



**The Harassment of Jewish Students
on U.S. Campuses**

**How Eliminationist Anti-Zionism and Academic BDS
Incite Campus Antisemitism**

September 2019

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I. Introduction

While acts of classical antisemitism in the U.S. reached near-historic levels in 2018 and included the deadliest attack against Jews in American history,¹ the nation's colleges and universities revealed a somewhat different but nonetheless troubling story. According to AMCHA Initiative's survey of antisemitic activity in 2018 on campuses across the country, harassment motivated by classical antisemitism actually decreased, and significantly so. At the same time, however, the number of Israel-related acts of harassment increased significantly.

Last year also saw two much-publicized incidents, the first of their kind, in which faculty on two U.S. campuses admitted to taking actions in compliance with the official guidelines of the U.S. Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (USACBI), which call for cutting all ties with Israeli universities, and boycotting or working to cancel or shut down events, activities, agreements or projects on their own campuses that promote the "normalization of Israel in the global academy."² In September 2018, a faculty member at the University of Michigan, himself a supporter of the academic boycott of Israel (academic BDS), refused to write a letter of recommendation for his student wanting to study on a university-approved program in Israel.³ Soon after, 1,000 individuals signed a petition stating, "We, too, are supporters of the BDS Movement, and would not provide a letter of support for a student seeking to study in an Israeli University."⁴ Then in November, the faculty senate at Pitzer College, a small private school in Southern California, voted to shut down the school's study abroad program in Israel, a vote spearheaded by a professor who is very active in the academic boycott movement.⁵

While these incidents raised considerable public awareness about the "institutional boycott criteria" contained in the USACBI guidelines and their harmful impact on the educational opportunities and academic freedom of both students and faculty on U.S. campuses, another less prominent set of criteria contained in the guidelines, known as the "common sense" boycott, also appeared to be linked to unprecedented behavior targeting members of the campus community for harm. The "common sense" boycott described and promoted in the USACBI guidelines calls on "conscientious citizens" to respond to "what they widely perceive as egregious individual complicity in, responsibility for, or advocacy of [Israel's] violations of international law," and suggests that such individuals should be subject to "due criticism or any lawful form of protest, including boycott." Significantly, the academic BDS-compliant "common sense" boycott makes activists' efforts more personal, by shifting the anti-normalization focus from boycotting or seeking to shut down or cancel Israel-related academic programs, events, collaborations and agreements, to vilifying, protesting and boycotting *individuals and groups* perceived as being complicit with, or

¹ <https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/anti-semitic-incidents-remained-at-near-historic-levels-in-2018-assaults>

² <https://usacbi.org/guidelines-for-applying-the-international-academic-boycott-of-israel/>

³ <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/09/19/professor-cites-boycott-israeli-universities-declining-write-recommendation-letter>

⁴ <https://www.change.org/p/stand-with-john-cheney-lippold>

⁵ <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/11/28/pitzer-faculty-vote-suspend-study-abroad-program-israel>

advocating for, Israel's alleged crimes. In 2018, it appears that the "common sense" boycott found expression in extreme acts of vilification and exclusion from campus life perpetrated against openly pro-Israel students and groups. For example, at San Francisco State University a faculty member compared Zionist students on her campus to white supremacists and neo-Nazis, and the slogan "Zionists Not Welcome" was chalked on campus walkways and printed on flyers posted across campus. And at New York University, a petition signed by 53 student organizations called for a boycott of two pro-Israel student groups as part of a long list of demands in compliance with academic BDS.

In an effort to better understand the substantial rise in Israel-related acts targeting Jewish students for harm and its possible linkage to academic BDS, the current study looked more closely at the nature of those antisemitic acts, as well as at the quantity and quality of anti-Zionist discourse and activity that accompanied them and their change from 2017 to 2018. We found:

- Shift in types of antisemitic harassment: Classical antisemitic incidents significantly decreased, Israel-related incidents significantly increased in both number and intensity:
 - Classical antisemitic harassment decreased by **42%** from 205 in 2017 to 118 in 2018.
 - Israel-related harassment increased by **70%** from 71 in 2017 to 121 in 2018.
 - Antisemitic acts involving the singling out of Jewish and pro-Israel students and groups for personal vilification **more than doubled**, with a **tripling** of expression falsely implying these students or groups are linked to "white supremacy."
 - Antisemitic acts involving the unfair treatment of Jewish and pro-Israel students or attempts to exclude them from campus activities **more than doubled**, with expression calling for the total boycott or exclusion of Zionist students or expression from campus life **nearly tripling**.
- Significant increase in quantity and severity of Israel-related antisemitic discourse from 2017 to 2018, particularly language calling for or condoning violence against Israel or Israel's elimination:
 - Expression demonizing and delegitimizing Israel increased by **32%**, with expression accusing Israel or Zionism of "white supremacy" **more than doubling**.
 - Expression promoting or condoning terrorism against Israel increased by **67%**.
 - Expression promoting or condoning the elimination of Israel **more than doubled**.
- Significant increase in academic BDS-motivated activity from 2017 to 2018 and strong links to acts of Israel-related antisemitic harassment and expression:
 - While the number of anti-Israel divestment campaigns decreased slightly, the promotion or implementation of academic BDS **more than doubled**.

