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THE (ON-GOING) DECLINE OF U.S. “HIGHER” EDUCATION — AND, ONCE AGAIN, CANADA MAY BE LEADING THE REVERSAL

Contents:

(Please Note: articles may have been shortened in the interest of space. Click link for the complete article – Ed.)

The Golf Shot Heard Round the Academic World: [David Feith, Wall Street Journal, Apr. 5, 2013](#)—It sounds like the setup for a bad joke: What did the Wall Street type say to the college president on the golf course? Well, we don't know exactly—but it has launched a saga with weighty implications for American intellectual and civic life.

This is Columbia University: [David Horowitz, National Review, April 2, 2013](#)—Our educational system from kindergarten to the university level, which has long been under the academic thumb of a Left that is comfortable supporting Islamic supremacists and anti-American terrorists both at home and abroad.

Manitoba Student Union Defunds Anti-Israel Group: [Canadian Jewish News, Apr. 15, 2013](#)—The University of Manitoba Students' Union (UMSU) voted to strip funding and official club status from an anti-Israel group on campus last week.

The Moral Challenge of Divestment Comes to UCSD: [Shlomo Dubnov and Asaf Romirowsky, Times of Israel, Mar. 20, 2013](#)—Last week the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) Associated Student Council passed an amended version of a resolution for divestment from companies dealing with the State of Israel, voting 20-12-1 in favor of divesting.

On Topic Links

Exposing Florida Atlantic U.: Anti-Semitism & Anti-Israel Extremism: [Alan Bergstein, You Tube, Mar 7, 2013](#) (video)

'Israel Lobby' Threatening Free Speech at Berkeley?: [Lee Kaplan, Front Page News, Mar. 29, 2013](#)

'Book Robbery' Hijacks History: [Asaf Romirowsky, Ynet News, Apr. 7, 2013](#)

Pro-Gay & Anti-Israel? 'Pinkwashing' to the Rescue: [Cinnamon Stillwell & Reut R. Cohen, Front Page News, Mar. 25, 2013](#)

THE GOLF SHOT HEARD ROUND THE ACADEMIC WORLD

David Feith

[Wall Street Journal, Apr. 5, 2013](#)

It sounds like the setup for a bad joke: What did the Wall Street type say to the college president on the golf course? Well, we don't know exactly—but it has launched a saga with weighty implications for American intellectual and civic life.

Here's what we do know: One day in the summer of 2010, Barry Mills, the president of Bowdoin College, a respected liberal-arts school in Brunswick, Maine, met investor and philanthropist Thomas Klingenstein for a round of golf about an hour north of campus. College presidents spend many of their waking hours talking to potential donors. In this case, the two men spoke about college life—especially "diversity"—and the conversation made such an impression on President Mills that he cited it weeks later in his convocation address to Bowdoin's freshman class. That's where the dispute begins.

In his address, President Mills described the golf outing and said he had been interrupted in the middle of a swing by a fellow golfer's announcement: "I would never support Bowdoin—you are a ridiculous liberal school that brings all the wrong students to campus for all the wrong reasons," said the other golfer, in Mr. Mills's telling. During Mr. Mills's next swing, he recalled, the man blasted Bowdoin's "misplaced and

misguided diversity efforts." At the end of the round, the college president told the students, "I walked off the course in despair."

Word of the speech soon got to Mr. Klingenstein. Even though he hadn't been named in the Mills account, Mr. Klingenstein took to the pages of the *Claremont Review of Books* to call it nonsense: "He didn't like my views, so he turned me into a backswing interrupting, Bowdoin-hating boor who wants to return to the segregated days of Jim Crow."

The real story, wrote Mr. Klingenstein, was that "I explained my disapproval of 'diversity' as it generally has been implemented on college campuses: too much celebration of racial and ethnic difference," coupled with "not enough celebration of our common American identity."

For this, wrote Mr. Klingenstein, Bowdoin's president insinuated that he was a racist. And President Mills did so, moreover, in an address that purported to stress the need for respecting the opinions of others across the political spectrum. "We are, in the main, a place of liberal political persuasion," he told the students, but "we must be willing to entertain diverse perspectives throughout our community. . . . Diversity of ideas at all levels of the college is crucial for our credibility and for our educational mission." Wrote Mr. Klingenstein: "Would it be uncharitable to suggest that, in a speech calling for more sensitivity to conservative views, he might have shown some?"

After the essay appeared, President Mills stood by his version of events. A few months later, Mr. Klingenstein decided to do something surprising: He commissioned researchers to examine Bowdoin's commitment to intellectual diversity, rigorous academics and civic identity. This week, some 18 months and hundreds of pages of documentation later, the project is complete. Its picture of Bowdoin isn't pretty.

