

SPECIAL FOCUS ON ANTISEMITISM

By Ken Greenberg, National Executive Director

JWV is in a unique position to have a special focus on antisemitism. JWV opposes all forms of discrimination and bigotry but is especially outspoken on antisemitism. During 2023, JWV leadership participated in numerous roundtables and called out individuals for hate speech and antisemitism. JWV will continue to be a strong voice to combat antisemitism wherever and whenever it occurs.

As the only Jewish VSO, we issued statements condemning antisemitic events and speeches at the University of Pennsylvania "Palestine Writes Literature Festival," the City University of New York law school graduation, the Goyim Defense League hate flyers on Long Island and remarks by a Member of Congress in Chicago. As instances of antisemitism across the country increase, JWV asks all Americans to be vigilant, learn, and educate our fellow citizens. JWV's full statements are provided in this article.

JWV Calls on University of Pennsylvania Leadership to Prevent Hate Speech on Campus September 20th, 2023

The Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America (JWV) remains deeply concerned that the Palestine Writes Literature Festival will be held on campus September 22-24, 2023. The festival coincides with the Jewish High Holiday of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, and takes place next to the location that Jewish students will be holding high holiday worship services. JWV National Commander retired US Army Colonel Barry Lischinsky stated, "University leadership should be sensitive to the needs of Jewish students and faculty and not provide a venue or platform for hate speech of any kind on campus." Lischinsky made clear, "The University must be responsive to its students and increase security around Jewish activities and move the festival to a different location, preferably off campus grounds."

JWV urges alumni and others to write University President M. Elizabeth Magill to disapprove of the "Palestine Writes Literature Festival" and to prevent the University from providing space to those that promote hate speech, bigotry, and antisemitic remarks and events on campus. Lischinsky reiterated that "JWV will continue to stand against hatred, bigotry, and combating antisemitism wherever and whenever it occurs."

Background

Most "Palestine Writes Literature Festival" speakers have little to do with celebrating Palestinian literature or promoting the culture of Palestinian writers and artists. Guest speakers have published antisemitic statements in the past which conflict with the University of Pennsylvania's antisemitism policy. Speakers have previously given anti-Jewish speeches which are clearly "hate speech" and are again in violation of the university policy and the U.S. Constitution related to freedom of speech.

Members and patrons of the Jewish War Veterans and others have fought, and many have given the ultimate sacrifice, to preserve the rights covered by the U.S. Constitution. While there is nothing illegal about the University of Pennsylvania event itself, the event speakers' anti-Jewish hate remarks should not be allowed on campus.

Antisemitism Curricula in California Schools

JWV signs and stands in support of the coalition letter the AMCHA Initiative wrote to the California Legislative Jewish Caucus asking for their help in preventing the implementation of widespread antisemitic curricula in California high schools.

JWV Denounces Antisemitic Remarks by Representative Jayapal

July 17th, 2023

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV) expressed outrage at the remarks of U.S. Representative Pramila Jayapal (WA) given on Saturday in Chicago stating that Israel is a "racist state."

JWV National Commander Colonel Nelson L. Mellitz, USAF (Retired) denounced the comments of Congresswoman Jayapal (WA) as "insensitive, hurtful, and just wrong." As antisemitism is on the rise, remarks like hers only fuel the fires of hate and bigotry. "JWV continues to stand in support of Israel as we have since its rebirth as well as vehemently oppose antisemitism, wherever and whenever it occurs, as we have since our founding in 1896," said Mellitz.

JWV Calls on New York Law Enforcement to fully Prosecute Individuals Responsible for Goyim Defense League Hate Flyers

June 19th, 2023

"Flyers recently distributed by the Goyim Defense League in Nassau County, New York are extremely antisemitic and filled with hate. They are despicable and threats to any Americans must be dealt with swiftly," said Colonel Nelson L. Mellitz, USAF, retired, National Commander of the Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV).

The flyer singles out current and former Jewish Members of Congress and contains a weapon in the upper left corner with a Star of David placed on the foreheads of elected officials from several states. Mellitz "implores New York law enforcement officials to fully prosecute the individuals responsible for the flyers." Law enforcement confirmed the flyer was found at a Jewish house of worship and at several residences in the Plainview, NY area.

JWV Condemns CUNY Law School Speaker's Comments and Calls on CUNY Leadership to Denounce Antisemitic Remarks

June 4th, 2023

Jewish War Veterans National Commander Colonel Nelson L. Mellitz, USAF, Retired, expressed outrage at the hate filled graduation speech delivered at the City University of New York (CUNY) Law School graduation by Fatima Mohammed.

Jewish men and women have served in the U.S. military in greater numbers than their percentage of the total population, since the founding of our great republic to preserve the right of free speech. The Fatima Mohammed anti-Jewish hateful graduation speech is a direct attack against what we have fought so hard to preserve for almost 250 years. "Her comments are extreme, inflammatory, filled with anger and have no place in any setting in the United States," said Mellitz.