- Academic BDS-compliant behavior was linked to **86%** of Israel-related acts of antisemitic harassment.
- Schools with Israel-related antisemitic expression are 11 times more likely to have incidents of academic BDS-related activity, and **92%** of expressions of support for academic BDS were accompanied by Israel-related antisemitic rhetoric.
- Dramatic increase in faculty participation in academic BDS promotion and implementation and Israel-related antisemitic expression from 2017 to 2018:
 - The number of incidents of academic BDS promotion or attempted implementation involving individual faculty or academic departments **nearly quadrupled**.
 - The number of events sponsored by academic departments that contained the demonization or delegitimization of Israel increased by **85%**.
 - The number of departmentally-sponsored events at which one or more speakers advocated for or condoned violence against Israel or Israel's elimination **nearly tripled**.
- Dramatic increase in student and faculty acknowledgement of anti-Zionist intent from 2017 to 2018:
 - Expression openly acknowledging the opposition of an individual or group to Zionism, Israel's founding ideology, increased **more than three-fold**.
 - Expression by BDS supporters acknowledging that the goal of BDS is to bring about or facilitate the elimination of Israel as a Jewish state increased dramatically, from one incident in 2017 to **32** in 2018.

Taken together, these results suggest that the significant increase in acts of Israel-related harassment seen in 2018 may have been a direct consequence of the increased promotion and implementation of academic BDS. Specifically, academic BDS's mandate to boycott or suppress programs, collaborations, events, or expression that promote "the normalization of Israel in the global academy," as well as the academic BDS-compliant "common sense" mandate to criticize, protest and boycott individuals who are deemed complicit with or supportive of Israel's alleged crimes, appear to greatly encourage antisemitic behavior. At the same time, the significant increase in Israel-related antisemitic expression and its very strong association with the increase in academic BDS activity, along with the presence of such antisemitic rhetoric in almost every instance of academic BDS promotion, suggest that expression portraying Israel as a "pariah state" worthy of harm and elimination may be critically important for justifying academic BDS activity on campus.

These data also highlight the prominent and growing role that faculty play in advocating for and implementing academic BDS. They suggest, too, that faculty play a no less important role in providing academic legitimacy to the Israel-related antisemitic expression that accompanies and justifies academic BDS promotion and implementation.

Finally, our results suggest that academic BDS is itself simply a tool, albeit the primary tool on college campuses today, for carrying out the eliminationist goals of anti-Zionism. They also highlight the fact that attempts to promote or carry out anti-Zionism's eliminationist goals can't help but inflict direct and substantive harm on Israel's on-campus supporters, particularly Jewish and pro-Israel students.

II. Methodology

Data Collection

AMCHA's Antisemitism Tracker⁶ contains incidents from 2015 to present culled from submitted incident reports, campus police logs, media accounts, social media postings and on-line recordings, which have occurred on U.S. college or university campuses and been identified by AMCHA personnel as having antisemitic content. This study focused on those antisemitic incidents that occurred in 2017 and 2018.

In determining what constitutes an antisemitic incident, a qualitative distinction is made between behaviors that are, in whole or part, directed at or disproportionately affect Jewish members of the campus community and cause them some degree of measurable harm (e.g. assault, bullying, suppression of speech, destruction of property), and behaviors, primarily speech or imagery, that are expressions of classic or contemporary antisemitic tropes,⁷ but which are not specifically directed at Jewish members of the campus community.

Incidents identified as "**Targeting Jewish Students and Staff for Harm**" involve one or more of the following behaviors:

- **Physical Assault** – Physically attacking Jewish students or staff because of their Jewishness or perceived association with Israel.
- **Discrimination** – Unfair treatment or exclusion of Jewish students or staff because of their Jewishness or perceived association with Israel.
- **Destruction of Property** – Inflicting damage or destroying property owned by Jews or related to Jews.
- **Genocidal Expression** – Using imagery (e.g. swastika) or language that expresses a desire or will to kill Jews or exterminate the Jewish people.
- **Suppression of Speech/Movement/Assembly** – Preventing or impeding the expression of Jewish students, such as by removing or defacing Jewish students'

⁶ <https://amchainitiative.org/search-by-incident#incident/search/display-by-date/search/>

⁷ AMCHA Initiative employs the U.S. State Department definition of antisemitism, which includes forms of anti-Zionist expression: <https://www.state.gov/defining-anti-semitism/>.

flyers, attempting to disrupt or shut down speakers at Jewish or pro-Israel events, or blocking access to Jewish or pro-Israel student events.

- **Bullying** – Tormenting Jewish students or staff because of their Jewishness or perceived association with Israel.
- **Denigration** – Unfairly ostracizing, vilifying or defaming Jewish students or staff because of their Jewishness or perceived association with Israel.

Language or imagery identified as “**Antisemitic Expression**” involves one or more of the following types of expression:

- **Historical Antisemitism** - Using symbols, images and tropes associated with historical antisemitism, including by making “mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such, or the power of Jews as a collective-especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, governments, or other societal institutions” (U.S. State Department).
- **Condoning Terrorism against Israel or Jews** - Calling for, aiding or justifying the killing or harming of Jews.
- **Denying Jews Self-Determination** - Denying Israel the right to exist or promoting the elimination of Israel as a Jewish state.
- **Demonization of Israel** - Using symbols, images and tropes associated with classic antisemitism to characterize Israel, Israelis, Zionism or Zionists, such as claiming that Israelis are evil or blood-thirsty and deliberately murder children or that Zionism is white supremacy, or delegitimizing Israel by insinuating that Israel is an illegitimate state and does not belong in the family of nations.

Identifying Classic and Israel-Related Antisemitic Incidents of Targeting

Incidents identified as containing classic antisemitism were those that demonstrated anti-Jewish animus on the part of the perpetrators, either through their use of language or imagery containing anti-Jewish messages, or through actions targeting identifiably Jewish individuals (e.g. a student wearing a kippah) or objects (e.g. vandalizing the mezuzah on a Jewish student’s doorpost). Israel-related incidents were those that demonstrated anti-Israel animus on the part of the perpetrators, either through their use of language or imagery containing anti-Israel messages, or through actions targeting identifiably pro-Israel individuals (e.g. a student wearing an IDF t-shirt) or objects (e.g. vandalizing a banner for a pro-Israel student event).

