

Where Are They Now? Former Campus Radicals in the Workforce

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

Former campus radicals are bringing their extreme ideologies to U.S. institutions of learning, commerce, civil society, medicine, and government.

These former campus radicals have simply moved their revolutionary struggle to various American institutions, particularly the classroom.

Policymakers and philanthropists should stop funding universities where radicalism has proliferated, and employers should exercise care in deciding whom to hire.

Academia has an extremism problem. After Hamas butchered hundreds of Israeli civilians and raped and injured thousands more on October 7, 2023, dozens of student groups at elite universities did the unthinkable: They blamed the victims and expressed support for those who are committing unspeakable atrocities. Within hours of the worst massacre of Jews since the Holocaust, for example, a coalition of more than 30 student organizations at Harvard University issued a statement holding “the Israeli regime entirely responsible for all unfolding violence.”¹

In the days that followed, university groups engaged in what appeared to be a macabre competition to see who could issue the most over-the-top glorification of the Hamas butchers.

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- At California State University, Long Beach, the La Fuerza (the Force) Student Association held a “Protest for Palestine,” which it advertised using images of the hang-gliders that Hamas terrorists used to infiltrate Israel, where they raped and massacred hundreds of youths at the Nova music festival.²
- The Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) chapter at Tufts University issued a statement praising Hamas “liberation fighters” for “show[ing] the creativity necessary to take back stolen land.”³ That “creativity” they so adored included gang rape, mass murder, and even slaughtering children in front of their parents.⁴
- Columbia University students organized an event honoring the “significance of the Oct. 7 Palestinian counteroffensive.”⁵
- At Swarthmore College, SJP praised the “valiant” fallen Hamas terrorists as “martyrs who have sacrificed their lives for liberation” and excused their atrocities as “legitimate resistance.”⁶ It seems some campus radicals believe that rape can be a legitimate form of resistance.

Nationwide, scores of campus groups issued similar statements or held protest rallies chanting genocidal slogans such as “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,” which calls for the destruction of the world’s only Jewish state.⁷ On many campuses, students calling for a cease-fire simultaneously chanted slogans calling for more violence against Israel, such as “No peace on stolen land” or “Globalize the intifada.” One slogan chanted by students at Princeton, MIT, Tufts, and several other universities—“There is only one solution: intifada revolution”—is an adaptation of a line in the Hamas charter that was literally inspired by the Nazis’ so-called Final Solution.⁸

People saying ignorant and hateful things is the price we pay for free speech, but what do all these campus radicals do when they graduate? Surely, spending their time in college spouting vile nonsense should not lead to jobs that shape the future of our society—but apparently it can, because many go on to careers in a variety of fields. The largest number of them enter education, where they can try to indoctrinate America’s children in their anti-American ideology.

The watchdog group Canary Mission has identified and created online profiles for thousands of student radicals over the past decade. As Canary Mission puts it, those radicals “promote hatred of the USA, Israel and Jews on North American college campuses.”⁹ While in college, they disrupted

events sponsored by Jewish student groups, agitated for the release of convicted terrorists, accused the U.S. and Israel of “settler colonialism,” and called for the boycott, divestment, and sanction of Israel. Some of the campus radicals identified by Canary Mission wrote online things like “Jews are our dogs” and, in Arabic, “may Allah obliterate the Jews.”¹⁰

What do these hateful ideologues do after obtaining their diplomas? To find out, we searched for the career histories of a sample of 300 former student radicals out of more than 1,300 identified by Canary Mission on their website by the time of our study. As detailed below, the most popular fields for former campus radicals include education, business and law, advocacy and nonprofit work, health care, and government.

K-12 and Higher Education

A plurality of former campus radicals work in the field of education. More than a quarter of them are in higher education, either as graduate instructors or as professors. Another tenth work in schools for younger children. All told, 38 percent of the kinds of people who once marched around campus chanting about decolonization go on to teaching careers. This is more than double the number who pursue careers as activists in advocacy organizations. Teaching pays better and offers a larger captive audience.

