

# “We know not Judah” – a discussion with Dexter Van Zile of CAMERA



Photo of Students for Justice in Palestine at Boston ADL offices protests “mobbing” Dexter Van Zile, CAMERA, June 24, 2021

by [Jerry Gordon](#) (March 2022)

**Dexter Van Zile is a Shillman Research Fellow** and noted Christian Media analyst at the Boston-based Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Research and Analysis (CAMERA), a non-profit media monitoring and advocacy group. His specialty has been focusing on anti-Israel and anti-Semitic propaganda and allied groups in the US and Middle East. Noteworthy of the latter has been attendance at several of the Christ at the Checkpoint conferences held by Bethlehem Bible College in the West Bank. We have [published](#) articles and interviews with Van

Zile focused on exposing anti-Israel statements and positions of mainstream church leaders and minority extremists in the evangelical movement, where the vast overwhelming majority actively support the sovereign Jewish nation of Israel. Van Zile has exposed woke anti-Israel ideology and its perpetrators in academia indoctrinating students in the Palestinian disinformation campaign, delegitimizing, demonizing, and trying to sanction Israel through the International Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Campaign. A campaign that triggered development and passage of Anti-BDS legislation and Executive orders in more than 26 states in America bolstered by recent US Appeals Court decisions denying claims by BDS proponents like the Muslim Brotherhood affiliate, the alleged "Muslim civil rights" group., the Council of American Islamic Relations (CAIR) on both First and 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment grounds of Free Speech and Right of Assembly. He has identified and disputed themes allying racial "victimhood" with disreputable allegations of Israel as an "illegal" occupier of indigenous lands creating as "apartheid state" – the subject of a recent disputed Amnesty International "investigative" report that has triggered a UN human rights investigation. Ironic, as he points out that the murder of Six Million European Jewish Men, Women and Children in Hitler's Nazi SS holocaust – the Shoah- were the victims post WWII from which sprang Human Rights groups now opposing Israel. He recognized the important emergence of efforts effectively dismissing Palestinian claims that "peace only runs through Jerusalem" symbolized by the several Abraham Accords concluded between Israel, several Gulf Emirates and Morocco as indicative that peace can be achieved in the Middle East based on common interests.

Perhaps as result of his enormous and effective oeuvre of investigations and attendance at anti-Israel events Van Zile has unfortunately become a target by violent anti-Israel Palestinian groups, in particular Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), ANTIFA on the left and increasingly, anti-

Zionist Jewish allies like Jewish Voices for Peace, J Street and others.

That was crystallized by an attack on Van Zile and two other CAMERA colleagues at a June 24, 2021, protest held at the Boston offices of the ADL by the UMASS Boston chapter of SJP and a representative of the Nation of Islam. Van Zile, armed with a pen, pad, and cell phone, was effectively called out by name “mobbed” surrounded and assaulted with hate speech, spat at for crying out Am Yisroel Chai in defiance, necessitating his extraction by his CAMERA colleagues. His views of what happened at this melee were captured on video. See Van Zile’s *Times of Israel* report, “[Seven Minutes of Hate courtesy of the SJP and UMass](#)”.

Following the event, efforts were launched to seek redress for his assault. Note this comment from a *Legal Insurrection* [post](#) on November 7, 2021:

*Mr. Van Zile was intimidated, harassed, and assaulted by rally participants who turned on him after another participant identified him as a “rabid Zionist,” based on his knowledge of Mr. Van Zile’s editorials supporting Israel and criticizing its detractors. Mr. Van Zile informs us that he has not received more than a perfunctory response to either of his complaints.*

It noted what the Louis D Brandeis Center for Human Rights letter to UMASS Boston on October 26, 2021, said about Van Zile’s assault:

*We represent the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law (the Brandeis Center), a national public interest organization that works to protect the rights of Jewish and Israeli college students as required by law.*

*We are writing to follow up on complaints submitted by veteran CAMERA reporter Dexter Van Zile to this University*

regarding his experience at a June 24, 2021, rally hosted by a registered student organization eligible to receive funds from the University of Massachusetts Boston (the University)—namely, Students for Justice in Palestine (UMass Boston SJP). Mr. Van Zile was intimidated, harassed, and assaulted by rally participants who turned on him after another participant identified him as a “rabid Zionist,” based on his knowledge of Mr. Van Zile’s editorials supporting Israel and criticizing its detractors. Mr. Van Zile informs us that he has not received more than a perfunctory response to either of his complaints.

