

As my last name Kestenbaum suggests, my family's origins are traced to Germany.

Indeed, my great-great grandfather, Rabbi Yosef Breuer, was the leading German Orthodox Rabbi and a respected figure within German society.

Rabbi Breuer's youngest daughter, my great-great Aunt, vividly recalls hiding under the bed while her father was arrested by the Nazis, and their historic Breuer Synagogue burned to the ground, on the night of Kristallnacht.

As one of the very last Jews to flee Nazi persecution in Germany, my family found home in the United States, where they were able to rebuild and sustain their Jewish identity.

To this day, the historic Breuer Shul stands tall in New York City, representing not only the indomitable spirit of the Jewish people but of what makes the United States of America such a beautiful, welcoming country.

My story of antisemitism, therefore, is deeply painful and it is deeply personal.

Members of this committee, I appear before you today with an urgent warning.

Kristallnacht did not begin with book burnings or broken windows.

Kristallnacht did not begin with destroyed synagogues nor expulsions.

Kristallnacht began with a pernicious ideology that swept across German society.

Kristallnacht began with the acceptance and normalization of Jew hatred.

Kristallnacht began with words.

Unfortunately, I have come to the heartbreaking conclusion that should these behaviors and actions not be challenged immediately, our country is headed down a truly dangerous path.

Members of this committee, if antisemitism were an infectious disease, Harvard University would have instituted mask mandates and social distancing decades ago.

I say these words out of two years of personal experiences with a racial ideology championed by Harvard that views Jews as an annoyance at best, pervasive bigotry, and a stunning lack of moral clarity by the institution. As such, the Congressional Committee on Education & The Workforce must think of the issue of antisemitism on college campuses in the same way they would of a national pandemic.

I'd like to walk you through three weeks in January to prove my point:

On Thursday January 4th, I woke up to dozens of fellow Harvard classmates posting on the social media app SideChat that Jews are both baby killers and pedophiles, lamenting the outsized role Jews play in media and politics, and arguing that “too many damn Jews” live in this country.

I immediately flagged this issue to the Harvard administration. To this date, no immediate action was taken.

On Sunday January 21st, the day before the Spring semester was to begin at Harvard, I walked through Harvard Yard to discover that every single poster calling attention to kidnapped Jewish civilians was vandalized by horrific antisemitism.

Some of the Jewish victims were compared to pedophile Jeffrey Epstein whereas others accused Jews of orchestrating 9/11.

In one particular instance, the vandals wrote “evidence needed, head still on” on a photo of ten-month-old Kfir Bibas, the youngest hostage taken, who remains separated from his family more than 140 days later.

I immediately flagged this issue to the Harvard administration. To this date, no immediate action has been taken. In fact, I even wrote to Harvard DEI, offering to miss my own classes to take down the posters.

On the morning of Thursday January 25th, I received an email from a Harvard employee asking me to debate him in a secluded underpass concerning whether Jews were behind the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

That night, that same Harvard employee posted a video to his social media waving a machete with a picture of my face and other prominent Jewish activists, declaring his intention to “fight” and “have a master plan that he won’t get into right now.”

For three days, I had private armed security outside my house. I had armed security follow me to Shabbat prayer services for my own protection.

While I immediately flagged this issue to the Harvard administration and to the police, this individual is *still employed by Harvard*.

On a Harvard student-run online forum, I was immediately removed after asking classmates to consider demanding Hamas release its Jewish hostages instead of an unconditional ceasefire.

On a different Harvard student-run online forum, after I had posted a similar question, students responded “we are taking a do not engage with Shabbos Kestenbaum approach.” over my “morally reprehensible views.”

On yet another Harvard student-run online forum, after I had pointed out that a featured speaker at Harvard called the October 7th massacre “about time” and a “glorious day,” a fellow student responded “I am still comfortable promoting this event.”

The bullying, intimidation, and ostracizing of Jewish students at Harvard is normalized.

People often ask me how Harvard has changed post-October 7th in relation to antisemitism.

I say there was no post-October 7th change, there was a change on the night of October 7th itself:

On the joyous Jewish holiday of Simchat Torah, our celebrations at Harvard Hillel were interrupted by rumors of a terrorist attack the likes of which the Jewish People have never experienced in modern history.

As an Orthodox Jew, I do not use, or even touch, electronics on the Sabbath or Jewish holidays.

Nevertheless, I was advised to break that religious obligation to locate my siblings and extended family who live in Israel.

While I was desperately trying to see whether they were alive or not, 34 student groups at Harvard, representing hundreds of students, jumped out of bed, some in their pajamas, to draft what they called an “emergency statement” blaming Jews for their own massacre, the largest one, I might add, since the Holocaust.

I know many of these students. I sit in class with them. I share study halls with them. They publicly praise Hamas, they side repeatedly with the Houthis, and believe Hezbollah to be a legitimate political resistance group.

To this day, Harvard has not condemned let alone disciplined, these 34 student groups.

But the antisemitism and Hamas sympathies do not rest solely on Harvard students.

It extends to, and is promoted by, Harvard faculty.

Just last week, close to 100 Harvard faculty and staff published a cartoon depicting a Jewish man, replete with the Star of David and the money symbol, choking an Arab and black man by their neck with a noose.

To this day, these faculty have not been disciplined in any way. They continue to teach and spread their poison with impunity. I pass them in the hallways and see their names featured prominently on lectures.

In fact, in three days' time, Harvard will proudly host antisemite Noura Erakat who participated on a panel with internationally designated terrorist and senior Hamas commander Ghazi Hamad who has repeatedly promised “a million more October 7ths.”