According to Canary Mission, one of the campus radicals included in this report’s sample was involved in “violently disrupting an event hosted by Students Supporting Israel on the UCLA campus” while a group of protestors chanted the genocidal slogan “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!”¹¹ She is now a graduate student teaching courses at that same university. Another campus radical wrote a piece alleging, according to Canary Mission, “that Zionist Jews bankroll nearly all of American politics.” He now teaches literature courses at an Ivy League university.

The Hamas-loving radicals are also in U.S. elementary and secondary schools. One former campus radical now works as a “behavior analyst” for a suburban school district in Illinois. Another campus radical in this report’s sample is now teaching high school in a small city in Maryland. While in college, he praised Rasmia Odeh, a terrorist convicted for killing two Israeli students in a supermarket bombing, as a “true Palestinian icon.”

Business and Law

Like Jerry Rubin, who went from being tried as one of the Chicago Seven in the 1960s to being a stockbroker, 24 percent of former campus radicals

have pursued careers in business as management consultants, lawyers, and corporate executives. Having profiles online documenting their extremist statements and actions in college appears to have posed little hindrance to gaining employment with companies like McKinsey, Disney, or Amazon.

While at the University of Houston, one radical bragged about how he liked to harass Jews on social media. After writing, “Yeah f*** you Jewish bitch” to someone on Periscope, he wrote that “[m]y new favorite thing to do is find Jewish people on periscope and do this.” He repeatedly expressed his hatred for Jews (e.g., “The only thing I hate more than Jews? Cold toilet seats”) and even expressed his wish that Hitler had killed more Jews (e.g., “Teacher: hitler tried to exterminate the Jewish people / Me: I wish he did / Kid next to me: wtf is wrong with you” followed by several “laughing face” emojis). He is now an engineer at AIG Technical Services in Houston.

A former student at the University of California, Davis, stated during a student senate hearing that “[y]ou can’t have coexistence with Zionists.” At the time, she was a student senator representing the Arab Student Union. She also openly wished for the destruction of Israel (“Israel will fall insha’Allah [God willing]”) She now runs an e-commerce firm that works with businesses selling products on Amazon and other online marketplaces.

Many former campus radicals have found careers in private legal practice. A former student at Northwestern University who was the student government senator representing the Muslim Cultural Student Association regularly posted anti-Jewish content on social media. For example, she Tweeted, “My moms [sic] friend is telling me about the Jewish, Zionist, Atheists who run McDonalds and feed us all meat to please the devil they worship” and “why is a Palestinian born man like yourself staring [sic] alongside Zionist scum like ScarJo [actress Scarlett Johansson].” She’s now an associate at the Foley & Lardner LLP law firm.

A former student at Kent State University had a history of Tweeting support for terrorists and virulent opposition to Israel, including a modern blood libel (e.g., “The only Israeli food that they eat is the blood of the Palestinian people.”) He’s now a law clerk in Cleveland.

Activism and Nonprofits

The third most popular field for former campus radicals is activism and the nonprofit sector. Of the campus radicals in this report’s sample, 16 percent pursued careers as activists in advocacy organizations or other nonprofits. Not surprisingly, many of the campus radicals go on to work at organizations that advocate against Israel.

One former campus radical who had repeatedly praised convicted Palestinian terrorist Rasmia Odeh and accused Israel of “polluting the Palestinian earth and water supply”—a modern blood libel—went on to work for IfNotNow, a radical left-wing organization that regularly demonizes Israel. Another campus radical who praised Odeh and another terrorist who was killed while trying to stab Israeli soldiers at a border crossing later found employment with Palestine Legal.

In yet another example, a fundraiser for American Muslims for Palestine spent a lot of time on social media attacking Jews, stating (among other things) that the “yahoodi” [Jews] deserve worse than to be “dragged through the streets like a dog and given the worst death.” He also attacked fellow Muslims who try to build bridges with the Jewish community, stating that “[i]f you work with the Jews you deserve any punishment possible in this dunya [world].”