**Legal Insurrection wrote:**

LDB also noted that harassment against Van Zile on the basis that he is a Zionist constitutes anti-Semitic behavior under the IHRA definition, which the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) essentially [incorporated](#) into its civil rights enforcement efforts under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, after President Trump signed an executive order to that effect. The June 24 events thus violated the honor code’s prohibition against harassment on the basis of membership in, or association with, a protected group. (Van Zile is actually not Jewish, but the assault [counts as anti-Semitic](#) just as did the 2014 murders of non-Jews in Kansas City by a perpetrator targeting Jewish people and institutions.)

LDB explicitly asked UMass Boston to investigate Van Zile’s claims, sanction the students and student organizations responsible, and make a public statement deploring attacks on Jewish students and supporters of Israel. It also none-too-subtly cautioned the university that it “should also be prepared to deal with similar events if and when they occur again, on or off campus.”

UMASS Boston’s silence since the aftermath of Van Zile’s “mobbing” has been deafening.

Against this background, we reached out to Dexter Van Zile for this interview.



**Dexter Van Zile**

**Jerry Gordon:** This is Jerry Gordon. I'm a Senior Editor at *The New English Review*, and we're here with an undoubted expert on the questions of Christian antisemitism and critical activities. He is Dexter Van Zile, who is a Shillman Research Fellow for the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis, otherwise known as CAMERA. He's published in a wide variety of media including *The Jerusalem Post*, *Times of Israel*, *Algemeiner*, *Jewish News Service*, *Jewish Press*, and *The New English Review*.

Dexter, you've authored an article about rogue Christian Evangelicals publishing anti-Israel tracts. Why don't you give us a rundown on who these rogues are?

**Dexter Van Zile:** Yes. Unfortunately, a few years ago, we could call them rogues and be sure that they were rogues, but these days, they're not as rogue as they used to be because they have a Pied Piper effect. The first one, obviously enough, is Gary Burge, who published a book in 2003 called *Whose Land? Whose Promise?* That book was republished in a second edition in 2013. Burge at one point invoked a passage from the Gospel of John declaring that Jews who try to live in the land of Israel without believing in Jesus will be cast out and burned. That book was published by the United Church of Christ, which had issued a statement years before saying that that type of

polemic was just beyond the pale.

Then there is Don Wagner, who wrote a book called *Dying in the Land of Promise*. He's been a long-time anti-Zionist. In that book, he compared Israelis living in the West Bank to a "killer vine" strangling a rosebush in his backyard. Not nice.

There is another Evangelical by the name of Bruce Fisk, who did a book titled *Hitchhiking with Jesus* [chuckle]. In this text, Fisk compared Palestinians who cooperated with the Israeli government to prevent terror attacks as akin to Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus Christ.

There's another author by the name of David M. Crump, who wrote a book, *Like Birds in a Cage*, in which he does everything he can to portray Israel as unworthy of Christian support. He blames Israel and its Evangelical supporters for the suffering of the Palestinians without considering anything that the Palestinians have done wrong.

A few years ago, I would've told you that these were marginal, at least in the Evangelical community. Gary Burge's anti-Zionism didn't get much traction in the Evangelical community, but it did very well in liberal Protestantism.

I would've said that these people weren't getting an awful lot of traction in the Evangelical community. But now, I'm worried. And I think one of the things that I'm concerned about at this point is that we have to figure out how to get to the young Evangelicals, because they are a lot more sympathetic to these types of arguments, and it worries me.

Some of this stuff is just classic anti-Judaism from the Bible. The upshot is that I think the mantle of anti-Zionism is being passed from the declining community of mainline Protestants to the more robust community of Evangelicalism.

