

Canadian Universities Antisemitism Report - 2022 -



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Canadian Universities Antisemitism Report

The Abraham Global Peace Initiative

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
The Abraham Global Peace Initiative.....	5
Statement of Concern.....	7
British Columbia.....	8
Royal Roads University	8
Alberta.....	9
Saskatchewan.....	10
Manitoba	11
Ontario	12
Quebec	18
Atlantic Canada.....	19
Dalhousie University	19
The Territories	19
General Note Antisemitism on University Campus.....	20
AGPI's Path to Discourse Through Education.....	22
Bibliography	23

Editor's Note: This is a working document to help monitor and evaluate Antisemitism on Canadian campuses. It is being edited and updated regularly as more information becomes available. It does not purport to have captured all incidents. If we have missed an important occurrence, please send your report by email to office@agpi.ca

Executive Summary

The college campus has traditionally been home to thousands of students, engaging in academic scholarships that will have lasting effects on the social and economic fabric of our country. Historically, the college campus was synonymous with social activism; it brought attention to pressing issues and mobilized a grassroots base to force political change. From women's rights to civil rights, to war, peace, and progress. For our neighbours in the United States, one only need to reflect on the 1960s and 1970s to be reminded about MLK's Atlanta University sit-in or the 800-person deep sit-in at Berkeley; Columbia University's Vietnam Protest, or the events on May 4 at Kent State.

As the '60s and '70s came and went, protesters became parents and the better world they fought for, gave way to a new generation who traded signs for social media; chants for hashtags, and sit-ins for trolling. In more recent years, Canada's most notable institution, which once followed suit with their American counterparts, found an alternative voice in pursuing change. Activists became academics and the rules of decades past were adapted to fit feelings over facts.

Across many of Canada's 223 public and private universities, and 213 public colleges and institutes, intellectual debate has been replaced by institutional discrimination against Jews. The once ivory towers that closed doors for would-be Jewish academics have now become toxic environments for Jewish students. Canadian institutions like the University of Toronto, McGill or the University of British Columbia have bylines of antisemitism linked to their names. While MacLean's magazine annually ranks the top Canadian institutions to study at, Jewish parents and students discuss safety on campus, acceptance of Jews, and freedom to practice their religion without fear of harassment, discrimination, or violence. University and college selections are no longer being made on program and merit, but out of fear and safety.

In 2021, there were over 100 notable, public, and news worthy incidents of antisemitism and/or anti-Jewish hate on Canadian college and university campuses. From student and academic unions banning research topics, kosher foods, or spaces for Jewish organizations to hold events, to gaslighting Jewish experiences and their histories. The year also set the stage for campuses to see racism through a prism of western ideology and defined by de-centring and silencing Jewish voices. Terms like anti-Zionism replaced antisemitism and IHRA was called out for being too restrictive, failing to allow academics the freedom to criticize Israel. While the Boycott, Divest and Sanction (BDS) campaign was taken up by student groups and their respective unions, those who spoke out against BDS found themselves marginalized. Student unions were investigated for allegedly embarking on campaigns of economic and academic warfare against Jewish students, and while some were called out for forcibly conscripting members by fund anti-Zionist campaigns through the allocating of mandatory student fees.

As complaints continuously fell on deaf years, this report sets out to expose the apathy, intimidation, and toxic learning environment Jews on campus endured over the 2021 calendar year.

Neil Orłowsky, MEd., PhD.
Director of Education

The Abraham Global Peace Initiative

The Abraham Global Peace Initiative (AGPI) is an internationally recognized charitable organization comprised of global leaders dedicated to giving a voice to humanity. Founded by Chairman Avi Benlolo with 30 years of experience, he heads a global community consisting of individuals dedicated to advancing human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. In so doing, AGPI amplifies Canada's powerful voice in the realm of human rights and activism by aiming and fortifying values such as pluralism, diversity, and inclusion alongside our six pillars. The six pillars by which AGPI's work is guided on are:

1. *Safeguard peace, freedom, and security.* In upholding human rights and advancing Canada's framework of building inclusive societies and championing freedom and democracy, we promote peace and security in Canada, Israel, and around the world.
2. *Stand against discrimination and antisemitism.* Due to the existence of hate, we work to preserve human life by advancing the Canadian perspective of pluralism, diversity, and equality. By upholding human rights, we promote tolerance, respect, and universal freedom for all.
3. *Make Peace by advancing global peace initiatives.* In upholding Canada's approach to advancing human rights abroad, we champion inclusive and accountable governance; peaceful pluralism; respect for diversity, and protection of rights of minorities to foster and promote global peace.
4. *Speak out for religious freedom and foster interfaith unity.* The advancement of religion is a human right enshrined in Canadian and international conventions. We seek to champion religion and protect and promote religious groups from discrimination, allowing them to freely practice.
5. *Advocate for international policy remedies.* We advance global peace, by studying and reviewing national and international frameworks and proposing remedies. Through research and reporting on issues, we provide lectures and briefs on critical issues that can advance a greater understanding of peace.
6. *Defend universal rights and freedoms.* We increase public awareness of human rights issues; promote respect for human rights internationally and research, study and disseminate information on human rights, per Canadian law and international conventions.

For more information on the work that AGPI does you can visit our website [here](#).

Guided by these six pillars, AGPI continues to strive for inclusivity for and amongst all people, regardless of race, religion, creed, or colour. Through this report, the term antisemitism will be understood under, and in alignment with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism whereby "Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical

manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”¹

To date, 31 countries, in addition to the United Nations, The European Union, the Organization of American States, and the Council of Europe have adopted IHRA’s working definition, and for that, the IHRA definition is used to decipher between what is antisemitism and what is legitimate criticism of Israel. Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, considering the overall context, include, but are not limited to:²

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making misleading, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government, COVID-19, or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g., gas chambers), or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, for example, by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for the actions of the state of Israel.