Many former campus radicals have found employment in more general left-wing organizations, including Code Pink, the Center for American Progress, and the Open Society Foundations. An associate at the Center for Court Innovation is the former president of the University of Toledo chapter of SJP, which distributed posters portraying as victims several Palestinian terrorists who died while attempting to murder Israelis during the 2015 “Knife Intifada.”

Some former campus radicals have worked at less overtly political non-profit organizations. A data analyst at Alpha Project for the Homeless was once a part of a campus protest at San Francisco State University where students chanted genocidal slogans and called for violence against Israeli civilians. One former member of Students for Justice in Palestine who had shared Holocaust jokes on social media later went to work for Yes for PSU, a campaign to pass a ballot initiative to increase public funding of Portland State University. As a student at PSU, he shared a social media post calling for genocide against Jews (“May Allah annihilate the Jews”); compared Jews to the goblin bankers in the Harry Potter movie series; and claimed that “the lowest tier of hell is for rapists and Jews.” When asked, “What was the last thing you made with your own hands?” he answered, “A furnace for Jews.”

Health Care

Another 15 percent of former campus radicals work in health care as doctors, dentists, and other therapists.

One campus radical posted dozens of hateful messages about Jews and Israel, including: “My last full day in Falasteen [Palestine] and i didnt find

a husband.... Its probs cus hes throwing rocking [sic] at the yahood [Jews] tho, so its ok.” She also posted her support for the 2015 “Knife Intifada,” in which 36 Israelis were murdered and hundreds were injured. She’s now a dentist. Another student radical who praised the Knife Intifada and glorified deceased terrorists as “martyrs” is now a doctor in California.

One hopes they remember their oath to do no harm.

Government

Government service is another field that has welcomed former campus radicals, employing 6 percent of alumni listed by Canary Mission, including a law clerk for a state supreme court, an engineer at NASA, and at least one elected official.

A former member of SJP at Swarthmore—which, during her membership, publicly celebrated Leila Khaled, a terrorist convicted of hijacking two airplanes—now works for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA). Another employee at UNRWA, who also works as a substitute teacher in New York City’s public school system, has a history of glorifying terrorists, such as Shadia Abu Ghazaleh, a bomb-maker for the terrorist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, as well as making anti-Jewish remarks on social media. For example, in 2019, she Tweeted: “Hamdillah [Thank Allah] just finished my minor in Jewish studies I don’t gotta hear their khara [s***] no more.”

Recommendations for Federal and State Policymakers

Undoing the radical Left’s Gramscian “long march through the institutions”¹² will not be achieved overnight. It will require great vigilance and a sustained effort to root out radicals and restore responsible stewardship of our institutions of learning, commerce, civil society, medicine, and government. The public and private sectors have different roles to play in this effort.

Campus radicalism is allowed to flourish because colleges and universities are highly subsidized. Public subsidies produce irresponsible behavior. When universities are funded primarily by tuition and the financial support of alumni, they are accountable to parents and former students. Public subsidies interfere with this market discipline, allowing university administrators to finance the demands of campus radicals for such things as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) centers and new positions in various “studies” departments.

Federal and state policymakers can significantly reduce these unnecessary and harmful public subsidies in several ways. They can, for example:

