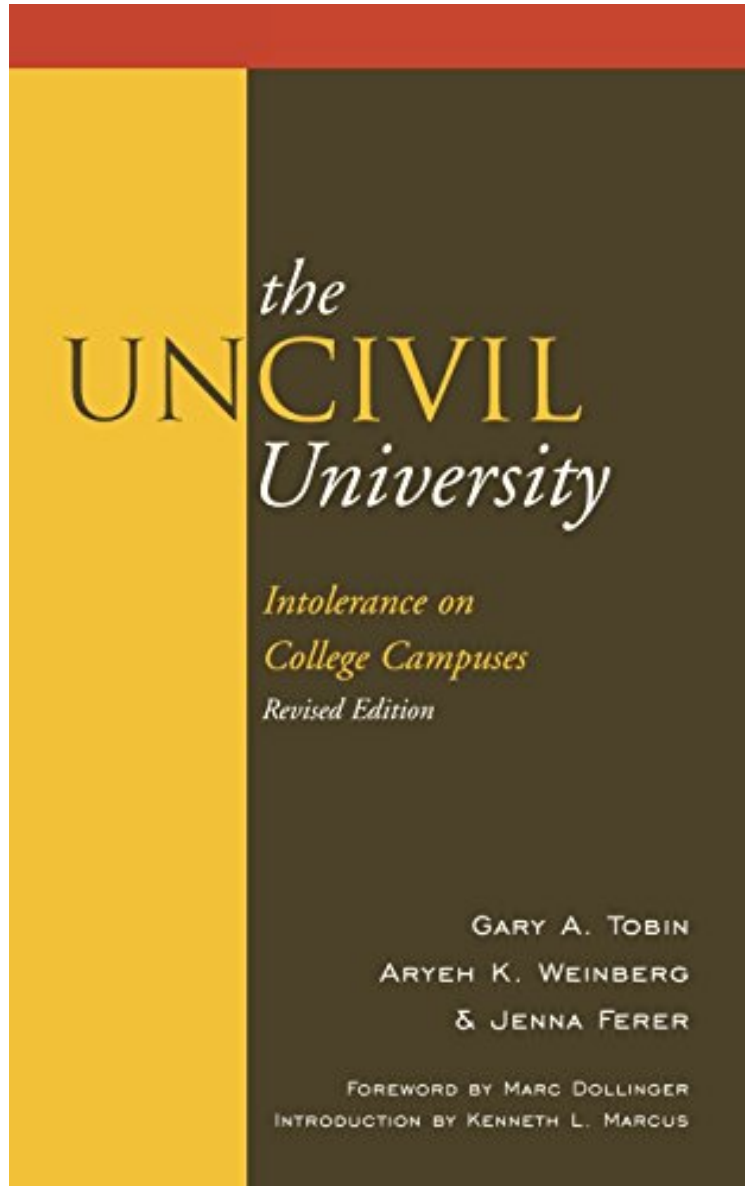


The UnCivil University: Intolerance on College Campuses

Gary A. Tobin, Aryeh Kaufmann Weinberg, Jenna Ferer
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Gary A. Tobin, Aryeh Kaufmann Weinberg, Jenna Ferer : The UnCivil University: Intolerance on College Campuses before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The UnCivil University: Intolerance on College Campuses:

14 of 16 people found the following review helpful. Hopefully, a landmark effortBy Jill MalterFirst and foremost, I