¹ IHRA, 2018

² Ibid

As governments and academic institutions continue to see resistance in the adoption of, and/or use of IHRA's working definition, AGPI questions the rationale and motivation of such opposition? While some claims allege that support of the definition prohibits free speech or academic freedom, as will be seen throughout this report, governmental and institutional legislation outline what is and is not permitted. As in any liberal democracy, citizens are allowed to criticize national and/or foreign policies, however, but criticism cannot be justly applied at the expense of another's religious and/or ethnocultural identity. Rather, this study applies the IHRA working definition of antisemitism as it provides a guideline for distinguishing between valid criticism and immoral forms of demonization of the state of Israel. As outlined within the definition, antisemitic discrimination involves illegally denying Jews of opportunities or services available to others.³ By this means, the IHRA working definition of antisemitism will be used to highlight the importance of academic institutions adopting and adapting their policies to align with their working definition.⁴

Statement of Concern

In the wake of the May 2021, Israel-Hamas conflict, academic institutions across Canada saw a rise in the spread of antisemitism. Moreover, the veiling of antisemitism behind claims of anti-Zionism not being "antisemitic" emerged in academic narratives, as did the attempt to have other racialized and marginalized bodies define what is and is not antisemitism to the Jewish community (i.e., gaslighting). Here, the term *gaslighting* is used to describe an often implicit, though an occasionally explicit form of emotional abuse by a bully or abuser who intentionally misuses the other's experiences to create false narratives or conflate issues in efforts to have the "other" feel unsure or insecure about their perceptions of their experiences, their world, or their views on a situation. In practice, university campuses have allowed for clubs and unions that aim at silencing, intimidating, and distorting Jewish narratives, all while bound under university regulations and while receiving university funding. University publications continue to silence and spread misinformation that targets Jewish students under the guise of academic freedom, and in the era of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), this begs the question, where is the equity and inclusivity of Jews on campus?

This report outlines major events that occurred on university campuses across Canada primarily in 2021 and organized by geographical location. Included are a collection of AGPI's reflective press releases and an analysis of possible paths forward. It is prudent to note that the Jewish people have historical and ethnic ties to the Land of Israel and denying the Jewish connection to the region and negating the Jewish experience from land, erases thousands of years of history.

³ IHRA, 2018

⁴ Ibid

British Columbia

Royal Roads University

British Columbia (B.C.) experienced large spikes in antisemitism with ten notable events making national and/or international headlines, three of which occurred on B.C. campuses, with the Vancouver Jewish community being one of the top three largest in Canada. In January, antisemitic graffiti was found in the forest surrounding the Colwood campus of Royal Roads University.⁵ While the incident was investigated, the university administration issued a statement in part that said, “We have zero tolerance for this on our campus or in our community. At Royal Roads we stand against all forms of hate, and we denounce racism in all its ugly forms.”

University of British Columbia

In July, local authorities investigated three individuals who allegedly vandalize Jewish student’s Mezuzah in University of British Columbia (UBC) dorm.^{6,7} The student was living in an on-campus (unnamed) residence at the time and had placed a Mezuzah on their doorway for the semesters they lived there.⁸ The Mezuzah is an outward symbol of a one’s Jewish identity and connection to their faith. The desecration of this symbol extends beyond simple vandalism and its desecration symbolizes the forceful removal of one from their G-d (with the purpose of the Mezuzah acting as a constant reminder of God's presence). While the act of vandalism was reported to the RCMP,⁹ it followed other similar events across the province, most notable hateful antisemitic graffiti found on the Vancouver Seawall and at the Victoria Jewish Centre on Holocaust Remembrance Day.¹⁰

While no stranger to controversy, Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR) held a joint 2020 event on the campus of UBC and hosted three individuals who historically had promoted antisemitic rhetoric and anti-Israel biases.¹¹ With the event taking place on Shabbat, many Jewish students expressed concern that the date was intentional to minimize a Jewish presence.¹² Following the release of the speeches via YouTube, one invited speaker could be heard proclaiming that: “Any form of resistance against the State of Israel is justified.” Such rally cries and dog-whistling follows similar statements made by armed resistance groups (namely Hamas and the PFLP) whose own armed insurgence against Israel is self-described as “resistance”. Calling for any *form of resistance* raises disturbing questions as to whether it is justified to use violence and intimidation tactics on students who support Israel on campus? If such events take place on campus grounds, and if the university grants appropriate permits for said organizations to organize and execute said events, does the university approve or share these same sentiments – are

⁵ Guillen, 2021

⁶ Bawaan, 2021

⁷ Renouf and Steacy, 2021

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Reznik and Petel, 2020

¹² Ibid

messages aligned? If then acted on, and Jewish students are targeted, is the university liable if they gave/approved of their campus to be used as a platform for hate?