Tellingly, according to Hillel International, in the 1970s, Jews accounted for roughly 25% of Harvard's student population. In 2023, that number is estimated to be lower than 5%. Even during President Gay's historic inauguration ceremony, which centered around the causes of "courage" and "diversity," there was no kosher food.

In response to global pressure, this congressional committee and investigation, and the withdrawal of more than one billion dollars in donations, Harvard belatedly established an Antisemitism Advisory group to purportedly combat this hate at Harvard.

The Group was so remarkably ineffective that its most effective member, Rabbi David Wolpe, resigned.

One month later, the Group was disbanded.

Now, there is a new Antisemitism Task Force at Harvard.

This too is so remarkably ineffective that its most effective member and co-chair, Raffaella Sadun, recently resigned. The other co-chair, Derek Penslar, has claimed that antisemitism at Harvard is "exaggerated."

DEI, the root cause of so much of the antisemitism at Harvard, is playing a role on the Task Force as well. Harvard has just announced its Chief DEI Officer, Sherri Charleston, will be a critical advisor for the committee.

I have emailed both the Antisemitism Advisory Group and the Task Force more than 30 times. I have yet to receive a single response.

In fact, this week alone, we Jewish students were forced to hire private armed security for a concert in honor of Jewish students victimized by antisemitism after a group of Harvard students encouraged a protest of the event, shouting threatening slogans such as "globalize the intifada" and "resistance is justified."

The response from Harvard? Nothing.

I know of Jewish students at Harvard who do not wear their kippahs publicly anymore, have changed majors due to hostile anti-Israel environments, have been spat on for their religious identity, and more.

While I can provide countless more examples and heartwrenching testimony, it is best that I conclude as follows: I have seldom experienced such disdain for, and contempt of, a minority group, than the way in which Harvard treats its Jewish student population.

This is the reality of being a Jew at Harvard in 2024.

For if antisemitism is a disease, then certainly, Harvard University is the Wuhan wet market. The time for Congress to act is now.

KIDNAPPED



Kfir Bibas
10 months baby
Israeli-Argentinian

**Bring Them
Home NOW.**

#kidnappedfromisrael



SCAN TO
JOIN THE
GLOBAL
EFFORTS

KIDNAPPED





Harvard · 1m



I would like us to all reflect on how much power the Jewish population has over the media. It's genuinely terrifying. The conflict aside, I have learned so much about power, coercion and influence.



3





Harvard · 2h



sharing this comment before it's taken down...
and people say antisemitism on campus isn't
real 🤔

<

OP · 54m ↑
6
↓

I'm begging you all to recognize the "Jewish people are controlling everything" (and are thus the reason Gay resigned) narrative as an antisemitic conspiracy theory. It is a common white supremacist argument against Jewish people.

[Share](#) [Email](#) [Flag](#)

2 comments

#1 35m ↑
0
...

It's not a theory if it's mostly true

Reply

#2 30m ↑
3
...

jewish people aren't the reason gay resigned. conservatives taking advantage of reactionary zionism are. it's important not to conflate the two

Reply





Harvard · 15m

Seriously US just can't support
Palestine bc we got too many damn
jews in state supporting our economy



-4





1960

1961

1962

1963

1964

1965

1966

1967

1968

1969

1970

1971

AFRICAN PEOPLE HAVE A PROFOUND UNDERSTANDING OF APARTHEID AND OCCUPATION.

The historical roots of solidarity between Black liberation movements and Palestinian liberation began in the late 1960s. This period was marked by a heightened awareness among Black organizations in the United States.

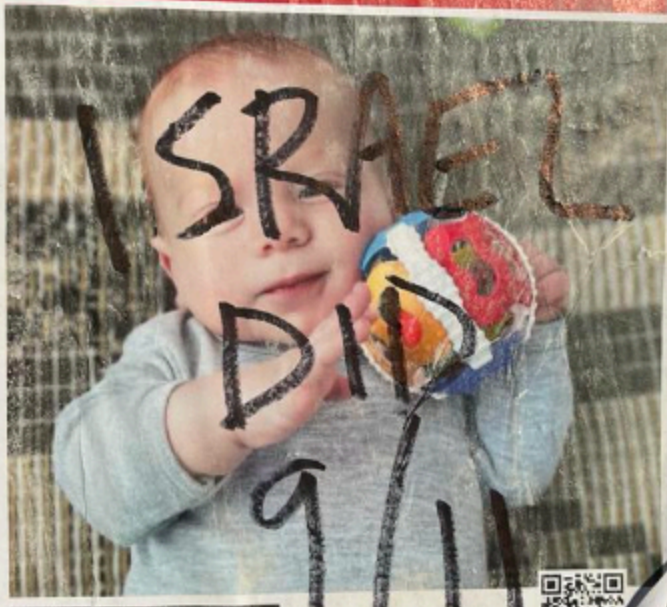
The STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE likened Zionism to an imperial project...

*...while the **BLACK PANTHER PARTY** aligned itself with the Palestinian resistance, framing both struggles as a unified front against racism, Zionism, and imperialism.*




@harvardpsc and @harvardafro

KIDNAPPED



Kfir Bibas
10 months baby
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**Bring Them
Home NOW.**

#KidnappedFromIsrael



SCAN
TO
SHARE

KIDNAPPED





Harvard · 2h



Do you guys not see the antisemitic tropes you're perpetuating? It's like y'all read Mein Kampf in expos

#2 ▶ #1

stfu pedo lover! all of you Zionists are the same. Killers and rapists of children!

1m Reply ...



1



25



70



Harvard · 3m



No antisemitism going on here. Nope definitely not.

OP ▶ #1

Make up your mind do Zionists bomb babies or are they pedophiles?

5m Reply ...



2



#1 ▶ OP

BOTH

Just now Reply ...



1





