

# “Anti-Semitism on College Campuses in 2005”

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**By Dennis Prager**

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—Anti-Semitism on American college campuses is not new. College presidents and professors didn’t begin tolerating or teaching anti-Semitism last Oct. 8.

Students marching on behalf of the annihilation of the Jewish state, student activists tearing down posters of kidnapped Jewish children, locking Jewish students in a library at Cooper Union and “70 percent of Jewish college students feeling forced to hide their Jewish identities” are the result of decades of anti-Israel, anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish rhetoric.

One example I recently came across is a column titled “When Young Jews Major in Anti-Semitism,” published in 2005 in *The Los Angeles Times*. When I looked to see who wrote the column, I saw—to my surprise—that I did. I did not recall writing the piece. But it is very much worth reading today.

“American Jewry is experiencing a cognitive dissonance the likes of which it has never known. To illustrate, consider my recent lecture in Virginia Beach, Va.: ‘Anti-Semitism at the Universities: What Can We Do About It?’

“It is very significant that a mainstream (i.e., largely secular and liberal) Jewish organization (the Jewish Community Center) would fly a speaker from across the country to speak on anti-Semitism at universities . . .

“Universities have become society’s primary breeding ground for hatred of Israel. This hatred is often so intense that the college campus has become a haven for people who use anti-Zionism to mask their anti-Semitism. Moreover, anti-Zionism itself is a form of anti-Semitism, even if some Jews share it.

“Why? Because anti-Zionism is not simply criticism of Israel, which is as legitimate as criticism of any country. Anti-Zionism means that Israel as a Jewish state has no right to exist. And when a person argues that only one country in the world is unworthy of existence—and that happens to be the one Jewish country in the world—one is engaged in antisemitism, whether personally anti-Semitic or not.

“Not long ago, on my radio show, I invited a UCLA student who, on the occasion of Israel’s birthday, had written a hate-filled article about the Jewish state in *The Bruin*, the school newspaper. I asked her if she had always been anti-Israel. She said that as a Jewish girl growing up in Britain, she was actually a Zionist who had visited Israel a number of times on Jewish-student trips there.

“ ‘What changed you?’ I asked.

“ ‘The university,’ she responded.

“That sort of transformation may be what inspired Harvard University’s president, Lawrence Summers, to deliver a speech in which he identified the university as replacing the far right as a center of anti-Semitism.

“‘Where anti-Semitism and views that are profoundly anti-Israeli have traditionally been the primary preserve of poorly educated right-wing populists,’ he warned, ‘profoundly anti-Israel views are increasingly finding support in progressive intellectual communities. Serious and thoughtful people are advocating and taking actions that are anti-Semitic in their effect if not their intent.’

“The vast majority of pro-Israel Jews, secular and religious, liberal and conservative, know this. That explains the lecture topic I was asked to speak about in Virginia to a largely secular and liberal Jewish audience.

“To make matters worse for many Jews’ psyches, not only has the institution they most revere turned out to be a moral wasteland and the most congenial place for enemies of the Jewish people—and of the United States (but that is another story)—at the same time, the people whom many Jews have most feared, conservative Christians, have turned out to be the Jews’ most loyal friends.

“That the secular university is bad for Jews, and conservative Christians are good for Jews, is more than enough cognitive dissonance for a Jew to experience in a lifetime.”

Here are two reflections on what I wrote 19 years ago.

■ First, neither I nor any description of the universities as “moral wastelands” would be printed in *The Los Angeles Times* today.

*The Los Angeles Times* was liberal for at least 60 years—the last Republican presidential candidate the paper endorsed was Dwight Eisenhower in 1956—but it is now leftist. Its editorial and opinion pages went from liberal, which meant that I and other conservatives could often be published, to left-wing and woke boilerplate. The level of its editorials and columnists is as low intellectually as it is morally.

One of these columnists actually wrote that Larry Elder, one of the most brilliant conservative minds in America today, is “the black face of white supremacy.” The fools who run *The Los Angeles Times* are consigning the paper to a fate similar to that of *Sports Illustrated*. *SI*, as it was known to sports fans, was once the country’s most revered sports magazine. Then, like the *L.A. Times*, it went woke. Soon it will be no longer.

■ Second, the deterioration of Harvard is also reflected in my column of 19 years ago.

I quoted Harvard's then-president, Lawrence Summers, who decried the Israel-hating, leading-to-anti-semitism views of "progressive intellectual communities." From Larry Summers to Claudine Gay, Harvard's moral decline perfectly mirrors that of *Sports Illustrated* and *The Los Angeles Times*. Everything the Left touches, it destroys.