Funded by Mr. Klingenstein, researchers from the National Association of Scholars studied speeches by Bowdoin presidents and deans, formal statements of the college's principles, official faculty reports and notes of faculty meetings, academic course lists and syllabi, books and articles by professors, the archive of the Bowdoin Orient newspaper and more. They analyzed the school's history back to its founding in 1794, focusing on the past 45 years—during which, they argue, Bowdoin's character changed dramatically for the worse.

Published Wednesday, the report demonstrates how Bowdoin has become an intellectual monoculture dedicated above all to identity politics. The school's ideological pillars would likely be familiar to anyone who has paid attention to American higher education lately. There's the obsession with race, class, gender and sexuality as the essential forces of history and markers of political identity. There's the dedication to "sustainability," or saving the planet from its imminent destruction by the forces of capitalism. And there are the paeans to "global citizenship," or loving all countries except one's own.

The Klingenstein report nicely captures the illiberal or fallacious aspects of this campus doctrine, but the paper's true contribution is in recording some of its absurd manifestations at Bowdoin. For example, the college has "no curricular requirements that center on the American founding or the history of the nation." Even history majors aren't required to take a single course in American history. In the History Department, no course is devoted to American political, military, diplomatic or intellectual history—the only ones available are organized around some aspect of race, class, gender or sexuality.

One of the few requirements is that Bowdoin students take a yearlong freshman seminar. Some of the 37 seminars offered this year: "Affirmative Action and U.S. Society," "Fictions of Freedom," "Racism," "Queer Gardens" (which "examines the work of gay and lesbian gardeners and traces how marginal identities find expression in specific garden spaces"), "Sexual Life of Colonialism" and "Modern Western Prostitutes."

Regarding Bowdoin professors, the report estimates that "four or five out of approximately 182 full-time faculty members might be described as politically conservative." In the 2012 election cycle, 100% of

faculty donations went to President Obama. Not that any of this matters if you have ever asked around the faculty lounge.

"A political imbalance [among faculty] was no more significant than having an imbalance between Red Sox and Yankee fans," sniffed Henry C.W. Laurence, a Bowdoin professor of government, in 2004. He added that the suggestion that liberal professors cannot fairly reflect conservative views in classroom discussions is "intellectually bankrupt, professionally insulting and, fortunately, wildly inaccurate."...

In publishing these and other gems, Mr. Klingenstein and the National Association of Scholars hope to encourage alumni and trustees to push aggressively for reforms. They don't call for the kind of conservative affirmative action seen at the University of Colorado, which recently created a visiting professorship exclusively for right-wingers. Rather, Mr. Klingenstein and the NAS want schools nationwide to stop "silent discrimination against conservatives." Good luck.

In case you're wondering, Bowdoin's official statement on this week's report amounted to little more than a shrug. A serious response would begin with inviting Mr. Klingenstein to campus for a public debate with President Mills. No golf clubs allowed.

Mr. Feith is an assistant editorial features editor at the Journal.

[Top of Page](#)

THIS IS COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

David Horowitz

[National Review](#), April 2, 2013

People who ask how it is possible that a convicted killer — a participant in a failed plot to blow up a social dance attended by 18-year-old draftees and their dates; a murderess who abetted the cold-blooded massacre of three law-enforcement officers, including the first African-American on the Nyack police force; a woman whose actions left nine children fatherless and who has shown no genuine remorse for that — should be hired as an adjunct professor at an elite school like Columbia University haven't been paying attention to what's happened to our educational system from kindergarten to the university level, which has long been under the academic thumb of a Left that is comfortable supporting Islamic supremacists and anti-American terrorists both at home and abroad....

The prestige of Columbia derives from its scientific and professional divisions (Social Work and Education excepted), in which traditional standards drawn from the Enlightenment and the scientific revolution and including two sides to controversial questions are still observed. Over the past several decades, the liberal-arts divisions and the aforementioned professional schools have reverted to their religious origins, except that the doctrines being rammed down students' throats without the benefit of opposing views are Marxist rather than Christian.

Conservatives have been lame in opposing this ominous development. They have abdicated responsibility at the trustee level, they have had little or nothing to say about it at the policy level, and they have been inattentive to it at the political level, despite the fact that 85 percent of college students attend state universities whose curricula and liberal-arts faculties are as monolithic, intellectually deficient, and politically perverse as Columbia's.

For example, a course at the University of California, Santa Cruz, is described in the official catalogue in these exact words: "The goal of this seminar is to learn how to organize a revolution." The course description goes on to explain that this would be an anti-capitalist revolution. Kathy Boudin would feel right at home there. In fact, her colleagues Bill Ayers and Bernardine Dohrn, who organized the terrorist Weather Underground in which Kathy Boudin was a soldier, were not adjunct faculty members like Boudin but full-fledged professors (at Northwestern and the University of Illinois). Ayers, a Columbia

graduate, is an iconic figure at Columbia's Teachers College (a third professional school at Columbia that is an ongoing disgrace) and has edited its series of classroom guides on how to use subjects like Mathematics to teach "social justice" — which, as Ayers understands and articulates it, is indistinguishable from the principles of the Communist gulags that the Cold War disposed of.

