

The Sabra Report

Raising Awareness and Encouraging Discussion About Israel

Anti-Semitism or Free Speech? College Students Cheer and Fear Trump Order

Myah Ward and Dan Levin, New York Times, December 15th 2019

Recap:

US President Donald Trump's executive order to classify Judaism as a race sparked debates amongst Jewish and pro-Palestinian groups.

The Context:

- ✧ Anti-Semitism will now be covered under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin. The directive also expands the definition of anti-Semitism to include certain anti-Israel sentiments. The order requires colleges and universities to treat movements like Boycott Divestments and Sanctions (BDS) as discriminatory or risk losing government funding. Muslim, Hindu and Sikh students are also protected under Title VI based on their shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics [1].
- ✧ The Republican Jewish Coalition called Trump "the most Pro-Israel President in American history" and said the "order will have a real, positive impact in protecting Jewish college students from anti-Semitism [2]." BDS supporters said equating anti-Semitism to anti-Zionism stifles free speech by "resorting to repression and smears to stop ethical boycott initiatives [3]." Liberal Jewish groups, including J Street, expressed their discomfort whenever "[Jewish] fate is tied up in the fate of Israel."
- ✧ The UK's new Conservative government will pass a law making it illegal for public bodies to engage with BDS. The move comes shortly after Britain's Labour party was dealt a historic defeat in last week's election due in part to its ambivalence to anti-Semitism in its ranks [4].

Conversation Points:

- ✧ Is Israel unfairly targeted on campus?
- ✧ Should Judaism and Israel be intertwined?
- ✧ Can labeling Jews as a racial group have negative consequences?
- ✧ Is anti-Zionism anti-Semitism?

After Ethiopian-Israeli Kindergarten Scandal, Ministry Vows End to Segregation

Sam Sokol, Times of Israel, December 15th 2019

Recap:

Israel's Education Ministry implemented new regulations to prevent racial discrimination in the classroom.

The Context:

- ✧ The Ministry's decision follows widespread outrage over a kindergarten in Kiryat Gat that relegated children of Ethiopian origin to a secondary room through a separate entrance. The kindergarten has since been shuttered [5].
- ✧ The ministry will close any "non-heterogeneous" kindergartens in the next academic year to prevent further discrimination. Education Ministry Director General Shmuel Abuav seeks to "prevent cases like Kiryat Gat in advance" and push a policy of "providing equal opportunity for all students."
- ✧ More than 135,000 Jews of Ethiopian descent live in Israel. Those who immigrated arrived in two main waves, in 1984 and 1991, but many have struggled to integrate into Israeli society. Community leaders say they are discriminated against when it comes to housing, education, and employment. This summer, Israelis of Ethiopian descent took the streets to protest police violence after an off-duty police officer killed 19-year-old Solomon Tekah in Haifa.

Conversation Points:

- ✧ Why have Ethiopian Jews failed to fully integrate?
 - ✧ Is the directive enough to reverse the Ethiopian feeling that they are second-class citizens in their own country?
 - ✧ Should Israel accept Jews of all ethnicities without a concrete plan for integration?
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Immigration to Israel Surging

Times of Israel, December 16th 2019

Recap:

Annual immigration to Israel rose 20% to 27,300. A portion of the increase is attributed to a 2017 law that grants an Israeli passport to anyone eligible for Israeli citizenship, without a requirement to reside in the country.

The Context:

- ✧ 10,500 people immigrated from Russia, 6,400 from Ukraine, 2,400 from the United States and 2,400 from France. More than 3 million people have immigrated to Israel since its establishment with 44% arriving after 1990. In the same 1990-2017 period, 574,000 Israelis emigrated with only half returning [6]. 4.5 Israelis with academic degrees emigrated from Israel for every one that returned.
 - ✧ 85% of immigrants reported satisfaction with their lives in Israel, considerably lower than the 92% reported among other Israeli Jews.
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Conversation Points:

- ✧ Why might immigrants report lesser satisfaction with their lives in Israel in contrast with those born in the country?
 - ✧ Will a brain drain deprive Israel fuel to grow its economy?
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Notes:

1. [Trump aims to crack down on anti-Semitism on college campuses using civil rights protections](#), Veronica Stracqualursi, Paul LeBlanc and Betsy Klein, CNN, December 10th 2019
2. [Trump Signs Order Against Anti-Semitism At Colleges, Worrying Free Speech Advocates](#), NPR, December 11th 2019
3. ['Deeply damaging': Anger as Boris Johnson plans 'anti-BDS' law](#), Anealla Safdar, Al Jazeera, December 17th 2019
4. [Boris Johnson to pass anti-BDS law, official says](#), LAHAV HARKOV, Jerusalem Post, DECEMBER 16th 2019
5. [Kiryat Gat kindergarten shuttered after allegedly segregating Ethiopian children](#), Times of Israel, September 22nd 2019
6. [Immigration to Israel on way to passing last year's numbers](#), Jerusalem Post, DECEMBER 17th 2019
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The Sabra Report is a newsletter intended to stimulate conversation about Israel by recapping major events & providing context. Our conversation points are meant to encourage discussion amongst friends and family.

The Sabra Report is written by Irving Safdieh.

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