on Canada, the report briefly touches on the experiences faced by European academics, artists, and students who publicly support Palestinian rights. The report provides useful profiles of the major organizations that challenge Canadian academics and students who are critical of Israel’s

1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_West_Bank_barrier#International_Court_of_Justice

2 https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/sites/default/files/press_release_document_antisemitism.pdf

treatment of Palestinians.

This is followed by a detailed ethnography to help elucidate the structures, norms, emotions, and behaviours that create the chilly climate in relation to any discussion of Palestine/Israel that supports Palestinian concerns or perspectives. The ethnography is based on a survey of 40 faculty members, 23 students, 7 activists, and 7 representatives of organizations from 21 universities in 7 provinces.

The picture they draw is deeply concerning. Those surveyed report serious violations of academic freedom, from political intervention into hiring decisions to effective pressure to self-censor in relation to writing or speaking about Palestine, harassment by pro-Israel advocacy groups and media outlets, attacks from academic colleagues, harassment on the grounds of their ethnic or racial identity, classroom surveillance, and interference by their university administration. A number of academics reported encountering Islamophobia and/or anti-Palestinian racism from colleagues, students, and at campus events and protests. Academics who had contractual appointments or were still tenure-track felt particularly vulnerable. Numerous respondents indicated they had suffered significantly from the emotional stress of working in a hostile environment.

A strength of the report is that it tells of these matters in the respondents' own words. We need to hear what they say.

Vigorous debate, contesting ideas and perspectives, criticizing policies and practices of institutions and governments, trenchant analysis, and informed advocacy are the lifeblood of the university and of a genuine democracy. That's the way we advance knowledge and promote more social justice in the world. But, as this report makes clear, when it comes to Palestinian human rights, too often academic freedom and freedom of expression are undermined, and with them the possibility of finding just solutions to intractable problems.

I hope this report will be widely read and will contribute to finding a better path for dealing with differences that, if unresolved, will harm all of us.

Endorsements of *Unveiling the Chilly the Climate: The Suppression of Speech on Palestine in Canada*

IJV's timely, deeply-researched report offers critical insight into the corrosive effect of ongoing efforts to delegitimize and quash support for Palestinian rights and criticism of Israel -- most notably with the targeting of individuals, academic institutions, and organizations, and the resulting chilling of free speech, legitimate debate, and protest. IJV's deep dive into the Canadian experience offers important insights into how such efforts are being pursued around the world, and why - for the sake not only of Palestinian rights, but to defend free speech writ large - challenging and reversing these trends is critical.

- LARA FRIEDMAN
PRESIDENT, FOUNDATION FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE

IJV's latest report is a significant contribution to the growing discourse on anti-Palestinian racism (APR). This timely intervention documents through critical testimonies the various manifestations of APR in academic institutions – and the resulting harms to both students and educators as well as academic freedom. Academic institutions would be wise to review this report to understand how Palestinian and allied students, educators and human rights defenders are silenced, smeared and intimidated and how we all suffer from the chill on academic freedom.

- DANIA MAJID
PRESIDENT, ARAB CANADIAN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

Embracing a reflexive, radical approach to ethnography, “Unveiling the Chilly Climate” is an archive and a roadmap. The archive is a collection of experiences of faculty, students, activists, and organizers as they confront and survive reprisals, harassment, intimidation, and racialization for their labor for and on Palestinian freedom. The roadmap is methodological; it demands that we take seriously not only the public figures and their more familiar stories, but also those precarious students, activists, and organizers as they stand up for the history and the present of Palestine and the Palestinians. Chilling effects, IJV reminds us, do not only result in self-censorship, they produce socially conforming behavior and discourse. With this archive and roadmap IJV and the people it documents chart the path forward to standing strong on the right side of history in Palestine, and beyond.

- SHERENE SEIKALY

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY;

DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST STUDIES;

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA;

AUTHOR, *MEN OF CAPITAL: SCARCITY AND ECONOMY IN MANDATE PALESTINE* (STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2015);

CO-EDITOR, *JOURNAL OF PALESTINE STUDIES*;

CO-EDITOR, *JADALIYYA*

In this timely report, Sheryl Nestel and Rowan Gaudet expose how the IHRA working definition of antisemitism is being weaponized to suppress pro-Palestinian advocacy on university campuses in Canada. Their findings help make sense of how a series of chilling strategies have been operationalized to smother the Palestinian demand for self-determination not only in North America but also in Europe.

- NEVE GORDON

AUTHOR OF *ISRAEL'S OCCUPATION*;

CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM OF THE BRITISH SOCIETY FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

The suppression of speech on Palestine relies on two premises: Israel is above the law and Palestinians (who are always presumed Muslim even when they are not) are outside of it. A profound anti-Muslim, anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab racism fuels Zionism. This painstaking study of the experiences of those have been targeted by Zionist organizations reveals that racial terror is typically conducted by a well-coordinated apparatus. The reprisals, harassment and intimidation of academics that the study relates is a powerful reminder that a terror campaign must render Palestine unthinkable, and Palestinians fictive. How else would it be possible to steal the land?

- SHERENE H. RAZACK
DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR AND PENNY KANNER ENDOWED CHAIR, UCLA;
AUTHOR OF *NOTHING HAS TO MAKE SENSE: UPHOLDING WHITE SUPREMACY THROUGH ANTI-MUSLIM RACISM* (UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS, 2022)

Unveiling the Chilly Climate is a devastating, evidence-based, comprehensive and in-depth study of the nature and extent of the suppression of speech on Palestine in Canada. (In fact it very helpfully goes beyond Canada to summarise the situation in the USA and some European countries.) Systematically and meticulously researched, and replete with references to the ethnographic data the researchers gathered, and to conceptual and contextual work which adds to the academically sound character of the work, the Research Report constitutes a deeply disturbing indictment of the multiple sources responsible for the depth and breadth of a wholesale attack on freedom of speech. The weaponization of antisemitism so comprehensively deployed to justify racism against Palestinians is not only morally indefensible, it does nothing to protect Jews against real antisemitism.

- ANTONY LERMAN
SENIOR FELLOW, BRUNO KREISKY FORUM FOR INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE, VIENNA;
AUTHOR OF *WHATEVER HAPPENED TO ANTISEMITISM: REDEFINITION AND THE MYTH OF THE 'COLLECTIVE JEW'* (PLUTO PRESS, 2022)

I am so grateful for this comprehensive, ethical report which documents the extent of the “chilling effect” suffered by those who speak out for Palestinian freedom in Canada. The intense consequences of the bullying, harassment, intimidation, and threats of physical violence are clearly recounted, along with the specific role played by Israel advocacy organizations who organize campaigns of repression against those who speak out. This report is a crucial call for accountability and action to protect and defend the essential right to speak out against oppression.

- REBECCA VILKOMERSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JEWISH VOICE FOR PEACE, 2009-2019

In their extremely important, excellently researched and very timely *Unveiling the Chilly Climate*, Sheryl Nestel and Rowan Gaudet reveal the frightening effects of the so-called “fight against antisemitism”, waged in the spirit of the IHRA WDA, on suppressing Palestinian and pro-Palestinian voices and the freedom of expression in Canada. This is a deeply troubling text as it shows how powerful, cynical and vicious the weaponization of the fight against antisemitism for silencing critique of Israel and Zionism has become. But this research also contains some hope in it as it also shows that if well organized and mobilized, battles against these dark forces can be won.

- AMOS GOLDBERG
PROFESSOR OF HOLOCAUST HISTORY AT THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM;
CONTRIBUTING INITIATOR AND DRAFTER OF THE JERUSALEM DECLARATION ON
ANTISEMITISM (JDA)

This comprehensive and impressive report sheds light on a serious human rights issue, long known and widely experienced, but until now largely undocumented and little analyzed. The extensive compilation and assessment reveals the myriad ways in which unjustified, inflammatory and often insidious accusations of anti-Semitism are used to intimidate and silence activists, academics and students who are critical of, or even simply concerned about, Israel's policies and human rights record with respect to the Palestinian people. That intimidation in turn subverts and distorts vital exchanges about transformation and solutions in a long-troubled region. The report is a vital resource for human rights advocates and must shape policy at all levels of government in Canada. Unveiling the Chilly Climate makes it clear that undermining and restricting vital human rights such as freedom of expression only deepens divisions, fosters greater misunderstanding and, ultimately, stands in the way of advancing the sorely-needed human rights agenda that would bring dignity, equality and durable security to all Israelis and Palestinians.

- ALEX NEVE

SENIOR FELLOW, GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA;
FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CANADA

This unprecedented report presents incontrovertible evidence of the range and extent of the suppression of academic speech on the question of Palestine. It demonstrates the tactics used to suppress criticism of Zionism and of the racial ideologies and colonial practices of the Israeli state. Perhaps most disturbingly of all, it shows the extent to which principled and evidence-based criticism of racism has itself been falsely labeled as racism in an attempt to banish it from scholarly conversations.

- SAREE MAKDISI

CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT LOS ANGELES;
AUTHOR OF TOLERANCE IS A WASTELAND: PALESTINE AND THE CULTURE OF DENIAL (UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS, 2022).

Executive Summary

Focused on the Canadian context, this report seeks to shed light on the wave of suppression of speech regarding Palestine that is sweeping North America and parts of Europe. It documents the impact of reprisals, harassment, and intimidation faced by Canadian activists, faculty, students, and organizations in relation to scholarship and activism in solidarity with the struggle for Palestinian human rights. There is a connection to be made here between these attacks and efforts by pro-Israel advocacy groups to market the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism (IHRA), a document that has come under vigorous attack by defenders of academic freedom and Palestinian human rights. While its proponents argue that this definition will not threaten freedom of expression or inhibit criticism of Israeli policies, the findings of this report demonstrate that these basic rights are already under threat and could be further imperilled if the IHRA were to be widely adopted.

The contribution of this report is two-fold: 1) the amount and quality of information gathered here is unprecedented and speaks to the worrisome prevalence of harassment and suppression of speech on Palestine on campuses and in Canadian civil society; and 2) it surpasses a simple documentation of instances of repression by employing an ethnographic methodology to analyze the so-called “chilling effect” and its impact on governmental, institutional, and individual decision making. This research project situates itself firmly within the realm of critical qualitative inquiry which seeks to employ qualitative research for social justice purposes, including making such research available for public education, social policy formulation, and the transformation of public discourse. Our inquiry is also shaped by decolonizing methodologies of social science research that seek to challenge institutions, academic and otherwise, which prioritize colonial forms of knowledge production and maintain institutional commitments that impede indigenous self-determination. Finally, we follow the directives proposed by queer, feminist, and antiracist research methodologies which entreat us to consider how our positions in social hierarchies of race, class, sexuality, and citizenship mediate our experiences.

In all, the researchers collected 77 testimonies from 40 faculty members, 23 students, 7 activists, and 7 representatives of organizations. Testimonies were collected from participants in Ontario, Manitoba, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, Quebec, and Alberta. Among the academics responding were representatives of 11 disciplines from 21 Canadian universities.

Interviewees recounted that their experiences included: political intervention into hiring, attempts to prevent access to event venues and the attempted

cancellation of public events on Palestine, as well as targeting and doxing, including the inclusion of 125 Canadian academics and activists on the website of Canary Mission, an organization which purports to document “individuals and organizations that promote hatred of the US, Israel and Jews on North American college campuses.” Threats of violence and genuine acts of violence were experienced by student activists, and these often contained racial and sexual slurs including threats of sexual violence. Students were subject to warnings and disciplinary measures by university administrators whom respondents often described as being hostile to Palestine solidarity activism on campus.

Faculty respondents reported restrictions on academic freedom, self-censoring of expression on Palestinian human rights, discriminatory treatment by academic publishing platforms, harassment by pro-Israel advocacy groups and media outlets, attacks from colleagues, political interference by university administration, classroom surveillance by pro-Israel student groups, and anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab racism. Indeed, the suppression of speech on Palestine has significant consequences in academia, where it threatens principles of academic freedom and encourages surveillance of critical intellectuals and activists and of the oppositional knowledge that they produce.

As our research reveals, the precarious employment conditions of over half of Canada’s university teachers mean that because of the “chilly climate” around speech on Palestine untenured or pre-tenure faculty are reluctant to pursue academic or activist work in this area, for fear of endangering contract renewals or future career prospects including, the access to publishing platforms so central to the academic tenure and promotion process.

Unsubstantiated allegations of antisemitic intent and support for terrorism are commonly levelled against pro-Palestine academics and activists. Significantly, Palestinians, Muslims, and non-Arab racialized participants appear to have borne the brunt of direct attacks on their scholarship and activism. The emotional impact of harassment and suppression was felt most acutely by the the Palestinian students and faculty interviewed. Jewish activists were not immune to attack and were often characterized by opponents as “kapos” or “self-hating Jews.”

We also document how both on- and off-campus Israel-advocacy organizations have been at the forefront of efforts to suppress speech and activism on Palestine. As University of Pennsylvania political scientist Ian Lustick has argued, the pro-Israel organizations have constituted a “vigilante” force which has made it “increasingly difficult to criticize Israel without fear of lawsuits, accusations of anti-Semitism, demands for political balance in staging of events, blacklisting of

participants, or other forms of personal or institutional harassment.”¹

Despite the proliferation in recent years of attacks on Palestine solidarity activism, public recognition of the grievous violations of Palestinian human rights has grown. This report signals that an atmosphere of repression and recrimination related to discourse and activism around Israel/Palestine is ubiquitous and insidious and should be unacceptable in a democratic society.

¹ Ian Lustick, *Paradigm Lost: From Two-State Solution to One-State Reality*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019, p.67.

Introduction

Focused on the Canadian context, this report produced by Independent Jewish Voices Canada (IJV) seeks to shed light on the wave of suppression of speech regarding Palestine that is sweeping North America and parts of Europe. It documents the impact of reprisals, harassment, and intimidation faced by activists, faculty, students, and organizations working in solidarity with the struggle for Palestinian human rights.

The contribution of this report is two-fold: 1) the amount and quality of information gathered here is unprecedented, and speaks to the worrisome prevalence of harassment and suppression of speech on Palestine on campuses and in Canadian civil society; and 2) it surpasses a simple documentation of instances of repression by employing an ethnographic methodology to analyze the so-called “chilling effect” on pro-Palestinian speech and its impact on personal and institutional decision making. While the chilling effect is interpreted in law as the act of self-censorship in response to a fear of legal reprisal or harm to privacy despite the legality of such speech, in this report we have embraced a broader interpretation of this term which concludes “that chilling effects predominantly involve not just a deterrent effect, but a shaping effect—people speaking, acting, or doing, in a way that conforms to, or is in compliance with, a perceived social norm, not simply self-censoring to avoid a legal harm. Chilling effects are thus also productive. They not only involve the silencing of speech, but also the expression of socially conforming speech and behavior.”²

This research project was undertaken by IJV,³ whose mission is to amplify the voices of Canadian Jews in support of justice in Israel/Palestine and at home. IJV has been an international leader in the movement to oppose the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism (IHRA).⁴ This report, researched and written between January 2021 and April 2022, was sparked by the aggressive campaign being carried out by pro-Israel groups in Canada for the adoption of the IHRA. This definition represents an unprecedented attempt to frame criticism of the State of Israel or of the political ideology of Zionism as “antisemitism.” While its proponents argue that this definition will not threaten freedom of expression or inhibit criticism of Israeli policies, the findings of this report demonstrate that these basic rights are already under threat.

2 Jon Penney, “Understanding Chilling Effects,” *Minnesota Law Review*, 106, 2022. P.105

3 www.ijvcanada.org

4 See IJV Canada’s comprehensive website on the IHRA: www.noihra.ca

Attempts to suppress speech about injustice in Palestine/Israel have grown dramatically in recent years. The United Kingdom, Germany, and the U.S. have seen some of the most egregious examples of this campaign, but Canada has not escaped its reach. In Canada we have seen dozens of high-profile attacks on activists and academics who have spoken out about Israel's ongoing violations of Palestinian human rights. Some of these attacks have garnered media attention and have even been the subject of academic research.⁵ However, public recrimination and attempts at disciplining critics of Israel are only part of the story. This research project seeks to bring to light what has been, up until now, a hidden aspect of this campaign of suppression—the so-called “chilling effect” upon knowledge production and activism related to the struggle for justice for Palestine. The chilling effect impedes our ability to engage in an honest reckoning with the history and impact of 74 years of Palestinian dispossession and 55 years

Chilling effects predominantly involve not just a deterrent effect, but a shaping effect—people speaking, acting, or doing, in a way that conforms to, or is in compliance with, a perceived social norm, not simply self-censoring to avoid a legal harm. Chilling effects are thus also productive. They not only involve the silencing of speech, but also the expression of socially conforming speech and behavior.

- JON PENNEY,
“UNDERSTANDING CHILLING EFFECTS”

of Israeli military occupation. This chilling effect has not been widely examined in the context of pro-Palestine advocacy for a variety of reasons, including the fact that it is defined as a “lack” or as “silence.” Our aim has been to produce a report which documents and analyses testimonies from a variety of groups and individuals about their experiences of suppression of speech on Palestine. By amplifying the voices of those affected, this project breaks the silence imposed by the chilling effect.

Beyond the gap in research, there are a number of reasons why it is important to understand how the chilling effect manifests and how

it impacts critical public discourse. In Canada and elsewhere, high-profile cases of backlash over discussions about Palestine/Israel have been well-documented, and will be discussed below. It can reasonably be assumed, however, that the majority of instances of suppression of speech do not receive media coverage. This is especially true in relation to individuals who are not public figures, such as

5 See for example Rafeef Ziadah, *Outside the Multicultural: Solidarity and the Silencing of Palestinian Narratives*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, York University, 2013. Michael Bueckert, *Boycotts and Backlash: Canadian Opposition to Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movements from South Africa to Israel*, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Carleton University, 2020. Mazen Masri, “A Tale of Two Conferences: On Power, Identity and Academic Freedom,” *AAUP Journal of Academic Freedom*, Vol. 2, 2011. Alan Sears and Mary Jo Nadeau, “The Palestine Test: Countering the Silencing Campaign,” *Studies in Political Economy* 85 (2010).

students and grassroots activists. Therefore, to fully understand the impacts of the backlash we must understand the chilling effect, which has broader implications than any individual controversy. The suppression of speech on Palestine has significant consequences in academia, where it threatens the principle of academic freedom and encourages surveillance of critical intellectuals and activists and of the oppositional knowledge that they produce. It is clear that instances of harassment, intimidation, and suppression of speech are becoming more widespread and will continue to escalate. The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism is but one manifestation of this escalation, but it is one that is being utilized with greater frequency. Therefore, gaining a clearer understanding of the chilling effect is urgently needed.

The context—Why is Palestine a pressing issue?

Contentious debates surrounding the State of Israel and its relationship to Palestinian dispossession have endured for more than eight decades. These debates have intensified with the proliferation of injustices committed against the Palestinian people in recent years, including: the deadly violence enacted by Israel in Gaza, which has added to the already abysmal living conditions of Gazans; the extreme unlikelihood of a two-state solution, which has become more obvious as illegal settlements multiply in the West Bank; the enshrinement of Jewish supremacy⁶ in Israeli law, which has codified Palestinians' second-class citizenship inside the 1967 borders; and reports by multiple respected human rights organizations, as well as the U.N. Human Rights Council's Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories, which concluded that Israeli policies equate with apartheid.⁷ In addition to state violence enacted by the

6 https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid

7 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories Occupied Since 1967 March 21, 2022 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ahrc4987-report-special-rapporteur-situation-human-rights-palestinian>; Israel's Apartheid against Palestinians: Cruel System of Domination and Crime against Humanity, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/5141/2022/en/>; A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution, *Human Rights Watch*, April 27, 2021 <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>; A Regime of Jewish Supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This is Apartheid, *B'Tselem*, January 12, 2021, https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid

Israeli military, violence perpetrated by Jewish settlers against Palestinians in the West Bank has intensified and continues with impunity.

There are numerous ways to comprehend the urgency and relevance of the issue of Palestine. Indeed, it is linked to many of the most important global issues of this century and the last, including: the Nazi genocide and the renewal of Jewish life in the post-Holocaust world; orthodoxies of nationalism and national consciousness; the rise of twentieth-century anti-colonial movements; ongoing opposition to U.S. political hegemony; struggles for Indigenous sovereignty; challenges to white supremacy and Eurocentrism; the development of human rights frameworks and the fight to implement them; struggles for justice for burgeoning refugee populations; the interpretation of and enforcement of international law; the worldwide rise of genocidal regimes and the enactment of ethnic cleansing; and the fight to eliminate racism in all its forms. Given this range of issues and their broad relevance, it should surprise no one that the ongoing injustices in Israel/Palestine are being vigorously challenged. What we are seeing at this moment are increasingly vocal movements worldwide for Palestinian freedom and, concomitantly, prodigious efforts on the part of Israel and its supporters worldwide to preserve Israel as an ethnocentric state that denies basic human rights to those it wishes to exclude or contain. Among those efforts is a well-coordinated apparatus aimed at discrediting and silencing oppositional voices.

The weaponization of antisemitism

For decades, the Israeli government and institutional supporters of Israel have used accusations of antisemitism to silence critics of Israeli policies.⁸ As *Jewish Currents* editor Joshua Leifer explains, “The Israeli government long ago adjusted its public relations strategy so that today the Israeli hasbara apparatus’s most active front is the attempted redefinition of anti-Zionism as anti-Semitism, with the goal of rendering any opposition to the occupation [or] Zionism—or even

⁸ See for example Israel’s Ambassador to the United Nations, Abba Eban’s response to the U.N.’s “Zionism is Racism” decision. Abba Eban, “Zionism and the U.N.,” *New York Times* Nov. 3, 1975.

simply Israeli policies themselves—beyond the pale of mainstream acceptability.”⁹ This redefinition has been labelled the “new antisemitism.” One of the main proponents of this view is Irwin Cotler, Canada’s Special Envoy for Holocaust Remembrance and the Fight Against Antisemitism, who claims that Israel has become “the collective Jew among the nations.”¹⁰ In his view, Israel is the state of all Jews and to vilify the state or disparage its founding ideology, Zionism, is to vilify or disparage all Jews. However, as British philosopher Brian Klug has argued, “anti-Zionism and antisemitism are in fact independent variables: one can exist without the other.”¹¹ Independent Jewish Voices rejects the assertion that strenuous criticism of Israel or even explicit anti-Zionism is inherently antisemitic. Rather, we agree with the examples of legitimate criticism of Israel outlined by the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism¹² signed by over 350 of the world’s most respected Holocaust and Jewish Studies scholars:

Supporting the Palestinian demand for justice and the full grant of their political, national, civil and human rights, as encapsulated in international law.

Criticizing or opposing Zionism as a form of nationalism, or arguing for a variety of constitutional arrangements for Jews and Palestinians in the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean. It is not antisemitic to support arrangements that accord full equality to all inhabitants “between the river and the sea,” whether in two states, a binational state, unitary democratic state, federal state, or in whatever form.

Evidence-based criticism of Israel as a state. This includes its institutions and founding principles. It also includes its policies and practices, domestic and abroad, such as the conduct of Israel in the West Bank and Gaza, the role Israel plays in the region, or any other way in which, as a state, it influences events in the world. It is not antisemitic to point out systematic racial discrimination. In general, the same norms of debate that apply to other states and to other conflicts over national self-determination apply in the case of Israel and Palestine. Thus, even if contentious, it is not antisemitic, in and of itself, to compare Israel with other historical cases, including settler-colonialism or apartheid.

9 Joshua Leifer, “Israel’s One-state Reality is Sowing Chaos in American Politics,” *+972 Magazine*, August 26, 2019, <https://www.972mag.com/one-state-israel-trump-netanyahu/>

10 Quoted in Brian Klug, “The Collective Jew: Israel and the New Antisemitism,” *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 2003, p. 120.

11 *Ibid* p. 129.

12 <https://jerusalemdeclaration.org>

Boycott, divestment, and sanctions are commonplace, non-violent forms of political protest against states. In the Israeli case they are not, in and of themselves, antisemitic.

Political speech does not have to be measured, proportional, tempered, or reasonable to be protected under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and other human rights instruments. Criticism that some may see as excessive or contentious, or as reflecting a “double standard,” is not, in and of itself, antisemitic. In general, the line between antisemitic and non-antisemitic speech is different from the line between unreasonable and reasonable speech.

Boycott, divestment and sanctions are commonplace, non-violent forms of political protest against states. In the Israeli case they are not, in and of themselves, antisemitic.

