



It's Complicated

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Howard Simon, in his Herald Tribune 4/16/2025 column makes some very good points about the importance of protecting our constitutional related to free speech. However, he unfortunately did not fully explain why a few student leaders of the antisemitic and anti-Israel protests on college campuses were targeted. Most of the campus protests were clearly protected by free speech. However, a significant number of the protesters violated the laws of our land by destroying property, harassing Jewish students and faculty, refusing to obey law enforcement, and preventing free speech by shouting down speakers at their schools who were identified as pro-Israel or who had business or academic relationships in Israel.

They promoted Boycotting, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) against the Jewish state. However, they ignored concerns related to atrocities committed in other parts of the world. Why only the Jewish State and not Russia, China, North Korea or the Sudan. Most of the leaders and protesters were chanting "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free". What they were really saying was a call for the destruction and elimination of the Jewish State of Israel.

Anyone committing crimes, violating the laws of our land, of entering our country illegally has the right to a fair hearing and adjudication of their charges. This has not happened with many of the targeted students and is a threat to our democracy. On this we can agree with Mr. Simon.

Criticism of Israel is not antisemitic in all cases. However, the campus protests that included violent attacks and vitriol towards Israel, should not be defended as expressions of free speech. At the core, these protesters were calling for the elimination of Israel. They also were promoting, and in some cases, gave direct support to terrorist groups in Gaza.

Bravo to those who called out the antisemitism of the college protesters and shame on those Universities that did not protect their Jewish students, and allowed the disruption of classes at their schools.

Yes, you can support freedom of speech and also defend Jews and Israel from hatred.

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