Incidents could be identified as having both classic antisemitic and anti-Israel aspects. For example, a voicemail message on a university staff member’s phone that included classic

antisemitic Holocaust denial, referring to the Holocaust as a “Holofoax,” also accused Jews of “extorting Palestine for a century.” Such incidents would be counted as both classic antisemitic and Israel-related.

Identifying the Implementation of Academic BDS

Behavior was identified as having implemented or attempted to implement the academic boycott of Israel when it met one or both of two sets of criteria stated in the official guidelines of the U.S. Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (USACBI)⁸.

The first set of criteria included actions intended to “boycott and/or work towards the cancellation or annulment of events, activities, agreements, or projects involving Israeli academic institutions or that otherwise promote the normalization of Israel in the global academy, whitewash Israel’s violations of international law and Palestinian rights, or violate the BDS guidelines.” Behavior compliant with these criteria included:

- Refusing to write letters of recommendation for students who want to pursue studies in Israel;
- Working toward the closure of their own university’s study abroad programs in Israel;
- Attempting to shut down collaborative research between scholars at their own university and in Israel;
- Attempting to cancel, shut down or disrupt events organized by students or faculty at their own university that feature Israeli leaders or Israeli scholars who come as representatives of their universities, or which are perceived as “normalizing Israel”;
- Boycotting academic programs or projects organized by students or faculty at their own university that “bring together Palestinians/Arabs and Israelis so that they can present their respective narratives or perspectives, or to work toward reconciliation” or that promote “co-existence.”

The second set of criteria used for identifying behavior that implemented or attempted to implement academic BDS was based on the USACBI guidelines’ explicit promotion of a “common sense” boycott that called for “due criticism, or any lawful form of protest or boycott” against individuals alleged to have “complicity in, responsibility for, or advocacy of [Israel’s] violations of international law.” Behavior compliant with these criteria included the denigration of students, faculty or campus groups, or their exclusion from campus programs and activities, because of their alleged support for Israel.

⁸ <https://usacbi.org/guidelines-for-applying-the-international-academic-boycott-of-israel/>

Identifying Anti-Zionist Intent of Speakers and the Eliminationist Intent of BDS

Expression was identified as having “anti-Zionist intent” if its message: 1) stated explicitly that the speaker or speakers were “anti-Zionist” (e.g. “I am a proud anti-Zionist”) or “opposed to Zionism” (e.g. “We stand opposed to Zionism”); or 2) denigrated Zionism in a way that clearly implied opposition to it (e.g. “Zionism should not and can not be defended for its ideological premise of ethno-religious Jewish preservation”).

Expression was identified as acknowledging the eliminationist intent of BDS when a BDS proponent or proponents openly stated that the goal of BDS was either: 1) to eliminate or destroy the Jewish state (e.g. “BDS means an end to Israel as the Jewish people’s homeland”); 2) one step towards the goal of eliminating or destroying Israel or Israel as a Jewish state (e.g. “BDS isn’t the end-all, it is just the first step”); or 3) would lead to an action or set of actions that would inevitably destroy Israel or eliminate it as a Jewish state, such as calling for the “right of return” of millions of Palestinians and their descendants, which would make Jews a minority in Israel (e.g. “BDS calls for the right of all refugees to return to their homes and properties”).

III. Results

1. Classical Antisemitic Harassment Significantly Decreased, while Israel-Related Harassment Significantly Increased

In 2018, there were **238** incidents on 118 campuses involving the targeted harassment of Jewish students. Of these, **118** were incidents involving classical antisemitism, and **120** were Israel-related incidents. Although the total number of targeting incidents was only 11% lower than in 2017 (261 at 125 schools), those incidents identified as expressing classical antisemitism decreased by **42%** (from 205), while the number of Israel-related incidents increased by **70%** (from 71). See Table 1.

Table 1

Number of Incidents of Targeting Jewish Students for Harm Involving Classical and Israel-Related Antisemitism in 2017 and 2018

Targeting Incidents	2017	2018	% Change
Classical	205	118	- 42%
Israel-Related	71	121	+ 70%
Total⁹	261	238	- 11%

⁹ Some incidents of targeting involving both classical and Israel-related elements, e.g. a swastika drawn on an Israel flag, were counted in both categories and therefore the total number of incidents is less than the sum of the incidents in each category.

2. Israel-Related Harassment of Jewish Students for Harm Becomes Increasingly Vilifying and Exclusionary

While the number of incidents involving acts of Israel-related targeting of Jewish students for harm increased from 2017 to 2018 in each of the seven categories of antisemitic behavior (see Table 2), the two types of behavior that saw the largest increases were acts of Denigration and Discrimination.

Table 2

Numbers of Incidents in 2017 and 2018 of Israel-Related Targeting of Jewish Students for Harm By Category of Behavior

	2017	2018
Denigration	35	72
Discrimination	17	41
Bullying	18	26
Suppression of Speech	27	29
Destruction of Property	4	8
Genocidal Expression	4	6
Physical Assault	0	1

a. Acts Targeting Zionist Students and Student Groups for Denigration more than Doubled

The number of incidents involving the Israel-related denigration of students or student groups more than doubled, from 35 in 2017 to 72 in 2018, with pro-Israel students being increasingly accused of evils such as racism, white supremacy, Islamophobia, and supporting apartheid, genocide and ethnic cleansing. For example:

- Shortly after the president of San Francisco State University issued a statement saying that Zionist students were welcome at the university, members of an anti-Zionist student group wrote to the president stating, “[W]elcoming zionists onto campus is a signal that SFSU supports the white supremacy of colonialism and ethnic cleansing.”
- At Washington University, members of Students Against Israeli Apartheid disrupted a Hillel-sponsored pro-Israel event and later posted on their group’s Facebook page, “Our protesting of [the event]...falls in line with our fight against white supremacy.”
- During student government elections at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, a student sent out an email to approximately 100 recipients in the Social Thought and Political Economy Program that denigrated a Jewish

student running in the election, claiming that she was "literally a fellow with the racist, islamophobic hate group, StandWithUs."