**Jerry Gordon:** Right.

**Dexter Van Zile:** They're deploying this anti-Judaism against the modern State of Israel. Years ago, a woman by the name of Alice Eckardt, who was Roy Eckardt's wife and was therefore part of a pro-Israel duo in the Christian community, wrote a magazine article in the 1960s in which she declared, "We talk about the modern State of Israel the way that we used to talk about the Jewish people."

Well, now, it's an old-new thing. Now, we talk about the State of Israel the way we used to talk about the Jewish people and the way a growing number of people have started to do so again. Twenty years of BDS activism by mainline churches and on college campuses has helped open the spigots of naked Jew-hatred.

I think that's really one of the shocking things, is that if you had told me in my youth that we would've seen these types of arguments deployed against Israel and these types of polemics deployed against Israel 70-plus years after the Holocaust, I would've said, "No way." But memories are short.

**Jerry Gordon:** Terribly short these days.

**Dexter Van Zile:** Yes.

**Jerry Gordon:** Not only is it the wedge in the Evangelical millennial grouping these days, but unfortunately, close to home to me, it's amongst Jewish millennials as well.

**Dexter Van Zile:** Right. You saw the piece that I wrote, "The Pinch Point is Upon Us."

**Jerry Gordon:** Oh, absolutely. Let's apprise our readers of what that experience was like.

**Dexter Van Zile:** For the longest time, I had always wondered why young progressive Jews seem to be so much less enthusiastic in their support for Israel than young Arabs and Muslims in the United States were in their support for the

Palestinian cause.

By any regular measure of progressive values, you would think that Israel wins easily, because it treats its own citizens and its minorities and its dissidents, even its adversaries, with greater humanity than any other country in the Middle East. That doesn't mean that Israel is perfect, sometimes Israeli soldiers do bad things. But no country is perfect. Israel does what it can to correct those imperfections.

On the other hand, the Palestinian cause is led by a group of authoritarian thugs who haven't been subjected to any electoral oversight. Why is it that the pro-Palestinian folks are so much more aggressive? Why are they so much more enthusiastic than progressive Jews?

I found out on June 24th, 2021, why that is the case.

The reason is because people have been bullied into silence. I went to an anti-Israeli rally with two of my co-workers here at CAMERA. I had my notebook, a pen, and my iPhone.

I knew the drill from previous rallies. I hold up my iPhone to take video. One of my co-workers, his battery died or there wasn't enough memory on his iPhone to take any more video, so I said, "Great." I handed him my iPhone. My arm was tired!

I was just standing there with a little notebook and a pen, and it was in front of the ADL offices in downtown Boston. They asked, "Is Dexter Van Zile here?" Because I had introduced myself to one of the rally organizers, as I had written about him previously. He took offense at some of the things that I had written. So, I went up and shook his hand and told him as I was figuring that if he had anything to say to me, he would do that.

But instead, what they did was sicced the mob on me, and said, "Is Dexter Van Zile here?" Two speakers did that. The first one had welcomed me and said she was glad to see me. But then



the second speaker, somebody by the name of Nino Brown, started leading a chant against me: "Zionist, go home."

And at about the same time, there was one of these individuals, a tall brown-haired kid, who looked like he was in college, but had that Antifa look about him. They were all wearing masks due to COVID, which was very convenient for them. He tried to grab my pen, as I wrote about it in the Times of Israel. At this point, I knew that the game was afoot, and I was in trouble, because I had never had anybody ever invade my space like that before.

Look, I have been to four Christ at the Checkpoint conferences in the West Bank. No one even laid a hand on me. No one ever even touched me. No one insulted me. I might have gotten into some rough arguments with people, but I was never really worried about my physical safety in an area under the control of the Palestinian Authority.

Here I was standing in front of the ADL offices in downtown Boston, and I knew I wasn't safe. But running away really wasn't an option. Part of it was because I was surrounded. Part of it was like, "Look, it's put up or shut up time." So, they started yelling, "Zionist, go home," and I started yelling "Am Israel Chai" back at them. I only did that for a few iterations because I was tired, but I made my point.