- THE JERUSALEM DECLARATION ON ANTISEMITISM

“Anti-Zionism is Antisemitism” as political strategy

Allegations of Jew-hatred directed at supporters of justice for Palestine constitute a strategy conceptualized by the Israeli government in partnership with “Jewish communal leaderships, national and international Jewish organizations, pro-Israel advocacy groups, institutional arms of the Israeli government and academics and researchers promoting the idea of a ‘new antisemitism.’”¹³ This strategy is central to Israel’s public diplomacy gambit better known as “hasbara.” Israeli journalist Noam Sheizaf describes hasbara as

a form of propaganda aimed at an international audience, primarily, but not exclusively, in western countries. It is meant to influence the conversation in

13 Antony Lerman, “The New Antisemitism,” *Open Democracy*, September 29, 2015, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/new-antisemitism/>

a way that positively portrays Israeli political moves and policies, including actions undertaken by Israel in the past. Often, Hasbara efforts includes a negative portrayal of the Arabs and especially of Palestinians.¹⁴

As journalist Ben White has reported, in 2015 the Israeli cabinet empowered the Ministry of Strategic Affairs to “guide, coordinate and integrate the activities of all the ministers and the government and of civil entities in Israel and abroad on the subject of the struggle against attempts to delegitimize Israel and the boycott movement.”¹⁵

As labor unions, scholars, churches, cultural workers, and students began, after 2005, to embrace the Palestinian civil society call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS),¹⁶ the now defunct Israeli Ministry of Strategic Affairs began to coordinate and fund initiatives designed to fight BDS, largely by accusing the movement and its supporters of antisemitism. One of the strategies pursued by the Israeli government has been to recruit supporters outside of Israel, who are then coached to create social media campaigns which employ deceptive messages in relation to the state’s policies and actions against Palestinians.¹⁷

These campaigns have been underwritten with millions of dollars¹⁸ in Israeli government funds and have been supplemented by well-known Zionist donors such as the late Sheldon Adelson, who also was among the largest contributors to Donald Trump’s failed presidential bid in 2020. An Adelson initiative, the Maccabee Task Force, was formed in 2019 to combat anti-Israel activity and the fight for BDS on university and college campuses and has operated in a number of countries, including Canada.¹⁹ Several Canadian organizations active in defaming and pursuing penalties against pro-Palestinian organizations and individuals receive financial support from the main funding arms of the Jewish Federations of Canada, United Jewish Appeal along with local Jewish federations. These include Hillel, B’nai Brith Canada, the Canadian Antisemitism Education Foundation,

14 Noam Sheizaf, “Hasbara: Why Does the World fail to Understand Us?” *+972 Magazine*, November 13, 2011, <https://www.972mag.com/hasbara-why-does-the-world-fail-to-understand-us/>

15 Eliana Rudee, “Largest Anti-BDS Conference to Date Probes Minds and Methodologies,” *Jewish New Syndicate*, June 21, 2019, <https://www.jns.org/largest-anti-bds-conference-to-date-probes-minds-and-methodologies/>; Quoted in Ben White, “Delegitimizing Solidarity: Israel Smears Palestine Advocacy as Antisemitic,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* XLIX, No. 2 (Winter 2020), p. 74.

16 <https://bdsmovement.net/what-is-bds>

17 Jane Jackman, “Advocating Occupation: Outsourcing Zionist Propaganda in the UK,” *eSharp*, 25:1 (Spring 2017)

18 Ben White, “Delegitimizing Solidarity,” p. 70

19 Jewish Telegraphic Agency, “Adelson-Backed Pro-Israel Initiative To Double To 80 Campuses,” *Forward*, August 30, 2018, <https://forward.com/fast-forward/409292/adelson-backed-maccabees-pro-israel-campus-initiative-to-double-to-80/>; Eric Cortellessa, “Anti-BDS group backed by Adelson heads to 6 countries outside US,” *Times of Israel*, Oct. 7, 2019, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/anti-bds-group-backed-by-adelson-heads-to-6-countries-outside-us/>

Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, the Canadian Institute for the Studies on Antisemitism, and the Canadian Institute for Studies of Global Antisemitism and Policy.²⁰ Hasbara Fellowships Canada, which trains and provides stipends to students to defend Israel on campus and is associated with the hawkish Aish Ha Tora religious movement, has also been active in attacks on Palestine solidarity activists.²¹ The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), Canada's main Israel and Jewish advocacy group, offers grants for organizations that “reduce the efficacy of anti-Israel activity on Canadian university campuses” and provides \$800 stipends to students willing to engage in Israel advocacy on campus.²² The Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center also recently initiated a “Campus Advocacy Fellowship” offering trips to Poland and Israel as well as a paid internship in a “human rights organization.” Those selected will be trained to “confront insidious forms of antisemitism including anti-Zionism, BDS, Israel Apartheid Week and other initiative that promote myths and libels about Jews.”²³



Several of these organizations are named by our respondents as the source of attacks they have suffered in relation to their pro-Palestinian activism. University of Pennsylvania political scientist Ian Lustick has argued that the Israel lobby constitutes a “vigilante” force which has made it “increasingly difficult to criticize Israel without fear of lawsuits, accusations of anti-Semitism, demands for political balance in staging of events, blacklisting of participants, or other forms of personal or institutional harassment.”²⁴

20 Jewish Federation of Greater Toronto, “Grant Distributions 2019-2020,” https://cdn.fedweb.org/fed-35/2/GrantDistributions_2020.pdf

21 Tyler Levitan, “Pro-Israel Campus Activists Acting as Agents of State Propaganda and Intimidation,” *Mondoweiss*, Feb. 6, 2015, <https://mondoweiss.net/2015/02/activists-propaganda-intimidation/>

22 <https://www.hillel.org/support-us/our-impact>

23 <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofSimonWiesenthalCenter/photos/a.255579791159140/4907828259267580/?type=3>

24 Ian Lustick, *Paradigm Lost: From Two-State Solution to One-State Reality*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019.

Allegations of antisemitism and the attack on anti-racism

Allegations of the emergence of a “new antisemitism” date from the early 1970s and intensified after the adoption in 1975 of UN Resolution 3379, stating that “Zionism is racism.” While resolution 3379 was rescinded in 1991, the “new antisemitism” designation assumed renewed salience in the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001 against the World Trade Center and the U.S. Pentagon. The subsequent “war on terror” unleashed not only military incursions by the U.S. and its allies abroad but also widespread and often lethal attacks in the West on individuals perceived to be Muslim.²⁵ That same year, under the shadow of the failed Oslo Middle East peace talks and the outbreak of the Second Palestinian Intifada, the 2001 Durban anti-racism conference ignited a new firestorm. A prominent feature of the conference was the promotion by anti-colonial participants of the view that Zionism equated with racism. The coupling of these efforts with the overt and inexcusable expressions of classic antisemitic tropes disseminated by some NGOs²⁶ opened the door to accusations by Israel and its supporters that a new form of Jew-hatred was an integral part of the “clash of civilizations” and that support for Israel was the hallmark of “civilized” Western societies.²⁷ Indeed, the semantic shift to a “new antisemitism” has significant Islamophobic implications in that it depoliticizes Palestinian resistance and paints advocates of Palestinian human rights as outside of the post-Holocaust Western moral order.²⁸ This view continues to underpin the fundamental strategy of Israel and its supporters in the bid to discredit advocates for Palestine. In other words, non-Jews who call for

Indeed, the semantic shift to a “new antisemitism” has significant Islamophobic implications in that it depoliticizes Palestinian resistance and paints advocates of Palestinian human rights as outside of the post-Holocaust Western moral order.

25 Nadine Suleiman Naber, “Imperial Whiteness and the Diasporas of Empire,” *American Quarterly*, December 2014, Vol. 66, no 4. See also “Submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief,” November 30, 2020 Submitted by: International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group, Islamic Social Services Association, and Noor Cultural Centre, <https://noorculturalcentre.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Islamophobia-in-Canada-2017.pdf>

26 See Harris O. Schoenberg, “Demonization in Durban: The World Conference Against Racism,” *The American Jewish Year Book* 102 (2002) 85-111.

27 Esther Romeyn, “(Anti-) ‘New Antisemitism’ as a Transnational Field of Governance,” *Patterns of Prejudice*, 54: 1, (2020).

28 Monika Bobako, “The Palestinian Knot: The ‘New Anti-Semitism’ and Islamophobia and the Question of Postcolonial Europe,” *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 35.3 (2018).

full equality for all in Palestine/Israel are labelled “antisemites” while Jews who oppose a state buttressed by a belief in Jewish ethnic supremacy are vilified as kapos,²⁹ self-haters, and “Un-Jews.”³⁰ As Martin Kemp has argued, this leaves only two options:

A Jewish state, allowed to break whatever rules it feels necessary to guarantee an ethno-religious majority, or the elimination of the Jewish Israeli community. There is no intellectual or psychic space for visions of a non-racist future, and those who look forward to a unitary state guaranteeing the rights of both national communities are, consciously or unconsciously, wishing only for the ‘destruction of Israel.’ From this blinkered mind-set, the branding of all non-Zionists as racists naturally follows.³¹

Palestine, academic freedom, and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism

Attacks on pro-Palestinian speech have multiplied significantly in recent years on university campuses in the U.S., Canada, and Europe. The targeting of pro-Palestinian academics is part of a “growing influence of private interests — corporations and overtly ideological organizations—on restrictions to academic freedom.”³² As Theo David Goldberg and Saree Makdisi note, “as far as these outside pressure groups (and their campus representatives) are concerned, the

29 The term “kapo” refers to Jewish concentration camp inmates who were forced to assist the Nazis in their imprisonment and extermination of Jews. Recently this term has been used as a particularly hurtful epithet against Jews who are critical of the Zionist project.

30 Natan Sharansky and Gil Troy, “The Un-Jews,” *Tablet Magazine*, July 16, 2021, <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/the-un-jews-natan-sharansky>

31 Martin Kemp, “Slouching Towards Salem: Reflections on Zionism and the ‘new Antisemitism,’” n.d. *The Psychoanalytic Activist* online newsletter for Section IX, Psychoanalysis for Social Responsibility, Society of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychology (Division 39), of the American Psychological Association, <https://psychoanalyticactivist.com/2018/04/16/special-edition-70th-anniversary-of-the-nakba/>

32 Kandice Chuh, “Pedagogies of Dissent,” *American Quarterly* Volume 70, Number 2, June 2018.

intellectual and academic price that the scholarly community pays as a result of this kind of intervention amounts to little more than collateral damage.”³³ In Canada, the U.S., Europe, and Australia, academia has become a major target for the pro-Israel organizations that police speech on Palestine. Indeed, the issue of Palestine is linked to other struggles within academia, including issues of democratization and academic governance, government underfunding of academic institutions, the increasing reliance on donors,³⁴ and debates about what is to be deemed injurious speech.



Attacks on academics who study and advocate for Palestinian human rights have catapulted issues of academic freedom to the fore. The doctrine of academic freedom is intended to protect the collective rights of those working and learning within academia to produce knowledge that challenges common orthodoxies without fear of censorship or retribution from university administrators, the state, or external actors such as donors. Broadly speaking, this safeguard is understood to advance the “public good.”³⁵ While the doctrine of academic freedom enjoys wide support in Western societies, its privileges are unevenly distributed. Elite tenured faculty are likely to enjoy unfettered freedom to publish whatever they

wish; however, untenured and precariously employed academics are far more constrained. More than 50% of Canadian university courses are taught by contract faculty rather than tenured or tenure-stream academics.³⁶ As our research reveals, the precarious employment conditions of over half of Canada’s university teachers mean that because of the “chilly climate” around speech on Palestine, some are reluctant to pursue academic or activist work in this area for fear of endangering contract renewals or future career prospects, including the access to publishing platforms which are central to the academic tenure and promotion process.

33 Theo David Goldberg and Saree Makdasi, “The Trial of Israel’s Campus Critics,” in *We Will Not Be Silenced: The Academic Repression of Israel’s Critics*, William I. Robinson and Maryam S. Griffin, Eds., AK Press, 2017.

34 Linda McQuaig, “University of Toronto Hiring Fiasco Shows Reliance on Donors Limits University’s Role in Challenging ‘Cherished Beliefs,’” *Toronto Star*, July 21, 2021, <https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/2021/07/01/university-of-toronto-hiring-fiasco-shows-reliance-on-donors-limits-universitys-role-in-challenging-cherished-beliefs.html>

35 Joan Scott, “What Kind of Freedom is Academic Freedom?,” *Critical Times: Interventions in Critical Theory* Vol.5, No. 1, 2022.

36 Chandra Pasma, “Contract Faculty: So Much More to Know,” *The Monitor*, August 15, 2019, <https://monitormag.ca/articles/contract-faculty-so-much-more-to-know>

Research in the U.S.³⁷ and the UK affirms this trend.³⁸ As will be discussed below, even tenured professors among our interviewees reported avoiding or abandoning research interests related to Palestine for fear of attacks and reprisals. It is clear that not only can constraints on academic freedom result from the actions of powerful academic players but also that these constraints must be linked to systemic inequalities. Importantly, racialized faculty are more likely than their white colleagues to feel the impacts and suffer the consequences of this chilly climate.³⁹

Attacks on pro-Palestinian students and teachers are increasing worldwide. There is a connection to be made here between these attacks and efforts by pro-Israel advocacy groups, and indeed the State of Israel itself, to market the International

Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism (IHRA) as a response to the growth of antisemitism.⁴⁰ Promoters of the IHRA have succeeded in having the definition adopted by many federal, local, and provincial/state governments as well as by institutions such as European soccer clubs.⁴¹ Despite claims that the definition and its examples are not “legally binding,” alleged contraventions of the IHRA have underpinned many of the cases and attacks launched against advocates for Palestinian human rights. Such cases are numerous in the U.S., the UK, and Germany and also have appeared in Canada, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Finland, and Australia.⁴²

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The IHRA includes a brief and ambiguous definition of antisemitism accompanied

37 Lara Deeb and Jessica Winegar, *Anthropology's Politics: Disciplining the Middle East*, Stanford CA: Stanford U Press 2016.

38 Gilang Al Ghifari Lukman, Jack Walton, Martha Scott-Cracknell, Omar Sharif, Sarah Chaya Smith, “Defining Antisemitism on UK campuses: Lived Experiences of the IHRA definition,” Published by the Balfour Project, February, 2021, <https://balfourproject.org/ihra-report-project/>

39 Committee on Academic Freedom, Middle East Studies Association of North America n.d. “Exposing Canary Mission: A Resource for College and University Leaders,” https://mesana.org/pdf/Exposing_Canary_Mission.pdf

40 For a detailed critique of the IHRA and full text of the document see <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f52a48dcce98340e25350e2/t/5fff2d4e058b964b22eb8f33/1610558799440/IHRA+Report+v1.1.1+-+20201025.pdf>

41 International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, “Information on Endorsement and Adoption of the IHRA Working definition of Antisemitism,” <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism/adoption-endorsement>

42 <https://www.ijvcanada.org/ihra-definition-at-work/>

by 11 examples. Seven of these examples connect antisemitism to criticism of Israel. One of these, “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” poses particular dangers within the academic context. This “Palestine exception to free speech” reveals itself as glaringly aberrant in the Canadian context where scholarship analyzing Canada as a settler colonial society has met with wide acceptance. Why would this analytical frame, applied to Israel and supported by mounting historical and contemporary evidence, be deemed antisemitic? As distinguished Harvard historian Derek Penslar has noted,

I find it particularly strange that a well-grounded, evidence-based argument regarding Israel would be construed as antisemitic. Legitimate scholarship has demonstrated that Israel bears its share of responsibility for the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem in 1948 and for subsequent Arab–Israeli wars. Claiming that IDF soldiers harvest Palestinian organs is antisemitic; claiming that Israel denies West Bank Palestinians basic human rights is not.⁴³

Pro-Israel advocacy organizations have urged universities and other educational institutions to adopt the IHRA as a tool for determining which campus actions and utterances might be deemed antisemitic, while at the same time denying that the IHRA will be detrimental to academic freedom.⁴⁴ However, the adoption of the IHRA by universities does pose a threat to academic freedom through the potential proscription of courses and curricular materials which frame the Israel/Palestine conflict in terms of settler colonialism or other types of anti-colonial and anti-racist theory. Scholarship labelled “antizionist” because of its strong criticism of Israeli policies of ethnic cleansing and the state’s ethnocentric foundations can and have been deemed antisemitic according to the tenets of the IHRA. The possibility exists that Israel-critical scholarship could be denied funding from federal and provincial sources such as the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.⁴⁵ As will be demonstrated below, even though the IHRA had not been adopted by their institutions, our research subjects had to field complaints from pro-Israel students and organizations about supposedly “offensive” materials critical of Israel, many of which were authored by distinguished scholars and are considered canonical texts in their fields.

43 Derek Penslar, “Why I Signed the Jerusalem Declaration: A Response to Cary Nelson,” *Fathom*, April 2021, <https://fathomjournal.org/why-i-signed-the-jda-a-response-to-cary-nelson-2/>

44 See for example https://www.cija.ca/policy_brief_ihra_and_defining_antisemitism

45 In defense of Ontario Bill 168, Progressive Conservative member of provincial parliament and chair of the parliamentary Justice Committee Roman Baber declared “If [antisemitism is] happening in one of Ontario’s academic institutions or it’s pushed by a grant recipient or anyone who wants to do business with the government of Ontario, we will know how to identify it and we should not stand for it—not this government.” *Ontario Hansard*, Feb. 27, 2020.

In 2019, then-U.S. President Donald Trump issued an executive order⁴⁶ which obligated U.S. federal agencies, including the Department of Education, to make use of the IHRA in a way that would render nearly all criticism of Israel antisemitic under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Subsequently, pro-Israel groups filed numerous complaints that resulted in federal investigations. The Office of Civil Rights opened cases against Palestinian activism at the University of California, Bard College, Georgia Institute of Technology, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and eight other institutions of higher learning.⁴⁷ Investigations of alleged antisemitism were also launched at Rutgers University, Duke University, the University of North Carolina, and Williams College. In each case, the “antisemitic speech” being investigated is criticism of Israeli state policies and actions.

Universities worldwide have used the IHRA in order to cancel events (“de-platforming”), punish faculty, and expel students.⁴⁸ The U.K. recently mandated that all universities adopt the IHRA or risk defunding.⁴⁹ In Canada, however, this strategy has been condemned by both Jewish⁵⁰ and non-Jewish academics whose representative organization, the Canadian Association of University Teachers, has voted unanimously to reject the adoption of the IHRA by Canadian universities.⁵¹

46 <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-combating-anti-semitism/>

47 Palestine Legal, *2020 Year-in-Review*, <https://palestinelegal.org/2020-report>

48 For a full list of incidents where the IHRA has been used to suppress speech on Palestine see <https://www.ijvcanada.org/ihra-definition-at-work/>. See also, Larry Haiven, “The Real Masters of ‘Cancel Culture’—the Pro-Israel Lobby,” *The Bullet*, July 7, 2020, <https://socialistproject.ca/2020/07/real-masters-of-cancel-culture-proisrael-lobby/>

49 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/universities-told-to-stamp-out-antisemitism-on-campus>

50 <https://jewishfaculty.ca/jewish-faculty-against-the-ihra-defn/>

51 <https://www.caut.ca/latest/2021/12/december-news-wire-highlights-cauts-91st-council-meeting>

Accusations of connections to terrorism and the escalation of anti-Palestinian racism

While accusations of antisemitism appear to be the major strategy used to silence and intimidate academics and activists who advocate for Palestinian human rights, claims that they are supporters of “terrorism” abound.⁵² Indeed, “terrorist” and “Palestinian” have become virtual synonyms in the pro-Israel lexicon.⁵³ These accusations must be seen as a feature of what is now recognized as “anti-Palestinianism” or “anti-Palestinian racism.” A ground-breaking report issued recently by the Arab Canadian Lawyers Association (ACLA) offers a collaboratively-developed description of anti-Palestinian racism (APR):

Anti-Palestinian racism is a form of anti-Arab racism that silences, excludes, erases, stereotypes, defames or dehumanizes Palestinians or their narratives. Anti-Palestinian racism takes various forms including: denying the Nakba and justifying violence against Palestinians; failing to acknowledge Palestinians as an Indigenous people with a collective identity, belonging and rights in relation to occupied and historic Palestine; erasing the human rights and equal dignity and worth of Palestinians; excluding or pressuring others to exclude Palestinian perspectives, Palestinians and their allies; defaming Palestinians and their allies with slander such as being inherently antisemitic, a terrorist threat/sympathizer or opposed to democratic values.⁵⁴

As the ACLA report notes, silence around the Palestinian right to equality and the demonization of those who advocate for that right constitute a form of bigotry that is distinct from Islamophobia. The report argues that “APR and Islamophobia are distinct conceptual categories. Failure to differentiate them raises problems of over-inclusiveness and under-inclusiveness; perpetuates stereotypes of Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims; and denies Palestinian redress.”

52 Palestine Legal and the Center for Constitutional Rights, “The Palestine Exception to Free Speech,” 2015, <https://ccrjustice.org/the-palestine-exception>

53 C. Heike Schotten, “Against Academic Freedom: ‘Terrorism,’ Settler Colonialism, and Palestinian Liberation,” in David Landy, Ronit Lentin and Conor McCarthy, *Enforcing Silence: Academic Freedom, Palestine and the Criticism of Israel*, London: Zed Books, 2020

54 Arab Canadian Lawyers Association, “Anti-Palestinian Racism: Naming, Framing and Manifestations, Community Consultations and Reflections,” April 25, 2022, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61db30d12e169a5c45950345/t/627dcf83fa17ad41ff217964/1652412292220/Anti-Palestinian+Racism-+Naming%2C+Framing+and+Manifestations.pdf>

Anti-Palestinian racism has become embedded in strategies and documents intended to counter antisemitism. According to ACLA, community consultations with Palestinians and their allies revealed that Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives frequently included antisemitism training that “depicted Palestinians, their campaigns, and/or criticism of Israel as antisemitic.” The result of this is to reinforce the notion that the Israel/Palestine conflict is a clash of religions which cannot be solved by political means. Nowhere is this clearer than in the IHRA, which deems that stating that “Israel is a racist endeavor” constitutes antisemitism. As journalist Peter Beinart points out, “It’s a striking illustration of the way in which claims of antisemitism seek to silence claims of anti-Palestinian oppression. Under the most widely adopted definition of antisemitism in the world, a Palestinian who calls Israel bigoted is guilty of bigotry against Jews.”⁵⁵

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The suppression of the Palestinian narrative

As the Palestinian intellectual Edward Said famously argued, it is imperative to view Zionism and its implementation by the Israeli state from the “point of view of its victims.”⁵⁶ While for many Jews Israel represents liberation from centuries of persecution, vilification, and genocide, for Palestinians Zionism and the establishment of the state of Israel has meant violence, dispossession, and profound personal, cultural, and material loss. From the perspective of Palestinians and their supporters, opposition to the ideology of Zionism and its realization in Palestine is a logical response to unbearable oppression and not a

55 Peter Beinart, “It’s Time to Name Anti-Palestinian Bigotry,” *Jewish Currents*, July 16, 2021, <https://jewishcurrents.org/its-time-to-name-anti-palestinian-bigotry/>. Also, see Justin Podur, “Anti-Palestinian Racism: A Resource,” <https://podur.org/2021/05/23/anti-palestinian-racism-a-resource/>

56 Edward Said, “Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims,” *Social Text*, No. 1 (Winter 1979).

result of pre-existing Jew-hatred. As sociologist Ran Greenstein has argued:

The focus of the Palestinian national movement has always been on the practical consequences of Zionist settlement as it affected them directly. That it was carried out by Jews specifically was of very limited concern, and that remains the case today. Some negative attitudes toward Jews may have emerged as a result of confrontation with Zionism, but these were an outcome, not a cause, of resistance to a political project seen as aiming to displace and replace them[...] For most solidarity activists today, anti-Zionism means rejecting the notion of Israel as an exclusive Jewish state in which Palestinians are subjected to an inferior position or are excluded altogether. In practice, anti-Zionism means support for equality, justice, and redress for Palestinians living as second-class citizens, occupied subjects, or stateless refugees. It means supporting the right of Jews to live as equals in Israel-Palestine, and any other place of residence, without special privileges or liabilities.⁵⁷

The scope and impact of the anti-Palestinian assault on academic freedom and freedom of expression have been documented in at least seven books and numerous reports fully devoted to this topic.⁵⁸ The tactics that have been used in the U.S. to attack academic supporters of Palestine include: false accusations of antisemitism and support for terrorism; monitoring and surveillance of classrooms and social media posts; public denunciations; lawsuits; and cancellations or modifications of public events.⁵⁹ Palestine Legal, a U.S. organization that provides legal support for those defending Palestinian human rights, reported that in 2020 the organization dealt with 213 incidents of suppression of U.S.-based Palestine advocacy.⁶⁰ Between 2014 and 2020, the group responded to a total of 1,707 incidents, 80% of which were aimed at students and scholars at 68 U.S. campuses. Nearly 80% of accusations to which Palestine Legal responded in 2015 related to false accusations of antisemitism.

57 Ran Greenstein, "Anti-Zionism is About Correcting Historical Wrongs, Not Encouraging Anti-Semitism", +972 Magazine, December 23, 2019, <https://www.972mag.com/anti-zionism-historical-wrongs/>

58 Susan G. Drummond, *Unthinkable Thoughts: Academic Freedom and the One-State Model for Israel and Palestine*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013; David Landy, Ronit Lentin and Conor McCarthy, *Enforcing Silence: Academic Freedom, Palestine and the Criticism of Israel*, London: Zed Books, 2020; Matthew Abraham, *Out of Bounds: Academic Freedom and the Question of Palestine*, New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2014; Steven Salaita, *Uncivil Rites: Palestine and the Limits of Academic Freedom*, Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015; William I. Robinson and Maryam Griffin, *We Will Not Be Silenced: The Academic Repression of Israel's Critics*, Chicago, CA: AK Press; Jon Thompson, *No Debate: The Israel Lobby and Free Speech at Canadian Universities*, Toronto: James Lorimer, 2011. See also, Jewish Voice for Peace, "Stifling Dissent: How Israel's Defenders Use False Charges of Antisemitism to Limit the Debate on Campus," <https://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/stifling-dissent/>; Palestine Legal and Center for Constitutional Rights, "The Palestine Exception to Free Speech: A Movement Under Attack in the US," <https://ccrjustice.org/the-palestine-exception>, and International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network, "The Business of Backlash," <http://www.ijan.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/IJAN-Business-of-Backlash-full-report-web.pdf>

59 Palestine Legal and the Center for Constitutional Rights, "The Palestine Exception to Free Speech: A Movement Under Attack in the U.S.," <https://ccrjustice.org/the-palestine-exception>

60 <https://palestinelegal.org/2020-report>



Attempts to deny tenure or remove scholars from teaching positions have been numerous. In 2007, American professor Norman Finkelstein, a fierce and prolific Jewish critic of Israel policy, was denied tenure at DePaul University. In 2005 and 2007 respectively, Prof. Joseph Massad of Columbia University and Prof. Nadia Abu El-Haj of Barnard College faced and eventually overcame vigorous campaigns to deny them tenure. Prof. Rabab Abdulhadi of San Francisco State University was accused by the pro-Israel Lawfare Project of fostering a hostile environment for Jewish students based on Palestine advocacy

and criticism of Israel's policies. The case was dismissed in court in 2017.⁶¹ In another widely-publicized case, Prof. Steven Salaita's tenure-track appointment by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign was retracted in 2014 after Salaita's tweets about Israel's devastating attacks on Gaza during Operation Protective Edge were deemed to be "uncivil."⁶² The preponderance of racialized academics, especially Black, Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim scholars, among those who have been the targets of attack by pro-Israel groups is noteworthy. Many of those who have borne the brunt of these attacks are senior scholars renowned in their fields of study, such as Angela Davis, Achille Mbembe, Marc Lamont Hill, Cornel West, and Jasbir Puar.