JWV calls on CUNY and the law school leadership to take immediate action to denounce her antisemitic remarks and assure that students are not provided a forum to promote hatred and antisemitism in the future.

Coalition Building

JWV is strengthening our efforts by partnering with organizations like Combating Antisemitism Movement (CAM), the Foundation to Combat Antisemitism (FCAS). They are more commonly known as Stand Up to Jewish

STAND UP TO JEWISH HATE

standuptojewishhate.org/

Hate or #BlueSquare. We have carried our message to Congress and asked Members to join us in combating antisemitism targeted at veterans and military servicemembers. We partnered with CAM and six Jewish Community Organizations for a forum with ten Members of Congress on Capitol Hill. We are working with FCAS to expand outreach to include Jewish Federations and JCCs across the county. We connected with StandWithUs, to take our efforts to combat antisemitism on college campuses. JWV is a resource in helping to educate Americans. Education is the key to reducing antisemitic actions and incidents in America and around the world.

National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism

In a High Holidays call with American Jewish leaders before Rosh Hashanah, President Joe Biden reaffirmed his commitment to "condemn and combat antisemitism at every turn" and said his administration had "started aggressively implementing" the National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism it unveiled in May of this year. VA's representative is Under Secretary for Benefits Joshua Jacobs and he continues to consult with JWV leadership for issues related to the veteran and military community.

At our Convention in Jacksonville, Karen Barall Associate VP of the Jewish Federation of North America briefed JWV on the National Strategy. She highlighted four pillars of the document that focused on:

1. Increase awareness and understanding of antisemitism, including its threat to America, and broaden appreciation of Jewish American heritage.
2. Improve safety and security for Jewish communities.
3. Reverse the normalization of antisemitism and counter antisemitic discrimination.
4. Build cross-community solidarity and collective action to counter hate.

Chet Edwards Speaks Out on Jacksonville Shooting

"JWV is uniquely powerful and an important voice in the fight against antisemitism in our country. Thank you for being that voice. America is a better country today because of your voice and we will be a better country tomorrow. As we are here in Jacksonville, I would be remiss not to say what we all know. What happened here three days ago was an unspeakable, unconscionable, tragic assault, not just on African Americans in Jacksonville. It was an assault upon our country, the very soul of our country, very heart of our country. I think it's also important for all Americans to understand that that young terrorist, that the killer had etched Nazi swastikas on his A-15. I think that is a message that needs to go out across this country. Let me also add that as a lifelong Methodist and the son-in-law of a Baptist minister, I feel a responsibility to be a partner with you in the fight against bigotry and antisemitism. All Americans of all faiths and backgrounds must join in the fight against antisemitism because antisemitism diminishes our country and what you were willing to give your life for. So, when I leave this convention today, I will double my effort to be a voice with you against antisemitism." August 29th, 2023

SPECIAL FOCUS ON ANTISEMITISM

Updated December 2023

By Ken Greenberg, National Executive Director

JWV is in a unique position to have a special focus on antisemitism. JWV opposes all forms of discrimination and bigotry but is especially outspoken on antisemitism. During 2023, JWV leadership participated in numerous roundtables and called out individuals for hate speech and antisemitism. JWV will continue to be a strong voice to combat antisemitism wherever and whenever it occurs.

As the only Jewish VSO, we've previously issued statements condemning antisemitic events and speeches. As instances of antisemitism across the country increase, especially following the terrorist attacks of October 7, JWV has continued to remain dedicated to the cause issuing a statement to Amazon regarding antisemitic product sales. JWV continues to remain active in the fight against antisemitism, monitoring and reporting on instances of antisemitism across the nation. These instances and JWV updates regarding them can be found in the information below. JWV direct action is marked blue and awareness is marked yellow.

JWV asks all Americans to be vigilant, learn, and educate our fellow citizens.

House Congressional Hearing on Campus Antisemitism

On December 5, 2023, the House Committee on Education & the Workforce heard from three university presidents regarding the rise in antisemitism on college campuses. JWV has continued to monitor the widespread instances of antisemitism on college campuses. Details related to actions of University of Pennsylvania, Harvard and MIT are below.

University of Pennsylvania's President and Chair Resign

In September 2023, JWV wrote to University of Pennsylvania's President Elizabeth Magill and Chair Scott Bok regarding Palestine Writes Literature Festival. Following the Congressional Hearing, University of Pennsylvania's President, Elizabeth Magill, and Chair, Scott Bok, submitted their resignation on Saturday, December 9, 2023. Julie Platt, the chair of the Jewish Federations of North America, was named the interim chair of the board of trustees of the University of Pennsylvania.