- SJP at University of California Berkeley launched a petition accusing the pro-Israel student group "Tikvah: the Zionist Voice at UC Berkeley" of "blatant racism."
- At the University of Vermont, SJP issued a statement accusing students who hung an Israel flag on campus of "the defense of apartheid, colonialism and imperialism."

See Table 3 for the expressions targeting Jewish students for denigration that increased the most from 2017 to 2018.

Table 3

Number of Incidents of Israel-Related Denigrating Expression Targeting Jewish Student with the Largest Increase from 2017 to 2018

Accusing Students of Being or Supporting	Incidents in 2017	Incidents in 2018
Racist/Racism	6	13
White Supremacist/Supremacy	11	33
Washer/Washing (Pink, Green, etc.)	6	11
Islamophobic/Islamophobia	3	7

b. Acts Targeting Students and Student Groups for Israel-Related Discrimination More than Doubled and Increased in Openly Exclusionary Nature

Discriminatory behavior deliberately designed to exclude Zionist students or student groups from fully participating in campus life also more than doubled, from 17 incidents in 2017 to **41** in 2018. In addition, discriminatory behavior became more blatantly exclusionary, with **14** calls for the boycott of pro-Israel students or student groups or the total exclusion of Zionist expression from campus life, up from 5 such calls in 2017. For example:

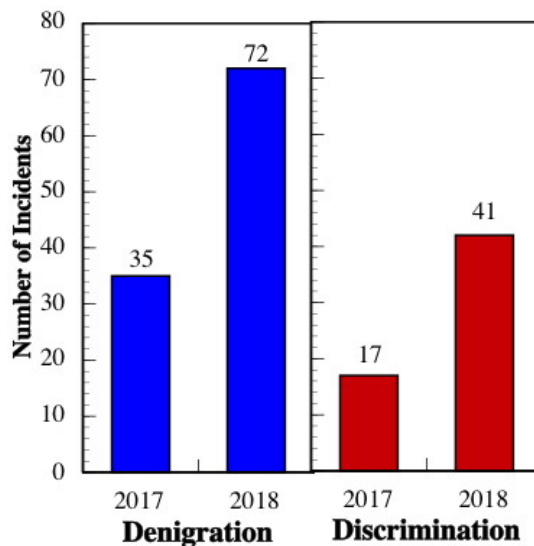
- At San Francisco State University, the director of an academic program posted to her program's Facebook page a message stating that welcoming Zionists to campus is "a declaration of war against Arabs, Muslims, [and] Palestinians." Soon after her message was posted, numerous flyers and graffiti messages showed up all over campus stating, "Zionists Not Welcome."
- A Stanford University student slated to become a residential assistant in a campus dormitory posted on his Facebook page a declaration that he'll "physically fight zionists on campus next year."

- At California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo, the Black Student Union and various other student organizations released a set of demands of the school’s administration that included, “We want an increase in ASI [Associated Students Inc] funding of ALL cultural clubs, with the exception of organizations aligned with Zionist ideology.”
- In an opinion piece in the student newspaper at the University of Virginia, a student argued that the Jewish Leadership Council should not be permitted full membership in the Minority Rights Coalition unless “they denounce their ties to Zionist [student] groups.”
- At SUNY Stony Brook, SJP issued a statement saying, “In response to the quote mentioned from the community pledge to accept and respect the identity of students, we ask the university: if there were Nazis, white nationalists, and KKK members on campus, would their identity have to be accepted and respected? Absolutely not. Then why would we respect the views of Zionists?”

Increases from 2017 to 2018 in acts targeting Jewish students for Israel-related denigration or discrimination are displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Number of Incidents Involving Israel-Related Denigration and Discrimination In 2017 and 2018



3. Significant Increases in Israel-Related Antisemitic Expression

- Incidents Involving Expression Demonizing or Delegitimizing Israel or Zionism Significantly Increased, Some Expression More than Doubling**

The number of incidents involving the demonization or delegitimization of Israel or Zionism increased by **32%**, from 311 incidents in 2017 to **410** incidents in 2018. As can be seen in Table 4, all of the most frequently heard expressions of demonization and delegitimization increased from 2017 to 2018, with the largest increase for the accusation that Israel is engaging in, or Zionism is a form of, “white supremacy,” which more than doubled in occurrence.

Table 4

The Most Frequently Heard Expressions Demonizing and Delegitimizing Israel and Zionism from 2017 to 2018

Demonization/ Delegitimization	Incidents in 2017	Incidents in 2018	% Increase
White Supremacy	17	42	147%
Settler Colonialism	28	55	96%
Genocide	37	66	78%
(Pink, etc.) Washing	34	51	50%
Ethnic Cleansing	67	98	46%
Racism	71	95	34%
Apartheid	219	268	22%

b. Significant Increase in Expression Condoning or Promoting Violence against Israel or Its Elimination

i. **Condoning or Promoting Violence** – Expression condoning terrorism or violence against Israel rose 67% from 18 in 2017 to 30 in 2018. For example:

- At the University of Houston, an article in the student newspaper praised two Palestinian women who had committed terrorist acts against Israel, calling them “heroic women in battle...ones of resilience, resistance, and perseverance that every woman can continue to learn from as their fight for liberation continues.”
- At anti-Israel rallies on several campuses, including at CUNY City College, New York University, Ohio State University, University of California Irvine and UCLA, students promoted “Intifada,” terrorist campaigns against Israel, with expressions such as “Intifada, Intifada, Long Live the Intifada!”, “Intifada revolution!”, “Intifada, there is only one solution!” and “From Gaza to the Plaza, globalize the Intifada!”.
- A speaker at an SJP event at UCLA said, “When you are fighting against an enemy like the Zionists, you do not deny any avenue of resistance...[including] armed resistance”.
- At University of California San Diego, a professor posted on her door the image of a young girl wearing a t-shirt saying “I [heart] Hamas.”

