

Anti-Israel Controversy in Newton, Massachusetts exposes Boston Jewish Community Divide



Newton, Massachusetts Mayor Setti Warren faces Dr. Charles Jacobs

of Americans for Peace and Tolerance,

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Source: Katherine Taylor, Boston Globe

Last weekend, we posted on Facebook the background of controversial anti-Semitic vandalism in the Boston suburb of Newton, Massachusetts. The topic at the core of a heated public meeting convened by Mayor Setti Warren. A video produced by the team at Americans for Peace & Tolerance (APT) provided background on the rancorous public meeting in Newton. The FB post of the APT video garnered over 60 shares from FB pages across the US, Europe and Israel. It provided documented evidence of the use of Saudi and UAE funded anti-Semitic texts and Arab World Studies notebook laced with pro-Palestinian propaganda materials and maps. We noted that APT had been in the forefront of uncovering the use of these materials by the Newton public schools since discovery in 2011. They contended their removal has yet to be independently confirmed. [Watch](#) it here:

A second FB post contained a *Wicked Local* Newton [report](#) noted the acrimony at the Newton public meeting:

Emotions were running high at a community discussion organized by Mayor Setti Warren Thursday night in response to several incidents of anti-Semitism and racism in the schools, with some in the overflowing audience apparently frustrated with the city's response to the incidents as well as with the event's tone.

A panel of speakers, including the mayor, a civil rights law expert, a child psychiatrist, teachers and students, spoke of the need for dialogue around discrimination in Newton, addressing issues of racism, anti-Semitism, homophobia and discrimination against people with disabilities.

But some Jewish residents, including many with direct familial or personal ties to the Holocaust, wished the forum was more focused on recognizing and denouncing the anti-Semitic graffiti in particular. There was also a group of activists upset about "anti-Israel" teaching materials they feel contributed to the anti-Semitic incidents.

"The idea that we're supposed to have a dialogue with people who put swastikas up after the Holocaust is absurd," said resident Steven Katz, a professor of Jewish Holocaust Studies at Boston University. "And this evening is not supposed to be about liberal values. It's supposed to be about anti-Semitism."

Tina Glik, a resident and parent, said she was concerned that "as clearly as the message was written, 'Burn the Jews,' we came here to listen to: let's be nice, let's talk about racism, let's talk about discrimination against gay people, let's talk about anything else but anti-Semitism."

Warren reiterated that he took any instances of anti-Semitism "very seriously," calling anti-Semitic graffiti

found at F. A. Day Middle School “despicable” and “horrible.” He pledged that all potential hate crimes would be investigated, with the perpetrators punished. Anti-Semitic graffiti was also discovered at Newton North High School multiple times during the past several months.

The Boston Globe initial report of the acrimonious meeting alleged that the protesters at the public meeting had ‘disrespected’ an articulate African American woman who drew attention to her son’s isolation at the Newton High school as evidence of racism, “[Activists disrupt Newton forum on prejudice:](#)”

The group of activists was led by Newton resident Charles Jacobs, who has had