Rounding out the year on BC campuses, was an AGPI press release that acknowledged the correct and commendable steps taken by UBC in cancelling the movie screening of “Fedayin: Georges Abdallah’s Fight”. AGPI raised concerns that such film focussed on, and elevated Abdallah, a convicted PFLP terrorist, to martyrdom status following his conviction for the murder of Lt. Col. Charles R. Ray, a U.S. military attaché in Paris, and Yacov Barsimantov, an Israeli diplomat in 1982. Further concerning was that the film screening was to include a talk by a leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) - a group who in 2003 was added on Canada Terrorist Entities List, a move echoed by the United States. While the cancellation drew the ire of The Palestinian Youth Movement-Vancouver, SPHR UBC, and Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Network – Vancouver for UBC, claiming that “For too long, institutions have been succumbing to Zionist pressure and censoring Palestinian speech. No external Zionist pressure should take importance over the community and Palestinian organizers”¹³, UBC administration felt that the “risk assessment” for “security and safety” on campus was far too great.

University of Victoria

In August, before the beginning of the Fall term, numerous Twitter users identified and reported Twitter handle “Motley Jew” as a University of Victoria professor who went on an antisemitic and anti-Zionist rant directed at many prominent Jewish advocates.¹⁴ Following reports to the University provost about the professor’s online conduct, which then prompted complaints about a course the professor was scheduled to teach focusing on the contentious nature of antisemitism, the university investigated and issued a course overhaul, though failed to remove “Motely Jew” as the instructor.

Alberta

University of Calgary

University campuses across Alberta have not been immune to antisemitism and the spreading of Jewish conspiracy theories. In 2017, reports that a University of Lethbridge professor was reinstated after being suspended for reportedly suggesting that there is a Zionist connection between 9/11 and the Holocaust drew outrage from many in the Jewish community.¹⁵ This reinstatement followed controversy at the University of Calgary¹⁶ where several posters questioning “Did the 6 million really die?” and “Truth does not fear investigation”¹⁷ were hung

¹³ Samidoun, 2021

¹⁴ Arnold, 2021

¹⁵ Scarpelli and Bourne, 2017.

¹⁶ Kaufmann, 2017

¹⁷ Ibid

around campus. While the posters were removed by campus security, students, and faculty, a university investigation failed to find anything of substance.¹⁸

Since 2017, campus debates focussing on how academics and/or student groups might foster intellectual curiosity by calling out Israeli foreign policy, have grown increasingly heated, drawing charges from both sides of the political debate. While some claim that these debates call out anti-Zionism as antisemitism, others claim “Zionist” lobby groups are working to silence debate by using the false charge of antisemitism. Consequently, there is a fine line between criticizing Israel’s foreign policy and questioning Israel as a Jewish state. Moreover, since 2017, the University of Calgary has continued to strive to find a balance between respecting the Jewish community in Calgary while ensuring a safe space for them to learn, and conflicting views on issues. Such balance includes their reiterating that the university affirms its commitment to free inquiry and debate while also sustaining an inclusive and safe campus. AGPI acknowledges and respects the academic inquiry and interrogation process, however, fails to accept the distortion of or conflation of intersecting histories by denying the lived experiences of Jewish ancestry and their connection to the region.

Saskatchewan

University of Regina

Provincially, Saskatchewan has been keeping a close eye on the situation that continuously unfolds in the Middle East.¹⁹ Brian McQuinn, an assistant professor of international studies at the University of Regina, publicly noted that the situation in the Middle East has ramifications at home, noting that Canada has a large Jewish and Israeli populations, as well as a large Palestinian population. What might be a new story for Canadians, is a critical issue for students with connections to the region. McQuinn further acknowledged that if tensions escalate, it will become more than an Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it will begin to involve neighbours.²⁰ Concerning though was that the University of Regina allegedly took a single-sided approach when outlining the number of Palestinian individuals who’ve perished during the time of the escalating violence, highlighting specific numbers of Palestinian children victims,²¹ yet failed to, or inconsistently bring attention to Israeli casualties.

McQuinn’s comments came one month after the University of Regina Faculty Association’s Executive Committee unanimously passed a motion to support academic freedom by rejecting the IHRA’s Working Definition of Antisemitism, joining the Academic Alliance Against Antisemitism, Racism, Colonialism & Censorship in Canada which encompasses twenty other faculty associations and unions.²² A URFA statement proclaimed that “URFA stands against antisemitism and all forms of racism and hatred. The support of academic freedom and the ability

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Davis, 2021

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

²² URFA, 2021

of URFA members to conduct their work and research without institutional censorship is a key element of URFA’s vision and mission and is rooted in our Constitution and Bylaws.”²³

Troubling still was that a 2020 Nanos poll, commissioned by the Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre found that almost 60% of those in the Prairies felt that students were not given enough opportunity to learn about or taught about the Holocaust, while the same study noted that 73% believe students today are less aware of the Holocaust and the impacts it had, then ever before.²⁴ If the 2020 trend continued into 2021 and 2022, AGPI remains concerned that more students are entering higher education and pursuing higher learning opportunities, void of an authentic understanding of any connection between the Holocaust and how antisemitic tropes used then have remerged and become normalized within academic circles.

Manitoba

University of Manitoba

The University of Manitoba has been under the microscope since 2013 when the University of Manitoba Students’ Union (UMSU) stripped the Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA) of official recognition.²⁵ In this monumental decision, UMSU became the first such group to bar an anti-Israel campus organization, citing systemic antisemitic harassment and discrimination. Further to their decision, the UMSU agreed that SAIA’s “Israel Apartheid Week” violated student union policies by “undermining the dignity and self-esteem of students on campus”.²⁶ Sadly, since 2013, few University student unions have followed suit and continue to approve a space for SAIA to host their annual Israel Apartheid Week.