The people who were with me from CAMERA said, "We thought we were going to have to intercede and basically drag you out of there. We thought we were going to have to throw punches to get you out of there."

After they started chanting at me somebody threw water at me. Somebody spit at me. Then towards the end of the melee a member of the Nation of Islam, he was providing security for the rally, told me that I needed to get out of there. I needed to leave. That I had insulted them by even mentioning the word "Israel" to them. He said, "You insulted those people when you

said Israel." At a certain point I went over to the building because they said, "Look, we're moving on. You got to get out of our way." That seemed legit. But they followed me, and they encircled me. You can see the video on YouTube. They said some terrible words you can't repeat on television.

Then they moved on. When it was over, at first the adrenaline kicked in. I was like, "Oh, we survived. We did great." The thing was then the implications of what had happened started to seep in, and it started to really affect me. One of the things that I saw was that there was a couple of people who said, "He's done nothing wrong, leave him alone." And they tried to stand between me and the mob, which is what the rally marshal who shoved me should have been doing because I hadn't done anything. I had made no aggressive gestures.

The interesting thing was, that didn't stop the crowd, it might have hindered it a little bit, but then there was one young man with a kippah who said, "They will use this against us!" and "One Zionist is not enough, or one Zionist is not worth it, something like that. You can see a lot of it on video. I joked later with some of my people at CAMERA, "So how many Zionists would it have been worth it? Three? Five? 10?" And we joked because it was like Abraham arguing with God about the number of just people, and it was like a reversal of that the just people is in Sodom and Gomorrah.

It became evident in the months afterwards that no one was going to be punished for this. I filed a complaint with the police department, filed a complaint with the Attorney General, filed a complaint with UMass Boston and the school investigate, but they never said anything publicly about this type of behavior being unacceptable.

Because the really was organized by a campus organization that's recognized by the student government, they are subject to Code of Conduct at UMass Boston, which they clearly violated.

But to be fair, State Sen. William Brownsberger, who represents my district, was profoundly disturbed when he saw the video and pressured the Boston Police to do a better job of monitoring rallies in the future and there has been more of a police presence at subsequent rallies.

The lack of punishment indicates that the powers that be in and around the City of Boston and elsewhere in the country are frightened of ANTIFA, BLM, the Nation of Islam, and the anti-Israel crowd. They're more frightened of those groups that I just mentioned, than they are of groups like the ADL or the JCRC. On one hand that is a good thing, because we don't want people "afraid" of mainstream Jewish groups, but there doesn't seem to be a lot of appetite for challenging the far left over antisemitism.

Maybe I'm overstating it. We see attacks on Jews in New York on a regular basis and the police seem to take those attacks seriously. There was a stabbing of a rabbi in Boston a week after I was mobbed in June, and the authorities really understood that that was crossing a line.

Still, there's a problem with American civil society these days and it's affecting the Jewish condition in the U.S. and it's time to really say that aloud. The American people have some decisions to make.

**Jerry Gordon:** So, this is a problem that the Jewish community in Boston, and elsewhere throughout the United States, unless prodded doesn't react, doesn't anticipate, or doesn't combat which is a horrible statement of affairs for the American Jewish community.

**Dexter Van Zile:** I don't think that's entirely fair. Local Jewish leaders pushed the police to investigate the mobbing. And back in 2007, when the Old South Church brought Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center to Boston, which was when the rank-and-file Jewish community stood up, as did the

leadership.

I wrote a couple of articles, I put them up on CAMERA's website and people read them. They understood what was at stake, and they protested out in front of that church. They made it perfectly clear that Old South made a mistake. I think that the Jewish community in Boston was united in their opposition to that rally. I give everyone a lot of credit. Pastor Nancy Taylor tried to characterize the opposition to the Sabeel conference as coming from right-wing Jews. She was trying to play a game of divide and conquer. What happened was that the Jewish community showed up united and clobbered the church with protest. That was a good moment. I hope that we would be able to pull that off or something like that again if it were necessary, but I don't know.