Jewish scholars and scholars of Jewish Studies have not been exempt from these attacks. Jews account for many of the professors targeted by Canary Mission, a website which "documents individuals and organizations that promote hatred of the USA, Israel and Jews on North American college campuses."⁶³ In 2014, the Jewish Museum in New York cancelled a lecture by Judith Butler, one of the most important philosophers of her generation, for her vocal criticism of Israel.⁶⁴ Butler has endured and responded vigorously to relentless criticism over her support for

61 Nora Barrows-Friedman, "Israel Lobby Lawsuit against San Francisco State University Collapses," *Electronic Intifada*, Nov. 9, 2017, <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/nora-barrows-friedman/israel-lobby-lawsuit-against-san-francisco-state-university-collapses>

62 Steven Salaita, *Uncivil Rites: Palestine and the Limits of Academic Freedom*, Chicago: Haymarket Books 2015.

63 <https://canarymission.org/about>

64 "Judith Butler Cancels Jewish Museum Talk," *Ha'aretz*, February 23, 2014, <https://www.haaretz.com/jewish/2014-02-23/ty-article/judith-butler-cancels-jewish-museum-talk/0000017f-f40f-d487-abff-f7ffe2f10000>

BDS and for her stringent critiques of Jewish nationalism.⁶⁵ Most recently, Prof. Liora Halpern was removed from her position as the Rebecca and Jack Benaroya Chair in Israel Studies at the University of Washington in the wake of her signing a letter of protest over Israel's bombings of Gaza in May, 2021. The donor whose contribution created the department and the endowed chair pulled funding for the program after being alerted to Halpern's criticism of Israeli policy. This incident has raised questions about the intellectual integrity of funded Israel Studies programs and the power of donors to impede academic freedom. The University of Washington's action was strenuously criticized by Jewish Studies scholars in a letter signed by more than 700 academics, many of whom are luminaries in the world of Jewish and Israel studies.⁶⁶ Ultimately, Halpern was reinstated and her program fully funded by the university despite the donor's actions.

In addition to attacks on individuals, pro-Israel activists in the U.S. and Canada have begun to target scholarly fields and academic theories alleged to be particularly harmful to Jews and Israel. Echoing recent attacks on Critical Race Theory emanating from the Republican Party and the white supremacist Right, some Israel supporters are claiming that this academic theory is "particularly threatening to Jewish students."⁶⁷ Pro-Israel groups have singled out disciplines and departments that focus on the histories and rights of marginalized groups, such as Women's Studies, Critical Ethnic Studies, and others, claiming that they propagate antisemitism and anti-Israel ideologies.⁶⁸

The tactics that have been used in the U.S. to attack academic supporters of Palestine include: false accusations of antisemitism and support for terrorism; monitoring and surveillance of classrooms and social media posts; public denunciations; lawsuits; and cancellations or modifications of public events.

65 Judith Butler, "Judith Butler's Remarks to Brooklyn College on BDS," *The Nation*, Feb. 7, 2013, <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/judith-butlers-remarks-brooklyn-college-bds>

66 Hank Reichman, "Donor Pulls Israel Studies Endowment Over Professor's Political Expression," Feb. 25, 2022, <https://academeblog.org/2022/02/25/donor-pulls-israel-studies-endowment-over-professors-political-expression/>

67 Tammi Ross-Benjamin, "The Anti-Zionism of Critical Ethnic Studies," *Jewish Journal*, Sept. 25, 2020.

68 Jewish Institute for Liberal Values, "Critical Social Justice Ideology and Antisemitism", https://jilv.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/CSJ_AntisemitismWhitePaperRv2.pdf

The Suppression of pro-Palestine speech and activism in Europe

Germany

In Europe, attempts to chill or repress speech on Palestine have been frequently and energetically pursued by pro-Israel organizations. Germany, where BDS was officially condemned by the Bundestag as antisemitic in May 2019, has been the site of devastating attacks on pro-Palestine speech. According to the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*, “Broad circles in Germany are seriously upset at what they see as an exaggerated use of accusations of antisemitism and of the BDS label for the purpose of curtailing criticism of Israeli policy. There exists a widespread view that a toxic atmosphere of fear, threats and censorship has been created.”⁶⁹ In the European context, one of mostly widely publicized examples of an attempt to curtail speech on Palestine is the case of noted historian and philosopher Achille Mbembe. In 2020, Mbembe was disinvited from a German arts festival after he was deemed “unsuitable” by Germany’s antisemitism commissioner. The commissioner argued that Mbembe’s work comparing apartheid South Africa to the Holocaust called into question the Holocaust’s uniqueness and was therefore antisemitic. Following the controversy, more than 400 prominent scholars signed a pledge “opposing ideological or political interference and litmus tests in Germany.”⁷⁰ In 2019, the Bank für Sozialwirtschaft shut down the bank account of Jewish Voice for Just Peace in the Middle East because that group supports the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement.⁷¹ In 2017, three Berlin-based BDS activists, known as the “Humboldt 3,” Jewish Israelis Stavit Sinai and Ronnie Barkan and Palestinian Majed Abusalama were accused of trespassing and assault after they protested peacefully during a public anti-BDS speech by Knesset member Aliza Lavie at Berlin’s Humboldt University.⁷² After a three-year legal struggle Barkan and Abusalama were acquitted of all charges, while Sinai received the minimum possible fine of 450 euros, likely in order to mollify the state.⁷³ On

69 Itai Mashiach, “Witch Hunt Is Raging Against Critics of Israel. Cultural Leaders Have Had Enough,” *Ha'aretz*, Dec. 10, 2020.

70 <https://nopoliticallitmustests.wordpress.com>

71 Benjamin Weinthal, “Post Exposé Leads to Closure of BDS Group’s Bank Account in Germany,” *Jerusalem Post*, June 21, 2019, <https://www.jpost.com/bds-threat/post-exposé-leads-to-closure-of-bds-groups-bank-account-in-germany-593176>

72 Denijal Jelic, “Germany’s Relentless Campaign to Silence Pro-Palestinian voices,” *Al Jazeera*, March 22, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2019/3/22/germanys-relentless-campaign-to-silence-pro-palestinian-voices>

73 Majed Abusalama, “Victory for the Humboldt 3!,” *Mondoweiss*, August 20, 2020, <https://mondoweiss.net/2020/08/victory-for-the-humboldt-3/>

May 12, 2022, in anticipation of Nakba Day, German police banned all Palestinian protests and events planned to take place in the city, deeming them “potentially antisemitic.”⁷⁴

On May 6, 2022, following an international campaign conducted by the European Legal Support Center, a Berlin court ruled in favour of German-Palestinian academic Dr Anna-Esther Younes, a scholar of Critical Race Theory, working on the intersection between race and coloniality, anti-Jewish racism and the repression of Palestinians and people of color in Germany and Europe. The court ordered the release of a secret dossier compiled by the German NGOs RIAS (Research and Information Centre on Antisemitism) and MBR (Mobile Advice Against Right-Wing Extremism), which had branded Younes as an antisemite. The Society for a Democratic Culture in Berlin (VDK), an umbrella group of the two NGOs, was ordered to release the dossier and disclose how it was processed and with whom it was shared.⁷⁵

The Netherlands

In October, 2021, the European Legal Support Center, which is “mandated to defend and empower the Palestine Solidarity Movement in Europe through legal means,” issued a 65-page report on the chilling of Palestinian rights advocacy in the Netherlands. The report documents 76 incidents of suppression of speech on Palestine between 2015 and 2020.⁷⁶ The tactics cited in the report are not unlike the ones reported by Palestine Legal in the U.S., and include: smear campaigns against advocates for Palestinian human rights alleging antisemitism and/or support for terrorism; defunding of organizations supporting Palestine by means of pressure on Dutch donors; threats of violence; restrictions on academic freedom; and the denial of public and private space for advocacy activities.

United Kingdom

Suppression of speech on Palestine has been fairly ubiquitous in the United Kingdom.⁷⁷ The most significant example of this has been the upheaval over alleged antisemitism in the British Labour Party. The controversy brought to the fore debates over the question of Israel/Palestine and the limits of critical speech on Israel in the UK. Eventually leading to the ouster of leader Jeremy Corbyn and

74 Hebh Jamal, “Palestinians in Germany Fear New Level of Repression after Nakba Day Crackdown,” *+972 Magazine*, May 21, 2022. <https://www.972mag.com/berlin-palestinians-nakba-protest-police/>

75 David Kattenberg, “The Dangers of Advocating for Palestine in Germany,” *Mondoweiss*, June 2, 2022 <https://mondoweiss.net/2022/06/the-dangers-of-advocating-for-palestine-in-germany/>

76 European Legal Support Center, “The Attempt to Chill Palestinian Rights Advocacy in the Netherlands,” Oct. 2021, <https://elsc.support/resources/the-attempt-to-chill-palestinian-rights-advocacy-in-the-netherlands>

77 For a more detailed list see https://www.ijvcanada.org/lhra-definition-at-work/#United_Kingdom

his temporary suspension from the party, the ongoing saga has brought to light how accusations of antisemitism were weaponized as part of an ideological power struggle within the party. The recent expulsion from Labour of prominent Jewish supporters of Palestinian human rights⁷⁸ has given credence to claims that there is a “witchhunt” within the party which seeks to diminish the influence of pro-Palestine members.

Despite the Labour Party upheaval, support for Palestine has burgeoned in the UK, bringing with it a wave of censure and suppression. The adoption in the UK of the IHRA and its deployment on university campuses has been the basis for numerous incidents of repression of speech on Palestine. Below is a partial list of incidents:

- In 2017, the University of Central Lancaster banned an upcoming event titled “Debunking Misconceptions on Palestine and the Importance of BDS.”⁷⁹ The university directly referenced the government’s adoption of the IHRA definition in its decision, specifically claiming that the talk would not maintain a “balanced view” and thus was not “lawful.”
- In February, 2017 Malaka Shwaikh, a PhD student of Palestinian origin who was campaigning for the vice-presidency of the University of Exeter Student Guild, was accused of antisemitism by the Campaign Against Antisemitism,⁸⁰ who claimed connections between recent antisemitic graffiti on campus and Shwaikh’s six-year-old Twitter posts. Though she won the election, Shwaikh endured months of vicious Islamophobic attacks on social media. Her university never intervened to defend her. She was finally cleared of all allegations by the Student Guild’s Trustee Board. In the same year, the Campaign Against Antisemitism also launched an attack against Prof. Rebecca Ruth Gould of Bristol University, alleging that a 2011 article authored by Gould advocated minimizing the importance of the Holocaust. Shwaikh and Gould were urged by their institutions to self-censor, and both scholars were the subjects of inaccurate articles in the press and were refused any opportunity to defend themselves in British news outlets.⁸¹
- In 2017, the University of Exeter banned students from staging a street theatre performance of a checkpoint in which some participants would dress as Israeli soldiers while others performed the roles of Palestinians. The event, which had been approved by the student union, was banned for “safety and security reasons” on less than 48 hours’ notice. An appeal against the decision was

78 Emily-Rose Baker, “The Weaponization of Antisemitism: Naomi Wimborne-Idrissi’s Suspension from the UK Labour Party,” *Jewish Women’s Archive*, December 17, 2020, <https://jwa.org/blog/weaponization-antisemitism-naomi-wimborne-idrissis-suspension-uk-labour-party>

79 Rosa Doherty, “University cancels Israel Apartheid Event,” *The Jewish Chronicle*, February 21, 2017, <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk/university-cancels-israel-apartheid-week-event-1.433123>

80 <https://antisemitism.org>

81 Malaka Shwaikh and Rebecca Ruth Gould, “The Palestine Exception to Academic Freedom: Intertwined Stories from the Frontlines of UK-based Palestine Activism,” *Biography* Vol. 42, Nov. 4, 2019.

refused. The cancellation happened within days of the Universities Minister writing to UK universities about the government's adoption of the IHRA definition.⁸²

- In February 2017, the University of Central Lancashire cancelled a campus meeting planned as part of “Israeli Apartheid Week” on the grounds that it “contravened” the IHRA definition of antisemitism recently endorsed by the UK government, and so was claimed to be unlawful.⁸³
- In mid-2019, the London council of Tower Hamlets refused its space to Big Ride for Palestine, a group which fundraises money for children's sports equipment in Gaza. As reported in *The Guardian*, council officials withheld information regarding their reasoning.⁸⁴
- In early 2021, the acclaimed film director Ken Loach was invited to his former college at Oxford University for a discussion on his work. While the talk did not focus on Palestine or Israel, Oxford's Jewish (student) Society condemned the event, stating that “on numerous occasions, Loach has made remarks that are antisemitic under the IHRA definition.” British Israeli historian Avi Shlaim described the incident as “a well-orchestrated campaign of character assassination against a man who had spent his life championing the victims of oppression and discrimination, including Palestinians.”⁸⁵ The event continued despite the controversy, although both Loach and the Master of the college who hosted him have been falsely accused of antisemitism.
- During the events of May 2021, which saw the deaths of more than 200 Palestinians and the destruction of 2500 homes,⁸⁶ a wave of pro-Palestine protests erupted in British schools. Protesting students were subsequently accused by some teachers of antisemitism. According to *The Guardian*, “One teacher, who wanted to remain anonymous, said at her school students had been explicitly banned from distributing material bearing the Palestinian flag and students who had been passing round ‘free Palestine’ stickers were humiliated in front of their peers, with the headteacher calling them ‘cowards and racists.’”⁸⁷
- David Miller, a professor of Political Sociology at Bristol University, was fired

82 Jewish Voice for Labour, “Palestine and Academic Freedom: A Road Map for Opposing the IHRA definition in Universities,” <https://www.jewishvoiceforlabour.org.uk/app/uploads/2021/11/IHRA-road-MAP-of-OPPOSITION.pdf>

83 *ibid*

84 Damien Gale, “UK Council Refused to Host Palestinian Event Over Antisemitism Fears,” *The Guardian*, August 3, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/aug/03/uk-council-refused-to-host-palestinian-event-over-antisemitism-fears>

85 Avi Shlaim, “On British Colonialism, Antisemitism, and Palestinian Rights,” *Middle East Eye*, March 1, 2021, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/big-story/uk-palestine-israel-policy-balfour-johnson-antisemitism-colonialism>

86 Weiyi Cai, Josh Holder, Lauren Leatherby, Eleanor Lutz, Scott Reinhard and Karen Yourish, “The Toll of Eight Days of Conflict in Gaza and Israel,” *New York Times*, May 17, 2021 <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/05/17/world/middleeast/israel-palestine-gaza-conflict-death-toll.html>

87 Nazia Parveen, “Anger Over British Teachers’ Response to Pro-Palestine Protests,” *The Guardian*, May 26, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/may/26/anger-over-british-teachers-response-to-pro-palestine-protests>

in October, 2021 after being accused by the Community Security Trust and the Union of Jewish Students of making antisemitic remarks.⁸⁸ Several pro-Israel lobby groups, including the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Zionist Federation, the Jewish Labour Movement, and the Community Security Trust,⁸⁹ called for Miller to be dismissed. Miller, who is well known for his hard-hitting critique of Zionism and scholarship on the impact of the Zionist lobby organizations, was dismissed despite two university-commissioned investigative reports which exonerated him of charges of antisemitism.

- In October, 2021, the University of Glasgow apologised for and labeled as “hate speech” a peer-reviewed article on the Israel lobby published in the university’s postgraduate magazine. Jane Jackman, who was then a scholar at Exeter University, published a paper entitled “Advocating Occupation,” which examined the role of Israel lobby groups in the UK, in the immediate wake of a 2017 documentary aired by Al Jazeera on the lobby’s interference in British politics. More than 500 scholars from around the world, including a Nobel Prize winner, Royal Society fellows, and former and current presidents of major academic bodies, signed a petition delivered to the university in protest of their withdrawal of Jackman’s article.⁹⁰
- Another 2021 incident at the University of Glasgow raised serious concerns about the university’s commitment to academic freedom. Danish professor Dr. Somdeep Sen had been invited to deliver a talk on his book *Decolonizing Palestine: Hamas between the Anticolonial and the Postcolonial* (Cornell University Press, 2020) but was subsequently required to prove that his lecture would not contravene UK anti-terror laws. Concerns had been expressed that the talk would have “negative repercussions” for Jewish students. Sen eventually declined to go forward with the lecture, stating that the claims of antisemitism against him were false and had damaged his reputation.⁹¹
- In January, 2022 Palestinian activist and PhD student Shahd Abusalama was told only one day before she was to begin teaching at Sheffield Hallam University that an investigation was being launched against her and that she would not be allowed to assume teaching duties. Sheffield Hallam University adopted the IHRA in February 2021. Abusalama, who has been active in campaigns against the IHRA and the boycott of the Eurovision singing

88 Asa Winstanley, “David Miller was Cleared of Anti-Semitism, Leaked Document Shows,” *Electronic Intifada*, October 22, 2021, <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/asa-winstanley/david-miller-was-cleared-anti-semitism-leaked-document-shows>

89 Asa Winstanley, “Professor David Miller fired after Israel lobby smear campaign,” *Electronic Intifada*, October 1, 2021, <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/asa-winstanley/professor-david-miller-fired-after-israel-lobby-smear-campaign>

90 Alison Campsie, “Glasgow University Accused of Undermining Academic Freedom in ‘Antisemitic’ Ruling,” *The Scotsman*, October 25, 2021, <https://www.scotsman.com/education/glasgow-university-accused-of-undermining-academic-freedom-in-antisemitic-ruling-3431124>

91 Alison Campsie, “Scholar Pulls Out of University Talk Amid Fresh Row Over Academic Freedom,” *The Scotsman*, November 2, 2021, <https://www.scotsman.com/news/national/scholar-pulls-out-of-university-talk-amid-fresh-row-over-academic-freedom-3447513>

competition⁹² had been accused of creating hostility towards Jews by the *Jewish Chronicle*, UK Zionist Federation, and the Campaign Against Antisemitism.⁹³ Abusalama was subsequently reinstated.

Canadian suppression of speech on Palestine

Canadian activism for Palestinian human rights emerged as a political force following the outbreak of the Second or Al Aqsa Intifada, which began in 2000. The most significant initial marker of this surge of activism occurred at Montreal's Concordia University in the Fall of 2002, when student protests led to the cancellation of a speech by right-wing politician and future Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who had been invited to speak by the campus Jewish organization Hillel. Some property damage occurred during the protest, but no injuries were recorded. Twelve students were eventually disciplined by the university and a ban was placed on events relating to the Middle East. These included a wildly unpopular moratorium on public speeches, rallies, exhibits, and information tables.⁹⁴ In the ensuing two decades we have witnessed a growing awareness on the part of Canadians of the historic dispossession of Palestinians by the State of Israel, as well as the establishment of a formidable network of Palestine solidarity groups both on campus and off. Palestine solidarity activism has been met with an increasingly aggressive backlash from pro-Israel Jewish organizations and their supporters. Below is a partial catalogue of these events beginning from 2009, which focuses on those incidents that have been in the public eye. We have chosen to highlight those cases where reputational and professional damage were the intended or actual outcome, or where policies were enacted which threaten academic freedom and freedom of expression.

92 Arwa Mahdawi, "The Eurovision Boycott Row Confirms It: Palestinian Lives Don't Matter," *The Guardian*, May 8, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/08/the-eurovision-boycott-row-confirms-it-palestinian-lives-dont-matter>

93 Nora Barrows-Friedman, "UK Israel Takes Aim at Palestinian University Lecturer," *Electronic Intifada*, January 22, 2022, <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/nora-barrows-friedman/uk-israel-lobby-takes-aim-palestinian-university-lecturer>

94 http://ctr.concordia.ca/2002-03/Sept_12/29-RectorsMessage/Messageindex.shtml

2009

In the spring of 2009, several universities banned a poster advertising Israel Apartheid Week.⁹⁵ The poster depicting a helicopter labelled “Israel” firing a missile at a toddler holding a teddy bear labelled “Gaza.”⁹⁶

B’nai Brith Canada and others attempted to have an academic conference on the one-state solution in Israel Palestine at York University shut down.

The Koffler Centre for the Arts cancelled an exhibit by Jewish artist Reena Katz because of her political work for Palestinian human rights.⁹⁷

2010

The National Post, Members of the Ontario Provincial Legislature, and prominent members of the Jewish community attacked a student and her academic supervisor for a Master’s thesis criticizing the March of the Living for promoting a Zionist agenda.⁹⁸

2011

After a four-year campaign by city politicians and pro-Israel lobby groups to block the participation of Queers Against Israeli Apartheid in the Toronto Gay Pride Parade, the city issued a report stating that use of the term “apartheid” did not violate the Criminal Code or the Ontario Human Rights Code.⁹⁹

2012

Palestine House, a community centre and immigrant settlement agency in Mississauga, Ontario, had one million dollars of federal funding rescinded after it was alleged that the organization supported political violence. The defunding led



95 For a discussion of attacks on Israel Apartheid Week see Rafeef Ziadah, *Outside the Multicultural: Solidarity and the Silencing of Palestinian Narratives*, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, York University, 2013.

96 <https://thecjn.ca/perspectives/opinions/ottawa-universities-ban-apartheid-week-poster/>

97 <https://nowtoronto.com/art-and-books/the-show-you-wont-see> and https://www.thestar.com/life/2009/05/23/has_jewish_group_forgotten_its_roots.html

98 One of the authors of this report (Nestel) was the academic supervisor named in these attacks. <https://rabble.ca/human-rights/when-neo-con-politicians-media-attack-academics-interview-sheryl-nestel/>

99 For a comprehensive account of the QUAIA controversy see Rafeef Ziadah, *Outside the Multicultural: Solidarity and the Silencing of Palestinian Narratives*, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, York University, 2013.

to the firing of 20 employees and the curtailment of English language programs for new immigrants, many of whom came from non-Arab immigrant communities.