But of course it is terribly outré to mention all this, and those of us who do are marginalized not only by the academic profession but by the editorial supporters of political bomb throwers at institutions that function as the arbiters of the intellectual culture — such as the New York Times, which played an active role in securing Boudin's undeserved release from a federal prison. These are sad times for our country, and the hour is late.

[Top of Page](#)

MANITOBA STUDENT UNION DEFUNDS ANTI-ISRAEL GROUP

[Canadian Jewish News](#), Apr. 15, 2013

The University of Manitoba Students' Union (UMSU) voted to strip funding and official club status from an anti-Israel group on campus last week. The move came a day after the University of Regina Students' Union (URSU), which represents both graduate and undergraduate students, repealed its support for the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement, 14 months after becoming the first university student union in Canada to endorse it.

The UMSU vote on April 11 went against legal advice and bucked the trend among other student councils at other universities across the country, which in recent months have voted to divest from Israel, most recently at the University of Toronto's Scarborough campus earlier this month. The UMSU motion, which passed by a vote of 19 to 15, prohibits Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA) from receiving funding from the student union or using student union facilities for club activities.

The resolution references the Manitoba Human Rights Code and accuses the club of "discrimination" and "harassment." Prior to the vote, the undergraduate student union's attorney issued an opinion reading, in part, that "the actions of SAIA were well within the grounds of legally protected and acceptable political discourse." The legal opinion warned that barring the group could expose the student union to legal liability, the *National Post* reported.

SAIA has branches on most major campuses in the country and organizes the annual Israeli Apartheid Week. Supporters of SAIA have said they'll fight the decision. "We are shocked that UMSU would ban Students Against Israeli Apartheid without any evidence or basis for the accusations brought forward in the motion," spokesperson Liz Carlyle said in a statement released by the Winnipeg Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid.

Judy Zelikovitz, vice-president of university and local partner services for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, commended and congratulated the local student activists who led the initiative in Winnipeg. B'nai B'rith Canada hailed the vote as "precedent setting" and called on other universities to follow suit.

Not all Canadian backers of Israel supported the move. Ezra Levant, a conservative television commentator and outspoken supporter of Israel, condemned SAIA, but warned that the vote set a dangerous censorship precedent on campuses and made the anti-Israel group look like the victim. However, Zelikovitz said the resolution does not harm free speech on campus. "It in no way infringes the right of students to organize or voice their opinions in open spaces on campus. Rather, the motion ensures that student union fees and resources are not misused to promote divisive and discriminatory agendas," she said in a statement to *The CJN*.

The resolution barring SAIA was the brainchild of student council member Josh Morry, who said SAIA's events were making Jewish students feel uncomfortable, although there haven't been any incidents of

violence during its five-year run on campus. “I didn’t have to prove that Israeli Apartheid Week has actually incited hatred, but that it is likely to undermine the dignity or self-esteem of students on campus who are Zionists,” Morry told the *Winnipeg Jewish Review*.

The University of Manitoba has approximately 28,000 students, and Avi Posen, director of Hillel Winnipeg, said the number of Jewish students is “in the hundreds.” The UMSU decision comes after several student unions across the country endorsed the boycott movement against Israel recently, including at York University and U of T’s Scarborough and Mississauga campuses.

Meanwhile, the University of Regina Students’ Union repealed its endorsement of the BDS movement at a general meeting of the group on April 10. Although there was no official vote count, Sean Wilson, a student representative who spearheaded the campaign, estimated about 130 people voted to withdraw support of the motion, while around 70 voted against the idea.

“I knew that when people were faced with what [BDS] actually was, they’d vote in favour of repealing it,” Wilson said. “The fact of the matter is, us adopting BDS doesn’t change anything overseas but it makes our Jewish students feel extremely uncomfortable and alienated.”

[Top of Page](#)

THE MORAL CHALLENGE OF DIVESTMENT COMES TO UCSD

Shlomo Dubnov and Asaf Romirowsky

[Times of Israel](#), Mar. 20, 2013

Last week the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) Associated Student Council passed an amended version of a resolution for divesture from companies dealing with the State of Israel, voting 20-12-1 in favor of divesting. To date, UCSD is the most prestigious school to pass a divestment resolution, as part of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign being propagated across North America and Europe. This resolution marks three out of the ten universities in the California system that have introduced and voted on similar resolutions. It is anticipated that the Student Council of UC Santa Barbara will be voting on a similar resolution soon.