With what looked like calm on campus, in March 2021, the University of Manitoba came under fire again when the University of Manitoba’s Faculty Association (UMFA) proposed a motion that would oppose the adoption and/or use of the IHRA working definition at the University of Manitoba and elsewhere.”²⁷ While many Canadian Jewish advocacy groups called out this motion, what was most concerning was that the UMFA’s opposition went beyond the use and scope of the definition itself as they attempted to bar faculty and students from using it in any capacity at the university. In what appeared to be an act of silencing Jewish voices and Jews defining antisemitism in their terms, the UMFA seemingly attempted to suppress academic freedom, under the notion that IHRA’s working definition suppressed academic freedom and legitimate debate around another country’s foreign policy. AGPI was deeply concerned with this motion and felt that the UMFA had knowingly negated the fact that Canada has adopted the IHRA Working Definition as part of its nation anti-racism policy.

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Nanos, 2020

²⁵ Brandeis, 2020

²⁶ Hopper, 2013

²⁷ Bellan, 2021

Of significance, it is noted that later that same month, the president of the “Students Supporting Israel”, an officially recognized University of Manitoba student group wrote a scathing letter calling out both the university’s and UMFA’s hypocrisy for their attempt to advance their research and scholarship of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity, by silencing the lived experiences of the Jewish community.²⁸

University of Winnipeg

In 2018, the University of Winnipeg made headlines when they showcased two Palestinian speakers who, at the time, publicly used the university provided platform to accuse Israel of “genocide”.²⁹ While university administration investigated and deemed the event antisemitic in nature, they issued a statement explaining that “Whether providing space, hosting or organizing events or discussions, the University strives to ensure a respectful environment.” The statement went on to explain that “In response to the recommendations contained within the report the University will work with members of the Jewish community and other racialized groups to enhance our campus environment and promote safety and inclusivity.”³⁰

Ontario

Universities in the GTHA have often been called ground zero for Canadian Campus Antisemitism and 2021 brought a year of damage control for each of them as more student groups claimed their anti-Israel protests were an act of resistance and decolonization. Sadly, these groups failed to recognize Jewish indigeneity in the Middle East and the history of colonization in the region. The following are just some of the larger incidents that occurred on a collection of university campuses.

University of Toronto

The start of 2021 proved to be promising for Jewish students on campus following years of complaints to university administration about the rise of antisemitism and/or the creation of an unsafe learning environment for Jewish students. As such, January saw the creation of a working group to tackle antisemitism on campus with the mandate to try and “create an inclusive and welcoming environment for Jewish members of the university community, review current U of T policy, develop new initiatives, and work with U of T administration to recommend actions the university can take to improve education about anti-Semitism.”³¹ Further promise came days later when the same administration ruled on a 2020 BDS complaint whereby graduate students were being forced to pay into the BDS campaign. In February, the University of Toronto panel ruled that the Graduate Students’ Union must stop funding the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions

²⁸ Kalo, 2021

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Anteblian, 2021

(BDS) movement against Israel. In the initial complaint the panel ruled on, it was noted that student union cannot “embark on a campaign of economic and academic warfare against people of a certain nationality, and forcibly conscript its members to the campaign by way of their membership fees.”³²

However, these successes were short-lived whereby in March, the university failed to comment on growing reports that antisemitism is ingrained at all three of the university’s campuses.³³ Throughout 2021, AGPI wrote to university administration and brought attention to many student concerns around the approval of Israeli Apartheid Week events on campus, public BDS campaigning and recruitment, and overall intimidation felt by Jewish students for wearing symbols of their religions, most notably the kippah. Following the university continuously failing to comment, AGPI published a press release rejecting the University of Toronto’s position on the definition of antisemitism, classifying it as worrisome and a source of divisiveness on campus. The University of Toronto claims that “the various proposed definitions [which include IHRA] were not designed for use in a university context.” The fact that the definition has been adopted by numerous universities around the world proves otherwise.

Further controversy surrounded the university when in April/May, the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) called for a boycott of the University of Toronto and censured the university over its decision not to hire an international law scholar.³⁴ While the censure garnered opposition from academics and political stakeholders worldwide, some U of T professors alluded to Jewish influence (i.e., donor money) in the hiring process.

While the censure was eventually lifted in September, the university attempted to shift direction in the meantime until several Jewish groups and faculty publicly condemned the University of Toronto Faculty Association (UTFA) for having an “antisemitism problem”. In a York University speaking engagement, the President of the UTFA referenced the censure and overall hiring scandal as being perpetrated by an “‘entitled powerful Zionist minority’ which was engaging in ‘psychological warfare’ against critics of the Cromwell report’.” The UTFA President’s blatant dog-whistling invoked a centuries-old antisemitic trope around Jewish influence, money, and global power.³⁵ This was later followed by the University of Toronto Students’ Union (UTSU) move to support and endorse an open letter falsely accusing the State of Israel of committing “genocide” against the Palestinians. In doing so, the union reversed an earlier decision not to endorse the letter.³⁶

Marking the end of a controversial calendar year, November saw the Student Union at the University of Toronto, Scarborough Campus ban “pro-Israel” kosher caterers, going so far as to force kosher caterers on campus to prove that they do not support their Jewish homeland.³⁷ Citing the banning of kosher food on campus, AGPI issued a press release describing the events and how the reaffirming of their (SCSU) commitment to BDS against Israel has led to a culture of fear and ingrained antisemitism on campus. The SCSU motion shockingly outlined the methods in which