2016

Paul Bronfman, a director of the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center, encouraged donors to withdraw financial support for York University unless a mural depicting Palestinian resistance was removed from the campus.¹⁰⁰

CIJA and B'nai Brith Canada succeeded in having elementary school teacher Nadia Shoufani suspended from her teaching job after speaking at an Al Quds Day rally. They alleged that Shoufani had “glorified” terrorism. In 2017 Shoufani was cleared of any wrongdoing by the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Federation.¹⁰¹

B'nai Brith published an article and a tweet alleging that lawyer and activist Dmitri Lascaris, then justice critic for the Green Party of Canada, had used social media “to advocate on behalf of terrorists who have murdered Israeli civilians” following a trip he made to Israel in the spring of 2016. Lascaris launched a libel lawsuit against B'nai Brith which was settled in 2021. B'nai Brith was ordered to delete materials relating to their complaint against Lascaris and he was compensated by B'nai Brith’s insurer for legal fees and disbursements.¹⁰²

2017

Canary Mission published a “report” profiling 29 members of Students for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR) McMaster.¹⁰³

2018

Six members of the University of British Columbia community were the subjects of an investigation based on allegations that they had engaged in antisemitic behaviour after they declared their opposition to holding the Geography Department’s year-end party at Hillel UBC.¹⁰⁴

100 <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/education/film-exec-pulls-support-for-york-university-over-pro-palestinian-mural/article28396804/>

101 <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/mississauga-nadia-shoufani-al-qds-rally-terror-school-board-dufferin-peel-1.3678220>

102 <https://thecjn.ca/news/canada/dimitri-lascaris-bnai-brith-lawsuit/>

103 <https://canarymission.org/campaign/mcmaster>

104 <https://web.archive.org/web/20200316185657/https://thetalon.ca/academic-freedom-at-ubc-threatened-by-false-allegations-of-anti-semitism/>

In February, 2018, several groups, including Independent Jewish Voices-Winnipeg, the Canadian Arab Association of Manitoba, and the United Jewish Peoples Order-Winnipeg, organized a public meeting at the University of Winnipeg entitled “My Jerusalem” to discuss the U.S. government’s recent decision to move its Israeli embassy to Jerusalem. Unable to have the meeting cancelled, B’nai Brith Canada complained to the university claiming, through reference to the IHRA, that the speakers were antisemitic. B’nai Brith demanded and received an apology from the university.¹⁰⁵

Rev. Dr. Naim Ateek is former Canon of St. George’s Anglican Cathedral in Jerusalem and a highly respected voice of the Palestinian liberation theology movement. In April 2018, in response to Ateek’s book tour, representatives of B’nai Brith contacted Canadian universities who were hosting him and demanded that they cancel his appearances, claiming that his writings were antisemitic. B’nai Brith Canada also filed a complaint with the Canada Revenue Agency to remove the charitable status of Friends of Sabeel, who sponsored Ateek’s tour.¹⁰⁶ In 2021 Canadian Friends of Sabeel settled a defamation lawsuit against B’nai Brith. B’nai Brith was forced to take down all articles and social media referring to the book tour.¹⁰⁷

2019

Jasmin Zine, a Wilfred Laurier Sociology professor who studies Islamophobia, was assaulted at a conference held by Canadians for the Rule of Law, a registered charity that seeks to challenge “political tribes” and “disruptors” who question the rule of law in Canada. The conference was sponsored and funded by several organizations that are known to promote Islamophobic views.¹⁰⁸

Lex Rofeberg, a rabbinical student and activist, had been invited as a keynote speaker to Limmud Winnipeg (an annual Jewish cultural and educational event) in March 2019. Limmud cancelled Rofeberg’s talk when the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg threatened to withdraw its sponsorship, complaining that Rofeberg was a critic of Israel and a supporter of BDS and the organization If Not Now.¹⁰⁹

In Summer 2019 the Palestine Youth Movement announced an event to be held

105 https://www.bnaibrith.ca/university_of_winnipeg_apologizes_for_antisemitism_at_anti_israel_event/

106 <https://thecjn.ca/news/canada/palestinian-priest-accused-of-spreading-anti-semitism-in-canada/>

107 <https://friendsofsabeel.ca/1793-2/>

108 https://theconversation.com/i-had-a-front-row-seat-to-hate-and-was-physically-assaulted-the-liberal-washing-of-white-nationalism-114002?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook

109 <https://www.manitobapost.com/winnipeg-news/limmud-winnipeg-defence-of-pro-bds-speaker-fails-evidence-test-117344>

at Toronto's Trinity St. Paul's United Church to launch a new scholarship named after Palestinian novelist and political figure Ghassan Kanafani. B'nai Brith Canada appealed to the board of the church to cancel the event, based on its claims that Kanafani was a spokesperson for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and was implicated in the 1972 Lod Airport Massacre (he was assassinated soon afterward by the Israelis). The church board quickly capitulated.¹¹⁰

On November 20, 2019, an event was hosted by a pro-Israel group at York University called "Reservist on Duty: Hear from Former Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) Soldiers." Hundreds of students gathered to protest the presence of IDF personnel on campus. Media reports in *Global News*, *The National Post*, the *Toronto Sun*, and others characterized the protesters as violent and accused them of chanting antisemitic slogans. These accusations were echoed by Toronto Mayor John Tory, Liberal MP Michael Levitt, Premier Doug Ford, and the CEO of the Friends of Simon Wisenthal Centre, Avi Benlolo. Reviews of videos of the event produced no evidence of antisemitic chants and revealed numerous violent incidents, including those initiated by the Jewish Defense League, targeting the protesters.¹¹¹

2020

On June 23, 2020, B'nai Brith Canada issued a press release and posted an online petition calling on York University President and Vice-Chancellor Rhonda Lenton to bar Professor Faisal Bhabha from teaching any "human rights" course at Osgoode Hall Law School. B'nai Brith claimed that on a webinar sponsored by the Ryerson University Centre for Free Expression Bhabha had "smeared this country's Jewish community" and should be "disqualified from teaching a human-rights course."¹¹²

Toronto restaurant Foodbenders was forced to close after the owner was targeted by several pro-Israel organizations after displaying pro-Palestinian banners on her restaurant. The owner also posted several indefensible remarks on social media. Among the posts were claims that the Jewish Defense League controls "our media and elected officials," while another said that "Canada is controlled by genocidal Zionists that interfere with our democracy, media, economy and basic human rights." While these and similar posts targeted "Zionists" and not "Jews," they repeated classic, common, and ultimately fallacious stereotypes of Jews as

110 <https://nationalpost.com/news/toronto-church-cancels-palestinian-youth-event-accused-of-being-an-open-glorification-of-terrorists>

111 <https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/protesting-the-israel-defense-forces-is-not-anti-semitic>

112 https://cfe.ryerson.ca/blog/2020/08/professor-petition-and-president-professor-bhabha-b'nai-brith-and-president-lenton?utm_source=pocket_mylist

evil power-mongers in Canadian society.¹¹³ Pressure was exerted on suppliers to cease doing business with the restaurant and the premises were vandalized. The owner, Kimberly Hawkins, was eventually forced to declare bankruptcy. While the provincial court dismissed charges that Hawkins violated anti-discrimination bylaws, she still faces other legal problems, including a defamation lawsuit and two complaints before the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal. One of the complaints is from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, and the other was lodged on behalf of a GTA resident who claims Hawkins discriminated against Jews when



Graffiti written on the sidewalk in front of Foodbenders. The Hebrew writing says "Kahane lives."

she posted that Zionists were not welcome at her store. The successful campaign to put Foodbenders out of business appeared to be completely out of proportion to her actual intent and ability to do harm. Hawkins was subsequently bombarded with misogynistic and violent communications.¹¹⁴

In a case which attracted international attention, legal scholar Valentina Azarova was offered a position as the director of the International Human Rights Program at the University of Toronto School of Law. Early in her career, Azarova had devoted considerable attention to violations of Palestinian human rights. While immigration difficulties were

cited as the reason that the offer to Azarova was rescinded, it was subsequently revealed that a tax court judge from a family who had made large donations to the law school had intervened with a university administrator to attempt to scupper Azarova's appointment. The judge, David E. Spiro, who was also affiliated with the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, told the administrator that the reputation of the University of Toronto would be sullied by Azarova's appointment. The offer was subsequently rescinded. In a rare action, the Canadian Association of University Teachers placed the University of Toronto under censure, causing academics worldwide to cancel speaking events and other collaborative efforts with the university. The censure was lifted after the university resubmitted its offer to Azarova. She subsequently declined the appointment.¹¹⁵

113 See IJV's full statement on Foodbenders: <https://www.ijvcanada.org/independent-jewish-voices-toronto-statement-on-the-foodbenders-controversy/>

114 <https://readpassage.com/anti-foodbenders-campaign-shows-political-double-standard-on-hate/>

115 <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2021/04/22/university-teachers-body-issues-rare-censure-against-u-of-t-law-school-for-serious-violations-of-academic-freedom.html>

2021

B'nai Brith Canada launched a campaign against Carleton University Sociology professor Nahla Abdo after her remarks on a webinar on antisemitism and antizionism.¹¹⁶

Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center called for the disciplining of University of Toronto professor Chandni Desai for sponsoring an event about Palestinian political figure and author Ghassan Kanafani.¹¹⁷

An anonymous letter called for the firing of Professor Ritika Goel, Social Justice, Anti-Oppression and Advocacy Theme Lead for the Doctor of Medicine and postgraduate training programs at the University of Toronto, after Goel signed a letter criticizing Israel during the assault on Gaza in May, 2021.¹¹⁸

Members of Parliament Leah Gazan (a person with Jewish and Indigenous ancestry) and Charlie Angus were attacked as antisemites for protesting Israel's failure to distribute adequate COVID vaccines to Palestinians in the West Bank.¹¹⁹

The board of *The Sheaf*, the University of Saskatchewan student newspaper, resigned after an article on Palestine that had sparked a complaint from Honest Reporting Canada was pulled. More than three dozen former Sheaf contributors signed an open letter condemning the decision to pull an article entitled "Photo Story: The Reality of Palestine" by Aleshba Naseer from the website.¹²⁰

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) was forced to apologize after Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center claimed that African-Canadian writer and activist Desmond Cole had "traumatized" Jewish participants during four professional learning sessions for senior TDSB educators. Cole had raised the issue of Palestine as an equity concern and voiced support for Javier Davila, a board employee who was under investigation for circulating pro-Palestine information (see below).¹²¹ Davila is currently suing B'nai Brith for defamation.¹²²

116 <https://www.bnaibrith.ca/carleton-university-should-condemn-antisemitism-take-action-on-professors-remarks/>

117 <https://www.friendsofsimonwiesenthalcenter.com/news/fswc-calls-for-action-after-u-of-t-prof-glorifies-legacy-terrorist-involved-massacre-civilians>

118 https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ritika-goel-allegations-1.6042598?utm_source=pocket_mylist

119 https://www.chroniclejournal.com/news/national/ndp-mps-post-on-israeli-vaccinations-in-west-bank-sparks-social-media-dust-up/article_326173e2-72e2-5d0f-8065-a4710026c9a1.html

120 <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/sheaf-board-under-fire-palestine-article-1.6065283>

121 <https://thecjn.ca/news/tdsb-apologizes-for-harm-caused-by-talk-from-activist-desmond-cole/>

122 <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/nora-barrows-friedman/canadian-teacher-sues-israel-lobby-group>

TDSB equity educator Javier Davila was suspended from his job after complaints from B'nai Brith about materials on Israel/Palestine that he shared with other educators. Davila also was viciously attacked by *Toronto Sun* columnist Sue Ann Levy. After two TDSB investigations, Davila was cleared of the charges and was reinstated without penalty. He is currently facing an investigation by the Ontario College of Teachers.¹²³

B'nai Brith Canada called for the resignation of University of Toronto Faculty Association President Terezia Zoric after she claimed that “an entitled powerful Zionist minority” conducted a concerted campaign against faculty members who were critical of a report absolving the university of any wrongdoing in the Azarova hiring controversy. Despite Zoric’s apology, which was rejected by B'nai Brith, several Jewish faculty members have launched a human rights complaint against Zoric.¹²⁴ Despite this, in April 2022, U of T faculty members re-elected Zoric.

123 <https://www.thestar.com/opinion/star-columnists/2021/06/23/all-of-us-are-very-afraid-tdsb-staffers-describe-culture-of-fear-after-board-suspends-a-student-equity-adviser-who-shared-resources-on-palestina-n-human-rights.html?rf>

124 <https://www.bnaibrith.ca/pushing-back-against-bigotry-at-u-of-t/>

Organizations deploying harassment

Several pro-Israel Jewish advocacy groups have been at the forefront of a “cancel culture”¹²⁵ that seeks to stifle critical speech on Israel’s human rights violations. As the Jewish anti-occupation group If Not Now noted in a recent report, North American Jewish organizations “promote a culture within the Jewish community that omits and denies the legitimacy of Palestinian narratives and rights” and seeks to “silence and intimidate those who oppose the policies of the Israeli government, shutting dissent out of the mainstream Jewish community.”¹²⁶ Respondents in our study named the following organizations as active participants in campaigns of harassment and intimidation:

- B’nai Brith Canada
- Hillel
- Honest Reporting Canada
- Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA)
- Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies
- Canary Mission
- Jewish Defense League
- Hasbara Fellowships.

Below we describe these organizations and highlight some of their actions and political campaigns to repress speech on Palestine.

B’nai Brith Canada

B’nai Brith Canada has been at the forefront of attacks on Palestine solidarity activists. According to the description on its website, “B’nai Brith Canada is the country’s oldest independent Jewish Human Rights organization. We are a principled grassroots voice, dedicated to eradicating racism, antisemitism

125 Larry Haiven, “Cancel Culture and the Israel lobby,” *Mondoweiss*, July 13, 2020, <https://mondoweiss.net/2020/07/cancel-culture-and-the-israel-lobby/>

126 If Not Now, “Beyond Talk: Five Ways the American Jewish Establishment Supports the Occupation,” <https://www.ifnotnowmovement.org/report-on-the-establishment>

and hatred in all its forms, championing the rights of the marginalized, while providing basic human needs for members of our community.”¹²⁷ According to the organization’s 2020 filing with the Canada Revenue Agency, their yearly revenue amounted to \$2,879,736. Of that amount, 57% was gifts from “other charities” while 20% came from government funding.¹²⁸

While claiming to be a “human rights” organization, B’nai Brith Canada has long since curtailed that activity and now frequently and zealously attacks advocates for Palestinian human rights. The following is a partial list of their actions:

While claiming to be a “human rights” organization, B’nai Brith Canada has long since curtailed that activity and now frequently and zealously attacks advocates for Palestinian human rights.

- The organization has called for legislation that would allow civil action against those calling for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions against Israel’s apartheid regime and a coordinated “public diplomacy” effort with Israel to oppose boycotts.¹²⁹
- B’nai Brith has been successfully sued for defamation by Palestine Solidarity activist Dmitri Lascaris, whom the organization accused in 2016 of advocating “on behalf of terrorists who have murdered Israeli civilians.”¹³⁰
- The Ontario Court of Appeals has recently ordered a trial in the defamation suit launched by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers in response to a 2018 press release by B’nai Brith alleging that CUPW had “aligned itself with the path of violence and extremism” by engaging in joint projects with the Palestinian Service Workers Union.¹³¹
- In 2021 Christian organization Canadian Friends of Sabeel settled a defamation lawsuit against B’nai Brith Canada for a 2018 article claiming that CFOS had sponsored an antisemitic book tour. B’nai Brith was forced to take down all articles and social media referring to the book tour.¹³²

127 <https://www.bnaibrith.ca>

128 <https://apps.cra-arc.gc.ca/ebci/hacc/srch/pub/dsplyRprtngPrd?q.srchNmFltr=B+nai+Brith&q.stts=0007&selectedCharityBn=787557495RR0001&dsrdPg=1>

129 https://www.bnaibrith.ca/bs_movement

130 <https://dimitrilascaris.org/2021/09/06/my-defamation-action-against-bnai-brith-canada/>

131 Colin Perkel, “Jewish Group Fails to Stop Postal Union Lawsuit Over Pro-terrorism Comments,” *The Canadian Press*, January 21, 2020, <https://nationalpost.com/pmnn/news-pmnn/canada-news-pmnn/jewish-group-fails-to-stop-postal-union-lawsuit-over-pro-terrorism-comments>

132 <https://friendsofsabeel.ca/1793-2/>

- B'nai Brith has publicly disparaged and called for the punishment of several advocates for Palestinian human rights, including:
 - Toronto District School Board employee Javier Davila
 - African-Canadian writer and activist Desmond Cole¹³³
 - Osgoode Hall Law Professor Faisal Bhabha¹³⁴
 - Carleton Sociology professor Nahla Abdo¹³⁵
 - Dufferin-Peel Catholic School teacher Nadia Shoufani¹³⁶
 - President of the University of Toronto Faculty Association Terezia Zoric¹³⁷
 - University of Victoria Jewish Studies Professor Shamma Boyarin¹³⁸
 - Dr. Ritika Goel, Social Justice, Anti-Racism and Advocacy Theme Lead at the Temerty Medical School of the University of Toronto^{139, 140}
 - Dean of Design at the Ontario College of Art and Design University Dr. Dori Tunstall¹⁴¹
 - Members of Parliament Leah Gazan, Nikki Ashton,¹⁴² and Charlie Angus¹⁴³
 - NDP candidate Miranda Gallo¹⁴⁴
 - Artist Rehab Nazal.¹⁴⁵
- In response to what became an international controversy over violations of academic freedom, B'nai Brith campaigned vigorously against the hiring of international human rights expert Valentina Azarova by the University of Toronto to head the International Human Rights Program (IHRP) at U of T's law school. B'nai Brith denigrated Azarova, calling her an "anti-Israel activist

133 <https://www.bnaibrith.ca/the-struggle-continues-for-tdsb-accountability/>

134 Jamie Cameron, "The Professor, the Petition and the President: Professor Bhabha, B'nai Brith, and President Lenton," *Centre for Free Expression*, August 12, 2020, <https://cfe.ryerson.ca/blog/2020/08/professor-petition-and-president-professor-bhabha-b'nai-brith-and-president-lenton>

135 <https://www.bnaibrith.ca/carleton-university-should-condemn-antisemitism-take-action-on-professors-remarks/>

136 https://www.bnaibrith.ca/school_board_suspends_mississauga_teacher_who_praised_terrorists/

137 <https://www.bnaibrith.ca/pushing-back-against-bigotry-at-u-of-t/>

138 "B'nai Brith Canada says university course could be 'forum for anti-Semitic views,'" *Cleveland Jewish News*, August 27, 2021, https://www.clevelandjewishnews.com/jns/b-nai-brith-canada-says-university-course-could-be-forum-for-anti-semitic-views/article_10d74b84-7066-5d68-8a65-7a4c34893258.html

139 <https://www.bnaibrith.ca/anti-israel-activists-dupe-medical-student-societies/>

140 <https://www.bnaibrith.ca/pushing-back-against-bigotry-at-u-of-t/>

141 <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/news/317520>

142 Kevin Rollason, "Ashton Defends Decision to Attend Rally for Palestine," *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 21, 2017, <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/bnai-brith-upset-ashton-attended-rally-for-palestine-423384723.html>

143 "NDP MP's post on Israeli Vaccinations in West Banks Sparks Social Media Dust-Up," *Toronto Star*, January 4, 2021, <https://www.thestar.com/politics/2021/01/04/ndp-mps-post-on-israeli-vaccinations-in-west-bank-sparks-social-media-dust-up.html>

144 https://www.cjpme.org/support_gallo

145 Sheri Shefa, "B'nai Brith Criticizes Agency for Funding What it Calls Pro-terrorist Exhibit," *Canadian Jewish News*, July 17, 2017, <https://thecjn.ca/news/canada/agency-criticized-funding-pro-terrorist-exhibit/>

with ties to an organization closely linked to a terrorist group.”¹⁴⁶

- In 2009, B’nai Brith exerted influence on Carleton University to fire sociologist Hassan Diab, who was accused of participating in the bombing of a Paris synagogue in 1980.¹⁴⁷ Diab was subsequently extradited to France in 2012 Diab was released in 2018 after the court dropped charges against him. The Canadian government subsequently apologized to Diab. On January 27, 2021, France's court of appeal ordered Diab to stand trial again and a court date has been set for 2023. There is currently a vigorous legal campaign to prevent Diab’s extradition to France.
- In a widely-documented campaign, B’nai Brith Canada organization attempted to have federal funding rescinded from a 2009 academic conference at York University entitled “Israel/Palestine: Mapping Models of Statehood and Paths to Peace.” Much of the proposed conference program focused on the one-state model for achieving peace and justice in Israel/Palestine. In its efforts to shut down the event, B’nai Brith Canada submitted a libelous statement to the York administration on June 12, 2009 asserting that “The veil of academia provided by these sponsors should not fool anyone. No academic body should lend its imprimatur to a conference where several of the speakers are actively engaged in Holocaust denial, rationalize terrorism, and are infamous anti-Israel propagandists.” B’nai Brith was subsequently forced to apologize for and retract this statement.¹⁴⁸
- In 2020, B’nai Brith attacked as “hypocritical, prejudiced and biased” 50 former Canadian diplomats who had sent an open letter to Prime Minister Trudeau urging him to oppose Israel’s proposed annexation of parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.¹⁴⁹

The Unholy Alliance

On November 8-9, 1938, in a precursor to the Nazi Final Solution where six million Jews perished, tens of thousands of Jews were arrested, roughly 100 were murdered, and thousands of synagogues, homes, and Jewish businesses were smashed and vandalized in Germany and Austria on Kristallnacht.

Just a short time after this tragic event, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini, probably the most famous and popular leader in the Islamic world, began his enthusiastic and ongoing support for the Nazis and their common goal of killing off the Jews.

Common Objectives of Nazism & Radical Islam

- Killing Canadian men and women on the battlefields
- Incitement of children through schools and media
- Annihilation of World Jewry and subjugation of every one else
- World Domination

We must wake up from our slumber - before it is too late

What starts with the Jews never ends with the Jews. Radical Islam is a force that has targeted Christians, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and even moderate Muslims.

B'nai Brith Canada is an independently funded national Jewish human rights organization on the frontlines in fighting antisemitism and racism.

To make a tax-deductible contribution, please call 416-633-6224/toll free 1-800-274-2310 or visit us at www.bnaibrith.ca.

B'NAI BRITH CANADA • Responsible Jewish advocacy • Responsive to Jewish needs
• Representing the diversity of grassroots Canadian Jewry

146 https://www.bnaibrith.ca/u_of_t_must_resist_pressure_campaign/

147 Joanne Laucius, “Email Trail Reveals How Carleton University Responded to 2009 Hassan Diab Media Storm,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, January 21, 2018, <https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/email-trail-reveals-how-carleton-university-responded-to-2009-hassan-diab-media-storm>

148 <https://file.news.yorku.ca/2009/06/22/bnai-brith-canada-apologizes-over-statement-about-york-conference/>

149 https://www.bnaibrith.ca/b_nai_brith_denounces_hypocritical_letter_to_pm_on_israel

- B'nai Brith has accused the University of Toronto of being the site of “systemic racism”¹⁵⁰ and recently condemned the outcome of a report by the university’s Working Group on Antisemitism for being “flimsy” and for not adopting the IHRA working definition of antisemitism.¹⁵¹ The report disputed B'nai Brith’s claims.¹⁵²
- B'nai Brith lobbied against the non-binding parliamentary bill M103, together with some extreme-right groups. Bill M103 denounces Islamophobia and other type of hate. The bill was introduced after the killing of six Muslims at a Quebec mosque by an extreme-right sympathizer.
- B'nai Brith conducted a persistent campaign to have a mural representing Palestinian resistance removed from the York University.¹⁵³

Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies (FSWC)

Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies (FSWC) describes itself as a “non-profit human rights organization committed to countering racism and antisemitism and to promoting the principles of tolerance, social justice and Canadian democratic values through advocacy and education.”¹⁵⁴ FSWC is the regional branch of the U.S.-based Simon Wiesenthal Center, which describes the Canadian office as carrying “out the work of the Wiesenthal Center in Canada by bringing antisemitism, bigotry, racial hatred, and ethnic intolerance to the attention of the Canadian government, the public and the media.”¹⁵⁵ Despite claims that it is dedicated to fighting bigotry, FSWC has moved forward, despite strong criticism, with the building of a large museum in Jerusalem on the site of a Muslim graveyard.¹⁵⁶

According to Charity Navigator, the Center’s total revenue and expenses were,

150 Michael Mostyn, Stuart Kamenetsky and Howard Tenenbaum, “University of Toronto must act now to uproot antisemitism,” *Toronto Star*, February 2, 2021, <https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/2021/02/02/university-of-toronto-must-act-now-to-uproot-antisemitism.html>

151 <https://www.bnaibrith.ca/bnai-brith-rejects-flimsy-u-of-t-antisemitism-report/>

152 <https://people.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Report-of-the-Anti-Semitism-Working-Group.pdf>

153 https://www.bnaibrith.ca/york_university/

154 <http://friendsofsimonwiesenthalcenter.com/>

155 <https://www.wiesenthal.com/about/regional-offices/toronto>

156 Rory McCarthy, “Row Over Plan to Build Jewish Museum of Tolerance on Site of Muslim Cemetery,” *The Guardian*, February 10, 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/feb/10/jewish-museum-tolerance-muslim-cemetery>

respectively, \$25,359,129 USD and \$26,181,569 USD in 2018. Of the revenue, 52.8% came from contributions, gifts, and grants, 31.4% from fundraising events, and 15.8% from government grants.¹⁵⁷

In its 2013 survey of Jewish charity compensation, *The Forward* singled out Rabbi Marvin Hier, founder, CEO, and President of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, as “by far the most overpaid CEO” in the Jewish philanthropic world. Hier and his family members received nearly \$1.3 million in 2012 from the Center.¹⁵⁸ In 2017, *The Forward* again ranked Hier as the most overpaid Jewish charity leader, with a total salary of \$818,148. In addition, Hier’s family members earned an additional \$600,000 from the organization.¹⁵⁹

Since 2010, the Center has published an annual list of individuals whom they consider to have uttered the most antisemitic or anti-Israel “slurs” for the year.¹⁶⁰ The top three offenders for 2021 were the British Broadcasting Company, Unilever (parent company of the ice cream manufacturer Ben and Jerry’s), and the American Jewish Palestine solidarity organization Jewish Voice for Peace. FWSC has lobbied school boards to remove material critical of Israel from the curriculum.¹⁶¹ FWSC has also been active in campaigns against BDS and Israel Apartheid Week on university campuses as well as attacks on several racialized individuals who have expressed pro-Palestine sympathies.¹⁶²

157 <https://www.charitynavigator.org/ein/953964928>

158 Sybil Sage, “Calling Out the Overpaid,” *The Forward*, December 17, 2013. <https://forward.com/opinion/189182/calling-out-the-overpaid/>

159 Steven Davidson, “How Much Do Top Jewish Non-Profit Leaders Make?,” *The Forward*, December 11, 2017, <https://forward.com/news/388240/how-much-do-top-jewish-non-profit-leaders-make/>

160 www.wiesenthal.com/TopTenAntiSemitic2021

161 <https://www.friendsofsimonwiesenthalcenter.com/news/fswc-seeks-explanation-after-anti-israel-video-included-in-ontario-high-school-curriculum>

162 <https://www.friendsofsimonwiesenthalcenter.com/news/fswc-calls-for-action-by-u-of-t-administration-as-jewish-medical-students-report-antisemitism-intimidation-harassment>; <https://www.friendsofsimonwiesenthalcenter.com/news/fswc-demands-accountability-from-tdsb-after-conference-keynote-speaker-goes-on-anti-israel-tirade>; <https://www.friendsofsimonwiesenthalcenter.com/news/fswc-demands-answers-after-tdsb-staff-member-who-distributed-hateful-anti-israel-materials-claims-to-have-been-reinstated>; <https://www.algemeiner.com/2016/04/11/jewish-groups-outraged-over-anti-israel-makeup-of-york-u-inclusion-committee/>; https://www.friendsofsimonwiesenthalcenter.com/news/fswc-calls-for-action-after-u-of-t-prof-glorifies-legacy-terrorist-involved-massacre-civilians?utm_source=pocket_mylist

Hillel

Hillel International describes its mission as “enriching the lives of Jewish students so that they may enrich the Jewish people and the world.”¹⁶³ Hillel provides services on 550 college and university campuses, largely in North America. The organization is an enthusiastic defender of the Israeli state on campuses worldwide. While claiming to welcome “a diversity of student perspectives on Israel,” Hillel is guided by strict policies in relation to Israel.¹⁶⁴ As stated on the Hillel International website, Hillel will not partner with, house, or host organizations, groups, or speakers that as a matter of policy or practice:

- Deny the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish and democratic state with secure and recognized borders;
- Delegitimize, demonize, or apply a double standard to Israel;
- Support boycott of, divestment from, or sanctions against the State of Israel;
- Exhibit a pattern of disruptive behavior towards campus events or guest speakers or foster an atmosphere of incivility.

