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Written Testimony
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Committee on the Judiciary
Free Speech on College Campuses

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“I was alone in a world gone mad.”

These are the words my grandfather wrote the day in October 1942 after his father had been shot dead and the Jews in his small Polish town, including his entire family, were deported to a death camp. He was a teenager, alone in a labor camp, with a bleak future filled with unimaginable suffering.

I have thought about my grandfather's words often in the 32 days since October 7th, as I have watched what I can only describe as a world gone mad.

I have seen and heard things on and around Cornell's campus that just over a month ago I could not have imagined. Cornell Professor, Russell Rickford, publicly justified and celebrated barbaric acts of terror as “exhilarating” and “energizing,” describing the torture, rape, and murder of innocent women and children as “resistance”. I see classmates perpetuating age-old antisemitic tropes on social media. I walk across a campus defaced with anti-Israel signage and graffiti, seeing phrases such as “Ef Israel” and “Zionism equals genocide”. Anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism are inextricably linked – this is evidenced by the Jew hatred that consistently and openly accompanies attacks on Zionism.

On campus, I am now confronted daily with shouts to free Palestine “from the river to the sea.” This catchy chant is not about peace or sovereignty for the Palestinian people — it is a call for a Palestinian state extending from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, a territory that encompasses the **ENTIRE** State of Israel. It is a Jew-hating, genocidal mandate seeking to deny the Jewish right to self-determination in Israel. It is a call to exterminate all Jews, in accordance with Hamas' open and unequivocal goal.

This chant is not about Palestinian life – it is about Jewish death.

Imagine that you frequent Jewish events on campus. Imagine that you live in a Jewish sorority house. Then imagine scrolling on your phone one day, only to discover that a fellow student wants to “shoot up” the kosher dining hall and “gang rape all Jew pig women” on campus. That is what my peers and I experienced last week when reading the multiple online threats made by a fellow student instructing other Cornell students to assault Jews on campus – to “follow them home and slit their throats.” This was not just hate speech — it was a call to action and an immediate threat. This sentiment did not begin with that student. Professors and student organizations have been fueling Jew hatred and spreading it across campus with disregard, or potentially even with deliberate intent to incite.

And even after that student's arrest, professors have continued to teach blatant anti-Israel lessons in their classrooms. Students in the course “Race, Racism, and Public Policy”, reported that Professor Lindsey played a video in class claiming that Israel is committing the crime of

apartheid, in what students felt was an attempt to place blame for the terror attack on Israel. Students in the writing seminar, “True Stories,” taught by Professor Glaubman, reported that the Professor suggested “Palestine is a text book case of genocide” and sought to pressure students who had previously expressed sympathy for Israel, to change their views. These not-so-subtle examples of bullying and attempts at indoctrination have a tangible impact on the pervasive Jew hatred spreading through our campus.

My grandmother, along with many other of my family members and close friends, live in Israel. Why are they calling ME everyday to check in and see how I am doing – do I feel safe on campus? Is there enough security? Do other students know that I am Jewish? They live in an active war zone with rockets constantly fired in their direction, and yet, my safety on an American college campus is keeping them up at night.

Growing up with first-hand accounts of what my grandfather endured during the Holocaust, I could never comprehend how neighbors and friends stood by as Jews were rounded up to be killed. And how governments around the world turned a blind eye—Until now. Witnessing such unbridled and unapologetic anti-Semitism on college campuses is a testament to the impacts of permitting Jew hatred to fester and infect the mob mentality of impressionable students.

It is shocking that college campuses have devolved into echo chambers fostering animosity, aggression and bigotry, a shift that is painfully reminiscent of the vitriol and terror my grandfather endured in the 1930s. Antisemitism can no longer be hidden under the guise of Anti-Zionism. Disseminating lies about Israel is an effort to validate violence against Jews.

I am grateful for the supportive words from the Cornell administration, but action speaks louder than words. We require tangible measures including strict adherence to policies that forbid threatening or intimidating behavior towards any student, and ensure purveyors of violence are removed from campus. No student should ever live in fear for their safety, regardless of background or religion.

What is happening at Cornell and universities across the country is not about protecting expressions of free speech or free exchange of ideas. It is about enabling and even promoting intimidation and the threat of harm to Jewish students and supporters of Israel. It is imperative that decisive action be taken to ensure the collective safety of students.

Thank you for your time today.