The UCSD students, in formulating their resolution, relied on the distortions of the BDS campaign in general: namely, a false characterization of Israel as a rogue human rights violator, the portrayal of the Jewish citizens of Israel as “colonial occupiers,” and the positioning of Arabs as indigenous residents of the land.

The students supporting the BDS movement have challenged the pro-Israel community as they have promoted the false notion that they are open to actual dialogue and debate that would promote equitable and peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; in reality, their motives are much more sinister. Rather than being interested in the “social justice” and “human rights” to which they so regularly give lip service, their actual intention is to weaken and destroy Israel, not to make it a partner in peace. As a result, the American Jewish community at large, many of whom embrace the “big tent” approach, still hold on to the desire to accept everyone’s views and self-affirmation in the name of being open and pluralistic. Since Israel’s very existence is positioned by BDS proponents as antithetical to peace, and an obstacle to social justice for the Palestinians, many on campus are conflicted about fervently supporting the Jewish state. To avoid such dilemma, the strategy of some organizations that support Jewish students is to focus on internal campus life issues, such as Jews being offended if the divestment passes. These arguments are not strong enough in the battle against BDS.

But not all supporters of Israel fall into that moral trap. For instance, some faculty at UCSD, spear-headed by members of its SPME chapter of *Scholars for Peace in the Middle East* (SPME), were able to come together and issue a strong statement opposing the divestment initiative, stating that “the most troubling

aspect of the resolution is its characterization of Jewish citizens of Israel as ‘colonial occupiers’ while Arabs are described as indigenous to the land. In so doing, the resolution denies the profound emotional, cultural, and religious connection of the Jewish people to the land of Israel, a connection that spans 3000 years. This is a deplorable attempt to delegitimize an ancient people’s ethnic identity. Rather than advancing the prospect of reconciliation between Arabs and Jews, such claims regress to the very attitude that has been at the heart of the conflict and prevented a peaceful resolution thus far.”

So while the UCSD faculty understood the danger of BDS, the rest of the Jewish community – both on the UCSD campus and at large – lost the battle before it even came to a vote because of a lack of unified strategy and a common ideology. SPME commends the student groups for toning down some of the amoral language of the BDS bill yet it was clearly not enough. Consequently, these grassroots efforts led Associated Students President Meggie Le to express objection to the divestment resolution, but to no avail. Unfortunately, the BDS movement continues to gain momentum as it uses academic freedom to intimidate those who would speak up and question its true intentions.

It is critical to understand that the BDS campaign is contrary to peace, representing a form of misguided economic warfare. The movement is in direct opposition to decades of agreements between Arabs and Israelis, in which both sides pledged to negotiate a peaceful settlement and commitment to a two-state solution, even while only Israel has repeatedly made concessions for peace. There is no doubt that what we saw at UCSD is only part of a larger campaign to isolate Israel and silence its supporters. Until we internalize that the actions of those supporting the BDS campaign are, as former Harvard University President Lawrence H. Summers observed, “anti-Semitic in their effect if not in their intent,” we will be losing more ground in this uphill battle.

As such, SPME would welcome the opportunity to help students navigate through the matrix of the university governing bodies as we work together, faculty, community and students, to combat BDS more effectively and strategically.

Shlomo Dubnov is a professor of music at UCSD and an SPME board member. Asaf Romirowsky is the acting executive director for Scholars for Peace in the Middle East (SPME)

[Top of Page](#)

ON TOPIC

[Exposing Florida Atlantic University: Anti-Semitism and Anti-Israel Extremism:](#) Alan Bergstein, *You Tube*, Mar 7, 2013—

A university in Boca Raton, Florida tolerates the anti-Jewish and anti-Israel activities of a radical hate group.

[‘Israel Lobby’ Threatening Free Speech at Berkeley?:](#) Lee Kaplan, *Front Page News*, Mar. 29, 2013—The title of a recent panel discussion at the University of California, Berkeley was ominous: “SHHHH! Don’t Talk About Palestine: Chuck Hagel, Judith Butler, and the Israel Lobby’s Threat to Free Speech on Our Campus.”

[‘Book Robbery’ Hijacks History:](#) Asaf Romirowsky, *Ynet News*, Apr. 7, 2013—‘The Great Book Robbery’ (watch [here](#)), a documentary that recently screened on a number of US college campuses, is the latest attempt by anti-Israel groups to rewrite and recast the historical events of 1948.

[Pro-Gay and Anti-Israel? ‘Pinkwashing’ to the Rescue:](#) Cinnamon Stillwell and Reut R. Cohen, *Front Page News*, March 25, 2013—What’s a pro-gay, anti-Israel activist to do when faced with the fact that the Jewish state is the only nation in the Middle East in which not only is it illegal to discriminate against homosexuality, but where homosexuality is celebrated with an annual gay pride parade?

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