³² Allgemeiner Staff, 2021a

³³ S. Levy, 2021

³⁴ Appel, 2021

³⁵ Zivo, 2021

³⁶ Reznik and Petel, 2020

³⁷ Jerusalem Post, 2021

BDS doctrine would be implemented throughout the campus and such applications included refraining from engaging with organizations and services or participating in events that further normalize relations with the State of Israel. In so doing, the SCSU resolution falsely referred to Israel as an “apartheid” state and moved to a calculated attempt to eliminate the sourcing of Kosher food options for Jewish students, from pro-Israel vendors - an outrageous form of religious and ethical discrimination.³⁸ Even while the union said it is against antisemitism, it’s every action and language contravened the internationally accepted definition of antisemitism as proposed by the IHRA.³⁹

York University

Following a very public display of antisemitism and anti-Zionism on campus in November 2019,⁴⁰ York University faced significant backlash from politicians from all three levels of government and across party lines who condemned, as AGPI Director of Education, Dr Neil Orłowsky labelled it, a “toxic culture of antisemitism” that York University has fostered. Still reeling from the fallout of global attention and condemnation, the York Federation of Students (YFS) decisively passed a motion to ban Israeli officials from speaking on campus⁴¹, claiming that the 2019 incident between Jewish students and supporters of Palestine was caused by having an Israeli (soldier) on campus. This blatantly antisemitic resolution which put blame solely on the Jewish community appeared to disregard and give a pass to the pro-Palestinian groups who choose to protest this event. What the YFS of students failed to recognize is that York University is home to 60,000+ students, some of whom are reserve soldiers from other countries.⁴² To single out Israel and to only call out the Jewish community is troubling, to say the least.

In discussion with his students own students in York University’s Faculty of Education, where Dr Orłowsky is completing his secondment, he admitted and found that the same findings from a 2021 World Jewish Congress article were experienced first-hand by both him and his students. It is noted that on campus, “Jewish students are called apartheid apologists, baby killers, and Nazis. Jewish students see antisemitic graffiti in bathrooms, lecture halls, and in the library. Jewish students are forced to sit quietly while professors and peers go on deeply antisemitic rants. Jewish students have their campaign posters ripped off the walls and defaced.”⁴³ Dr Orłowsky himself had to remove a post-It note with a swastika from his office door and repeatedly was told to “hide my Magen David, for my safety”.

In September, The York Federation of Students (YFS) decided to take misguided action when they hosted antisemitism training on September 28, the night marking Simchat Torah. Further controversy was sparked when YFS opted to negate a list of suitable educators provided by Hillel York for such training and instead booked the Independent Jewish Voices of Canada (IJV) — a group that describes itself as the “first national Jewish organization to endorse the

³⁸ Mostyn, Kamenetsky, and Tenenbaum, 2021

³⁹ IHRA, 2018

⁴⁰ Passifume, 2019

⁴¹ Rose, 2019

⁴² Rakhamilova, 2019

⁴³ T. Levy, 2021

Palestinian-led Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement.”⁴⁴ This clear attempt to have a non-mainstream advocacy group define antisemitism for Jewish students, on a day when Jewish students could not attend is another clear attempt to manage the narrative and virtue signal. While AGPI continuously reached out to the university and the entire YFS council, our calls were ignored, and the event went on.⁴⁵

Carlton University

Canada’s capital saw its fair share of antisemitism in 2021. For the Carlton University community, the year started with the Carleton University Academic Staff Association (CUASA) considering a resolution put before the council condemning the IHRA’s Working Definition of Antisemitism. CUASA alleged that the IHRA definition “includes criticism of Israel among its list of potentially antisemitic acts” and that “no state is above criticism or challenge.”⁴⁶

Following their proposal, February saw an unidentified Carleton student organization execute a “Carleton University Students for Scholars at Risk” online event endorsed by the university. From those in attendance, it was noted that the event seemed “designed to criticize the IHRA’s definition of antisemitism for its perceived limiting of genuine condemnations of Israel. A panelist at the event and Professor of Sociology at the university, Dr Nahla Abdo, took it upon herself to allege that Jewish money was corrupting the institution. She referred to an Israeli lobby at the university and referenced buildings named after Jewish donors as evidence. Dr Abdo then proceeded to attack Carleton’s Center for Jewish Studies directly.”⁴⁷ Similar to their counterparts, Carlton University has repeatedly announced that they remain committed to ensuring a safe environment for all its students, however, the university has failed to provide a comprehensive antisemitism policy that is both implementable and actionable.

University of Ottawa

It was a bookend year in Ottawa when in February, The Academic Alliance Against Antisemitism, Racism, Colonialism, and Censorship in Canada (ARC) raised awareness and concern about IHRA’s global efforts to see the adoption of their working definition of antisemitism across all levels of government and a wide range of institutions, including those in the post-secondary education sector. In so doing, the Association of Professors of the University of Ottawa (APUO) publicly announced that they would unequivocally support the academic freedom of its members which included the right to pursue research and open inquiry in an honest search for knowledge that is free from institutional censorship, including that of the government. Ironic to their statement was that the APUO had previously publicly opposed antisemitism and all forms of racism and hatred but claimed that IHRA’s working definition misconstrues antisemitism and undermines their anti-racist and decolonial initiatives⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Pierre, 2021

⁴⁵ Sarick, 2021

⁴⁶ Allgemeiner Staff, 2021b

⁴⁷ Robertson, 2021

⁴⁸ Roy, 2021

On the backs of the February debate, 2021 ended with the University of Ottawa student Union (UOSU) adopting a motion calling for the University of Ottawa to support the Boycott, Divest and Sanction campaign against Israel in November, however, the University of Ottawa's leadership denounced the decision, stating in December clarifying that the UOSU was a separate body from the university. In the statement by both the University President and Vice-Chancellor, "Boycotts and divestments limit the free exchange of ideas and perspectives and, therefore, run contrary to the values that guide our university's core academic mission. Moreover, boycotts and divestments create an environment where some members of our community may feel insecure and ostracized. I encourage members of our University community to engage in dialogue and work together to ensure that we have a campus where mutual respect and freedom of expression flourish." Only time will tell as to which way the University of Ottawa decides to venture.⁴⁹

Queens University

One of Canada's most prestigious academic institutions, Queens University had a disturbing start to 2021 when the School of Religion's guest speaker's lecture was "zoom bombed" with a montage of vulgar images overlaid with ugly speech acts, a racist insignia, including a swastika.⁵⁰ While this event cannot be blamed on the institution itself, it does question the security measure put in place before and after the incident.