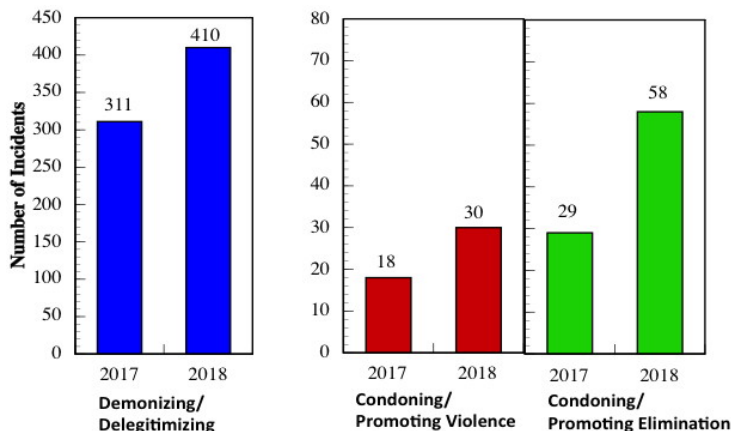
ii. **Condoning or Promoting the Elimination of Israel** – Expression openly promoting or condoning the elimination or destruction of Israel as a Jewish state more than doubled, with 58 reported incidents in 2017 to **129** in 2018. For example:

- At the University of California Los Angeles, attendees carried tote bags bearing the slogan “Make Israel Palestine Again” at the National Students for Justice in Palestine conference, and the same slogan appeared on placards displayed by students at anti-Israel rallies at the University of Houston and the University of California Davis.
- At the University of Michigan, three academic departments sponsored an event at which the speaker claimed that it was “unjustifiable...that such a thing as a Jewish majority state ought to exist at the expense of those who can lay claim to that land historically.”
- A speaker at an SJP event at Emanuel College said, “Yes, it is Palestine, it will always be Palestine... We lost some of it in ‘48 we lost the rest of it in ‘67, we’re gonna get it back.”
- An SJP-authored op-ed in the student newspaper at the University of California Davis stated, “[I]t is an ideological fantasy to really believe that progress is possible so long as the state of Israel exists...The goal of Palestinian resistance is...to completely dismantle those forces at play.”

Increases from 2017 to 2018 in Israel-related antisemitic expression demonizing Israel and calling for or condoning violence against Israel or Israel’s elimination are displayed in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Number of Incidents Involving Israel-Related Antisemitic Expression in 2017 and 2018



4. Promotion and Implementation of Academic BDS more than Doubled and was Strongly Linked to Acts Targeting Jewish Students for Harm and Israel-Related Antisemitic Expression:

- While the number of anti-Israel divestment resolutions declined slightly from 16 in 2017 to **15** in 2018, the number of incidents involving student or faculty attempts to implement or promote an academic boycott of Israeli universities and scholars more than doubled, from 61 incidents in 2017 to **126** incidents in 2018.
- **105 (86%)** of the Israel-related acts of antisemitic harassment were consistent with the USACBI guidelines for implementation of academic BDS.
- Schools with Israel-related antisemitic expression were 11.3 times more likely to have incidents of academic BDS promotion or implementation ($\chi^2 = 29.5$, $p < .001$), and the more Israel-related antisemitic expression, the more incidents of academic BDS activity ($R = .74$, $p < .001$).
- **33 of 36 (92%)** of incidents involving the promotion of academic BDS were accompanied by language demonizing and delegitimizing Israel.

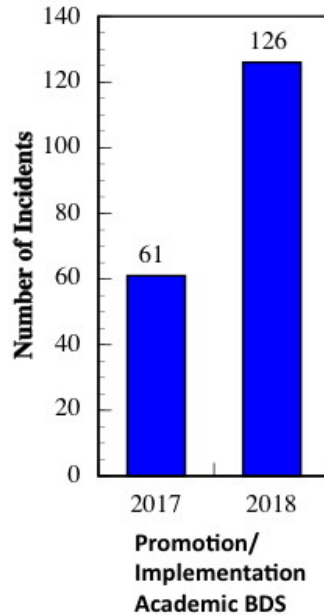
In 2018, incidents involving the implementation, attempted implementation or expression of public support for academic BDS have included the following:

- At the University of Michigan, two instructors refused to write letters of recommendation for students wanting to study in Israel, in compliance with the USACBI guidelines. And at Pitzer College, the faculty senate voted overwhelmingly to shut down their school's only student abroad program in Israel, in compliance with the academic boycott.
- In the wake of the above incidents, there was a flurry of expression of student and faculty support on campuses across the country, including conferences sponsored by multiple academic departments supporting the right of faculty to implement academic BDS, held at New York University and the University of Michigan.
- On numerous campuses, student-organized events about Israel were protested and disrupted, and a few shut down or canceled, such as a student-organized forum on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at Syracuse University, which was canceled after the event was protested because it was perceived as being "pro-Israeli."
- At New York University, 53 student groups pledged to boycott NYU's pro-Israel clubs and refused to co-sponsor events with them.

