

Antisemitism Today and the Great Debate

by Gary Fouse



As a Gentile teacher who first became alarmed at campus anti-Semitism about 13 years ago on the University of California at Irvine, I have witnessed what I feel is a transition in that issue. Let me explain.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has become a hot button issue on American college campuses. The only logical explanation, in my view, is that the Palestinian movement, both in the Middle East and North America, has been very effective in convincing many uninformed and gullible students that Israel is guilty of massive human rights violations against the Palestinian people including apartheid and even genocide. This pro-Palestinian movement is well-organized and well-funded. In my view, more

than any other factor, it has led to a resurgence of anti-Semitism in the US and Canada.

In Europe, where the situation is so grievous that Jews are leaving by the tens of thousands, Israel is more an issue to the native Europeans. In contrast, the wave of recent Muslim immigrants, migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees, need no Palestinian issue to stoke their centuries-old hatred of Jews. Not all Muslims, of course, but it is undeniable that hatred of Jews (and Christians) is deeply embedded in Islamic history and teaching.

Over that past decade, as I have written about anti-Semitism, I have said that the focal point for the resurgence in anti-Semitism in America is on our university campuses for the reason I mentioned above. Now, however, I see it metastasizing into the population at large removed from academia. The universities refused (and still refuse) to confront it, and now it has spread.

If there is anything positive to come out of that, it is that now the problem cannot be denied just because the universities hide their heads in the sand. How hard it has been for myself and other people concerned about the problem to convince the outside community that there was a problem on our campuses. Even mainstream national Jewish organizations like the Anti-Defamation League, the various chapters of the Jewish Federation, and Hillel shielded the universities from scrutiny because (in the case of the latter two) they were too embedded and dependent upon the universities and because they did not want to see a drop off in Jewish attendance at their respective schools. "Jewish life is thriving," they said even while Jewish students were going to school in an atmosphere of intimidation by the pro-Palestinian bullies in the Muslim Student Associations and Students for Justice in Palestine. Now the public at large knows the problem exists nation-wide. But now, it is not just on our campuses.

Most notably, the recent attacks on synagogues in Pittsburgh and Poway, California have captured the attention of the nation. Now the public is talking about it. President Trump is talking about it. That is a positive development that comes from two massive tragedies and a troubling resurgence in Jew hatred.

The great question now before us is who is responsible? Already this has stirred debate, and well it should.

The two men who attacked the aforementioned synagogues were white nationalists (but hardly Trump supporters). Those attacks in particular have put the spotlight on white nationalism, and I will be the first to admit that we have a problem in the US with this rise, which is due to many factors outside the scope of this writing. Suffice to say that we must condemn groups like the KKK, neo-Nazis, and the Aryan Brotherhood and call them out for their hatreds whether they be against Jews, blacks, Hispanics, or whatever.

But the question is -the point of the great debate- is whether they are the biggest purveyors of Jew hatred today. Without in any way trying to protect these groups -I condemn them- my belief is still that most Jew hatred in the world and in the US today is being stirred from Islamic quarters. I would rather use the word Islamic rather than Muslim here because I don't accuse all Muslims of being Jew haters. I do repeat, however, that Jew hatred has a long history within Islam and is part of Islamic teaching in the Koran and the hadith.

It is so much easier and convenient to put all of the blame for anti-Semitism today on white nationalists in North America and Europe than to talk about Islamic anti-Semitism and acts or speech against Jews by Muslims. After all, the politically correct crowd does not want to call out a so-called protected group like Muslims for criticism.

I personally witnessed this up close and personal shortly

after the beginning of the Trump administration when the Bat Yahm synagogue in Newport Beach hosted an inter-faith event in 2017 dedicated to the idea that Trump supporters and other white nationalists were the main cause of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. I attended and watched speaker after speaker, Jew, Christian, and Muslim bemoan the white nationalist hatred being perpetrated by Trump supporters. The then Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at UC Irvine, Thomas Parham, spoke and lambasted not only Trump, who "didn't have the moral decency of a cockroach," but