consider myself a supporter of scholarship. I think the success of us humans as a species and the success our civilization depends on scholarship, and I consider systematic challenges to academic standards as threatening all this. And there's a threat right now, as this book shows us in some detail. The symptoms we see, namely anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism on campus are, as the authors are quick to point out, "of a much larger malaise." We won't fix the problem by seeking "balance." Tobin and his co-authors wisely point out that "universities do not" (and should not) "balance racism and sexism with positive images of blacks and women. They make it clear that racism and sexism do not belong on campus. Period." And that is what they say needs to be done with anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism. They're right. Some folks say that we need to be careful not to infringe on academic freedom. But there's more to scholarship than freedom to say anything, no matter how absurd and counterproductive it may be. Universities need to "ensure both high quality and honest scholarship, adhere to principles of truth, preserve civil discourse, and provide freedom from intellectual intimidation." In this book, we see some striking examples of uncivil behavior and campus misconduct. Perhaps the most obvious example is the infamous Columbia University Middle East and Asian Languages and Cultures department. But there are plenty of others. And we see that the issue is not some sort of genuine or intellectual debate about a real nation, namely Israel. Instead, it is "a failure of the university community at all levels to properly protect its highest ideals." The result is a barrage of propaganda that has no place on any campus. According to the authors, this propaganda has four primary components. First is the claim that Jews do not deserve to have a nation-state at all, and that Zionism is a form of racism. Second is the taunt that the Holocaust is not a Jewish experience at all, but a Levantine Arab one. Third is the justification of violence against Israelis. And fourth is the fantasy that there is a race called the Jews which controls America, our government, and our foreign policy. We see plenty of examples for all four of these components. The authors make some very reasonable recommendations. Universities need to police themselves, both with internal groups and committees of scholars from other universities. These folks need to review the level of scholarship, quality of teaching, and objectivity of the discipline. Faculty who harass, discriminate against, or intimidate students need to be disciplined, with repeat violations leading to the firing even of tenured faculty. The campus community needs to be educated about anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism (including integrating such material into courses, curricula and syllabi when appropriate). Colleges need to establish rules for civil discourse (for example, it ought to be against the rules to shout down speakers). University funds ought not be used to sponsor racist speakers or events. University and college trustees need to become more involved in a number of ways. Donors and alumni need to demand more accountability when they make gifts. And eventually, the cultural norms of the campus need to change so that anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism are as unacceptable as any other forms of prejudice there. Yes, the universities have mechanisms in place to fix their problems. But if they refuse to do so, the authors recommend that the public sector press for accountability as well. After all, the public pays taxes that support the universities. Universities can refuse the money. But if they take it, they need to meet some standards set by those who hand it to them. In addition, the authors think that the Jewish community ought to make these issues a higher priority, given that it would be a shame (and counterproductive for our entire society) were a higher education to have the effect (or side-effect) of increasing anti-Semitism. There are, of course, a couple of ideas that the authors feel are overrated. One is to "balance" some of the perversions of academic standards we see on campus by creating chairs of Israeli studies. While there is nothing wrong with such chairs of study about any nation, Israel included, there's also little reason to expect this to help much. First, such chairs can very easily be filled with anti-Israeli propagandists. And second, as we've already seen, "balance" is not a useful or proper goal to have here. I agree. Another relatively weak idea is to focus on teaching Jewish students to answer the propaganda of the bigots with truths. While it is a good idea for everyone, Jews included, to understand why much of the absurd propaganda is in fact false, that won't really address the problem. I agree with this as well. Moreover, I think that having Jews be even more involved in protesting against such bigotry may merely have the effect of making it appear that there's a silly tribal war going on, with both sides equally irrational. The possibility that the struggle is actually between academic honesty and dishonesty might appear more remote. This is a very important work, and I think all those involved with academia ought to read it. In my opinion, the future of our universities is at stake. If this battle can be won, I think our universities, our nation, and human rights in general will be far better off.

16 of 18 people found the following review helpful. Academic freedom endangered
By Shalom Freedman
This is an extremely important book. It points to one of the most alarming trends that has been developing on American Campuses over the past decade or more. A good description of these processes has been given by Avi Beker in an oped piece in the newspaper 'Haaretz': "The book presents a sad and disturbing picture of anti-Semitism disguised as an academic debate about the Middle East. Dr. Gary Tobin, one of the book's authors and president of the Institute for Jewish Community Research, San Francisco, explained that the main problem today does not lie in open or blatant anti-Semitism, but rather in atmospheres and teaching styles." "The academic debate on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is framed in the politics of racial discrimination, and this is why it has so much currency on campuses," says Tobin. "Jews are the white, colonialist oppressors and the Palestinians are the brown victims of colonization. So to be a white Jew in support of Israel you risk being branded as a racist. And that accusation is more insidious on a day-to-day basis than any mass rally." "The study presents reports of insults and humiliations suffered by Jewish students due to their support for Israel, and describes how Jewish faculty members that support Israel are being