Hillel Ontario, whose 2020 budget reflected \$4,000,000 in revenue,¹⁶⁵ supports nine campus organizations and claims to be the largest Hillel in the world. They state that “Our robust advocacy agenda seeks to reduce antisemitism and anti-Zionism on campus by combating BDS, hosting intensive fact-finding missions to Israel, building coalitions across ethnic, political and religious lines, and maintaining relationships with university leaders.”¹⁶⁶ Hillel in Canada has been active in

While claiming to welcome “a diversity of student perspectives on Israel,” Hillel is guided by strict policies in relation to Israel.

opposing Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions resolutions by campus groups and national student organizations.¹⁶⁷ Tensions began to arise in 2012 in response to Hillel’s repressive policies and ultimately resulted in the resignation from the international organization

of several chapters across the U.S. and the establishment of “Open Hillel” (now called Judaism on our Terms). The new organization described itself as promoting “pluralism and open discourse on Israel/Palestine in Jewish communities on

163 <https://www.hillel.org/about>

164 <https://www.hillel.org/jewish/hillel-israel/hillel-israel-guidelines>

165 <https://www.charitydata.ca/charity/hillel-ontario/888242484RR0001/>

166 <https://hillelontario.org/our-impact/>

167 “SFSS BDS motion sees support from Palestinian and Jewish students and opposition from Hillel,” *The Peak*, August 6, 2021, <https://the-peak.ca/2021/08/sfss-bds-motion-sees-support-from-palestinian-and-jewish-students-and-opposition-from-hillel/>

campus and beyond.” They vowed to “eliminate Hillel International’s Standards of Partnership for Israel Activities, which exclude individuals and groups from the Jewish community on campus on the basis of their views on Israel” and to “work to end similar restrictions on discussion and debate in other broad-based/umbrella Jewish institutions.”¹⁶⁸

Canary Mission

In our research we were able to identify 125 Canadians, including 89 students and 34 professors, who are listed on the website of Canary Mission¹⁶⁹ an organization which purports to document “individuals and organizations that promote hatred of the US, Israel and Jews on North American college campuses.” Palestine Legal, a U.S. organization that defends those attacked for defending Palestinian human rights, has noted that Canary Mission appears to disproportionately target Arab and Muslim activists on its website.¹⁷⁰

Canary Mission is purportedly funded by Israeli-American multi-millionaire Adam Milstein, who also sits on the boards of right-wing pro-Israel campus groups StandWithUs, Israel on Campus Coalition, and Hasbara Fellowships. Milstein is part of a community of right-wing, pro-Israel donors which funds aggressive tactics against Palestine solidarity activists, focusing largely on university and college campuses.¹⁷¹

A report produced by the Middle East Studies Association of North America, *Exposing Canary Mission: A Resource for College and University Leaders* found that Canary Mission does not engage in substantive or reasoned debate about issues or ideas; it targets and seeks to defame individuals and organizations whose opinions it does not like. For Canary Mission, then, unsubstantiated accusations of anti-Semitism and support for terrorism are a way to discredit and marginalize anyone who disagrees with the extremist views of the people behind the website.¹⁷²

According to author Sumaya Awad: “The Canary Mission blacklist has been very powerful in silencing people and making them think free speech is not their right.

168 <http://www.openhillel.org/about>

169 <https://canarymission.org>

170 <https://palestinelegal.org/news/2021/3/30/palestine-legal-submits-report-to-un-canary-mission-discrimination>

171 Alex Kane, “Right-wing Donor Adam Milstein has Spent Millions of Dollars to Stifle the BDS Movement and Attack Critics of Israeli Policy,” *The Intercept*, March 25, 2019, <https://theintercept.com/2019/03/25/adam-milstein-israel-bds/>

172 https://mesana.org/pdf/Exposing_Canary_Mission.pdf

Canary Mission does not engage in substantive or reasoned debate about issues or ideas; it targets and seeks to defame individuals and organizations whose opinions it does not like.

- MIDDLE EAST STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA, *EXPOSING CANARY MISSION: A RESOURCE FOR COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY LEADERS*

It instills a powerful sense of fear and paranoia: You're always left wondering if it's going to be the reason a job doesn't call back, a landlord declines you, or you have trouble going through airport security."¹⁷³

Reporting in *The Forward*, journalist Josh Nathan-Kazis revealed that the Canary Mission website is being used "as an intelligence source on thousands of students and academics by Israeli officials with immense power over people's lives."¹⁷⁴ Israeli

officials have questioned and denied entry to Israel and occupied Palestinian territory to Palestinians returning home, students, and faculty who reported seeing print-outs of their Canary Mission profiles when passing through Israeli border control and being questioned about content on those profiles.¹⁷⁵

The use of Canary Mission to deny entry to Israel was cited by the 2020 United Nations Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance as a form of digital border technology that violates equality and non-discrimination rights, as well as freedom of expression protections, and leaves those whose rights are violated with limited avenues of redress.¹⁷⁶

Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA)

As described on its website, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) is the "advocacy agent of Jewish Federations across Canada. CIJA is a national, non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to protecting Jewish life in Canada through advocacy. CIJA represents hundreds of thousands of Jewish Canadians affiliated with Jewish Federations across Canada."¹⁷⁷ CIJA was formed during an

173 Murtaza Hussain, "The Real Cancel Culture: Pro-Israel Blacklists," *The Intercept*, October 4, 2020, <https://theintercept.com/2020/10/04/israel-palestine-blacklists-canary-mission/>

174 Josh Nathan-Kazis, "Canary Mission's Threat Grows, From U.S. Campuses to The Israeli Border," *The Forward*, August 13, 2018, <https://forward.com/news/407279/canary-missions-threat-grows-from-us-campuses-to-the-israeli-border/>

175 *ibid.*

176 <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3872160>

177 <https://www.cija.ca/about-us/>

18-month restructuring process after which, in 2011, it ostensibly assumed the functions of the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC), the Canada-Israel Committee (CIC), the Quebec-Israel Committee, and the National Jewish Campus Life and University Outreach Committee. In a recent doctoral dissertation, Michael Bueckert argues that:

the restructuring process[...] centralized significant aspects of the Canadian Jewish establishment, stripping it down to a single mouthpiece and giving it the mandate of both pro-Israel advocacy and all other advocacy priorities of the Jewish community. Simultaneously, it downgraded and then eliminated the most democratic organ within the Jewish establishment, and codified elite control of CIJA's Board of Directors, and hence all policy and budgeting matters. Unlike under the CIC, in which positions were the result of decision making between various representatives of Jewish communal institutions, under CIJA the "official" Canadian Jewish public position on Israel is determined by a self-nominating board of elites, some which are not Jewish, and without any pressure to compromise with a democratically elected CJC or the more right-wing B'nai Brith. In effect, this process has consolidated and strengthened the pro-Israel lobby in a right-of-centre position, without the possibility of a democratic challenge.^{178, 179}

In its relatively short existence, CIJA has become one of the most active lobby groups on Parliament Hill. Indeed, in 2019 CIJA CEO Shimon Fogel was named as one of the top 100 lobbyists by *The Hill Times*.¹⁸⁰ In its most recent report on lobbying activities, the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada reported that CIJA met with representatives of 44 government offices in 2021. Among the objectives of the organization are to develop and enhance:

- Canada and Israel's relationship with regard to expanding trade between Canada and Israel through the promotion, application and expansion of free trade agreement;
- Canada-Israel bilateral relations related to trade, investment and scientific and academic exchanges;
- Canadian diplomatic relations related to the trade agreements with Israel and other nations in the Middle East;

178 Michael Bueckert, *Boycotts and Backlash: Canadian Opposition to Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movements from South Africa to Israel*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Carleton University, 2020.

179 See also Dan Freeman-Maloy, "Organizing the Canada-Israel Alliance," *Canadian Dimension*, October 29, 2006. <https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/organizing-the-canada-israel-alliance-daniel-freeman-maloy>

180 <https://m.facebook.com/cijainfo/photos/a.220751191346870/1979137042174934/?type=3&theater>

- Canadian participation in International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).¹⁸¹

In its most recent lobbying report CIJA stated that they engaged in lobbying on the following: Canadian participation in Operation Proteus,¹⁸² discussions on Canada-Israel military cooperation, joint training exercises, and military staff exchanges.¹⁸³

CIJA has major political and financial influence on pro-Israel activities on campus. According to their 2019 Campus Issues Guide, CIJA's activities include working for the adoption of the IHRA by universities and enhancing "Canada-Israel academic collaboration."¹⁸⁴ CIJA also "offers grants and advocacy materials to empower Jewish and pro-Israel students to defend Israel from slander and lies." Moreover, CIJA also hosts "non-Jewish Canadian student leaders, faculty, and administrators on fact-finding missions to Israel, providing first-hand knowledge of the challenges facing Israel and the values Canadians and Israelis share." They also "support friendly faculty who are at the forefront of combating academic boycotts of Israel."¹⁸⁵

CIJA also "offers grants and advocacy materials to empower Jewish and pro-Israel students to defend Israel from slander and lies."

In fiscal year 2018, CIJA provided advocacy support and training to pro-Israel activists on 25 campuses across Canada. As journalist Andrew Cohen reported in a recent article in the *Ottawa Citizen*, "CIJA refuses to

discuss its annual budget, which comes almost entirely from Jewish Federations of Canada, an umbrella organization of Jewish charities. CIJA itself spends an estimated \$8 to \$11 million, 40 per cent on advocacy on Israel alone."¹⁸⁶

CIJA is an active player in Canadian electoral politics. Recently they accused the New Democratic Party of having a "toxic obsession with Israel" in relation to resolutions at the 2021 party convention calling for the weapons trade between

181 https://lobbycanada.gc.ca/app/secure/oc/lrs/do/clntSmmry?clientOrgCorpNumber=111&sMdKy=1650577898209&V_TOKEN=1650577898209

182 <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/operation-proteus.html>

183 https://www.cija.ca/ndp_resolution_highlights_an_ongoing_toxic_obsession_with_israel

184 CIJA Campus Issues Guide 2019/2020 held in collection of Sheryl Nestel

185 *ibid.*

186 Andrew Cohen, "Cohen: Canadian Jews Need to Ask Lobby Group Some Tough Questions," *The Ottawa Citizen*, February 13, 2018, <https://ottawacitizen.com/opinion/columnists/cohen-canadian-jews-need-to-ask-lobby-group-some-tough-questions>

Canada and Israel to be suspended until Palestinian rights are upheld.¹⁸⁷ Notably, CIJA was recently implicated in the controversy over the hiring of legal scholar Valentina Azarova at the University of Toronto Law School. Tax Court Judge David E. Spiro, a former CIJA director and University of Toronto donor, allegedly attempted, at CIJA's urging, to persuade the Law School not to hire Azarova, a scholar of Palestinian human rights violations, in a clear violation of the principles of academic freedom and university autonomy.¹⁸⁸ Along with other Canadian Jewish organizations, CIJA also recently dismissed the Amnesty International report on Israeli apartheid as "an antisemitic diatribe that we both reject and condemn."¹⁸⁹

Honest Reporting Canada

Honest Reporting Canada (HRC) describes itself as "an independent grass-roots organization promoting fairness and accuracy in Canadian media coverage of Israel and the Middle East."¹⁹⁰ Established in Canada in 2003, HRC has criticized media coverage of Israel/Palestine, targeting over 80 Canadian news outlets including 20 affiliated with the CBC. According to *Passage* journalist Davide Mastracci, HRC regularly issue "email alerts," urging their followers to email news outlets whom they believe are purveying false or misleading information about Israel.¹⁹¹ According to Mastracci, Honest Reporting's goal is "getting the media to be pro-Israel, but doing so through the guise of caring about facts, impartiality and honesty." The complaints rarely have to do with facts, but rather concentrate on the framing of news stories. Mastracci notes that in a post titled "Glossary of Problematic Mideast Terms," Honest Reporting Canada calls on the media to adopt the term "terrorist" instead of "militant," "Judea and Samaria" (used by the Israeli pro-annexation right wing) instead of the "West Bank," and to stop referring to "illegal settlements," because the Israeli government doesn't contend that they're illegal.

A recent investigative report about the Canadian Broadcast Corporation's coverage of Palestine revealed that senior management often squelched stories and

187 https://www.cija.ca/ndp_resolution_highlights_an_ongoing_toxic_obsession_with_israel

188 Shree Paradkar, "External Review Exonerates U of T in Faculty Hiring Fiasco, but Exposes What Critic Calls a 'Gold Mine of Impropriety'," *Toronto Star*, March 31, 2021, <https://www.thestar.com/opinion/star-columnists/2021/03/31/external-review-exonerates-u-of-t-in-faculty-hiring-fiasco-but-exposes-what-critic-calls-a-gold-mine-of-impropriety.html>

189 <https://www.cija.ca/jewish-groups-denounce-calls-to-dismantle-jewish-state/>

190 <https://honestreporting.ca/who-we-are/>

191 https://www.getrevue.co/profile/nowyouknow/issues/what-s-the-israel-lobby-how-does-it-work-now-you-know-945641?utm_campaign=Now%20You%20Know&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Revue%20newsletter

interviews that reported the news from a Palestinian perspective out of fear of pressure from the institutional Jewish community. According to a CBC reporter quoted in the article, “If CBC runs a program featuring Palestinian voices, the backlash comes quickly[...] It immediately escalates to the highest levels, and they have to deal with it. There is a lot of fear of backlash from the pro-Israel lobby, [especially] people from Honest Reporting.”¹⁹² While the CBC does receive complaints from Palestinians and their supporters, the reporter noted that “They’re just not feared in the same way, because they don’t have as much power and sway.”

Hasbara Fellowships Canada

According to their Facebook page, Hasbara Fellowships Canada “trains, equips, and supports pro-Israel advocates on university campuses across Canada.”¹⁹³ After returning from their Israel training trips, “Hasbara Fellows use their newly-acquired advocacy skills to combat antisemitism and Israel boycotts on campus and throughout their communities.”¹⁹⁴ Hasbara Fellowships was launched in 2001 in a joint effort with the Israeli Ministry of Strategic Affairs by Aish HaTorah, a right-wing orthodox Jewish organization that has notably produced and disseminated anti-Palestinian and anti-Muslim propaganda.¹⁹⁵ Hasbara Fellowships is also a founding member of the Israel on Campus Coalition, which was revealed in the 2017 Al Jazeera documentary “The Lobby”¹⁹⁶ to engage in surveillance and smear campaigns against campus Palestine solidarity groups.

Jewish Defense League

The Jewish Defense League was founded in 1968 in New York City by Rabbi Meir Kahane. According to the Southern Poverty Law Centre, “JDL has targeted anyone it considers a threat to the survival of radical Jewish nationalism. This includes U.S. and foreign diplomats, domestic radical-right organizations, Arab and

192 Rahaf Farawi, “CBC’s Palestine Exception,” *Review of Journalism*, June 15, 2022, <https://reviewofjournalism.ca/cbcs-palestine-exception/>

193 <https://www.facebook.com/hasbaracanada/>

194 <https://www.israelengage.org/about>

195 Michael Leshar, “Why are Orthodox Rabbis Edging into Israel’s Apartheid Politics?,” *Electronic Intifada*, December 5, 2014, <https://electronicintifada.net/content/why-are-orthodox-rabbis-edging-israels-apartheid-politics/14078>

196 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ISjXhMUVKE>

Muslim activists, journalists and scholars, and Jewish community members who are simply not ‘Jewish enough.’”¹⁹⁷ In 1971, Kahane was convicted in New York on charges of conspiracy to manufacture explosives and received a suspended sentence. In 1988, Kahane, who had won a seat in Israel’s parliament for his right-wing party “Kach,” was banned from the legislative body after calling for violence against Arabs. Kahane was assassinated in New York City in 1990. In 1994 Kach activist Baruch Goldstein massacred 29 and wounded 125 Palestinian Muslim worshippers at the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron. The massacre ended when he was beaten to death.

A chapter of the Jewish Defense League appeared in Canada in 1979 and after a period of inactivity was revived in 2006. JDL members have a history of violence and assaults at protests. In December 2017, JDL Canada member Yosef Steynovit was indicted on assault and hate crime charges after severely injuring a Palestinian-American during the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) policy conference in Washington, DC.

During a large protest in Toronto in May, 2021 against Israel’s attacks on Gaza, JDL members were observed inciting violence against pro-Palestine demonstrators.¹⁹⁸ Responding to reports of violence, The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, B’nai Brith Canada, Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies, and the UJA Federation issued a joint statement which claimed that the violent attack was proof that “anti-Israel activists are seeking to use the current violence in the Middle East as an excuse to target Toronto’s Jewish community for intimidation and hate.”¹⁹⁹ The statement was echoed by Toronto Mayor John Tory, Premier Doug Ford, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. None of these statements was rescinded despite evidence that the violence was initiated by the JDL and its supporters.²⁰⁰

JDL’s long-time leader Meir Weinstein announced in July, 2021 that he was leaving the organization. He has subsequently continued his activities under the banner of a new organization, “Israel Now.”²⁰¹

197 <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/jewish-defense-league>

198 Peter Smith, “Well-Known Anti-Muslim Hate Group Claims Responsibility For Countering Pro-Palestinian Protest,” *Anti-hate.ca*, May 17, 2021, https://www.antihate.ca/anti-muslim_hate_group_claims_responsibility_for_countering

199 https://www.cija.ca/jewish_organizations_condemn_violence_at_toronto_protest

200 See the IJV statement on false charges of antisemitic violence at the Toronto demonstration <https://www.ijvcanada.org/ijv-toronto-open-letter-on-false-antisemitism-allegations-at-palestine-solidarity-rally/>

201 Stephen Ellis, “The Long Overdue Death of the Jewish Defence League,” *Canadian Dimension*, August 21, 2021, <https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/the-long-overdue-death-of-the-jewish-defence-league>

Methodology

This research project situates itself firmly within the realm of critical qualitative inquiry, which seeks to employ qualitative research “for social justice purposes, including making such research accessible for public education, social policy making and community transformation.”²⁰² Our inquiry here also draws on decolonizing methodologies of social science research which seek to challenge institutions, academic and otherwise, that prioritize colonial forms of knowledge production and maintain institutional commitments which impede indigenous self-determination. Finally, we follow the direction of queer, feminist, and anti-racist research methodologies which entreat us to consider how our positions in social hierarchies of gender, race, class, sexuality, and citizenship mediate our experiences.

The researchers, Sheryl Nestel and Rowan Gaudet, contacted faculty, students, and organizations known to have advocated for Palestinian human rights. Organizations were asked to circulate a call for their members to participate in the research (Appendix A). Those who agreed to participate also contacted friends and colleagues who had been affected by attempts to suppress speech on Palestine and invited them to contact the researchers directly. The research, while not conducted under the auspices of an academic institution, nonetheless adhered to the principles of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.²⁰³ In all, the researchers collected 77 testimonies from 40 faculty members, 23 students, 7 activists, and 7 representatives of organizations. Approximately half of the participants submitted an anonymous online interview questionnaire in Google Forms, while the remaining testimonies were gathered from interviews conducted on Zoom and then transcribed. In analysing the data, the researchers identified the following categories which reflected respondents’ experiences:

- Political intervention into hiring
- Restrictions on academic freedom
- Self-censorship in relation to Palestine
- The potential impact of the IHRA
- Harassment by pro-Israel advocacy groups and media outlets
- Attacks from academic colleagues
- Ethnic/racial identity and the experience of harassment
- The emotional impact of self-censorship, harassment, and suppression of

202 Norman Denzin, “Critical Qualitative Inquiry,” *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2017, Vol. 23 No. 1.

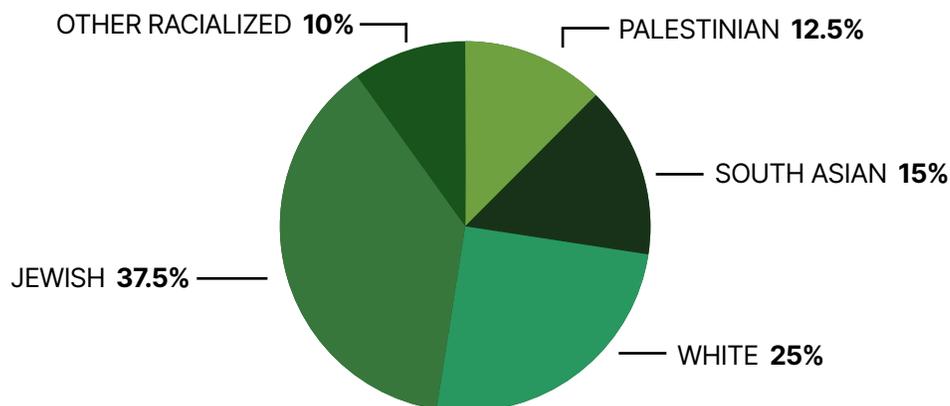
203 https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique_tcps2-eptc2_2018.html

- speech
- Political interference by university administration
 - Classroom surveillance
 - Sexist and homophobic slurs
 - Anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab racism
 - Threats of violence, including death threats and threats of sexual violence.

Testimonies of academics were collected from participants in Ontario, Manitoba, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, Quebec, and Alberta. Among the academics responding were representatives of 11 disciplines and 21 Canadian Universities. Twenty respondents self-identified as female and 20 self-identified as male. We have chosen to use the gender non-specific terms “they,” “them,” and “their” in our report when referring to individuals of all genders so as to offer maximum anonymity to our participants, with exceptions made for when a participant’s gender is relevant to the testimony they provided.

We also shared the report prior to publication with those interviewees who wished to approve the text prior to its being made public. Academic participants self-identified variously as Palestinian (5), South Asian (6), white (10), Jewish (15), and other racialized individuals (4).

IDENTITIES OF ACADEMIC RESPONDENTS

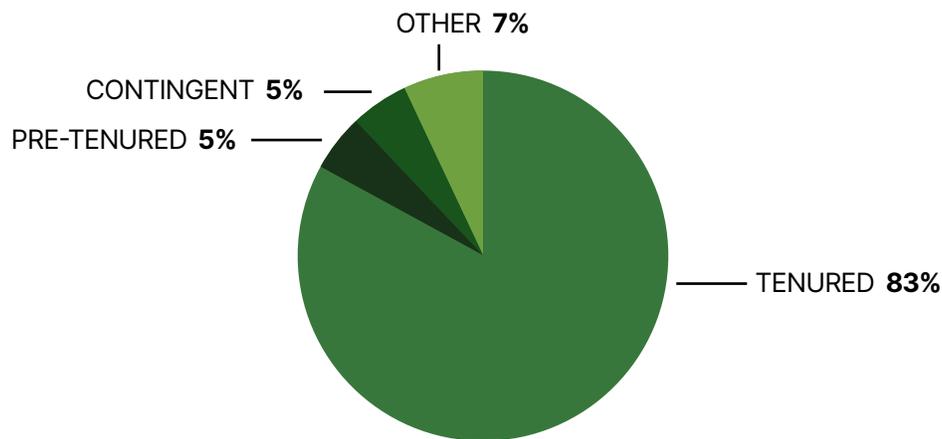


Eighty-two percent ($n=33$) of academic respondents currently occupy tenured or tenure-track academic positions while 5% ($n=2$) were pre-tenure, 5% ($n=2$) were contingent faculty, and 7% ($n=3$) held another academic position.

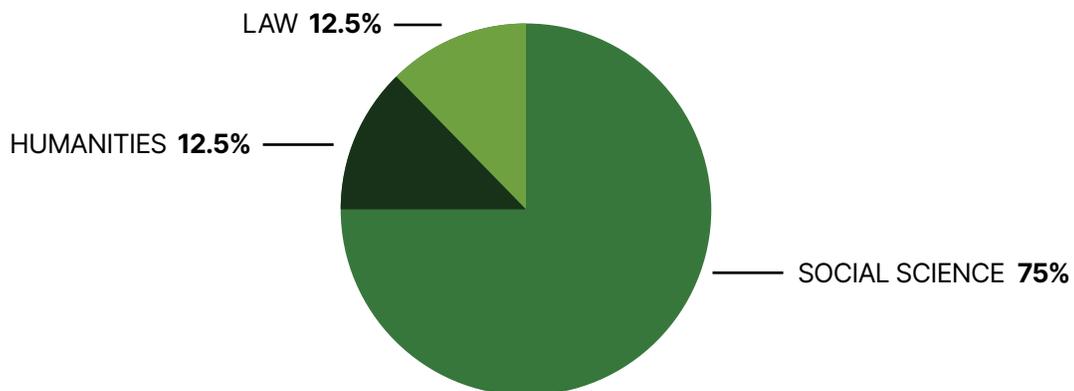
Seventy-five percent of the respondents worked in the social sciences while 12.5% were legal scholars and 12.5% worked in the humanities. The students responding gave testimonies on their experiences from 13 different Canadian universities across British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec.

Twelve respondents self-identified as female, 8 as male and 3 as non-binary. Student participants self-identified as Palestinian (9), racialized non-Palestinians (4), Jewish (10), and white (10, although 9 of these respondents also self-identified as Jewish). Of the student respondents, 14 related experiences solely related to undergraduate studies, 4 solely to graduate studies, and 4 to both undergraduate and graduate studies.