Increase in the promotion and implementation of academic BDS from 2017 to 2018 are displayed in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Number of Incidents Involving the Promotion or Implementation of Academic BDS in 2017 and 2018



5. Faculty Contribution: Faculty and Departmental Participation in Anti-Zionist Behavior and Expression Increased Significantly

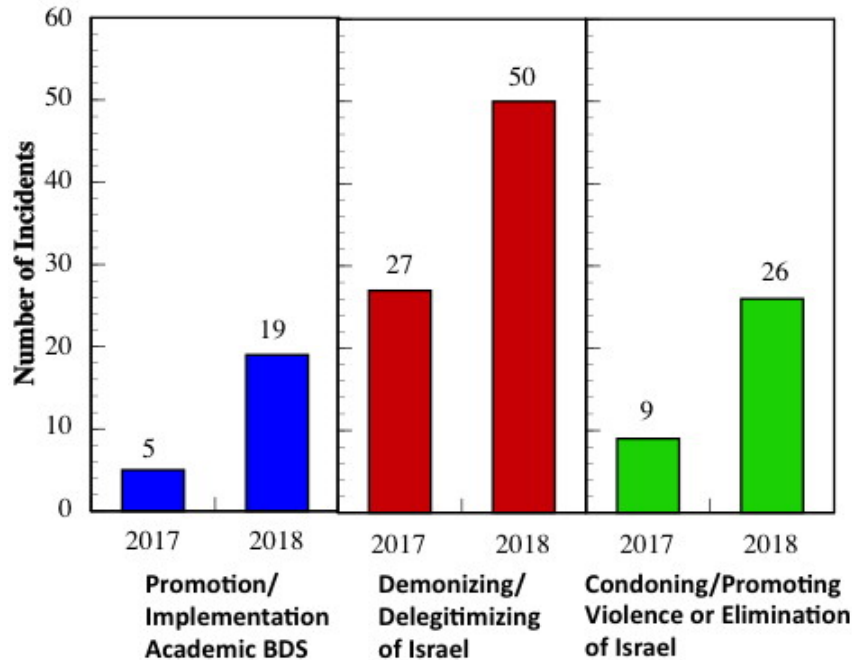
Incidents involving the promotion and implementation of academic BDS, or antisemitic expression demonizing Israel and calling for or condoning Israel's harm or elimination increased considerably from 2017 to 2018:

- The number of incidents of academic BDS promotion or attempted implementation by faculty or academic departments **almost quadrupled**, from 5 incidents in 2017 to **19** in 2018.
- The number of events sponsored by academic departments that contained the demonization or delegitimization of Israel increased by **85%**, from 27 departmentally-sponsored events exhibiting such rhetoric in 2017 to **50** in 2018.
- The number of departmentally-sponsored events at which one or more speakers advocated for or condoned violence against Israel or its elimination **nearly tripled**, from nine events in 2017 to **26** in 2018.

Increase in the faculty and departmental contribution to academic BDS and Israel-related antisemitic expression from 2017 to 2018 are displayed in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Contribution of Faculty and Departments to Academic BDS Promotion and Implementation and to Israel-Related Antisemitic Expression in 2017 and 2018



6. Significant Increase in Student and Faculty Acknowledgement of Their Own Anti-Zionist Intent and the Anti-Zionist Intent of BDS

a. Acknowledging Anti-Zionist Intent - Expression openly acknowledging the opposition of an individual or group to Zionism, Israel’s founding ideology, increased more than three-fold, from 22 reported instances in 2017 to **78** incidents in 2018. For example:

- SJP at SUNY Stony Brook issued a statement acknowledging, “Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) is and will always be against Zionism.”
- SJP at the University of California Irvine held a week-long series of events entitled “Anti-Zionism Week: We Will Return.”
- A speaker at a departmentally sponsored event hosted at San Francisco State University stated, “Zionism is a white supremacist idea...It’s a way that white supremacy expresses itself within Jewish communities as well as outward.”

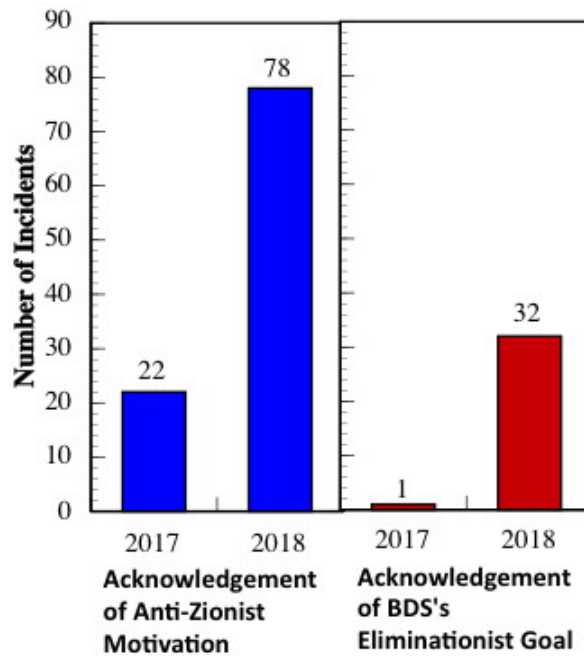
b. Acknowledging the Eliminationist Intent of BDS - Expression of BDS supporters acknowledging that the goal of BDS is to bring about or facilitate the elimination of Israel as a Jewish state increased dramatically, with one incident reported in 2017 and **32** incidents in 2018. Examples include:

- An interviewee in the documentary “The Lobby,” which was screened at George Washington University, Northeastern University and Boston University, said, “BDS is saying that what Israel has to do is treat Palestinians in its midst the same way it treats Israeli Jews...if Israel does that there will be more Palestinians inside greater Israel than there are Jews and that means if you have a system where everyone is treated equally then you would no longer have a Jewish state.”
- At a departmentally sponsored event at San Jose State University, one speaker acknowledged, “I do support boycott divestment and sanctions. I’m very active in organizing for the boycott because I think that without the U.S. government support, the Israeli state would fall in one day.”
- A speaker at an SJP event at the University of North Florida stated, “With the materialization of BDS, officially we would see the end of Israeli Apartheid and a free Palestine.”