More concerning however was in May when Queen's University's student newspaper, *The Queen's Journal*, issued a statement condemning the ongoing violence against Palestinians in East Jerusalem by the Israel Defence Forces. As they wrote, "The Journal stands in solidarity with those students and faculty affected by the ongoing occupation of Palestine. Palestinian peoples deserve, and have always deserved, the rights to freedom and equality." The editors then double-downed, adding that the Journal would be donating to the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement.⁵¹ These statements come one month before the English Department at the university released a statement 'on Palestine & Social Justice' claiming that "We support the rights of our students and others to share their critically informed views of the conflict in Palestine..."⁵² failing to mention Israel or the Jewish connection to the land. AGPI quickly issued a statement to the Queens University Principal explaining that "The language in the attached letter is horrifying, especially its false premise that reads: "this occupation is a result of the settler-colonial state enforced by the IDF and backed by western powers. Unfortunately, this decontextualized falsehood can influence students who may not be as informed about historical circumstances which have led to this latest conflict."⁵³

⁴⁹ Ottawa Jewish E-Bulletin, 2021

⁵⁰ Krause, 2021

⁵¹ YGK Staff, 2021

⁵² Chaudhry, 2021

⁵³ Benlolo, 2021a

University of Western Ontario

While students in London, Ontario took to the streets to celebrate homecoming, many Jewish students reported seeing several boarded-up businesses lining the campus, covered with antisemitic symbols and tropes, while other establishments frequented by Jewish students, placed “Free Palestine” and “We stand in solidarity with Palestine” signs in their windows. While the signs themselves were not explicitly antisemitic, students expressed a feeling of discomfort and “outing” based on their religious beliefs, noting that the “Free Palestine” movement has been taken up by pro-BDS parties. It is important to note that statements like “Free Palestine” and chants that often follow (e.g., From River to Sea, Palestine will be free”, again are a dog whistle call to action against Israel. In November, Dr Orlowsky met with students at UofW and noticed a number of these signs remained in student housing windows, and across the campus.

Of greater concern was during the intersession term when students reported an assistant professor of transfusion medicine at the U of W’s Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry antisemitic tweets that were seemingly directed to a, or multiple Jewish students. In following up and reviewing the assistant professor's Twitter feed, Dr Orlowsky confirmed that said professor repeatedly criticized students and Zionism itself, claiming that “If their culture is Zionism at the expense of the Palestinian people, they should be boycotted and sanctioned.” Unfortunately, Schulich’s Dean stated that “Universities are places where controversial discussions and debates take place, and at times, unsettling ideas are presented and challenged... It’s important to note that individual faculty members have the freedom to express their opinions and beliefs, and those views are their own.”⁵⁴

Wilfrid Laurier University

There is no doubt that greater learning needs to be had around antisemitism and its manifestation in academia, so too must there be greater education around the role of and appropriate uses of technology. In recent years, many social media giants have come under fire for their lack of policy or policing around antisemitism and how their platforms have been used to disseminate hate. In May, this exact issue brought unwanted attention to Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU) when two students who attended Laurier posted a horrific TikTok video glorifying the stabbing of Israelis (assumably Jewish-Israelis), burning the Israeli flag, comparing Jews to toilet paper and garbage, and then pretending to vomit. While university officials were quick to condemn the video, stating that “Wilfrid Laurier University does not condone behaviours that promote hate, induce fear, or threaten people’s safety. We are aware of the reports of a video posted to social media by a student, and we are taking appropriate action” many have directed further backlash at the university itself calling for greater consequences to hate-fueled incidents.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Bieman, 2021

⁵⁵ Waitson, 2021

Quebec

McGill University

Bill 21 has caused a lot of stir in Quebec and its university campuses have failed to do any better. Following several instances in 2019 where The Student Society at McGill University (SSMU) allegedly attempted to force a student to resign from her student government position because she was Jewish, the SSMU began an unofficial Twitter campaign asking members to “punch a Zionist”⁵⁶ Later that same year, McGill hosted an Artists4Israel program that saw anti-Israel activists block a mural of peace with anti-Israel posters.⁵⁷ In 2021, things failed to improve. In May, McGill University received a 45-page petition signed by over 1500 faculty, students, and alumni, and sponsored by several pro-Palestinian, politically motivated, and/or contentious and antisemitic student groups, that called on the university to “condemn Zionist speech” and demands the university label “Zionism as racism”.⁵⁸ Much to the chagrin of the undersigned, McGill responded stating that “demands are in fact wholly antithetical to our commitment to equity and inclusion” and that McGill “will not respond to calls that would threaten to undermine our obligation to uphold a safe, respectful and inclusive campus for all.”⁵⁹