ACADEMIC STATUS OF RESPONDENTS



ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE OF RESPONDENTS



Study data: Academics

While there are numerous personal accounts by pro-Palestine scholars, students, and activists about their experiences of harassment, intimidation, and silencing, there are very few ethnographic studies of those who have experienced these forms of repression.²⁰⁴ We believe ethnography to be an essential tool for understanding the structures, norms, emotions, and behaviours that create a chilly climate in relation to Palestine/Israel. In addition, ethnographic work allows us to capture the experiences of those who may not wish to self-identify for fear of professional and/or personal repercussions.

We were inspired by a 2016 American study of 100 anthropologists whose work dealt with societies in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)²⁰⁵—a notable exception to the dearth of ethnographic research in this area. In their study, MENA anthropologists Lara Deeb and Jessica Winegar describe the impact of “compulsory Zionism,” which they define as “support [for] the specific political and positive view of Israel as a Jewish state that should serve as the designated and rightful homeland of the Jewish people,”²⁰⁶ as the normative political stance expected of academics. Steven Salaita, whose hiring by the University of Illinois was cancelled after his tweets about the 2014 Gaza war were deemed “uncivil,” corroborates Deeb and Winegar’s analysis. Salaita points to the “normalization” of the uncritically pro-Israel position that dominates liberal academic and political discourse:

Whereas “normalize” generally (but not always) refers to a geopolitical relationship between nation- states, including economic and cultural exchange, “norma-tize” highlights the ways that a particular discourse becomes accepted as natural or commonsensical. Focusing on Israel’s normalization, then, draws attention to its position as a standard of responsible morality and acceptable intellectual citizenship.²⁰⁷

204 See for example the edited collection of testimonies *We Will Not Be Silenced: The Academic Repression of Israel’s Critics*, Eds. William I. Robinson and Maryam S. Griffin 2017 AK Press Chicago, CA.; Steven Salaita *Uncivil Rites: Palestine and the Limits of Academic Freedom*. Also, Elizabeth Berger, “Canary Mission is Dangerous to Your Professional Health,” *Mondoweiss*, January 11, 2021, <https://mondoweiss.net/2021/01/canary-mission-is-dangerous-to-your-professional-health/>

205 Lara Deeb and Jessica Winegar, *Anthropology’s Politics: Disciplining the Middle East*, Stanford CA: Stanford U Press 2016. See also Khulod S. Wahboubadr Unpublished Dissertation, *Is the Academic Freedom of Foreign-Born Professors in U.S. Seton Hall*.

206 Deeb and Winegar, p. 18

207 Steven Salaita, “Normalizing State Power: Uncritical Ethical Praxis and Zionism,” in *The Imperial University: Academic Repression and Scholarly Dissent*, edited by Piya Chatterjee and Sunaina Maira, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014, p. 22.

Deeb and Winegar document a multiplicity of micro and macro aggressions directed against scholars whose views on Zionism and Israel clash with this expected norm. They depict Israel-critical perspectives as a “poison chalice” wherein “knowledge and perspectives that one should share about the region’s peoples and the interconnections of local and global power hierarchies, [exist] alongside the awareness that doing so without job security poses serious risks that must be constantly navigated to avoid negative repercussions” (p. 81).

We found that much of Deeb and Winegar’s data of harassment and intimidation overlapped significantly with the data we collected. For example, in both their study and ours, tactics employed by student and outside organizations included “recording classes without permission, walking out of class, sending threatening emails to professors, making phone complaints to faculty and administrators, threatening to give negative evaluations or outright lying on evaluation forms, interrupting the professor or other students during class in a hostile manner, and, on occasion, making threats to professors’ physical safety” (p. 90).

They detail how their interview subjects often experienced this exceedingly politicized academic environment as threatening, opposed to the principles of critical thinking and scholarship, and a major drain on time that would be better devoted to teaching and research. In response, many anthropologists avoid Israel/Palestine in their teaching or research. Those who do not spend considerable time proactively preventing problems and managing those that do occur (p. 18).

Unlike our interview subjects, all of whom had witnessed or experienced harassment or repression, the majority of Deeb and Winegar’s interlocutors had not experienced such incidents but still expressed a sense that “working on the region was a “mine-field,” and fears that they could easily be targeted by right-wing and/or Zionist organizations because of their teaching, public lectures, or research, and that their institutions would not necessarily protect them.

As Deeb and Winegar argue:

Global politics have combined with national, local, and institutional forces (including sexism, racism, and economic pressures on higher education) to affect careers materially in terms of access to the discipline and regional fieldsites, relationships with advisors, experiences on the job market, tenure battles, and ability to obtain research funding. These material effects had significant consequences for many anthropologists’ professional lives, as did politically motivated complaints and attacks against their work in the classroom or in public lectures (p. 54).

Deeb and Winegar conclude that “when it comes to academic politics, Israel-

Palestine is central and exceptional. We are not the first to make this argument, but we offer ethnography to show just how deeply Israel-Palestine politics have affected scholarly practice, in ways at odds with the very definition of what scholarship should be” (p. 17).

In what follows, we will offer evidence that this same dynamic is affecting Canadian scholars and activists who speak out for Palestinian human rights.

Hiring

Following the recent controversy related to the candidacy of legal scholar and Palestine human rights expert Valentina Azerova at the University of Toronto, the politicization of academic hiring in relation to the politics of Israel/Palestine has taken on international significance. Four respondents reported participating in or witnessing hiring processes where the candidates’ political position on Palestine was used as evidence that they might be predisposed to discriminate against students who did not share their views. Candidates who had expressed critical views on Israel were seen as potentially “divisive” for the department where the hiring was taking place. In some instances, Jewish department members expressed that they would feel “unsafe” if a perceived pro-Palestine candidate were to be hired. One candidate was advised by a senior colleague not to use the example of inviting a Palestinian speaker if a question about potential classroom controversies arose.

The candidate described being told:

“No, no don’t do that. Palestine is controversial at [...] university where you are applying and it is not a good idea to mention it. Choose a different example.”
If this advice has been given once, I bet it has been given a hundred times.
And yet for most, it seems unnecessary. Nearly everyone knows to avoid the “controversial” topic of Palestine in a job interview.

In another incident, faculty colleagues who signed a protest letter after a highly qualified pro-Palestine candidate was not hired were targeted by a university administrator who wrote a lengthy vitriolic email circulated to all faculty members accusing the letter signers of disrespectful behaviour and antisemitism. What followed was a year of ostracization and shaming from senior administration and several members of the faculty who no longer wanted to be, or were too afraid to be, associated with anyone who signed the letter.

■ Many of us letter signers wondered if our careers had been destroyed. We

were not invited to faculty events... and the [administrator], over the summer, requested meetings with certain pre-tenure faculty to berate them for signing the letter (mainly racialized women). The [administrator] re-accused the letter signers of antisemitism in another email to hiring faculty.

A faculty member who had come to Canada from a European university commented that:

You never know what's going to go wrong in Canada. Like, I think I even when I've applied for jobs, you know, if it's on your CV, anything to do with Palestinians, unlike, [...] almost any other country, you close doors for yourself, right? It's like a scarlet letter. So that is a pernicious impact. Like, I can say, even like, broadly, folks with their PhDs will have that problem in Canada.

A racialized scholar whom we interviewed reported that their candidacy for an academic appointment was opposed by a group of students who claimed that the candidate's objection to the IHRA rendered them unsuitable, because they "make members of the Jewish community uncomfortable." The interviewee believed that the students' objection amounted to an accusation of antisemitism. They remarked that "the intention was clear and the inference to antisemitism was made clear."

This person was also asked in a job interview about their position on Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions. As they noted,

I'm not one of those people who like from the very beginning was "rah rah BDS." I want to be careful about my stance on this; I don't even really know what my position is. [The interviewer] knew enough about my politics and I think what he was trying to do was to embarrass me, to put me on the spot and he was trying to use my politics as a basis to screen me. The incident made its way back to the committee and the way they interpreted it was that I was a troublesome person.

A Palestinian scholar summed up the perils of their job search thusly:

The toughest part, of course, was making 130+ job applications and not knowing if the reason you're not getting anything is because of how bad the job market is, your publication record (I had five journal articles in four prestigious journals, which I knew was more than most coming out of their PhD), or Palestine.

Academic freedom

More than a third of our academic respondents reported various circumstances and actions that functioned to curtail their academic freedom. A number of interviewees felt that the academic environment in Canada was particularly unwelcoming to those working in the area of Palestine Studies.

As one interviewee who works in the area of Middle East and North African Studies noted:

Yes, we always have long conversations with students who are interested in working on Palestine and who have their hesitations then in terms of moving forward with their work and in terms of access to scholarship, publishing, and also where to publish, and where to find mentorship. And that's why that they move on, most of them[...] to European universities to pursue graduate level courses. And because they think that in North America—Canada and the US—there isn't that much support for their work, or they will go to interdisciplinary type of programs, like cultural studies, cinema/film, so that they can sort of centre it around Palestine. But there is hesitation and fear of future direction.

A Palestinian academic whose dissertation was not awarded the top dissertation prize at their university but was nonetheless chosen to represent the university in a nation-wide competition noted that

faculty in my department were perplexed by this unusual decision. Usually, the winning dissertation is also the one that represents [name of university]. Maybe they didn't want “to own it.” Who knows? Who cares? Again, it means nothing to me personally, but these things matter for jobs. Emotionally—I grew up under Israeli occupation, I can handle this. Again, I don't mean to sound brash or dismissive. But just to point out: this is what I expect. I have no idealized vision of society or politics that has been punctured by these things.

Priceless: this from one of two external reviewers of my SSHRC proposal "German-Jewish Echoes in modern Arab Thought"

beyond the social sciences and humanities research community		X			
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g) Briefly describe the proposal's strengths and weaknesses in relation to the above criteria:

I do not support the proposal because the author uses elaborate conceptual jargon to avoid the obvious, namely the presence of deep seated anti-Semitism and religiously based hatred of the state of Israel in Arab and Islamist intellectual life. He associates is project with Judith Butler, whose work aims at the destruction of the state of Israel, done of course with the full complement of humanistic sounding verbiage. Here we have a scholar drawing on "German-Jewish" intellectual traditions to contribute to a broader attack on the Jewish state. Why would the Canadian SSHRC wants to associate itself with this kind of assault?

Eight interviewees reported that submissions to academic journals and book publishers were met with negative reviews which cited the author's critical stance on Israeli human rights violations. Three interviewees disclosed that articles that

they were told had been accepted for inclusion in journals or edited collections did not appear in the final publications. In several incidents, submissions critical of Israel were withdrawn by the editors from the publication at the last minute or were reported to be “lost.” All of the incidents occurred in relation to mainstream disciplinary journals and publishers. One interviewee, a Palestinian, remarked:

I did not think I would get published in [name of prestigious disciplinary journal] or other mainstream journals[...] So, I self-disciplined and have not sent anything to these journals.

Academic respondents also reported incidents where research funding had been affected by their focus on Palestine-related issues. In one case, a national pro-Israel advocacy group intervened with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) in an attempt to defund the work of a professor who introduced the issue of Palestine into a research report. The respondent was subsequently deluged with Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)²⁰⁸ requests from the pro-Israel advocacy group and has had to seek legal support. A subsequent research proposal submitted by this respondent to SSHRC was declined funding. In another reported incident, in which a pro-Palestinian candidate was sidelined and her supporters accused of antisemitism, advocates for the candidate complained to their faculty association that several of the faculty members who had accused them of antisemitism were represented on a committee which presided over funding for faculty research grants.

Potential impact of adoption of the IHRA

Academic respondents overwhelmingly opposed the adoption at universities of the IHRA. Five respondents reported that the IHRA was directly referenced in student complaints to university administrators related to their course content.

One respondent bluntly described their uneasiness about the implementation of the IHRA:

There are serious concerns with how the IHRA definition would silence political criticism of Israel and impact scholarship and teaching. As a threat to academic freedom, it would create a chilly/poisoned environment on campuses. Since the illustrative examples label any reference to Israel as a racist endeavour to be antisemitic, a wide range of notable scholars such as Edward Said, Hannah Arendt, Achille Mbembe, Judith Butler, Cornel West,

208 <https://www.ontario.ca/document/freedom-information-and-protection-privacy-manual>

Audra Simpson, etc. would potentially be censored and excluded from syllabi due to their political views on Israel. This unprecedented promotion of Israeli exceptionalism is contrary to the values of academic freedom upon which universities and scholarly endeavours are grounded. It gives outside political lobby groups undue influence on the affairs of the university and academic research. If IHRA is adopted by universities it will affect campus life and the kinds of events that can be held, effectively shutting down any Palestine solidarity efforts and courses that integrate a critique of Israel as a settler colonial state that engages in anti-Palestinian racism. Personally, I would challenge this academic censure in solidarity with others being fully aware of the political, and potentially legal, backlash I would face.

Another respondent commented that

Reactive measures do not suffice in addressing the tangible threats posed by IHRA proponents against academic freedom. Racialized faculty like myself[...] engaged in anti-racism, anti-Islamophobia, and anti-colonial scholarship are the primary targets of the pro-Israel lobby. IHRA exacerbates the existing McCarthyite tactics of these groups against vulnerable faculty and students.

Given the indeterminate legal status of the IHRA, which has been adopted by the Canadian federal government and by other civil institutions, several respondents feared that they might face legal consequences for violating the IHRA. One legal scholar we interviewed was of the opinion that the application of the IHRA would seriously impact free speech and effectively criminalize endorsement of BDS. Another respondent has anticipated the possibility that the IHRA will be mobilized against their academic work and has taken pre-emptive steps:

Given the sensitive nature of my current research and my past experiences I have asked my university to provide the funds for a lawyer to vet my forthcoming report for any potential problems/threats and they have agreed. I am far more aware of the need to be legally protected, since academic freedom is no longer a given and cannot be taken for granted in the face of the IHRA lobby.

“I am far more aware of the need to be legally protected, since academic freedom is no longer a given and cannot be taken for granted in the face of the IHRA lobby.”

Self-Censorship

Reports of self-censorship figure prominently in the research findings. As one respondent commented:

I purposefully would avoid discussing Israeli settler colonialism in my classes (even when relevant to our studies) in fear of being labelled as an anti-Semite and of not being promoted to tenure. To me, this is an effective campaign to censor critics.

Another respondent quipped:

I'm not gonna lie to you. I don't teach about Palestine and that's an intentional risk aversion.

Respondents reported a variety of reasons for self-censoring in relation to Palestine. For one professor, speaking out about Israeli human rights abuses against Palestinians threatened their ability to be heard as a credible expert in their major area of research and activism:

As a progressive Jew, and somebody who spent time in Israel I am somebody who would have otherwise been very happy to do some work on Israel/Palestine. But when I saw what happened to me personally, as a result of my participation in [a highly controversial academic event], I said to myself, it's not that I won't get to do my academic work. Sure, I can go ahead and publish all I want on Israel/ Palestine, but my ability to speak as a credible expert on [their field of scholarship], will be harmed by the likes of [names of prominent pro-Israel academics in their field]. And that's not a price I was prepared to pay. Because in the long run, we're all harmed by that, right? Like, it's not about—it wasn't a personal choice, like, “I'm not up to it kind” of thing. It was that my main engagements are going to be harmed if I continue to do work [on Israel/Palestine], because all of these people will go after me. And I will no longer have the voice of the media, you know, when an important decision comes down, because I'll be seen as biased, right? Because that's the word they use. So, I've been very supportive, you know, behind the scenes with respect to colleagues who continue to work in that area. I'm not shy to speak out when the occasion requires it. But I'm not doing so, you know, as an expert on Israel/Palestine, because I want to be an expert on [their field of study and advocacy] and unfortunately, the writing was on the wall in terms of what the trade-off would be.

Several respondents reported removing Palestine-related material from their work in order to satisfy reviewers or avoid controversy early in their academic careers. As one Palestinian academic reported:

There are strategic decisions. For example, my first book included a lot more material on Palestine-Israel than in the first version. A reviewer suggested that I remove most of that for my own career's sake. I decided this was sage advice from a reviewer who genuinely was interested in seeing the book published. As a result, my first published book was much heavier on theory than I had planned. The other material was still published in a book chapter and a journal article. Also, I made a strategic decision to not publish opinion articles (about Palestine) until after tenure. I have followed that plan.

Another reason that respondents self-censored was their precarious academic status as pre-tenure faculty or as academic job seekers. The impact of precarity on the practice of self-censoring on issues related to Israel/Palestine should not be underestimated. Several interviewees reported that as pre-tenure faculty they avoided teaching, researching, or speaking publicly about Palestine. As one respondent put it:

I don't want to self-censor in the same way that I did when I was on the market. I think that maybe the lesson is that people who self-censor the most[...] are those in precarious positions.

Another respondent suspected that their work on Palestine might be related to their precarious academic status:

It's hard to say whether or how they've affected me professionally. I'm almost 39 and I've been a sessional for almost 10 years. It's certainly possible that devoting much of work to Palestine is a factor shaping why I have not advanced, but I cannot say for sure.

Other interview subjects talked about the emotional toll of self-censoring and the danger that the practice might become a habit:

I and other academics, other activists, the media, are always looking over our shoulders whenever we deal with Israel/Palestine issues. This constant apprehension takes a professional and emotional toll. For example, in the period when I was untenured, I was very careful not to be publicly active on the issue. For some, it is too easy to continue this learned activity once they receive tenure. Thus, the chilling effect is successful.

A racialized scholar who writes about Palestine remarked that:

Some days I think about the toll that this is taking and what might be possible if I worked on something else. How would that be for my sanity, well-being, and time.

A Jewish academic recalled the emotionally charged scene when they disclosed to their department chair that they were a supporter of the BDS movement:

And I never shook as hard as when I told my chair. I remember telling him that I was pro-BDS because he was encouraging me to do these, you know, there's all these Hebrew University fellowships or whatever, and grants and whatnot. And I had to explain I would never do them. And he was fine with it. But I was freaking out. Like it was really hard for me to say. You know, that kind of like the sense of self-censoring—an untenured professor could get in trouble. And I had friends who, you know, would tell me also openly that they were really afraid of stating openly that they were in favour of BDS.

A racialized professor explained their reluctance to speak about Palestine for fear of endangering their precariously positioned academic department:

And it seems like if I stand up for this issue, I'm just creating more problems, especially when you work at a Women's Studies department. They're so underfunded. They're so under resourced; they are always under attack.

Harassment and attempts at suppression of speech by pro-Israel students, Zionist campus groups, and external pro-Israel advocacy groups

Twenty-one out of 40 academics surveyed reported being targeted by campus pro-Israel Jewish student groups and/or by external pro-Israel advocacy groups. Ten interview subjects reported that they had been the victims of prolonged smear campaigns initiated by pro-Israel lobby groups. While some of these attacks have been publicized widely, the majority of incidents reported to us have not been made public. B'nai Brith Canada, Hillel, Honest Reporting Canada, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, and the Jewish Defense League were all named by respondents as groups which have attempted to shut down or forcefully disrupted campus events about Palestine, launched public slander campaigns against pro-Palestinian faculty, or lodged complaints with university administrators against faculty. In addition, as mentioned above, 34 Canadian academics have been targeted by Canary Mission, which, according to the U.S. Middle East Studies Association, is “a secretive but clearly non-academic political organization that uses its website to engage in defamatory attacks against college students who advocate for Palestinian rights, against student and other organizations engaged with this issue, and against faculty who teach, or speak

publicly, about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.”²⁰⁹

A faculty member who spoke publicly against Israel’s bombing of Gaza was attacked by pro-Israel Jewish student groups whose actions they subsequently described as “nefarious.” The Jewish Students Association at the university brought a harassment charge to the university harassment coordinator against the faculty member. At a subsequent rally where the faculty member spoke, there were local and national media present as well as a “human rights observer” from B’nai Brith Canada and a member of the regional Police Hate Crimes Taskforce. B’nai Brith subsequently issued what the respondent described as a “defamatory press release” naming them.

Several respondents reported that they were targeted by Honest Reporting Canada (HRC), which managed successfully to convince the right-wing media outlet Postmedia not to publish op-eds about Palestine authored by pro-Palestine faculty. As one interview subject reported:

My impression is that the HRC smear was effective in that it resulted in the [local newspaper] and associated Postmedia papers being much less willing to publish or interview me on issues relating to Palestine (and possibly in relation to other issues). I later learned (from a junior journalist) that the managing editor at the [name of newspaper] would get alerts from HRC complaining that they were publishing a “terrorist supporter” any time they published my name, on any topic.

Attempts by external pro-Israel organizations to shut down campus pro-Palestine events were frequently mentioned by our interviewees. According to one respondent:

Our humanities research unit hosted an exhibition of photographs, “Human Drama in Gaza,” and a well-attended panel on the exhibition followed by several days’ showing of films by Palestinian filmmakers and supporters of Palestinian efforts for peace and justice. There were half-a-dozen complaints from audience members about “lack of balance” and “pro-Palestinian bias.” What I learned only later from a sympathetic dean was that considerable pressure had been exerted by members of the local Jewish community[...] once it was known that the exhibition would be hosted by a gallery on campus. They wanted the exhibition and related programming cancelled, as had happened at a number of other campuses across Canada, or made unaffordable for the campus organizers through an insistence on massive and expensive security measures. But my status as an expert on academic freedom

209 <https://mesana.org/advocacy/committee-on-academic-freedom/2018/04/18/exposing-canary-mission>

and as a respected scholar, and the advanced nature of preparations for the exhibition, apparently protected the events from cancellation.

Their Jewish identity did not protect several of those we interviewed from being accused of antisemitism. One Jewish professor told us that

members of the institutional Jewish community have attempted to get me fired (but I had tenure) and/or reprimanded and/or my activities on behalf of the Palestinian cause curtailed. They warned my university administration that the university was becoming known as “the antisemitic university” because of my activities.

Another Jewish academic reported that they had been

baselessly, falsely accused of antisemitism on Twitter when I was giving a talk about my book and when I was participating in an online panel questioning the IHRA definition of antisemitism. In the former case, the department hosting the event was also contacted in an effort to pressure them to cancel, and they did not heed the request. In the latter case, the tweets tagged one of my employers, [name of university]. In the incidents described above, hostility towards me came from Hillel in both cases.

A Jewish academic who works in the public school system recounted that:

I brought a motion to my union local which, if it had passed, would have gone to our provincial AGM and asked them to create a committee that would look at ways of supporting BDS. A member leaked an advanced notice of the motions to B’nai Brith, which then triggered a national media circus that in turn led the [school] board to put me on “home assignment,” bar me from school property, and conduct an investigation into my classroom activities and comments. All of my students were interviewed and asked if I had ever said anything problematic in class. After 17 days, I was absolved of wrongdoing and returned to work.

Pro-Palestinian professors who have been targeted for their views reported having suffered professionally and personally from smear campaigns and incidents of harassment. Here in Canada, as in other countries, racialized faculty appear to bear the brunt of these attacks. One racialized respondent related the profound professional and emotional toll of an attack:

I became the target of racist defamation by the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center [accusing] me of supporting “terrorism.” A press release was circulated on several social media outlets by every major pro-Israel lobby group in

Canada. It also circulated on the personal pages of [pro-Israel] Canadian politicians. This triggered a wave of racist abuse directed at me online calling for my university to remove me from my job. The press release did not engage with any relevant substance from my talk, and any comment quoted in the release was completely taken out of context so as to bolster their claim regarding support for terrorism and antisemitism. The press release was used to cast aspersions on my character, undermine my credibility in my area of scholarly and professional expertise, and poison the minds of my colleagues with their racist accusations... This became a high-risk incident involving numerous offices including the Provost faculty, the Dean of Arts and Sciences[...] campus police, campus safety, and EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion offices). Instead of focusing on my research and pedagogical innovation, my energy became directed at time consuming meetings[...] with these offices. [A month's time] was spent obtaining legal counsel on the additional security implications this would have for my ability to cross borders, particularly travel to [their Middle East region of study...] since “terrorism accusations” are taken very seriously by governments around the world.

It is not surprising that scholars who identify as Palestinian have been notably affected by these attacks. One respondent related that

I gave a public talk [about the Palestinian/Israeli struggle] a 20 minute presentation followed by a 10 minute presentation from (name of second speaker), after which we both answered questions in the 30 minute Q&A session. This happened at [name of university]. The following day, the [local newspaper] wrote a story about the talk. The report quoted me calling the situation in Gaza a “concentration camp.” I emailed the paper and told them that I didn't actually say that, the other speaker did. They never responded to me. A few days later, a person from “Honest Reporting Canada” published an op-ed in the [name of local paper] basically calling me an antisemite. Since everything was recorded, I went to the [name of university] media relations person. Though the paper never returned my emails or answered my calls, they did listen to him. They removed the op-ed and edited the report.

Another Palestinian academic reported that they once showed a picture of Haifa pre-1948 in class to make the point the land was not empty before then:

Although I had explicitly noted that the power point presentation was strictly for students enrolled in the class, and not to be shared or publicized, it was sent to the Hillel Foundation and in turn they sent it to the History Department and to Jewish Studies. The Acting Chair then sent it to the Dean with a complaint. I was contacted by the Dean and had to meet with him to

- explain. Luckily the Dean didn't take it further.

Another Palestinian respondent described the emotional impact of working in an academic setting where scholarship on Palestinian human rights is unwelcome:

- The threatening environment is always there. Just being of Palestinian origin turns my life into a constant struggle to validate that there is such a thing as a Palestinian with a past, present, and future.

