

# Anti-Semitism in Student Governments

Hat tip Amcha Initiative and Legal Insurrection

by Gary Fouse



**There is yet another story** regarding campus anti-Semitism this week. This time, it is the University of Southern California, where a Jewish, pro-Israel student [has resigned](#) after months of pressure from pro-Palestinian students, most notably, the infamous Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP).

This is not an isolated incident. As I have often written, the pro-Palestinian movement on college campuses across North America has resulted in a resurgence in anti-Jewish feeling across the country. There are other factors and other guilty parties, but in my firm opinion, most of the anti-Semitism in the US comes from our universities and from pro-Palestinian

quarters.

One of the main forces of this anti-Israel movement is the Boycott, Divest and Sanctions (BDS) movement. It seems every year, every university student government has to waste untold man hours and energy debating and passing-or rejecting- BDS measures brought by SJP or similar organizations. That leads me to the topic of this article: It is increasingly obvious that pro-Palestinian groups on campus are trying to get their supporters into student governments and exclude pro-Israel Jews at the same time. This week's example of Rose Ritch at USC is just one such example.

USC has also recently seen two other students [targeted](#) for various reasons including being pro-Israel.

*"USC SJP spearheaded a petition [1] calling for two student senators to be removed from the student government and expelled, which denigrated them specifically for holding Zionist beliefs. The petition began with a disclaimer stating, "Being anti-Zionist and being anti-Semitic are not the same, and no one involved in this process has been anti-Semitic in any regard." The petition continued, "Starting with Isabel... she has shared many of her racist, classist, and fatphobic views in both social media posts, messages, and in her interactions with others, which include Zionist beliefs... On a Zoom call with students at USC, she retracted her Zionist beliefs, but issued no official apology or plan of action to help the communities of students she has harmed... Nathaniel (also referred to as Nate) shares the Zionist beliefs... He also has invalidated the existence of Palestinian people, and says he does not endorse the violence happening in Palestine, but wears shirts and makes TikToks in support of the Israeli Defense Forces." [Link 1](#)" (H/T Amcha Initiative)*

Over at cross-town UCLA, which has had numerous problems with anti-Semitism in recent years, the Rose Ritch story brought back the experience of [Rachel Beyda](#), who was sharply

questioned about her Jewish identity when she was trying for a seat on the student government in 2015.

In 2014, UCLA's student government was also accused of [targeting](#) Jewish, pro-Israel students (H/T Legal Insurrection).

*"So I was not completely surprised when I learned from reader emails over the past several days that there is an attempt at UCLA to disqualify any student who received pro-Israel training or trips from being on the Student Council."*

As you can imagine, UC campuses have had more than their share of anti-Semitic problems, including swastikas. Sticking to the issue of student governments, however, we have another example from [UC Santa Cruz in 2016](#).

*"Another incident at UC Santa Cruz, when Jewish student, Daniel Bernstein, an electoral representative on his college council, received a message from the SJP-aligned chair of the student council instructing him to abstain from a vote on divestment from because he was elected with a 'Jewish agenda'"*

And last year, we had this from [UC Davis](#):

*"A Jewish ASUCD Senator resigned his position due to continued exclusionary behavior of ASUCD based on his identity as a Zionist....."* (H/T Amcha Initiative)

Of course, no report on campus anti-Semitism would be complete without mentioning [UC Berkeley](#).

*"In the public comment, some Jewish students spoke to the room about the disqualification of a Jewish senator-elect, among others, and noted that because of this, they felt that the Jewish community lost essential representation in the ASUC."* (H/T Amcha Initiative)

Another institution that has experienced a great deal of anti-Semitism over the years is San Francisco State University.

This [SFGate article](#) goes all the way back to 2004.

*“According to the pro-Israel advocacy group, Stand With Us, Jewish students at SFSU have been ‘denied positions in student government because they were ‘Zionists’, and ‘funding was denied to Hillel events because it was (a) ‘Zionist’ (group)’”.*

Lest you think this is just a California problem, think again. There are other examples from universities across North America (including Canada). Last year, the student body president at the [University of Michigan](#) was attacked over alleged statements he had made about Palestinians while in high school (H/T Amcha Initiative).

*“This is not the first time a CSG president has made racist and Zionist remark against Palestinians, and holding this president accountable is possible today due to the decades of Palestinian student activism and advocacy that has ensured a shift in social moral order.”*

In Massachusetts, [Williams College](#) was embroiled in a student government controversy over the student council’s refusal to recognize a pro-Israel student group on campus (H/T Amcha Initiative).

Even in Canada, the pro-Palestinian agitators have managed to turn the Israeli-Palestinian issue into a hot-button issue, as one McGill University student leader [learned](#) in 2018-19 as reported by the Montreal Gazette.

*“But of the three who agreed to go on the trip, Wright was the only subject to a Nov. 28 motion by the Student Society of McGill University to reprimand her should she accept the trip. She says she was targeted because of her Jewish identity, a claim that’s backed by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and Montreal-area MNA David Birnbaum.”*

And it was hardly the first time, the McGill student

government was accused of anti-Semitic actions due to the Israel-Palestinian issue. Also in 2018, the Montreal Gazette [reported](#) the travails of another pro-Israel student.

*“Noah Lew and two other students were voted off the Students’ Society of McGill University last October after they were identified as having pro-Israel viewpoints. They were since reinstated.”*

I could go on and on, but you get the point. One reason that this issue and the asinine BDS movement have gained traction on university campuses is that the pro-Palestinian activists are getting into student governments, and at the same time, working to keep Jewish, pro-Israel students out. Is this what universities envisioned when they created student governments ages ago? What does the entire issue have to do with the lives of students on campus? Nothing. So now, thanks to SJP and their ilk, student governments are endlessly tied up arguing and voting on this issue. And make no mistake: It is anti-Semitic.