At a certain point, the decision needs to be made by non-Jews. Are we going to let this type of stuff continue?

There are reasons to be hopeful. My friends in Boston who used to wonder why I got so amped up about these issues had an "aha" moment when they saw the video, which is a good thing. This stuff isn't at the top of their minds like it is for you and me, but the video gave them a visceral understanding that the people who hate Israel and who are obsessed with Jews can't be trusted with power. And that's a good thing. Once they saw someone they knew go through what happened last June, they understood that there was a problem.

I should probably thank the folks who mobbed me!

**Jerry Gordon:** Let's hope you're right. Now we have the matter of how Israel and the American Jewish Community can combat things like the Amnesty International's report accusing Israel after an investigation of being an apartheid nation. I think just within the last few days, the Amnesty International representative in Israel said she thought that their US headquarters had gone too far in its accusations. From your

vantage point, what can we do here in the US constructively to combat this kind of disinformation campaign?

**Dexter Van Zile:** There is a UN Committee of Inquiry on the Arab Israeli conflict that is doing its own investigation on the Amnesty International report. The Amnesty International report was an opening gambit to set the table for that committee of inquiry. I'm actually enthusiastic to see just the level of criticism that Amnesty has been subject to. It has been withering.

Then there is the case of a former Iranian diplomat and professor, Mahallati, at Oberlin College.

**Jerry Gordon:** Yes.

**Dexter Van Zile:** Digging into Mahallati, I saw the contrast with the investigation that Amnesty International did regarding Iran. At least the Iranian diplomats were given a chance to respond to the accusations leveled at it back in the day. The reports would say, "And then the Iranian diplomat said this, this and this. Blah, blah, blah."

The interesting thing is that they didn't do that with this Israel report. There was a letter from the Board of British Jewish Deputies to Amnesty's UK wing saying, "You didn't talk to us. The folks in Amnesty didn't ask us for a response to any of the allegations in this document."

It is clear the Amnesty document is a hit job, an opening salvo to an ongoing propaganda war against the Jewish State.

I think one of the arguments that needs to be made is, "Look, why are you folks even more anti-Israel than a growing number of Arabs in the Middle East? What is your problem? The Arab leaders in the Middle East want to make peace. They're starting to recognize that the Palestinians have been profoundly irresponsible, they're starting to say so publicly, and you can't even be bothered to acknowledge that reality."

What is wrong with you? Do you really want to promote peace? Do you really want to promote human rights? Or are you just interested in demonizing the Jewish State?"

This is the thing that really bugs me the most. The modern human rights movement was founded in large part in response to the Holocaust. Six million Jews were murdered because of a crazy, evil, demonic campaign to deprive people of their humanity and another six million people died in those very same death camps and it was the result of a war that cost a total of 60 million people their lives. The Jews were at the center of that whole narrative that the Germans used to justify their war in Europe. If you want to talk about who paid a price for the founding of the modern human rights movement, it's the Jewish people.

Now, what we see is that very same movement is doing everything it can to deprive the Jews of their ability to protect their very lives, protect their freedom and well-being. It is simply outrageous. We need to point that out to the young Jewish community and say, "Look, too many Jews died for the lack of these principles and now these principles are being bastardized to demonize Jews. It is disgusting. We can hammer away at them left, right, and center."

**Jerry Gordon:** What do you believe these days is behind the spike in antisemitism here in the US and globally?

**Dexter Van Zile:** I'm relying a bit on Bernard Harrison's book, *Blaming the Jews* which posits that when people have a prescription for improving the human condition and it doesn't work, people start to cast about for obstacles to this plan and oftentimes, that means Jews.

There was a sense a few years ago that everything was going to get better. There was a sense before Donald Trump got elected that Barack Obama was going to usher in a new world. There was a lot of enthusiasm for how that was going to play itself out.