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Harassment and hostility from academic colleagues

Several interview subjects reported that they had been attacked publicly or received vexatious communications from their academic colleagues. One racialized professor described the continuous opposition they encountered within their academic department:

- On the door of my office, I had lots of posters of events, speakers and political posters related to struggle and resistance in the Middle East. And when I came to my office, all sorts of things were written on these posters, that, you know, things like, what about the struggle of women here? What about how you understand where the Middle East is and this and that. And then I received messages in a sort of a more thoughtful way, email messages from my colleagues [after a leave of absence] saying that “we're happy that you're back[...] but we don't like your views on Israel.” “Israel is the most democratic country in the Middle East.” And “Why don't you talk about Saudi Arabia?” “Why don't you talk about [name of Middle Eastern country] as you're from [name of same Middle Eastern country].” I mean, that type of a deeply racist, I would say, sort of comment, but in a more well-crafted rather than violent type of the message. And so, it created a very hostile environment. For years, some of these colleagues with whom I had very collegial relationships prior became cold towards me and were not talking to me.

A racialized Muslim professor related a disturbing incident in which a colleague automatically assumed that they were the source of a pro-Palestine flyer being circulated in the department:

There was a campaign against Heather Reisman[...] the Indigo lady. Because she was sending money—I think she still does—to [Israeli] soldiers.²¹⁰ And so obviously all these things are led by the students because they're way more political than faculty. And so, they did a flyer campaign. We share our mail room with our grad students and TA's and they teach for us. Anyway, somebody put these flyers in all the mailboxes. This was shortly after I was hired and you know, our department is actually relatively “quote unquote” diverse racially but actually, there's almost no Muslims there. Right? So, apropos of nothing, [an older faculty member] the kind of guy who says whatever he wants, whenever he wanted (and it was very hierarchical there), and he's like, “well, what are the patterns?” Like, “What are these in our mailboxes?” “Where did these come from?” Then he looks at me, he's like, “Do you know?” And I'm like—this is my first or second year—and everybody's looking at me! Just like, “No, I don't know!” And I didn't say anything.

A Palestinian professor became a target after publishing an article about an art exhibit at their university:

Some years ago, I wrote a short article[...] supporting the work of a local Lebanese-Canadian artist who used Arabic calligraphy (the word Kian— being) to make an artistic form which was placed at [name of university] grounds for a while. A retired professor was allowed to publish in [name of university newspaper] the most defamatory article stating I supported terrorism, because the word Kian looks like the Ottoman tughra²¹¹ —from there he went on an abusive rant: “The Ottomans destroyed Constantinople,” [he] linked this to “madrasas of terrorism” and went off on a mad like tirade—calling upon the university to fire me and that I should never have been hired at [name of university]. I am not kidding; this is a real story. The Chair at a time wrote me a couple of sentences saying not to worry about it... but that was it.

A Jewish faculty member described their experience of feeling betrayed by academic colleagues who were affiliated with the institutional Jewish community. After they had tried to solicit these colleagues' input, this professor was very

210 Canadian business moguls Heather Reisman and Gerry Schwartz founded and raised millions of dollars for Heseq, an organization that supports immigrant or “lone” soldiers in the Israel Defense Forces. See Glen Wheeler, “Indigo's Israel Problem,” *NOW Magazine*, June 7, 2007 <https://nowtoronto.com/news/indigos-israel-problem>

211 A calligraphic monogram, seal, or signature of a sultan that was affixed to all official documents and correspondence.

publicly attacked in relation to a high-profile event that they had helped to organize:

I've always been a bridge builder in my own life, right? So, I'm not one of these anti-Zionists who doesn't engage with the enemy, so to speak; I engage. That's the way I work. Like, I feel like, if you really want to make a difference, you have to be willing to have conversations, right? So, when this [event] was planned, it was my job to talk to [Jewish communal organizations]. And these were all people that I knew. People who I go back with for decades, as a result of shared advocacy. [I knew them] not just around Israel/Palestine issues, but on shared commitments to human rights more broadly. And I feel like they all betrayed me. I went in good faith, with the [event's] terms of reference with the proposed advisory committee that included a spectrum of people from the critical to the, you know, strongly Zionist. [...] And, you know, everybody to my face was, like, thanking me for, you know, the approach. Some are more honest than others. I think that there were a couple that were incredibly dishonest, because they didn't tell me that they were planning a frontal assault on the [event] while I was sitting in their office.

I remember talking to [name of well-known scholar] and then the next week, I see [their negative] op-ed in the National Post, so basically, you don't treat colleagues like that, right? When I made a good faith effort to say, "this is what we're doing. We'd love your input on it, if you have any particular issues, I'm here to work with you; we want this to be a dialogue, we want it to be a credible [event], where people from a multiplicity of different perspectives have a voice." That's the role of academics. And basically, from the Jewish organized community I had nothing but duplicity, dishonesty, and lack of integrity, frankly. And I will say, it was the most horrendous experience of my life, like really awful, because people that I have long known and at least respected and agreed to disagree with on these issues, slam[med] the door in my face, and were quite cruel ... And of course, I lost respect for all of them, all of them. The tenor of what came back to me, not necessarily directly out of those people's mouths, but from their organizations was that I was a self-hating Jew. And it's like, it's the furthest thing from the truth[...] The Jewish community has to get off its high horse that somehow we can't talk about those problems in Israel. Because to the extent that we refuse to do so, we're really sowing the seeds for the destruction of the State of Israel in the long run.

A professor of Middle Eastern origin who had been active in pro-Palestine advocacy described steps they took after a very public incident in which an academic colleague attacked them aggressively on a panel addressing poverty and mental health in Canada:

He started attacking me, totally out of blue, not related at all to the panel. I confronted him saying “I don't understand what you're talking about; this is not my point.” And he lashed back at me that I was an antisemite therefore I cannot formulate an opinion on this very panel. And so, I complained about him to the other panelists, to the [head of my department] who took it to the provost's office because I had requested that a disciplinary letter to be put in [the harasser's] file. And we did that because he was so violent—publicly so disrespectful and violent. And then they said that they will do it, but I don't know if they've done it. But he is notorious. Everywhere that I went, he would be there from then on, and he intimidated and created such a fearful environment for me. He was awful. He was everywhere. He was predatory.

Another respondent echoed what several of our interview subjects had reported:

Of course, some of my colleagues were very, very supportive. Other colleagues were not, they would make comments about how I was working with terrorists. You know, whatever. The “usual.”

Several respondents indicated that while they had not been directly targeted in a hostile manner, they were “advised” by colleagues about the consequences of writing, speaking, or engaging in pro-Palestine activism. In one incident told to us by a Jewish academic:

A colleague asked me something innocuous, maybe about presenting in Israel or something like that. And I said, why I would never do that, because I support the Palestinian call for boycott of [Israeli] institutions. And she turned and she said, Well, who's going to sit on your tenure committee then? Later on I realized she wasn't trying to threaten me. But I felt very threatened and I barely slept for a couple of days.

For several respondents, support from colleagues has remained positive but muted. One respondent told us that:

It's mostly been quiet support, rarely expressed openly. Despite the egregious cases we all know about, there is more room to speak freely about this issue in the university than I think we appreciate. My view is, consequently, that there is far too much self-censorship by academics. And that's a real problem for academics and for intellectuals generally. Edward Said said it beautifully: “Nothing in my view is more reprehensible than those habits of mind in the intellectual that induce avoidance, that characteristic turning away from a difficult and principled position which you know to be the right one, but which you decide not to take ...” (Representations of the Intellectual, 1996, pp. 100–101).

The emotional impact of targeting, harassment, and hostility

Numerous respondents indicated that they had suffered significantly from the emotional stress of working in a hostile environment. A Palestinian professor talked about their hesitancy to discuss their personal history and background and the resultant sense of isolation:

I didn't feel at ease in my workplace, and I can't point to a single thing any one colleague did necessarily, but rather—although I had some colleagues who were clearly Zionist, and occasionally would express some sentiment that would make me feel uncomfortable. [...] It was like this cloud hanging over you, you know. So, I mean in terms of personally I never really, for instance, talked about myself—my personal, you know, my family, my past... I just generally felt quite... yeah, it was quite isolating. But also, it's like I wouldn't talk about myself. It wasn't just that I wouldn't talk about my politics, but I wouldn't talk about myself. It does take a toll; it does. Because I consider myself to be a pretty direct and honest person so, if you can't even talk about your identity? I feel like it kind of challenges what I consider to be a core foundation or element of my personality.

Another Palestinian interviewee described being made to feel like a biological threat:

Okay, so the emotional impact is I feel that I am like, kind of like, a bacteria. I don't really know how else to describe it. I feel like I am this dirty existence. Like, I'm a dirty word, I have a dirty identity. And if I talk about it, it ruins everything. Like it ruins the department, and it ruins their PR, and it ruins the university.

Yet another Palestinian academic told us that:

Emotionally it is a daily trauma waking up in a society where the dominant narrative erases you, and recognizes your colonizer as the legitimate owner of your land, that you are stereotyped as a terrorist instead of a victim, that teaching about it becomes akin to a battle that you might lose any time.

A racialized faculty member who has been the subject of personal and professional attacks related that:

The emotional toll has been heavy ... When things were at their worst I was dealing with anxiety and high level of stress. Even responding to this questionnaire is emotionally triggering.

A Jewish professor who has faced relentless attacks by Jewish groups revealed that the harassment had

damaged my professional reputation and it was shattering to me emotionally. It has left me feeling insecure with past colleagues. I felt humiliated and ashamed.

The emotional toll has been heavy ... When things were at their worst I was dealing with anxiety and high level of stress. Even responding to this questionnaire is emotionally triggering.

Political interference by university administration

Interviewees offered numerous examples of political interference by university administration into controversial issues related to Palestine/Israel. One respondent described their university's response to an academic conference at their university:

There is a situation that happened at [name of university] that I know about which I think may have involved outside interference. It was around a conference that was being organized. There were two Palestinian speakers invited—one from Ramallah, and one who's based in the UK. And I think it was on the basis of the fact that they were going to be keynote speakers that the trouble started. The two conference organizers, who are not junior, I mean, these are well-established sorts of academics, they were called into the president's office. They were hauled in there and grilled. And they went ahead and did their conference with these speakers. But this added a lot of stress and a lot of extra work onto doing that. Like, you can see how less committed people would just say, "Forget it," but they weren't going to do that.

A racialized faculty member described another instance of university interference:

One of the incidents was when I circulated on the listserv of [name of department] an event related to Palestine... it was just an event on campus, like any other event that we would post on the list serve. I did that. And then immediately after, I started receiving threatening messages, and then some letters from the president's office, forwarding me the letters from two

previous presidents requesting that the president remove me as the director of [name of department]. So, you can imagine that even a former president, knowing the policy of the university, knowing the issues of academic freedom, and all the policies that are there to sort of protect us was asking the current president to remove me.

One respondent reported how their department was forced by the university to rescind a decision to cancel academic cooperation with an Israeli institution:

The Israeli embassy and other pro-Zionist people[...] immediately got in touch with the university. And they pressured our acting dean at the time. I don't think he had any idea of what [kind of] bomb he was stepping on. And the university basically pressured us—basically told us that we could just forget it. That we had no power to make such a decision as a faculty, that our faculty council was “portative.” That meant we could only give advice; we did not have any democratic power. And that, you know, we could not break our relationship with this outfit in Israel. And so, we got reprimanded. But we were forced to rescind our decision and were basically told we had no right to make that decision in the first place. You know, that was it. So that was the worst case.

In another incident reported to us, a university president publicly condemned the adoption of BDS by students:

After the undergraduate students voted for BDS, the president of the university issued a statement condemning BDS and the vote. Such statements send a message to faculty, not to mention students, about what is expected on campus—not Palestinian solidarity—contributing to the “chill.” What would it be like if administration would take seriously BDS mandates representing tens of thousands of students and acted accordingly to support Palestinian human rights and uphold international law?

Classroom surveillance

Classroom surveillance of professors by pro-Israel students is a documented tactic used by on- and off-campus pro-Israel organizations.²¹² Concerns about surveillance have grown as universities increasingly embrace online platforms, particularly in the wake of the global COVID pandemic. One racialized academic

212 *The Palestine Exception to Free Speech*, Palestine Legal and the Center for Constitutional Rights, September, 2015.

who has had to deal with career-threatening attacks by pro-Israel organizations observed:

I am more cautious of what I say in my classes, especially if they are recorded and can be shared via remote teaching. I know I am being monitored by the lobby groups that have targeted me. At the Centre for the Rule of Law conference²¹³ I attended in 2018, they recruited 60 volunteers to track and document scholars/activists/organizations that are critical of Israel. They were bringing in the Lawfare movement from the US[...] to fight legal battles to defend Israel in Canada. I will never back down from taking the same principled stand, but because of my experience I am more aware of how what I say can be used against me. I am definitely more mindful and strategic though refuse to be censored or politically silenced.

Another interviewee described their experience as a racialized person who teaches about the Middle East:

Over the years, I've been teaching a course on [the Middle East] and frequently, I will receive a message from someone, different people like posing as being a student interested in in this course, and I can sense that this is testing or looking for more factual information. They want to know if I can share my course outline. And do I cover issues related to Palestine? How do I define the Middle East? Sometimes directly naming if Israel is included, sometimes by questioning the way that the questions are framed like, what constitutes the Middle East for you, what are the issues? And what period? I can feel it, that it is someone that is looking for, sort of interrogating me on the type of a scholarship or the teaching that I'm doing. So, this is another method of threat, sort of intimidation, and direct intervention.

But student or not a student, I think that's not the issue. The issue is how [I am] being identified as someone who needs to be watched. People are surveilling the university by monitoring who is teaching what and how the relationship between Palestine and Israel is covered in the courses and in the discussion on campuses. They are using this type of information, the teaching, the courses, the debates in classes and the scholarship that it is being produced. So, it's, it's a form of intimidation. And it's a method of surveillance, I would say.

213 <https://www.cftrl.org/conference-2019.html>

A professor who is active in pro-Palestine politics outlined their experience with student complaints:

When presenting materials critical of Israel, I am constantly harassed by students who claim that I am antisemitic in class. This usually results in many emails and extra time holding discussions defending my position in office hours. All of this is also conducted while students hold the specific threat of defaming me as an antisemite publicly, to my employer, and to other students. This happens every time Israel is mentioned in a critical light in my classes. In an introductory class, one of my students listed Israel as an example of a settler colonial state (I had asked students to give examples of settler colonialism, in a lecture largely focused on Canada). I received a flurry of emails and several comments claiming that I had allowed an antisemitic remark to go unchecked in my class. Speaking critically about Israeli policies, requires an inordinate amount of background information and justification—so much so, that one is left with little time to actually deal with substantive critiques. This is not the case for critiques of any other settler colonial societies. Pro-Israeli students trained to defend Hasbara strategically target professors who are critical of Israeli policies. Anytime Israel is mentioned in a critical tone in my classes, I am immediately charged with disseminating antisemitic tropes, even blood libel. The charges amount to defamation—and the threat hanging over professors is that they will be targeted by an active harassment campaign. I see this as censorship. I purposefully would avoid discussing Israeli settler colonialism in my classes (even when relevant to our studies) in fear of being labelled as an antisemite and of not being promoted to tenure. To me, this is an effective campaign to censor critics.

Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian racism

Nine academic respondents reported encountering Islamophobia and/or anti-Palestinian racism from colleagues, students, and at campus events and protests. The examples offered by those interviewed demonstrate the ways in which these forms of hate frequently intersect with expressions of sexism and homophobia.

A Palestinian professor described colleagues' responses to a research project that involved travel to Palestine/Israel:

They were telling me that Palestinian women aren't, aren't really allowed to speak in the West Bank, that Palestinian men will be really upset if they speak about their experiences. And that I should be very fearful of the Palestinian men. And if I [...] interviewed Palestinian women, that there

could be consequences for these women. And so... if I'm in trouble, I need to seek out an Israeli soldier. And I remember being in complete shock, but also wondering if I just had it wrong. Like, was I naive? I was shaking; like it shook me, right? Because I thought, "Am I misreading my own culture?"

Several interview subjects recounted their experiences of witnessing expressions of anti-Palestinian racism and Islamophobia at campus political events. One respondent reported:

I have been to numerous demonstrations at [name of university] where very hateful expressions by pro-Israel students and faculty are made. Too many to count.

Another professor interviewed recounted that they had

seen pro-Israeli students call Palestinians "terrorists," "uncivilized," and "homophobic."

A racialized professor had

explicit anti-Muslim messages written on articles and images I have posted on my office door.

A Palestinian academic summed up their experience in a way that reflected the sentiment of several other participants:

The most common [expression] is that Palestinians are violent and backwards, and they're the root cause of the conflict. This is so prevalent. The level of dehumanization is really high. It's the reality of the structure as a whole, that you can stereotype, demonize, and dehumanize Palestinians and that would not only be acceptable but agreeable.

When asked about the link between their identity and their experiences of harassment and hostility, one academic answered "Well, I think having a Muslim name, absolutely." Another respondent cited how the fact that "being from the Middle East plays a major role. It has been argued that I'm not objective, I can't be objective in my views." This observation was confirmed by another interview subject who told us that "Some people explain my views by the fact that I am Arab."

Some respondents directly acknowledged how their white racial identities protected them from the most egregious forms of targeting. One Jewish interviewee commented

I'm a white guy in a really wealthy university, and in a good tenured position. So, I don't have to go through what my Palestinian colleagues have to go through, which is probably double or triple the amount of fear that I have to deal with.

Another white respondent told us:

I have privilege that permits me to express myself more freely than most in more situations than most—so cis, upper middle class, able bodied, etc. In other words, these things mean that I am less likely to face recriminations and if I do, they are probably going to stick less than for folks in other positions.

Respondents reported both their own experiences of Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian racism and those experiences that their students had shared with them as trusted faculty. In a recent incident, a student reported to the respondent that they had witnessed another professor state that what Palestinians were facing was a “punishment from God.” Another respondent told us that:

A Palestinian student reported how she was always shut down when raising concerns about Palestine in class or even privately with profs. She felt like they did not want to deal with the issues even though she was in a Global Studies program. She also was extremely concerned about the implications of IHRA for Palestinian students since not being able to refer to Israel as “as racist endeavour” denied her the ability to name her oppression. She felt that IHRA was a form of political erasure for Palestinians and this was something she experienced viscerally on campus. It is important to note the intersection between anti-Arab/Palestinian racism and Islamophobia. This has been an issue on our campus and in the experience of Muslim and Palestinian students.

In another incident reported to us,

Three Muslim female students who were part of the Muslim Student Association and a Palestinian student group were part of an Israeli Apartheid Week event. They built an apartheid wall on the concourse. Some students were playing Israel Defense Forces soldiers and created check points as a simulation. Some of the women were wearing keffiyehs as hijabs. After the event ended, they were taking down their display and some male members of Hillel grabbed their keffiyeh headscarves off their heads. It was later in the evening and no one was around, no security.

Study data: Students and activists

Important data on public cases of suppression of speech and activism are being compiled in the United States by Palestine Legal, including in their important 2015 report *The Palestine Exception to Free Speech* and in yearly updates. In their reports, Palestine Legal documents tactics commonly employed against pro-Palestinian student activists in the U.S., including: spurious accusations of antisemitism, false and racist allegations of support for terrorism, the use of bureaucratic barriers to student activism, public doxing, and other tactics. We found all of these to be common in Canada as well. However, as in the case of Canadian academics, very little qualitative research has been done that explores the multidimensionality of the repression faced by students and community activists who work for Palestinian human rights. Consequently, our objective in this report is to bring to light the impact of harassment and intimidation on the academic careers and perceptions of safety and well-being of pro-Palestinian students and community activists, paying particular attention to the experiences of those from marginalized groups. We were able to discern the following themes from our interviews with students:

- Administrative repression
- Self-censorship
- Doxxing and public smear campaigns
- Threats of violence, acts of violence, and attempted use of violence
- Anti-Palestinian racism and Islamophobia
- Emotional distress.

We received 23 testimonies from students or interviewees who related their experiences on Canadian university campuses. Of those students, 9 identified as Palestinian, 4 identified as (non-Palestinian) racialized, and 10 identified as white. We also collected data from 10 self-identified Jewish students, and 3 self-identified Muslim students. Testimonies came from students who were or had been at McGill University (5), York University (5), Concordia University (4), University of Toronto (3), Carleton University (2), University of Western Ontario (2), University of British Columbia (1), McMaster University (1), and Queen's University (1).

Suppression of student activism: Administrative repression

Palestine Legal describes bureaucratic barriers as one of the most common strategies used to hinder Palestine-related campus organising. In the Canadian context, our research has found these bureaucratic methods to have been used by both university administrations and student unions in order to limit student activism for Palestinian human rights. While some tactics have been public and overt, subtler methods are often employed to prevent backlash and media coverage. Eleven students from six Canadian universities described experiencing some form of administrative repression in relation to their pro-Palestinian campus activism. The tactics used by university administrations include the

- banning of posters
- placing last minute and burdensome costs on events
- limiting students' ability to book spaces for events
- imposing disciplinary measures on activists
- threatening to shut down pro-Palestinian clubs
- conducting one-on-one meetings with student activists to warn them of potential career damage
- condemning of student-organized pro-Palestine events by campus administrators.

Over the past decade and a half, we have seen the proliferation of attempts to stifle campus pro-Palestinian activism. One notable example was Carleton University's 2009 banning of a poster advertising that year's Israel Apartheid Week events on campus. Carleton administrators claimed that the poster, which depicted an Israeli military helicopter dropping a shell on a Palestinian child, was "inflammatory" and could lead to infringements of Ontario's Human Rights Code.²¹⁴ This explicit ban caused widespread attention and backlash as well as a lawsuit based on what was seen by many as suppression of freedom of expression. While the university eventually succeeded in having the legal action dismissed, the attention the incident received and reputational damage to the university was significant.

A Palestine solidarity activist who attended Carleton in the years following this incident described the serious impact it had on the university's relation to campus organizing:

214 <https://thecjn.ca/perspectives/opinions/ottawa-universities-ban-apartheid-week-poster/>

I think just that we always knew that the university's stance was not with us; we knew because of the history. I think in the early 2000s, like 2008, 2009, 2010, a lot of the universities were uncalculated in their attacks on Palestinian student organizers, but then it became more and more careful. So, it went from like openly saying that they were against or trying to ban terms like Israeli Apartheid or trying to ban posters, to becoming more hidden or harder to challenge, like making it difficult to book rooms, making it difficult to book tables so that you couldn't speak to students, or using bureaucratic things to stifle student organizers[...] They don't want us to speak about Israeli Apartheid on campus and it's just a matter of how they're going to prevent that.

This student noted that when booking rooms for events,

We would have to book them well in advance, and often we would book them through OPIRG (Ontario Public Interest Research Group) and not put SAIAs (Students Against Israeli Apartheid) name on it for example, and I think that's a really common experience for Palestine organizers.

Another student described the imposition of financial barriers to prevent an Israeli Apartheid Week panel at Université de Montréal from taking place:

Two [or] three days before the event took place, the university administration, without any notice, were like “Alright if you guys want this event to happen you have to give us \$3000 in security costs to ensure the proper security at the events.”[...] You know if they would have told us two weeks before, or whatever, we would have found a way to maybe fundraise or maybe bring this up to the university administration and negotiate something out, but bringing it up two days before [then] your intention is to cancel the event.

Students noted similar experiences at King's University College, University of Ottawa, Concordia University, and Western University, where a former student reported threats from university administrators to have the Palestine-solidarity club banned altogether. Notably, not all campus groups experienced such repression. One student interviewed told us that their university's president considered it a matter of freedom of expression to allow Palestine-related organising on campus. However, based on the testimonies we have gathered, it is evident that bureaucratic barriers are widely used by many Canadian universities to prevent discussions relating to Palestine from taking place on their campuses.

In some cases, university administrators actively condemned students who were already being publicly smeared and harassed by on-campus pro-Israel organizations. In these cases, rather than defending their students, the universities

implicitly supported the harassment campaigns. The students we interviewed felt that the condemnation levelled at them by the university administration actually provoked further harassment.

One student who became the centre of a public media storm described the following:

While the dean of students acknowledged that I might have safety concerns, the university offered no material support and in fact contributed to the attacks through public condemnation.

One McGill-based student-activist noted:

In my experience in the past three and a half years I don't think I've ever seen an instance where the administration is trying to be supportive, or —not even supportive but maybe like, neutral. They're always making it clear that SPHR [Students for Palestinian Human Rights], BDS, whatever kind of Palestine activism on campus is not welcomed and is[...] definitely not appreciated on campus.

A student at another university described the unequal power dynamics evident when she was summoned, unaccompanied, into an administrator's office and reprimanded for attending a protest:

But at the end of the day, I am a woman, I am a visible minority, and I am woman of colour and[...] I didn't realize it at the time but the power differential between us, as students—not just as students—but of us as children of immigrants or immigrants ourselves and visible minorities and then him being you know, “white alpha male,” even without the power differential of student and the head of the [university office] there was definitely that power differential of “You have to listen to me or I will get you in trouble.”

When asked if she were made to feel her educational future was at stake, she responded:

You know when you're sitting with somebody in an office for two hours, and they're drilling you on what stupid choices you just made, and the end—in that moment, I did feel, yes. I did feel like “I need to lay low.”

Political activism on Palestine has recently spread to Canadian high schools.²¹⁵ In addition to accounts from university students, we received the testimonies of two high school students who recounted that school administrators and teachers acted to silence discussion surrounding Palestine.

The testimonies we have gathered make it clear that not only are Canadian universities failing in their duty to protect student activists on their campuses, but many are implicated in the silencing of pro-Palestinian student activism.

Self-Censorship

Our student respondents described various ways in which a chilling effect was taking place in relation to their Palestine solidarity engagement. Several students reported feeling concerned about potential negative reactions from their professors in response to their politics. As one Palestinian student described:

So there were certain classes where I really self-censored just because I knew the political leanings of the professor or I didn't know the political leanings of the professor, where like, I was a little bit unsure.