Increases in student and faculty acknowledgment of their own anti-Zionist motivation and the eliminationist goals of BDS from 2017 to 2018 are displayed in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Student and Faculty Admission of Anti-Zionist Motivation and BDS’s Eliminationist Goals in 2017 and 2018



IV. Discussion

Putting the Data into Perspective

For many years, students and faculty on campuses across the country have defended their anti-Israel behavior and rhetoric as legitimate criticism of Israel's treatment of Palestinians and Israeli Arabs, with the goal of effecting change in Israeli policy. However, the data from this study suggest that anti-Israel campus activism may have a fundamentally different motivation and goal, whose pursuit can lead directly to acts of harassment against Jewish and pro-Israel students.

With increasing frequency and clarity, campus activists are admitting that the underlying motivation for their Israel-related action and expression is not opposition to Israel's policies, but to the Jewish State's very existence. This was demonstrated in the three-fold increase from 2017 to 2018 of incidents involving individuals or groups openly acknowledging their opposition to Zionism, Israel's founding ideology. In addition, as student and faculty expression openly acknowledging opposition to Zionism dramatically increased, campus expression calling for or condoning violence against Israel significantly increased as well, with expression calling for or condoning Israel's destruction more than doubling.

To understand what is currently playing out on campus, it's important to put these trends into historical context. While armed violence directed at the Jewish State has long been an approach taken to achieving anti-Zionism's eliminationist goals, a complementary "non-violent" approach to hastening Israel's elimination, one that has become quite popular on U.S. campuses, was first explicitly articulated in the official declaration¹⁰ of an NGO Forum that ran parallel to the UN World Conference Against Racism held in Durban South Africa in 2001. Based on a false analogy linking Israel to apartheid South Africa, the declaration detailed a two-step campaign that has become known as the "Durban Strategy,"¹¹ whose goal is to effect the dismantling of "apartheid" Israel, in the same way as apartheid South Africa had been dismantled in the 1990's.

The first part of the Durban Strategy involves making the argument that Israel is so evil that it must be isolated and eliminated. Besides the apartheid label, which is applied to Israel no less than 15 times in the declaration, Israel is also falsely accused of "settler colonialism" and "crimes against humanity," including "racism," "genocide," and "ethnic cleansing." Both on and off campus, these continue to be the terms of contemporary defamations of Israel, with other expressions, such as "white supremacy" and "pink washing," being associated with Israel more recently as these terms have taken on increasingly demonic connotations in common parlance.

The second part of the Durban Strategy -- what the declaration refers to as its "programme" -- is an action plan that calls for "the full cessation of all links...between all states and

¹⁰ <http://academic.udayton.edu/race/06hrights/WCAR2001/NGOFORUM/Palestinans.htm>

¹¹ https://www.ngo-monitor.org/in-the-media/the_durban_strategy/

Israel,” as well as “the imposition of mandatory and comprehensive sanctions and embargoes.” This is a blueprint for the program of boycotts, divestment and sanctions that has come to be known as BDS. As found in our study, the dramatic increase in 2018 of campus activists’ acknowledgement of BDS’s eliminationist intent highlights the connection between campus BDS efforts and the Durban Strategy’s use of BDS as a tool for isolating, harming and ultimately eliminating the Jewish State.

For several years, the most prominent manifestations of BDS found on college campuses were the campaigns carried out by anti-Zionist student groups, primarily Students for Justice in Palestine, promoting resolutions in their student governments demanding that their school’s board of trustees dis-invest financial holdings in companies such as Caterpillar and Hewlett-Packard that do business in Israel. Although campus divestment efforts have generated a lot of attention, they have never resulted in a school’s formal boycott of or divestment from Israel. Nevertheless, as AMCHA’s studies of antisemitic activity on U.S. campuses in 2015¹² and 2016¹³ have shown, in the weeks-long campaigns promoting these divestment resolutions, student activists have been very successful in carrying out the first part of the Durban Strategy, namely, injecting onto campus, via apartheid walls, op-eds in the student newspaper, invited speakers, demonstrations, etc., enormous amounts of expression portraying Israel as a uniquely evil state worthy of elimination.

The data from our current study suggest that efforts to carry out the second stage of the Durban Strategy by means of promoting anti-Israel divestment campaigns have recently been overshadowed by efforts to promote and implement an academic boycott of Israel, which more than doubled from 2017 to 2018. This change in focus from a boycott aimed at hurting Israel economically to one aimed at hurting the country academically has brought with it additional challenges for many members of the campus community. That is because it’s impossible to implement academic BDS – whose institutional boycott criteria call on activists to work towards cutting their school’s ties with Israeli universities and the scholars who represent them and boycotting, cancelling or shutting down events, activities, agreements or projects that promote the “normalization of Israel in the global academy [or] whitewash Israel’s violations of international law and Palestinian rights” – without negatively affecting the educational opportunities and academic rights of students or faculty members on U.S. campuses who want to study about or travel to Israel or to collaborate with Israeli scholars or educational institutions.

Moreover, the fact that 85% of antisemitic acts of harassment are consistent with the USACBI guidelines demonstrates that Jewish and pro-Israel students are particularly vulnerable to the harms of an academic boycott of Israel, especially the academic BDS-compliant “common sense” boycott that targets Israel’s supporters for “criticism...protest...[and] boycott.” Academic BDS-mandated actions not only undermine the educational rights of Jewish and pro-Israel students, but also impede their right to

¹² <https://amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Antisemitic-Activity-at-U.S.-Colleges-and-Universities-with-Jewish-Populations-2015-Full-Report.pdf>

¹³ https://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Antisemitism_At-the-Epicenter-of-Campus-Intolerance_Report-2016.pdf

express their opinion or identity and curtail their ability to fully participate in campus life. Pro-Israel student-organized events and activities are routinely protested and disrupted, and Jewish and pro-Israel students and student groups are targeted for vilification, discrimination and calls for their total exclusion from the campus community for their alleged efforts to normalize Israel and whitewash Israel's crimes.