I don't want to comment on the policies of the Obama Administration, but people woke up after eight years of Barack Obama and the world was the same difficult place that it always has been. I'm not blaming the Obama Administration. That's the way of the world.

Still, there was kind of a millennial hope that somehow, we were going to walk into a utopia. It didn't happen.

Peoples' millennial hopes were disappointed, and people started looking around for a scapegoat. Richard Landes has written about that in his book, *Varieties of Millennial Experience*.

Utopia didn't materialize, people got angry, and they started casting about for a scapegoat to justify or to explain why things aren't perfect. I think Richard calls this "apocalyptic Jazz."

I think that's one of the big factors. As far as globally, I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that the world has become a much rougher place to live in. There seems to be a sense that we're headed into a much more difficult period of history, particularly with this invasion of Ukraine. So, people are scared, they're angry, they're frightened. During those moments, when there's some sort of plague, the Jews are a legitimate target for these folks. It is a frightening thing.

**Jerry Gordon:** Particularly during the pandemic when you saw an outburst of criticism of vaccination programs, and people running around wearing yellow stars saying "Jude" on it, where the analogy to the Holocaust and the murder of the six million European Jews.

**Dexter Van Zile:** There is another bigger problem. It is the whole issue of "Woke" ideology. The woke doctrine basically is people want to be a victim. People are now starting to value being a victim more than their ability to affect the world and

make their own way in the world. They are more interested in telling everybody just how victimized and helpless they are. Rather than saying to themselves, "These are the things I can accomplish, and these are the things that I want to do with my life." For some reason, people put more value on being victimized than having their own agency.

I also think that Jewish history since the Holocaust has been a refutation of the whole value of being a victim and an affirmation of the value of embracing a transcendent purpose. If you look at what Israel has done, the country has been a tremendous example of what human beings can accomplish, even after they've suffered terribly.

Jewish history puts a lie to the notion that somehow that if you have suffered in the past, that you can never transcend that suffering. There are a lot of people that just don't want to transcend their suffering and are more interested in cashing it in so that they can demand that other people take care of them. A mainline Protestant minister nailed it when I spoke to her a couple of days ago: "When there's no transcendence, all that's left is to lick your wounds."

**Jerry Gordon:** You credit this in part to the rise of Israel as both a technological and regional military power that people say can easily paint the brush of Nazi storm troopers as canards, for example, to express their disdain for the Jewish Sovereign State of Israel.

**Dexter Van Zile:** I use the analogy of Joseph and his brothers. When the brothers threw Joseph down the well, they repented it afterwards when he survived and succeeded. Some people in the Christian world look at Jews and look at Israel, and say, "You're still here and you've succeeded? We haven't gotten rid of you? After all that's happened?"

I know that sounds brutal, but that's about what it is. People end up telling a story about the Jewish people that justifies



the previous suffering that they endure. If we were Joseph's brothers after he succeeded in Egypt, we would be telling a story about how we were entirely justified in throwing Joseph in the pit, and then selling him into slavery.

**Jerry Gordon:** Yet they had to fulfill a commitment to their revered late father to bring the bones of Joseph back for burial in what is now Israel.

**Dexter Van Zile:** As a Christian I've been thinking a lot about this. There is that phrase in Exodus where it says something like, "Pharaoh knew not Joseph." I think that's a really good description of what is going on. That we have forgotten even recent history in reference to the Jewish people. We have forgotten the damage that antisemitism did, not just to the Jewish people, but to Western civilization. Christianity's fratricidal impulse toward Jews is profoundly destructive and we need to repent of it.

I almost want to tell people that we know not Judah, because Judah was the brother who confronted his fratricidal impulse saying, "We did a wrong thing" when confronted with what his family had done to Joseph. As a Christian, if you don't know Judah, you can't go around talking like you know Jesus. Because Jesus was a descendant of that line.

He was a descendant of King David, and David was a descendant of that line. Why was King David an interesting arresting figure, and why was he a man after God's heart? Because when he was confronted with his sin, he said, "Yeah, that's me, I did something wrong." Speaking now as a Christian, if you can't acknowledge and repent the sins of your past, then you can't really have a meaningful relationship with Jesus.