A Jewish student had similar concerns:

In general, I was aware that bringing up Palestine with regular, moderate professors could generate a bias against me.

Even students who perceived their professors to be supportive of their political positions stated that they were still cautious about raising the issue of Palestine in class. One student noted:

I was lucky enough that most of my professors allowed me to speak on the topic but there was always a nervousness around it.

For students working on issues related to Palestine, witnessing harassment of their peers caused added stress and increased fear regarding their own work. One student whose friend had become the target of a public campaign described the following:

215 Joanne Lavoie, "Controversy Erupts as Toronto Students Call for End to Anti-Palestinian Racism in the TDSB," *North York Mirror*, March 7, 2022, https://www.toronto.com/news/controversy-erupts-as-toronto-students-call-for-end-to-anti-palestinian-racism-within-the-tdsb/article_f0482370-c6ec-5f5d-ad8f-2137141d5cc2.html?

One faculty member[...] warned me that my thesis “better be good and solid,” prompting me to spend more time completing my thesis, including more references, and ultimately writing a much longer document.

Some students’ concerns extended beyond the classroom and onto the campus more broadly. A Jewish student described their hesitancy to speak critically about Israeli policies:

There wasn't one particular instance, but rather an atmosphere in which I felt that if I expressed any anti-Zionist, pro-BDS, or relatively mild criticism of Israel and its policies, then I would experience hostile resistance that I didn't feel confident responding to.

Several students expressed concern with how harassment campaigns harm their chances of employment or their relationship with current or future employers. As one student who had been publicly involved in protests on their campus described:

Where self-censoring happens is when you realize your livelihood is at stake. So, the only time where I felt like shit is getting serious, for lack of better words, was when one of my workplaces was getting emails and phone calls about what was happening at [their campus].

Several students, many of whom were Jewish, feared repercussions if they were to raise the issue of Palestine in spaces run by or related to mainstream Jewish campus clubs. One Jewish student who had been deeply involved in mainstream campus Jewish life explained:

I had a few classes with the president of one of the Jewish clubs, so I would be careful not to get her riled up during class.

This student was extremely hesitant to speak up for Palestinian human rights in the company of other Jews:

I felt this most in Jewish-aligned spaces on campus, from Chabad (of which I was the founding President), Hillel[...] and Jewish Studies classes.

For many Palestine solidarity activists on campus, protection from harassment and doxing became a priority. One SPHR activist described how they had decided to remove individual activists’ names from the club’s publicly available material. Pro-Palestinian articles were subsequently published under the name of their club rather than being attributed to individual authors.

When asked to describe the rationale for this decision, they stated the following:

I think recently we've been doing a good job at trying to keep members of SPHR anonymous—like any time we publish an article it's always kind of like “members of SPHR”[...] So, in 2016 when the BDS vote was happening[...] a lot of our members were put onto Canary Mission. A handful, a few who were really, really involved were blacklisted on the site[...] and so when I joined, the main topic we were focusing on is how are we gonna be safe? We had trainings about cyber security and how to make your Facebook profile private so that only people you have mutual friends with can see your account, like it was a lot of focus on that—[and] not including names when we're interviewed for articles.

Students, for whom publication of articles and other campus activism might have served as an asset in securing future opportunities for study and employment, often felt that they needed to obscure their involvement in pro-Palestine activities for fear of negative consequences.

Doxxing and public smear campaigns

Canary Mission

As described above, Canary mission is a pro-Israel website which publishes photos and links to social media accounts of individuals (largely students and professors) whom it accuses of antisemitism or support for terrorism based on their public pro-Palestinian activism. A listing on Canary Mission will often be one of the first links to appear when searching Google for the name of an individual who has been targeted. Being identified on Canary Mission can be particularly damaging for students or recent graduates who are looking for employment. The impact, according to the Middle East Studies Association of North America's Committee on Academic Freedom, is “what is in effect a blacklist, reminiscent of the ‘Red Scare’ and McCarthyism.” The preponderance of visibly Muslim individuals, people of Middle Eastern origin, and racialized people is perhaps the most notable feature of the Canary Mission website.

While the Canary Mission website displays a preponderance of Americans, we managed to identify 125 Canadians who are targeted there, including 88 students, 34 professors and 3 community activists. To do this, we searched the website for student organisations which are largely or solely active in Canada — namely Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA), SPHR, and IJV. We then verified that the profile of those identified with these organisations had been targeted for activities

within Canada. For professors, who are often not tagged to a specific organisation, we scanned the entire list of professors on the Canary Mission website and confirmed whether or not they were listed for activities engaged in while working in Canada. Because information posted on Canary Mission is frequently partial, it is likely that we failed to identify all of the Canadians targeted.

Several of those targeted on the Canary Mission website were among our interviewees, and they provide insight into how the “chilling effect” impacts student activists’ lives even after leaving the university. One Palestinian activist who recently graduated described to us how their Canary Mission profile has impacted their attempts to find both employment and housing. As they explained:

The Canary Mission page on me was not that bad. But it was updated ... to claim that I've “defended terrorists.” The first thing when you Google me is that [their name] has “defended terrorists.” I was applying for apartments[...] and then some real estate agent was like, “Oh well, we did a background check, and it says something about you being a—like supporting terrorists.” But now the thing is[...] how many times I was rejected ‘cause “we found someone more qualified,” right? But that's maybe a code word for “What is this shit on Google when we fucking Google you?” [...] Basically, their intention is to starve us to death. And, we live in a capitalist world where there's no safety net... I don't think it's safe right now to talk about Palestine.

Threats of violence

Several of the students and activists we interviewed reported receiving threats of violence. Five respondents reported receiving threatening internet or text messages. Two reported receiving in-person threats, and one reported both online and in-person threats. In another case, graduate students involved in a BDS campaign found threats hand-delivered to their student mailboxes. Of those threats of violence received by students, three of them included death threats and one included a threat of sexual violence. While some interviewees believed these threats would not be actualized, we cannot minimize the psychological distress caused to those targeted. Neither can we ignore the role such threats play in creating a chilling effect on pro-Palestine speech and activism.

Threats of violence were often linked to volatile campus events that were covered by the mainstream media. One Palestinian student activist described their experience in the wake of such an event:

My profile used to be entirely public. So, whenever I posted something, anybody and everybody could see it. So very often I would get messages on

Messenger or Instagram or whatever. And it would be blatant racist insults. Followed by some form of anti-Palestinian sentiment and occasionally a threat of physical assault. And then at some point, when it's at the heat of a political moment, like the [2019] York protests, you're seeing death threats are starting to come out much more often.

A Jewish student we interviewed received death threats for publishing a pro-Palestinian article in their campus paper during an ongoing BDS campaign. Another activist reported that during their time as a student, Never Again Canada, a group known to be affiliated with the Jewish Defense League,²¹⁶ posted threats on their Facebook page suggesting that the student and their co-organizers “should be killed,” using language that was generic enough to prevent the pressing of legal charges. The threats did not come from identifiable organizational accounts but rather from personal email and social media platforms.

Threats of sexual violence and homophobic and/or transphobic harassment in response to their pro-Palestinian advocacy were experienced by a third of our student respondents. One non-binary Arab student described their interaction with a student politician on campus:

He also was very homophobic to me and misgendered me, saying that because I support Hamas terrorists—and also called me a terrorist— that means that I'm actually homophobic and not really gay, while also misgendering me. Just so many awful things.

Some forms of harassment involved claims that Muslims are inherently homophobic while other forms of attack utilized familiar homophobic epithets when targeting activists. While these two strategies may reflect the different ideological inclinations of the harassers, they both signal that Palestine solidarity is outside the realm of political and social normativity.

Acts of violence and attempted use of violence

Six incidents of violence or attempted use of violence were reported to us by respondents. Most of these incidents took place at protests or rallies. A community activist recalled one such event:

■ Approximately nine of us went to protest the JNF [Jewish National Fund]-

216 Martin Patriquin, “The Angry Radical Right,” *Macleans*, January 21, 2016, <https://www.macleans.ca/politics/the-angry-radical-right/>

Toronto's "Negev Gala" kick-off event with former Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz at Beth David Synagogue in the north end of Toronto. We staged three different interruptions, non-violently, protesting the recent attacks of the summer of 2014 on Palestinians in Gaza where over 2200 were murdered by the Israeli Army. We were violently attacked, with one person having her neck grabbed by two men. We were happy to leave, but were pushed and shoved violently.

A student organizer whose club repeatedly found their posters torn down reported that:

There was a gentleman who actually brandished a knife while I had confronted him tearing down posters, and then used the knife to cut the poster off the wall and was brandishing it while he was doing that, which is also quite intimidating. And then subsequently, as we were following this individual and filming him so that we can identify him, he assaulted my friend with an umbrella.

Another incident reported to us took place during a panel at the Université de Montréal in which one of the panelists, a former Israel Defense Forces soldier who spoke out against Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory, was physically assaulted before security personnel were able to stop the assailant, who was wearing an Israel Defense Forces tee-shirt.

Another student respondent was called to his club's campus office when a member of the Jewish Defense League appeared and began threatening club members before becoming violent:

He went over there and threatened the president[...] of the Palestine Solidarity club there—in her office. And he tore down a banner that said "Israeli Apartheid" or something, and he took it somewhere and filmed himself taking a piss on it. And then posted that on his Facebook. And he was like "This is what I think of you Arabs." Just acting very tough, but very intimidating, like you don't know if he's actually going to do something or not.

While pro-Palestine protesters at York University were falsely accused²¹⁷ of fomenting violence during a visit to campus by Israeli Defense Force soldiers in 2019, our respondents denied such allegations and reported that significant violence was actually enacted by the pro-Israel demonstrators.

217 Davide Mastracci, "Debunking Politicians' Lies about the York University Protest," *Medium*, November 26, 2019, <https://medium.com/@DavideMastracci/debunking-politicians-lies-about-the-york-university-protest-9b9cf096a2f8>

One Jewish activist we interviewed described their experience of the event:

The JDL and many counter-protestors massed and began shouting. I joined in with a line of marshals. We linked arms in an effort to keep our side separate and safe from the JDL and others in their camp. There was a lot of taunting and pushing and shoving and kicking. I had elbow jabs in my back. But the two people of colour on either side of me were punched and pushed much more than I. And the York Security was as good as worthless. One person, from our side, was sent to hospital with a concussion.

Our research verifies that both threats of violence and actual acts of violence have been carried out against pro-Palestinian activists in Canada, and both appear to factors in creating a “chilling effect” on political speech and activism opposing Israel’s military attacks and the political subjugation of Palestinians under its control.

Anti-Palestinian racism and Islamophobia

Ten student respondents reported encountering Islamophobia and/or anti-Palestinian racism in their activism. These incidents happened both online and in person. Notably, over half of racialized respondents reported being directly subjected to Islamophobic slurs and/or anti-Palestinian racism, including being called the “sand N-word.”

One student related how being visibly racialized or identified as Palestinian impacted the attacks they and other students faced:

Being visibly Arab, being recognizably Palestinian... puts you in a much more vulnerable position. But once they're recognized as Arab, whether they have, you know, racialized so to speak features, it wouldn't really matter. It's just much more of the confirmation of the identity of the person.

As discussed above, allegations that activists are “sympathetic to terrorism,” are aligned with terrorist groups, or are themselves terrorists function as common expressions of Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian racism.

Many of those we interviewed faced these defamatory accusations. As one respondent told us:

■ I guess sometimes I can be an easier target. I've been racialized directly by

being called a terrorist. You know, someone who is not a Palestinian may be called a supporter of terrorists, or terrorist supporter, I've been called a terrorist. It's been claimed online, by JDL members on Facebook. They've written several times in the past that I have direct connections to Hamas, to Hezbollah, and to Palestinian... just terrorist leaders and terrorism.

Many of the students who experienced racism and Islamophobia related this to the general climate of racism they have grown up in. As one Arab student activist described:

I've been called horrible things. I've been accused of wanting to bomb Israeli children I—just like awful racist shit. Nothing I'm not used to. I mean I grew up Arab with like a visibly Arab father in post-911 New York City.

Christian Palestinian respondents reported that they were not spared from Islamophobic attacks:

In terms of being Christian as well, you know Christians are a minority in Palestine, so Zionists have claimed that I've been lying about my religion[...]. They're trying to say that I must be a Muslim if I am an activist for Palestine. Or, if I'm an antisemite in their minds then I must be a Muslim.

Expressions of Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian racism often took the form of portraying Palestinians as opponents of Western liberal values like gender equality and the acceptance of sexual minorities.

One respondent described their experiencing tabling for a pro-Palestinian group on campus:

Israel on Campus folks, but also some regular kind of conservatives on campus, kind of started a scene[...] There was this really hyper-fixation on the idea that actually Palestinian women are oppressed by Hamas and by Palestinians. And Palestinian culture is really backwards. And you know, that they don't give women rights. And Israel is the only country in the Middle East where women have rights[...] When you really think about it, it's Islamophobic/racist at its core. And it's, been accepted as regular language of how to speak about Palestinians regarding LGBTQIA rights or women's rights when we're discussing Palestine.

Gendered Islamophobia was consistently directed at hijab-wearing respondents. As one described:

People assume that I like came from somewhere yesterday[...] So there was

just that bias, of that “She's new here, she doesn't know how things are done here, she has no real understanding of law or international law, or anything law really.”

The consequences of doing pro-Palestinian work in a racist environment also shape political strategy. The voices of white pro-Palestinian activists are often amplified and those of Palestinians muted in the quest for public receptivity. As this activist explains:

I think that oftentimes [as] Palestinians... a lot of things that we say get vilified. But then when it's a white-passing ally that says it, it gets taken more seriously... When we were doing our Israeli Apartheid Week, we reached out to Breaking the Silence,²¹⁸ and we got Breaking the Silence to come to our campus. We wanted to, I think at some point they reached out to George Galloway. There was like, “Oh, could we get Norman Finkelstein? Or should we get, Robert Fisk?” There was this hyper-fixation with white or white-passing men or ex-Israeli soldiers who could corroborate our story. And I think, in a lot of ways, that is part of sort of internalized colonialism, of feeling like the Palestinian story is disregarded. So how can we get people to take us seriously and to listen to what we're saying? And oftentimes, that's through either having Israeli voices or just quite literally white, Canadian or British or whatever voices that could come basically say, “Yes, it's true, Palestine is being colonized.”

“I guess sometimes I can be an easier target. I've been racialized directly by being called a terrorist. You know, someone who is not a Palestinian may be called a supporter of terrorists, or terrorist supporter, I've been called a terrorist.”

218 Breaking the Silence is an Israeli NGO that collects testimonies from Israeli soldiers on violations of Palestinian human rights. <https://www.breakingthesilence.org.il>

Emotional costs of pro-Palestine activism

Numerous students reported having suffered emotional distress as a result of harassment and hostility they had faced. As one activist described:

I mean, it takes a mental toll. It's not like a basic troll, right? Because, in the back your mind you're going to be discriminated against because of those views, whether it be in a professional setting, where you go try to find a job, or whether like, once you graduate, once real life starts, you will know that these things might come back and bite you in the ass. So that's the number one reason why a lot of people don't do activism in Canada, specifically, with this topic is because they're scared about their future, ability to make money and live [a] normal life. So yeah, that's always in the back of your mind. And that's not a healthy thing to have in the back of my mind constantly.

Many of these students reported that this had had a significant impact on their studies, such as adding to the stress of thesis writing. As one student described:

You're not gonna be able to balance your school work and dealing with all the administrative roadblocks that are put up against you to hold a talk. So oftentimes, you find yourself sacrificing your academic future for these things. And I know a lot of individuals who have burnt out, not because they're not smart academically—in fact they're very gifted, probably way more gifted than me, or other people I know, and just completely mentally burnt out and dropped out. Just because they couldn't handle what they were facing.

Or as another student who was smeared and harassed online reported:

The hundreds of hateful and violent messages as well as the public attacks were frightening and humiliating. In the initial days I did not feel safe on campus, and I never felt comfortable there again.

Palestinian students told us that their familial experiences of intergenerational trauma worsened the burden of stress they bore for their activism. One Palestinian student described how they learned to embrace emotionality as a legitimate response to the Palestinian history of dispossession and to the hostility they encountered as an activist:

I think that oftentimes the suppressing of emotions is a way to try to appear objective or rational and makes that emotional situation worse when you're already dealing with intergenerational trauma and vilification for your work and kind of being called all these names [on] social media, etc. And you're sort of trying to maintain this really composed image of like, “I’m not emotional, I’m going to be rational and, ‘hit them with fact,’” right? And so, it took a

while for me to be able to understand that it's totally fine that I'm emotional. And to just accept that that's actually a good thing. And that was also a really liberating feeling.

For many Palestinians, activism was a very personal response to their familial histories of dispossession and suffering. As one student who had been the subject of online smears described:

I cannot let go of this struggle. Because if I do, I'm basically giving up on my grandparents. I'm doing this because they can't do it. If they could be fighting right now for my cause I would be studying right now.

Other respondents: Artists and lawyers

During our research it became apparent that pro-Palestinian Canadian artists face significant repression as a consequence of their work and activism. We were able to gather data from five different artists about the backlash that they have experienced for their work. In one case, the Israeli ambassador called for the premature closing of an artist's show. A representative of the highly respected Toronto Palestine Film Festival noted that the festival has faced frequent accusations of disseminating "propaganda" for showcasing Palestinians' art and perspectives. Two Jewish artists also related their experiences of having their artwork attacked when they sought to bring together Jewish and pro-Palestinian themes. In one case a smear campaign was mounted against the artist and their work. In the second instance, the artist's piece was removed from an exhibition. A third Jewish artist related that they were disinvited from joining a gallery's Board of Directors due to their Palestine-related activism.

Three of the five artists experienced a gallery either cancelling their show or being pressured to do so. An incident at an art gallery in Fredericton highlights how galleries can be pressured into censoring cultural production related to Palestine. In 2013 a coalition of groups organized a show of art by Gazan children related to a recent bombing campaign carried out by Israeli forces.

As one activist involved in supporting the show explained:

Right before the artwork was about to be hung, there was a huge backlash from the establishment Jewish community in Fredericton[...] They started attacking the authenticity of the drawings, saying that they were not made by children, and that was one of their main points that they were trying to argue.

The show was then cancelled, only to be opened for the final four days after community backlash against the cancellation.

Lawyers

Three practicing lawyers described the impact of their Palestine solidarity work on their legal careers. One lawyer expressed concerns that if their Palestine solidarity work were to become public they would lose both private and government work. Similarly, another respondent explained the impact that their Palestine solidarity work has had on their professional life:

I've had to hide myself. Like, you know for my legal career, you know like “Do I change my name?” “Do I sanitize my resume?” In certain workplaces, do I sanitize my identity? And it took a toll, like so much so that I turned down job opportunities, which impacted me in the long run. I left jobs.

Evidence that this dynamic is at work in the legal community was substantiated by a member of IJV’s legal committee who reported that:

When speaking with many lawyers looking for potential representation for IJV as interveners in the Foodbenders Ontario Human Rights Tribunal cases [and] then the Order in Council²¹⁹ challenge, approximately 20 lawyers declined the work based on their concerns of backlash from colleagues in the legal profession and from Jewish community groups.

219 In October 2020, Ontario adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Working Definition of Antisemitism by Order-in-Council, bypassing a scheduled vote in the provincial legislature. The adoption had been vigorously opposed by a wide coalition of groups. Several groups have since discussed challenging the adoption, which they feel circumvented the democratic process.

Conclusion

This research report documents the impact of reprisals, harassment, and intimidation faced by Canadian activists, faculty, and students in relation to scholarship and activism in solidarity with the struggle for Palestinian human rights. Our research provides evidence of the “chilling effects” of this atmosphere of repression and its impact on university faculty, students, and community activists. Public attacks by Canadian pro-Israel organizations have grown exponentially in the last few years and the hidden impact of these attacks has been to produce an environment which threatens academic freedom, muzzles scholarly production, obstructs academic careers, encourages mendacious and malicious discourse, and stifles legitimate protest. Attacks on pro-Palestine speech must be understood in the context of a growing crisis in academia around issues of democratization and governance, precarious employment, debates over harmful speech, and the influence of private interests on consistently underfunded universities.²²⁰

This report has focused principally on academia, where the contentious politics of Israel/Palestine manifest most frequently. Notably, our data reveal that many of those who experienced suppression and harassment were subjected to forms of racism and xenophobia. It seems deeply unprincipled that these forms of pernicious discourse are mobilized by those defending Jews against the perceived antisemitic threat posed by criticism of Israel. The prevalence of anti-Palestinian racism, including accusing Palestinians and their supporters of sympathy for, or actual links to terrorism, as well as claiming that all Palestinians harbour genocidal intentions towards Jews, contributes to the dehumanization of Palestinians that has long contaminated discussions of Israel/Palestine.

As was demonstrated, pro-Israel organizations have been central players in the creation of the chilly climate. Interference in hiring, classroom surveillance, prohibitions against Jewish campus groups collaborating with advocates of BDS, demands for the censure or dismissal of pro-Palestinian faculty and students, and obstruction of pro-Palestinian events were reported by our respondents. Such actions are antithetical to the spirit of academic inquiry and the mission of the public university. Generous funding of pro-Israel campus groups by national and local Israel advocacy organizations in addition to monetary incentives offered to students willing to counter pro-Palestine activism on campus raise serious

220 Linda McQuaig, “University of Toronto Hiring Fiasco Shows Reliance on Donors Limits University’s Role in Challenging ‘Cherished Beliefs,’” *Toronto Star*, July 21, 2021, <https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/2021/07/01/university-of-toronto-hiring-fiasco-shows-reliance-on-donors-limits-universitys-role-in-challenging-cherished-beliefs.html>. See also Mari Cohen, *The Fight for the Future of Jewish Studies*, <https://jewishcurrents.org/the-fight-for-the-future-of-israel-studies>

questions about the ability of external actors to impact the campus political environment. These actors deploy the same politics of obfuscation and denial on campus that characterize their defense of Israeli violence and apartheid in the broader community.

We also note that the push to adopt the IHRA definition by pro-Israel organizations, and its subsequent adoption in several jurisdictions, has increased the chilling effect on campus even though questions about its implementation persist. The possibility exists that implementation of the IHRA could require the banning of certain scholarly work and even the exclusion of Israel-critical scholars from public funding for academic research. Perhaps the inherent irony of the IHRA is, as Palestinian American scholar Saree Makdisi notes that “pointing out the racism of the Israeli state—a state that legally enshrines racial discrimination—would itself be considered a form of racism.” Moreover, Makdisi observes, “calling for equal rights throughout that state[...] could similarly be considered hate speech”²²¹ effectively silencing those speaking out for justice for Palestinians.

The devastating impact of the chilly climate on advocates for Palestinian human rights gives us legitimate cause to worry about freedom of expression and dissent and about the growing toxicity of discourse around Palestine. However, as Nick Reimer reminds us, “The normalization of violations of academic freedom means that the case for Palestine in universities should be made first with reference to the scandal of Israeli apartheid and only secondly on more ‘procedural’ academic grounds.”²²² The chilling effect, as destructive and appalling as it is, is largely a stratagem designed to foster denial of the unendurable reality of settler colonialism in Israel/Palestine. Surely, we must oppose this on many of the grounds delineated in this report. However, the ultimate goal should be to break through the discourses of denial in order to champion and amplify the Palestinian experience—a history and a present that cries for justice.

221 Saree Makdisi, *Tolerance is a Wasteland: Palestine and the Culture of Denial*, Oakland: University of California Press, 2022, p. 182

222 Nick Reimer, “Disciplinary and the Boycott” in David Landy, Ronit Lentin and Conor McCarthy, Eds., *Enforcing Silence: Academic Freedom, Palestine and the Criticism of Israel*. London: Zed Books, 2020 p. 68.

Appendix A

Re: Requesting your participation in a research project to document experiences of silencing, harassment and self-censorship of students, professors, activists and organizations who have spoken out around Palestine.

Greetings, I'm contacting you as part of a research project being carried out by Independent Jewish Voices Canada on the backlash faced within Canada by those who are active, either as students, academics, writers and/or activists, on issues pertaining to Palestine/Israel. IJV is a grassroots Jewish organization which engages in various forms of Palestine solidarity work. For this project, titled "Unveiling the Chilly Climate: How the suppression of speech on Palestine is experienced by academics, students, activists and organizations," we're gathering testimonies exploring the 'chilling effect' caused by retributions and backlash which individuals face for discussing Palestine/Israel, and we are hoping you would be willing to provide us with a testimony based on your experience. We are happy to accept testimony regarding retribution which you have personally experienced or witnessed. We would also appreciate it if you were able to pass on the information provided in this email and attached documents along with my contact information to anyone you know who would potentially be willing to provide us with a testimony. More information about the project itself is included in the statement of intent which is attached.

We're taking testimonies in written form through a questionnaire, or else through oral interviews conducted over Zoom upon request. We greatly prefer that you submit a written testimony as our resources for transcribing oral interviews are limited. Due to the nature of the project, we're also providing the option to maintain confidentiality for those who desire it. For the full information regarding release and security of information, please see the attached release form which we will all be signing should you agree to provide testimony.

We're seeking to have collected all interviews, whether written or oral, by March 15th. If you are willing to provide testimony, please respond to inform us and we will forward you a link to the questionnaire as well as your personal ID number, for you to fill out at your convenience. If you prefer having an interview over Zoom, please let us know and we will book a date. We kindly ask that all testimony whether written or oral be provided by the date specified.

Finally, we are of course more than willing to provide answers to any questions you may have about the contents of this email, the attached information, or about the project as a whole. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any and all questions.

All the best, and thank you for your time,

Sheryl Nestel, PhD