

University Presidents Call for Peace and Thus Perpetuate War

*by Alan G. Futerman and
Walter E. Block*

Many university presidents are now calling for “peace” in the Middle East. For example, according to Peter Kilpatrick, president of The Catholic University of America in Washington, his university “continues to pray” for victims and “for all those impacted by the violence, for an end to hostilities, and for a lasting peace.” In the view of Fordham University president Tania Tetlow, members of her campus should now “come together to pray hard for peace.” La Salle University president Daniel J. Allen announced to his campus community that “we will gather to pray for peace.” According to Jonathan Peri, president of Manor College, “We will keep making our difference in the world by praying for peace, sharing messages of peace, acting to thwart evil, and educating for peace.” Neville G. Pinto, President of the University of Cincinnati has announced that he has “join(ed) the

call for peace in the region.” Peter Salovey, President of Yale University “hope[s] for peace” and challenges his community to “work for peace.” University of Connecticut President Radenka Maric has been “advocating tirelessly for global peace.” This of course is only the merest tip of the iceberg.

Student A punches student B in the nose. He then kicks him in another part of the body. Whereupon the president of the university at which they are both enrolled immediately calls for “peace” between them, but for some reason or other is either unwilling or unable to punish A in any manner, shape or form. To add insult to injury, this is by no means the first time that A has bullied B in this manner. As it happens, A does this at least a few times every semester. On each occasion, the university president virtue signals and calls for “peace” between the two of them. As per usual,

he never punishes A for his depredations.

What are we to think of such a college president? However we assess him, “justice” would by no means comprise any part of our evaluation of him, not even to any small extent. Rather, we would say he is *biased* on behalf of A. This campus leader would be protecting A against receiving his just deserts. B is perfectly willing to return A’s punches so as to achieve symmetry, but he is a good citizen of the institution of higher learning and abides by the president’s carefully thought-out wishes. The result? A’s attacks not only do not stop, but their rate and severity increases.

Hamas has recently punched Israel in the nose. This terrorist organization has also kicked that nation worse than at any other time in the last eighty years. Other such organizations can fully be relied upon to emulate this Gaza-based association if “peace” breaks out and Israel ceases and desists from dealing out any war-like violence. For example, Hezbollah. Each and every “semester” these groups send a few rockets over in the direction of the only civilized country in the Middle East and murder a few innocent civilians. Every half or full decade they can be comfortably relied upon to more seriously injure citizens of this country. But none have been as deadly as what occurred on October 7, 2023, a day of infamy. Hamas has indeed surpassed the degree of devastation they have ever previously imposed upon the only Jewish state on the planet.

Whereupon the presidents of many universities (and many other leaders of our society too) have called for “peace” on all sides. Either these people are *incredibly* naïve or they are strongly biased against the Jewish nation. This should be clear to even people with the meanest intelligence. Nor do these peacenik university presidents have the courage of their convictions. They are not up front about their views at all. They do not declare that Hamas is in the right, Israel in the wrong. Indeed, they *sometimes* even strongly and properly castigate Hamas for engaging in savage terrorism. Rather, they attempt to appear *even-handed*. They hide behind their false claims on behalf of “peace now.”

Our view on this matter is starkly different. We side with William Lloyd Garrison who said in a different context: «I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation. . . . I am in earnest — I will not equivocate — I will not excuse — I will not retreat a single inch — and I will be heard.” Do not expect restraint or equivocation from us. Hamas is composed of vicious savages; the IDF is on the side of righteousness. Calling for “peace” when the Israeli army is demonstrating to Hamas the error of its ways is to support the latter against the former. It is not at all evenhanded as these university presidents pretend it to be.

What should be the proper call by university presidents instead? That, since they want peace, Hamas must end its aggression. Since they (as any decent human being would) do not want to see

innocents die, Hamas must disarm. Given their humanitarian considerations, these college presidents should demand Hamas release Israeli hostages. In sum, they should call for Hamas to unconditionally surrender. Why are they (nor almost anyone for that matter) not asking Hamas for such things? To ask this question is to answer it. Only the IDF, and not pronouncements charged with moral relativism, can make it happen. And so, it will.

Alan G. Futerman and Walter E. Block are authors of *The Classical Liberal Case for Israel, with commentary by Benjamin Netanyahu* (Springer, 2021). Block last appeared in AQ with “DEI in Sports” (Spring 2023).