This has become really important to me. When I walk into a church, and I see Christ on the cross – that's my map of reality. Sometimes I tell people "That's a map of adulthood." I said that to a young couple sitting in front of me, and they

looked at me and judging from their face they thought, "Man, that's pretty rough stuff," but they couldn't argue with me. I was shocked when it came out of my mouth. I think that the people who can't confront that reality, that adulthood is suffering, end up casting about for scapegoats.

Unfortunately, that's where the Jews come in. The irony is that a lot of people condemn Christian Zionists, saying they think more about Jews than they do Jesus.

Well, I think it's truer of the folks who hate Israel than it is of Christian Zionists!

**Jerry Gordon:** Turning back to some things that we were referring to on Woke doctrine, you wrote about a professor at University of Massachusetts at Amherst, which was an illustration of the kind of sea-change in American academia about imposing "woke doctrine."

**Dexter Van Zile:** Yes. Professor Sut Jhally, he was able to indoctrinate an entire generation, a couple of decades worth of students at UMass Amherst, in his anti-Israel propaganda. He had two anti-Israel movies and both of them portrayed Israel as the singular source of conflict, and nothing that the Palestinians had done wrong was a problem. And so, he's been a problem for a long time, he just retired, but he still, every once in a while, makes the rounds.

**Jerry Gordon:** In general, how do you think woke doctrine has changed American Academia?

**Dexter Van Zile:** I think it's intimidated a lot of them. I think there's an awful lot of professors that were liberal, and they wanted to make the world a better place, but they were willing to at least countenance opinions from the other side.

When I got my Master's degree at Western Washington University in the early 1990s, I saw the beginnings of this woke stuff.

There was this beginning of the diversity, equity, and inclusion ideology, but it hadn't really got rolling. I was a lot further on the right than a lot of these people then, but they still treated me with a great degree of humanity.

I'm not sure that I would be able to survive on college campuses these days because of this woke ideology. It has promoted this notion of race over individual behavior. What is more important is not how you behave as an individual, or how you treat the people in your life on a regular, daily basis, but what skin color you have and what ethnic group you belong to. That is very troublesome.

What it does is that it makes people invest more into their identities than into their character and how they treat the people around them. People are more interested in cultivating narratives about who they are and what they've suffered than what they can accomplish. Ultimately, that leads to authoritarianism and tribalism. Like the former Yugoslavia, or Lebanon, we may all end up being in these armed ideological or communal groups, which don't have any commitment to the Constitution or to the larger Republic. I think that the hostility that we see towards the Jewish People in the United States is part of that factor. They are a small group and its relatively safe to target them.

**Jerry Gordon:** I quite agree with it. Let's deal with the Council of American Islamic Relations.

**Dexter Van Zile:** Okay, yes.

**Jerry Gordon:** I raised it for a couple of reasons. One was the recent episode in January that I've written about in Texas, where the local CAIR chapter in that suburb of Fort Worth, Colleyville was supporting the release of this radical Pakistani scientist who had been arrested by the US back in 2008, Dr. Siddiqui, who was incarcerated in a nearby federal prison. Dr. Siddiqui is a graduate of MIT and Brandeis, where

she earned a PhD in Neuroscience. They were supporting Jihad here. That prompted another Pakistani Muslim in Britain to go transatlantic to the US to hold a hostage event at a Reform synagogue in Texas, ending in release of one of the hostages and the escape of the others.

The perpetrator died in crossfire with an FBI SWAT Team. CAIR has not stopped supporting, "justice" for Siddiqui, who was planning a series of dirty bomb attacks here in the United States when she was captured by US and FBI people in 2008 and put into custody at Bagram airfield in Afghanistan. More recently, CAIR has launched litigation against anti-BDS executive orders and statutes in a number of states. They got knocked out of the box when a US Appeals Court in Baltimore knocked out their justification on the grounds of First Amendment and 14th Amendment. First Amendment for speech rights and 14th Amendment for rights to assembly. What is the position now of CAIR in this country, where it was convicted for support of terrorism raising funding for Hamas, an affiliate of the Muslim Brotherhood, at a famous 2008 Dallas trial, when you have members of the Congress pushing for an Islamophobia monitor?