- **Privatize student loans.** Federally subsidized loans drive up tuition inflation and facilitate irresponsible university spending and programming. Private banks will be far less interested in loaning money to students seeking a degree in Genderqueer Studies than the federal government is. Congress should restore market discipline to student loans by eliminating federally subsidized loans, such as the PLUS loan program.¹³
- **Cut state appropriations to public universities.** Universities are rife with administrative bloat and wasteful spending that is both decadent (e.g., lazy rivers) and inimical to the academic spirit of free inquiry (e.g., DEI centers).¹⁴ State-level policymakers should look closely at how public universities in their states are spending taxpayer dollars and adjust the level of public subsidy accordingly.
- **Stop paying excessive overhead costs for government grants.** The federal government spends billions of dollars each year in excess overhead for contracted research with universities beyond what private-sector firms pay. As Heritage Foundation Senior Research Fellow Jay P. Greene has proposed, “Congress should prohibit federal grant-awarding agencies from paying an indirect rate that is higher than the lowest rate that is accepted from private organizations, such as foundations and businesses.”¹⁵
- **End foreign language programs under Title VI of the Higher Education Act.** The federal government spends \$75 million annually on foreign language and culture educational programs under Title VI. As Adam Kissel, a former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Higher Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Education, has observed, “much of that funds academic centers that side with America’s antagonists and enemies,” particularly Middle East studies centers.¹⁶ The intent of Title VI was to protect the “security, stability, and economic vitality of the United States,” but as Kissel argues, the centers funded under Title VI “often produce graduates who have more sympathy for foreign countries than for the United States.”¹⁷ Congress should eliminate Title VI or, at the very least, significantly reform the program to ensure that it serves U.S. interests.¹⁸

Recommendations for Private Actors

There are several ways that private actors, such as alumni, philanthropists, and business leaders, can also help to curb the radical infiltration of American institutions. They can, for example:

- **Stop donating to colleges and universities where campus radicalism is a problem.** Alumni and philanthropists should carefully monitor how universities spend their money and what sort of campus culture they are inculcating. Too often, university administrations cave into the demands of campus radicals to “deplatform” conservative speakers and punish supposed “microaggressions” while allowing radical students to chant genocidal slogans at rallies and harass fellow students. Too many universities also exposed their moral bankruptcy by repeatedly weighing in on political controversies that have no direct bearing on university life and then going conspicuously silent after the worst massacre of Jews since the Holocaust—or, worse, issued statements that drew a moral equivalence between Hamas and Israel. Donors should stop supporting such universities and redirect their giving to more deserving institutions.
- **Stop hiring student radicals.** Students who have publicly expressed support for terrorism or terrorist organizations like Hamas have demonstrated that they lack good judgment or a functioning moral compass. Campus radicals trained to search for microaggressions and agitate to impose their ideology on their coworkers are not likely to be the sort of reasonable and collaborative employees that employers desire. Employers should use resources like the Canary Mission and Stop Antisemitism to avoid hiring such radicals.

Fortunately, employers are starting to wake up to the hateful radicals in their midst. Pershing Square CEO Bill Ackman, for example, posted on X that he had been “asked by a number of CEOs if [Harvard] would release a list of the members of each of the Harvard organizations that have issued the letter assigning sole responsibility for Hamas’ heinous acts to Israel” to ensure “that none of us inadvertently hire any of their members.”¹⁹ More than a dozen CEOs quickly joined his call to avoid hiring radicals who have publicly supported terrorism.²⁰

Some campus radicals are already losing job offers. After New York University Law School Student Bar Association President Ryna Workman

issued a statement declaring her “unwavering and absolute solidarity” with those engaging in “resistance” against Israel (i.e., Hamas), she lost a “[c]ushy” job offer from the law firm of Winston & Strawn.²¹ A month later, the NYU School of Law student body voted to remove Workman from her position as president of the NYU Student Bar Association.²²

It is true that people should not be held responsible forever for their youthful indiscretions. For those who demonstrate that they have abandoned their hateful radicalism, for example, Canary Mission has a process to remove former radicals’ names from its website.²³ But there is no evidence that these former campus radicals have renounced their dangerous ways. Instead, it appears that, like Bill Ayers or Angela Davis, they have simply moved their revolutionary struggle to various American institutions, particularly the classroom—where they can recruit the next generation of campus radicals.

Conclusion

Like the proverbial virus that escapes the lab, campus radicalism is no longer confined to colleges and universities. Former campus radicals are bringing their extreme ideologies to U.S. institutions of learning, commerce, civil society, medicine, and government. Reversing the Left’s “long march through the institutions” and restoring responsible stewardship of our institutions is a herculean but necessary task. Policymakers and philanthropists should start by cutting their funding of universities where radicalism has proliferated, and employers should exercise great care with regard to those whom they hire.

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