Harvard President Retains Support Following the Congressional Hearing

More than 500 Harvard faculty members supported University President Claudine Gay in a letter to the school's board Sunday, following intense blowback from a congressional hearing about the rise in antisemitism on campus, where Gay failed to clearly state whether calls for the genocide of Jews violated the Ivy League school's rules.

New York Governor Releases Letter Condemning Antisemitism

JWV commends Governor Kathleen Hochul of New York on her strong statement on antisemitism. JWV urges it members to contact their Governors and ask them to make similar statements against antisemitism in their states and educational institutions.

JWV, Auxiliary, and Museum Leaders Call on Amazon to Remove Items Expressing Hatred

November 6th, 2023

Dear Mr. Jassy:

The Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America, (JWV), National Ladies Auxiliary (JWVA) and the National Museum of American Jewish Military History (NMAJMH) write to express concern on the critical issue of terrorism, hatred, bigotry, and antisemitism. Now more than ever, Americans must demonstrate solidarity and unity in standing against all kinds of expression of hatred. Officials from government, corporations, universities, nonprofits, and individual citizens are leading the effort.

We call on Amazon and its leadership to recognize a product that is offensive to many in your customer base and in the world. JWV, JWVA, and NMAJMH urge Amazon to stop selling and distributing offensive merchandise, including apparel, stickers and items on your website and commercial platform. The merchandise contains the phrase "From the River to the Sea Palestine Will be Free" and its meaning calls for the destruction of Israel and annihilation and elimination of the Jewish people. The attached is a sample from your website.

While we recognize the First Amendment provides for freedom of speech, terrorism and hatred are never justified. The slogan appeals to hatred, incites violence and bigotry and is deeply offensive across the global community. This is especially true since the terrorist attacks by Hamas on October 7, showing atrocities of innocents being beheaded, whole families randomly being executed, women being raped, and people being kidnapped and held hostage. All entities and individuals have a responsibility to prevent and not facilitate hatred and violence.

JWV, JWVA and NMAJMH have a long and extensive history of combatting antisemitism, hatred, and bigotry, advocating for America's veterans, service members, their families, caregivers, and survivors since 1896 and supporting Israel. We urge Amazon to join us in combatting hatred and bigotry, advocating for veterans and service members, and supporting Israel, the lone democracy in the region.

Thank you for your attention and consideration. We look forward to working and partnering with you in the future.

Questions should be directed to our National Executive Director, Mr. Ken Greenberg by email at (kgreenberg@jwv.org) or 202 265 6280, extension 406.

Sincerely,

COL Barry Lischinsky, USA, Ret.

JWV National Commander (2023-2024)

Shirley Zak

JWVA National President

Elaine Bernstein

NMAJMH President

Attached image of sample product shirt



Veterans Affairs Lawyer Under Fire for Mocking Israelis

November 2023

JWV was alerted of behavior of a VA employee in the Office of General Counsel that was posted on Instagram and have been circulated in the Jewish press.

Shakeba Morrad, the employee in question, serves as an appellate attorney at Office of General Counsel for U.S. On November 12, 2023, Morrad posted a video on Instagram where she can be seen mocking Israelis pleading for the return of their citizens being held hostage by Hamas. The video was later deleted.

A Veterans Affairs spokesman confirmed to the *Free Beacon* that the agency is investigating the incident and that it does not tolerate antisemitism.

"We are aware of this incident, are investigating the matter, and will take any appropriate action," said Terrence Hayes, the department's press secretary. "There is no place at VA for antisemitism or any expression of bigotry or hatred."

JWV Suspends Use of X (Formerly Twitter) Following Antisemitic Remarks

November 2023

JWV recently suspended use of the social media platform, X, formerly known as *Twitter*. This comes after X's owner, Elon Musk, gained notoriety for public antisemitic comments.

On November 15, 2023, Musk agreed with a tweet that said, "Jewish communities have been pushing the exact kind of dialectical hatred against whites that they claim to want people to stop using against them" stating that the user was telling the "actual truth." His response to this antisemitic tweet continues his ongoing support for the Great Replacement conspiracy theory, as well as providing implicit support for Nazism.

Coalition Building

JWV is strengthening our efforts by partnering with organizations like the Jewish National Fund, Anti-Defamation League, Hadassah, Hillel, as well local JCCs and Synagogues by reaching out and expanding our message of combating antisemitism, sharing the legacy of Jews in military service, and telling the stories of 18 Jewish Medal of Honor recipients.

We also partner with VA and DOD officials on Holocaust Remembrance Day and Jewish American Heritage Month programs to educate their employees and constituencies and conduct programs at our Museum highlighting the service of Jewish veterans and service members.

JWV is a resource in helping to educate Americans. Education is the key to reducing antisemitic actions and incidents in America and around the world and in preserving the legacy of Jews in the military.