**Dexter Van Zile:** One of the things that I think is interesting about the United States is that we have had a wonderfully corrosive effect on the abuse of power by religious leaders of all stripes. That is going to remain an important aspect of American society going forward. For example, when a small number of fundamentalists tried to intervene and stop the teaching of science or evolution in public schools with the Scopes Monkey Trial, journalists like H. L. Mencken went after the fundamentalist community hammer and tongs. He did everything he could to marginalize them. You might be able to make a case that H. L. Mencken was a little bit bigoted towards the Evangelicals. OK?

**Jerry Gordon:** Yes.

**Dexter Van Zile:** The thing was, is that he was able to hold those religious leaders to account and said, "You can't do that." You can't impose your will on all of America on this issue. Then there was the priest abuse scandal in the Roman Catholic Church. That news was broken by *The National Catholic Reporter* in 1984. Everyone says, "Oh, well, it broke in *The Boston Globe* in 2002."

No, it was the Catholics themselves who started to write about it, and then there was the Survivors Network of those Abused by priests, SNAP. Then you have people like me that have been railing against mainline Protestant churches for the past 20 years. You have a group like the Institute on Religion and Democracy, which has argued against a lot of the things that the mainline churches have done. People have hammered on religious leaders from every quarter. There is a Netflix documentary on Scientology's abuses. Then there are websites devoted to the abuse of power by pastors in mega churches throughout the country. OK? If you're a religious leader here in the United States, you're going to be held accountable if you abuse your power, and if you infringe on the rights of others, even if you do it in the name of your religion.

When groups like CAIR and others start to say, "When you criticize us, you are being Islamophobic," I have concluded that they're using that accusation to prevent the process of holding religious leaders accountable for their abuse of power, that every other religious group in the United States has been subject to, since the founding of the Republic. So, when I see accusations like that, I say, "That's how it is in America."

Either you can make a straightforward case that you're doing the right thing, or you can't, and if you can't, then what you do is you charge somebody with bigotry.

Yesterday, I was up in Salem, Massachusetts, and I went to the Peabody Essex Museum, and there was a kid walking in Salem

with a cross with a circle and a line through it. He was saying he was an anti-Christian, and he was declaring it right out in public. That's how it is in America. He's not going to be charged with blasphemy.

I don't like to see anti-Christian stuff, but I can live with it. The United States has been a very rough place for religious leaders who cannot handle being argued with or being held accountable, and I think that's wonderful.

**Jerry Gordon:** What do you think this country is going to be doing with regard to its obligation to defend the rule of law?

**Dexter Van Zile:** I don't know. That's, I think, a very frightening thing... People are starting to see what happens when the rule of law is not protected. A long time ago, a rabbi said, "You know, I don't like it when you use the phrase canary in a coal mine."

I've heard so many Jews use that phrase in the years since, that I don't know what else to use. I think that when we see Jews attacked in the streets of New York and that their assailants are arrested and hopefully punished, it's a warning to the rest of us. I want to offer a "Weimar Warning," because the Weimar chaos began with leftists very early on, but it sure didn't end with them. What do people think is going to happen next if we allow one ideological community to get away with this type of behavior? Do we think that the rest of society isn't paying attention and aren't going to use the misdeeds of one group as a license for their own misdeeds? Do we think that the rest of society isn't paying attention and aren't going to use the misdeeds of one group as a license for their own misdeeds? Yeah, I'm bothered.

**Jerry Gordon:** Well, on that note I want to thank you for a through discussion of the dynamics behind what a lot of us are witnessing today, here in the United States, and unfortunately abroad as we conclude this discussion.

**Dexter Van Zile:** Thank you.

[Watch](#) the YouTube video of the discussion with Dexter Van Zile of CAMERA.

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