

Cancel Culture Comes for Hamas Lovers on Campus



by James S. Robbins

Progressives and the universities that produce them are suddenly and unexpectedly paying a price for decades of Israel hating on campus. Who knew?

Major university donors and board members are breaking affiliation with schools that have soft-peddled Hamas terrorism. They are calling schools to account for outrageous ideas being expressed by students and faculty regarding the October 7 terror attacks in Israel.

Granted, anti-Israel views have been the standard for years on many campuses, so it is nothing new. But in the wake of the worst day for Jews since the Holocaust, campus antisemitism is getting a fresh look.

The day after Hamas slaughtered over 1,200 people in Israel, more than thirty "Harvard Palestine Solidarity Groups"

released a [statement](#) holding “the Israeli regime entirely responsible for all unfolding violence.” This is the same type of virtue-signaling nonsense they might have trumpeted after any incident in that part of the world, without criticism or question.

But this time the kids misread the room. “Blame Israel” did not quite work when Hamas operatives were busy streaming videos of killing families, throwing young women into trucks to haul back to Gaza for unspeakable abuse, or dragging the corpse of one of them through the streets behind a motorcycle.

By October 9, bipartisan Harvard alumni members of Congress weighed in denouncing the letter. Former Harvard President and Clinton-era Treasury Secretary Larry Summers [posted](#) he had “never been as disillusioned and alienated” from Harvard, particularly due to the “silence from Harvard’s leadership.”

And it got better. Billionaire hedge-fund manager [Bill Ackman](#) called on Harvard to release names of members of the pro-Hamas groups (probably the same students in most of them) so companies don’t “inadvertently” hire them. [Other business leaders and investors](#) chimed in also wanting the names, and on October 11 Accuracy in Media [exposed](#) the group members – “Harvard’s leading antisemites” – on a truck mounted with a digital billboard.

Later three pro-Hamas students from Harvard and Columbia [lost job offers](#) from the firm of Davis, Polk, and Wardwell because their actions were “a direct contravention of [the] firm’s value system” and they needed to maintain “a supporting and inclusive work environment.” The president of the NYU Student Bar Association likewise [lost a job offer from Winston & Strawn](#). It must have been quite a surprise for these progressives to see the standard cancel culture lingo being used against them.

Then things really began to bite. Israeli billionaire Idan

Ofer and his wife Batia resigned from the executive board of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and [withdrew](#) a planned multimillion-dollar donation. Billionaire retailer [Les Wexner](#) followed, saying the Wexner Foundation had cut funding from the school because "our core values and those of Harvard no longer align."

Harvard president Claudine Gay had struggled to keep up with the unexpected PR nightmare, offering weak explanations and generic denunciations of terrorism, defending free speech but cautioning that the student groups "do not speak for Harvard." Really? Because this is the first time we have heard this.

There was also a [major donor revolt at UPenn](#) citing a history of on-campus antisemitism and a mild response to the October 7 attacks from the administration. The Penn faculty Senate released a [combative statement](#) accusing the donors of trying to manipulate them and defending academic freedom; funny how they were not so outspoken a few years ago when conservative law professor Amy Wax was being [targeted](#) for her views. Maybe if she had praised Hamas they would have liked her better.

Meanwhile Jewish students [fear for their safety on campus](#). Julia Jassey of the student advocacy group Jewish on Campus says that "Jewish students are afraid to go to class and sit next to peers who have been posting hateful things online." But this is [nothing new](#) – open antisemitism has lately been rife in higher education. Tabia Lee, a former DEI director at De Anza College in California, says [diversity programs](#) are helping drive this trend. She says that by the logic of "critical social justice," Jews are "white oppressors" and unworthy of support. When she tried to make her campus more inclusive for Jews, she was called a "dirty Zionist" and later fired. Today the bravest, most daring, and dangerous thing a student could do is openly wear a Star of David on campus.

These incidents are exposing the rot in higher education that took hold long ago. Surely the severe reaction came as a

surprise to progressives who have lived in a self-constructed, consequence-free environment in which anything they say is treated as noble and profound, and any ideas they disagree with are viewed as troubling, triggering, or “[actual violence](#).” In their sealed campus bubbles no idea was too foolish, no [intersectional](#) position too absurd. ([Queers for Palestine](#)? Please, they [kill people](#) like that.)

But now we seem to have found the edges of this. People are finally noticing what has been going on. Business leaders, board members, and major donors are waking up to the kinds of ideas they have been supporting. Donors should take this as a sign to redirect their generosity to schools that better reflect their values, the worthy stewards who promote freedom do not hold them and their principles in contempt. [The Institute of World Politics](#) and [Grove City College](#) spring to mind!

And as for the students who support Hamas, if you like Gaza so much, please go there. Soon.

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