Concordia University

Criticism and antisemitism at Concordia University is nothing new, so much so, in 2004, a feature documentary film, “Discordia”, produced by the National Film Board of Canada chronicled the life of three Concordia students during the aftermath of the Netanyahu Incident at Concordia University in Montreal in 2002. In 2014, the Carlton Students Union (CSU) presented a student referendum endorsing the BDS campaign. In 2017, the CSU faced backlash from Jewish groups for “hijacking” the Passover holiday, by providing space for a “Passover Against Apartheid” event. Yet in what appeared to be a change of political direction, in 2020 the CSU voted down their prior 2014 BDS motion, citing “impracticality” of the prior BDS endorsement to cease using products and services with operations in Israel, and in 2021 issued an apology to the Jewish community for fostering a campus culture of fear. Posted on the CSU Facebook page, the student union brought attention to their culture of indifference towards antisemitism, claiming embarrassment for the past behaviours and wanting to verbally admit how “ridiculous” they have been. As a step towards reconciliation with the Jewish community, the CSU had pledged to implement antisemitism training for all incoming CSU representatives and club executives.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Rakhamilova, 2019

⁵⁷ Ibid

⁵⁸ Petition, 2021

⁵⁹ Hasbara Staff, 2021

⁶⁰ Algemeiner, 2021c

Atlantic Canada

Dalhousie University

Atlantic Canada is a strong base of the Jewish community. Dalhousie University, located in the heart of Halifax, hosts the largest Jewish student community in Atlantic Canada.⁶¹ During the rise in violence in May 2021, Dalhousie witnessed circulating messages through Twitter such as “Hitler was right” and other profane tweets.⁶² In response, Hillel’s director of Atlantic Canada asked about limits to free speech and whether they should exist in situations like these. Increasingly and most notably during the pandemic, Jewish student life had been lived on social media.⁶³ Students learn, work, and socialize online. With increased physical isolation, this new virtual life has become the equivalent of real-life for many students on campus. What are universities and individuals at large doing to safeguard online Jewish identities and stop the spread of misinformation?

The University of Fredericton

The University of Fredericton alongside others participated in a Pro-Palestinian march in May. The march occurred at Fredericton City Hall and was open to the public. Jewish students showed interest and went peacefully to observe what the march would involve. Initially, the invitation stated that there would be an open and peaceful discussion between members of the Free Palestine movement and local politicians. Sadly, the events that ensued showed that organizers were not open to collective and constructive dialogue and the protest became heated. Onlookers claimed to hear hateful and antisemitic chants in Arabic (SITE). Unbeknownst to the politicians in attendance (who went on record supporting the movement) were the antisemitic nature of the chants.⁶⁴ Slogans that were heard included “One Holocaust wasn’t enough” and “Death to all Jews”. Meanwhile, local officials smiled and shook hands with the protestors. These events resulted in members of the city’s Jewish community fearing for their safety and consequently, many removed their Mezuzot from their doorways.⁶⁵

The Territories

Although seemingly remote from most national urban centres, the northern Canadian Territories are not exempt from experiencing antisemitic hate crimes.⁶⁶ While in 2017, graffiti began to appear in Yellowknife of swastikas and other racist symbols and slogans,⁶⁷ AGPI was happy to note that in 2021, we did not document any significant antisemitic reports on campus. .

⁶¹ Rifkin, 2021

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ Hinchey, 2017

⁶⁷ Ibid

General Note Antisemitism on University Campus

Although this report primarily focuses on the Canadian experience, it is important to shed light on the similar unfortunate reality of our neighbours to the south. An AGPI press release recently reported on the vandalism of a Torah at the University of Washington D.C. Vandals reportedly tore apart a Torah, covered it in detergent, and poured hot sauce all over the Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity house. Avi Benlolo, Founder and Chairman of AGPI, described this incident as “an alarming and grave situation resulting in the violation of fundamental human rights.”

Benlolo wrote a general campus piece for the *National Post* expressing concern for the return of Jewish students on campus. The hostile climate will no doubt worsen with attempts to boycott and delegitimize the Jewish State. Sadly, many of these groups believe they are acting in the cause of “social justice” without fully understanding either the context of the conflict or that Hamas is a radical Islamist terrorist organization.⁶⁸ Either way, this unfounded and radicalized behaviour on campuses results in violence towards Jewish students and faculty, as it has for the past 20 years.

The silence surrounding antisemitism on university campuses has contributed to some troubling facts. A new Alums for Campus Fairness survey found that nearly all polled Jewish-American college students attested to antisemitism and the demonization of Israel on their campus. Furthermore, 79% of 500 respondents had experienced or heard first-hand about another student making offensive or threatening antisemitic comments.⁶⁹ The FBI revealed that Jews are the target of 58% of all religiously motivated hate crimes in the U.S. despite constituting just 2% of the population.⁷⁰

The Toronto Police Service published their yearly aggregate data findings which include hate crime statistics by the Intelligence Service and Hate Crime Units.⁷¹ The three most frequently reported criminal offences motivated by hate in 2020 were mischief to property, assault, and harassment. The Jewish community alongside the Black community were the most victimized groups. The victim group most targeted in 2020 was the Jewish community with 63 occurrences in the Toronto Police jurisdiction. In 63 of the 82 hate crimes reported and investigated, the victims were members of the Jewish community. Meanwhile, the Jewish community constitutes only 3.8% of the population of the City of Toronto. Religiously, racially, and ethnically the Jewish community is the target of the most hate crimes committed in the city.⁷² For a visual representation, Figures 1 and 2 outline the numbers described above (Note: percentages might not add up to 100 due to rounding).

⁶⁸ Benlolo, 2021b.