As in the case of campus-based efforts to promote and implement anti-Israel divestment resolutions, the promotion and implementation of academic BDS is strongly associated with Israel-related antisemitic expression, which was demonstrated in our study by the extraordinarily high correlation ($R = .74$) between incidents involving academic BDS activity and language demonizing Israel and calling for or condoning its harm or elimination. Our study also found that more than 90% of the incidents involving expression promoting academic BDS themselves included such Israel-related antisemitic expression. Once again consistent with the Durban Strategy, these data suggest a logical progression: language portraying Israel as a pariah state worthy of harm and elimination encourages the condoning or promotion of harm directed at Israel (academic BDS) or Israel's elimination (academic BDS's goal), which in turn leads to (academic BDS-compliant) acts targeting both Israel and Israel's campus supporters for harm.

Finally, while student activists play an important role in its promotion and implementation, academic BDS is primarily a faculty-driven boycott, whose rise in prominence and popularity on campuses across the country is linked to the increased participation of faculty in the anti-Zionist rhetoric and behavior associated with it: from 2017 to 2018, faculty expression demonizing and delegitimizing Israel rose by 85%; faculty expression calling for or condoning the harming or elimination of Israel nearly tripled; and faculty promotion of academic BDS or implementation of its guidelines nearly quadrupled. These data provide evidence that faculty boycotters have been highly successful in carrying out the first part of the Durban Strategy when it comes to academic BDS: they have not only been making the arguments that Israel is an apartheid, settler colonial, racist, and genocidal state, but providing those arguments with the academic legitimacy that has allowed them to flourish on campus and well beyond. These data also demonstrate the alarming possibility that, if left unchecked, faculty boycotters may be successful in carrying out the second part of the Durban Strategy, by implementing a boycott whose goal is to eliminate the Jewish State, but whose unavoidable effect is the harassment of Jewish and pro-Israel students.

Recommendations

In light of these findings, we offer the following recommendations to university leaders:

- **Establish a uniform standard of behavior for all students that addresses harassment equitably:** Often anti-Israel antisemitism and BDS-motivated harassment is overlooked by university administrators as political speech. However, harassment is harassment, regardless of the motivation behind it. University administrators must recognize that BDS in general and an academic boycott of Israel in particular are tools of an intolerant ideology whose ultimate goal often

results in the harassment of students. On campus, BDS efforts are invariably accompanied by language that demonizes and delegitimizes Israel and calls for or condones violence against the Jewish State or its destruction. Such rhetoric often incites behavior that not only targets Israel for harm, but also Israel's on-campus supporters, primarily Jewish and pro-Israel students. While anti-Zionist speech, except in rare instances, is protected under the First Amendment, the intolerant behavior that such rhetoric incites may not be constitutionally protected, and in these cases, the behavior must be promptly and appropriately addressed. Moreover, Jewish and pro-Israel students must be afforded the same protection *as all other students* from behavior that substantially impedes the expression of their opinion, belief or identity, or otherwise limits their ability to fully participate in campus life. This requires the establishment of a single standard of behavior for all students: language or behavior deemed unacceptable when directed at students from one group must be deemed unacceptable when directed at any student, irrespective of the motivation of the perpetrator or the identity of the victim.

- **Issue statement affirming that academic BDS will not be permitted to harm members of the campus community:** Publicly acknowledge that while an academic boycott of Israel may ostensibly target Israeli universities and scholars, its implementation cannot help but directly and substantively hurt students and faculty on U.S. campuses, not only subverting their scholarly and educational opportunities and curtailing their academic freedom, but corrupting the entire academic mission of the university. Clearly state that the implementation of any part of the academic BDS guidelines that hurts students and faculty on your campus, or the school in general, will not be tolerated.
- **Make clear to faculty that all academic decisions must be based solely on educational and professional, not political, criteria:** While respecting the academic freedom rights of faculty, provide safeguards to ensure that they are not permitted to privilege their own anti-Zionist feelings, or any other personal opinions about controversial issues of the day, over the educational welfare of their students. We suggest following the example of the University of Michigan: In response to a faculty member's refusal to write a letter of recommendation for his student wanting to study in Israel, the school not only sanctioned the professor but assembled a faculty panel to investigate the question, "What ought to be the intersection between political thought/ideology and a faculty member's responsibility to students?" Earlier this year the panel issued a report and recommendations that included the core statement of principle, "as faculty members make judgments and act in their role as teachers, they must do so based solely on educational and professional reasons."¹⁴ Laudably, the university's leadership has adopted the panel's recommendations and is committed to establishing explicit procedures for bringing forward concerns about faculty who violate them.

¹⁴ https://www.provost.umich.edu/provost_comm/20190321_Blue_Ribbon_Panel_Report.pdf

Lead Researchers

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Tammi Rossman-Benjamin is cofounder and director of AMCHA Initiative, and was a faculty member in Hebrew and Jewish Studies at the University of California Santa Cruz from 1996 - 2016. Rossman-Benjamin has written articles and reports about academic anti-Zionism and antisemitism and lectured widely on the growing threat to the safety of Jewish students on college campuses. She has presented her research in scholarly talks and academic conferences at several universities, including Indiana University, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Harvard University and McGill University. Rossman-Benjamin's research has been featured in several volumes on antisemitism. In July 2010, she co-organized a two-week scholarly workshop entitled "Contemporary Antisemitism in Higher Education" at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. Articles and opinion pieces from Rossman-Benjamin have been published in *Newsweek*, *The Hill*, *New York Daily News*, *Los Angeles Daily News*, *San Jose Mercury News*, *Sacramento Bee*, *Contra Costa Times*, *Jewish Journal of Los Angeles*, and dozens of others.