forced out. In a corresponding debate held in the U.S. Senate last week, there was discussion of the anti-Israeli atmosphere that prevails in centers for Middle Eastern studies in American universities, some of which are funded by Arab money. "In short the Israel bashing is accompanied by an effort at vitiating all debate on the Middle - East issue. The politically correct Arabists of the Middle East study's departments set the tone which undermines the first principle of university life, academic freedom. Hopefully this book will serve as an important part in braking this dangerous non- democratic process. 11 of 24 people found the following review helpful. progress? By bookloversfriend I took heart from the news that the Politically Correct campuses were now backing the Islamists. Now, at last, I thought, the Jews, who were instrumental in ensconcing P. C. in America, would turn against it and expose it for the fraud that it is. But no. P. C. is too useful to dispense with. The aim is, rather, to re-insert "Jews" (along with Blacks, Hispanics, homosexuals, and women) back into the list of groups whom it is suicide to speak against. Great.

In the name of academic freedom, the core values of higher education honest scholarship, unbiased research, and diversity of thought and person have been corrupted by an academy more interested in preserving its privileges than in protecting its own integrity. The American university has lost its civility. Nowhere is this loss more apparent than in the rise of anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism on college campuses. This book documents the alarming rise in bigotry and bullying in the academy, using a range of evidence from first-hand accounts of intimidation of students by anti-Israel professors to anti-Semitic articles in student newspapers and marginalization of pro-Israel scholars. The *UnCivil University* exposes the unspoken world of double standards, bureaucratic paralysis, and abdication of leadership that not only allows but often supports a vocal minority of extremists on campus.

The *UnCivil University* is one of those rare books that shines a light on a problem that many have been too blind to see or too ashamed to acknowledge namely, the rise in anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism on the American college campus. Gary Tobin and his colleagues document this troubling development with meticulous care, showing how at many leading universities a small but aggressive minority has succeeded in sowing hatred for Israel and hostility toward Jewish students and faculty who dare to defend the only free and democratic state in the Middle East. This is a timely book, because the agents of bigotry and unreason on the campus have advanced very far toward their goal of closing down enlightened debate on the future of the Middle East. If they succeed, all of us Jews and gentiles alike who believe in the ideals of pluralism and rational discourse will be the losers. The publication of this volume represents an important step in restoring a civil and enlightened university. (James Piereson, executive director, John M. Olin Foundation) The one-sided coercive atmosphere prevalent on so many of our campuses is depriving an entire generation of the kind of education they deserve. When it comes to social, political, religious, and ideological matters, the academy has too often shown a pronounced preference for only one perspective. As this important book makes clear, it is high time for all of us to insist that colleges promote a civil yet robust exchange of ideas the very foundation of a liberal education. (Anne D. Neal, president, American Council of Trustees and Alumni) Gary Tobin and his co-authors identify a pernicious trend on college campuses and devote their considerable analytical ability to finding ways to combat it. Anti-Semitism is a blight on any society; it has no place in civil discourse. As this book makes clear, much work remains before it is banished to history forever. (Tom Lantos, Congressman, Democrat, San Francisco, San Mateo) In this alarming, well-sourced analysis, researchers for the Institute for Jewish Community Research find anti-Israel propagandists using the banner of academic freedom to intimidate, marginalize and indoctrinate.... They include practical recommendations, clear-headed rebuttals to opposing arguments, interviews with varied students, and sober deliberation on the university's responsibilities. (Publishers Weekly 2009-04-01) About the Author Gary A. Tobin was president of the Institute for Jewish Community Research (IJCR) and director of the Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University for fourteen years. His books include *Jewish Perceptions of Anti-Semitism*, *Rabbis Talk about Intermarriage*, and *The Trouble with Textbooks*. Aryeh Kaufmann Weinberg is a research associate at IJCR. Jenna Ferer is a former research associate at IJCR.