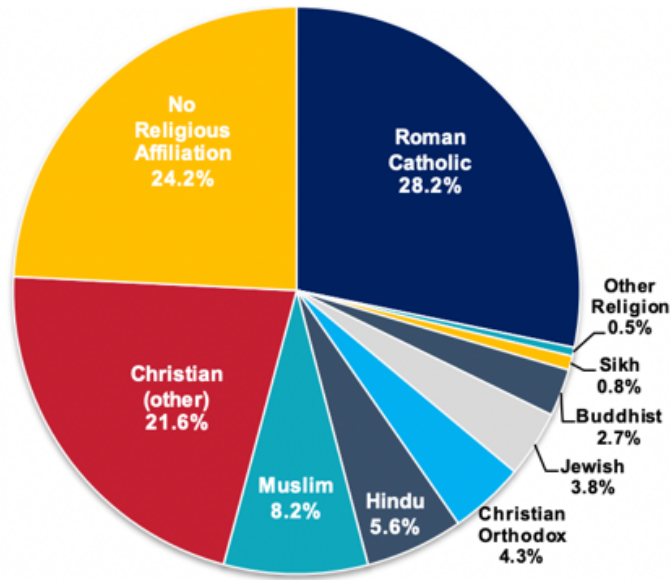
⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ Toronto Police Service, 2020

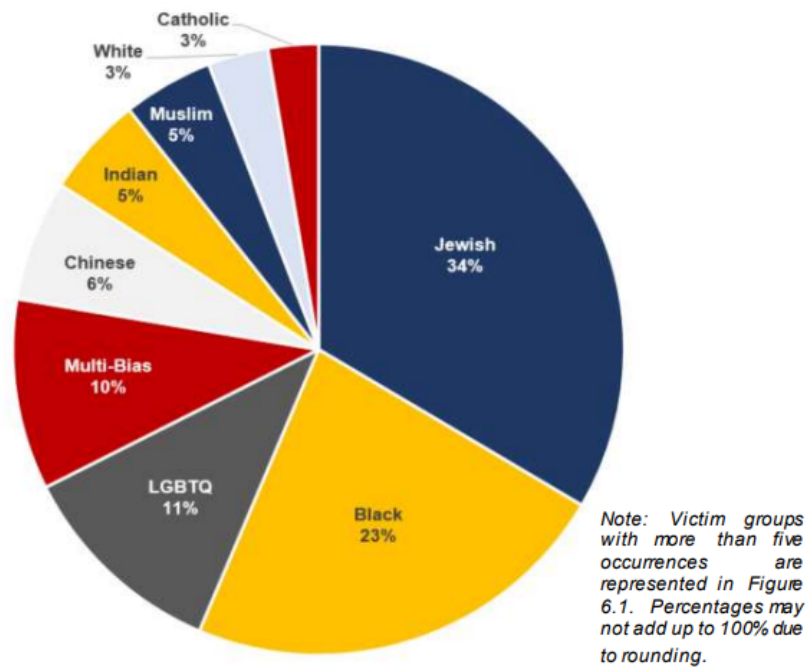
⁷² Ibid

Figure 1:



(Percentage of the Toronto population by religious affiliations).⁷³

Figure 2:



(Percentage of hate crimes experienced by marginalized groups in Toronto).⁷⁴

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Ibid

AGPI's Path to Discourse Through Education

AGPI works hard to provide information, resources and reporting to ensure Canada's voice is amplified in the fight for human rights. Through education and discourse, we can build a better tomorrow by protecting our past and defending our future. In a letter to the Toronto District School Board, AGPI's Director of Education and Global Chair of Education Dr Neil Orłowski outlined an 8 point reflective model for educators - or anyone taking part in a discussion on the conflicts in the Middle East. This model of thinking provides a set of tools to create safe spaces and open dialogue for discussions of this calibre.

1. Have I strongly and critically articulated the case for the duality of narratives, examined the interconnectivity of histories, and situated diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts as essential to the mission of this activity and to achieve excellence for all students, from all pathways?
2. Have I established or designated an administrator tasked with overseeing, critiquing, and/or leading class or institution-wide efforts to introduce and/or strategically advance DEI and anti-racist organizational change within my class, my department, or our school?
3. Have I engaged with colleagues, school and system leadership, the community, and other organizations to implement inclusive materials that appropriately highlight all parties equally?
4. Have I delegated central and decentralized accountabilities for advancing DEI and anti-racism to key roles across the class, department, or school teams to act as champions and to foster accountability?
5. Have I established a model of coordinated decentralization whereby central (board) and local (school) DEI champions communicate and collaborate to approve anti-racism and DEI efforts I am engaging in?
6. Have I adhered to board policies, procedures, and implementation tools that integrate DEI, anti-racism, and inclusive excellence principles and practices into my class and our activities?
7. Have I engaged in regular climate reviews to assess the perception and experiences of diverse community members with the ability to disaggregate responses from racialized members? If so, have I considered its findings and appropriately implemented them in my practice?
8. Have I incorporated mechanisms for regular consultation with, and engaged with communities most affected by the systemic inequalities including racialized community members I am focusing on?

The dialogue of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a difficult one to navigate. Through our various programs such as the Power of One Exhibit, our Speaker Series, and our education opportunities we strive to create a safe place for discourse, encouraging all to ask questions and remain respectful of all experiences. For more information on the *Power of One*, you can find that [here](#). You can register for our speaker series [here](#). For more information on how you can be part of the change visit our [website](#). Consider supporting our advocacy work [here](#). In addition, you can sign our campus declaration against antisemitism [here](#). We can all do our part to keep our students and each other safe.

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world”

- Anne Frank

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