

Hillel Rabbi Praises Drexel U Honorary Degree for Anti-Israel, Anti-America Noam Chomsky



Drexel U. Hillel Rabbi Isabel de Koninck (Left), with Noam Chomsky (center) and Drexel President John A. Fry (2nd from Right)

Source: Facebook screen shot

My colleague, Lori Lowenthal Marcus, founder of *Z Street* and national correspondent for *The Jewish Press*, demonstrates in this [article](#) why progressive rabbis at college Hillel chapters are leading this generation of Jewish college students, astray. Witness the honorary degree given to Noam Chomsky at the June 12, 2015 commencement at Drexel University in Philadelphia. Drexel handed out 14 honorary degrees, including Chomsky. He was one of several honorees who spoke at a number of campus ceremonies. According to the Drexel [announcement](#) Chomsky received his honorary degree as “professor emeritus at MIT, linguist, philosopher, cognitive scientist, logician and political commentator.” The Drexel Hillel executive director and campus rabbi, Rabbi [Isabel de Koninck](#), posted on her Facebook page about being in the presence of Chomsky. de Koninck exclaimed: “That’s me with Chomsky and President Fry!” A former Drexel Hillel student cited by Marcus said:

A representative of the Jewish community should probably not be in a photo op with him. It is a bit disturbing that a figurehead of the Jewish community would allow herself

to be next to him. I wouldn't be surprised if some students felt alienated and more hesitant to be involved in the organization after seeing such a photo.

de Koninck is an alumna of Brandies U, received her ordination from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Philadelphia, was a Wexner Fellow and is a board member of the Reconstruction Rabbinical Association.

Chomsky originally hailed from a Philadelphia Jewish family, where his father was a noted Hebrew linguist and Hebrew school administrator; his mother came from an avowed leftist anarchist background. Chomsky was fortunate to have been educated at the University of Pennsylvania where he received in rapid order over the period from 1944 to 1950 a BA, MA and PhD before settling down as a cognitive linguist at MIT. He is a linguist who adhered to an environmental / behavioral model of how speech developed and disputes the view that speech was genetically determined. Despite being the author of 100 books, many of them anti-war, anti-American, anti-Israel and socialist/anarchist tracts. *The New York Times Magazine* did a profile on him that revealed his biggest problem at the time was estate planning. He had made a fortune from sales of his books published by the progressive London-based Pluto Press.

Chomsky came to the fore in 1967 at the peak of the Vietnam anti-war movement as an advocate of the New Left, from which he made a career giving college lectures and receives honoraria.

Marcus notes some of Chomsky's extreme views.

On Israel:

He has called the Jewish State such a consistent and extreme violator of human rights "that you hardly have to argue about it." For that reason, he claims, U.S. military aid to Israel is in direct violation of U.S. Law. He also contends that peace proposals made by Hamas have been more

“forthcoming” and sound than any proposed by Israel.

Although he is distressed that the BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel) Movement has not yet been successful, he is very supportive of it.

On America's foreign wars and policies:

Chomsky also denied there was proof of Osama bin Laden's involvement in the 9/11 attacks, and said the U.S. attack on bin Laden's compound in Pakistan would justify a retaliation scenario in which “Iraqi commandos landed at George W. Bush's compound, assassinated him, and dumped his body in the Atlantic.”

Also, according to Chomsky, the United States is not a democracy; it is a “plutocracy” in which most citizens are disenfranchised.

12 Years ago, on a rainy night in November 2003 in New Britain, Connecticut, I witnessed the award of a \$50,000 honorarium presented to Chomsky then President of Central Connecticut State University, who subsequently resigned in March 2004 over charges of plagiarism and fiscal misappropriations. I was there in the presence of the Hillel director and students from the nearby University of Hartford. Also present was a fellow Army Intelligence reserve officer and high school history faculty member, Richard Bruneau. At the time CCSU was notoriously “occupied” by pro-Palestinian and anti-Iraq war activists, including a local Chomsky acolyte, distinguished university professor emeritus [Norton Mezvinsky](#).

We witnessed a succession of speakers queuing up at a microphone excoriating the US for the “unlawful” invasion of Iraq, and Israel as a colonial power occupying Palestinian lands. This despite the Jewish nation defending its citizens in the midst of a bloody Intifada. I recall remarking to Bruneau at this convocation at CCSU it reminded me of the

images of Hitler's Nuremberg rallies. Except that those participating in the adulation for Chomsky were community pro-Palestinian anti-Israel and anti-War leftists supported by CCSU faculty and its President. The sense of that occasion was caught in Bruneau's report on the Chomsky 'honor' in a *Frontpage magazine* article, "[College Pres Cheers Chomsky](#)":

On Tuesday night at Central Connecticut State University, a capacity crowd filled Welte Auditorium to honor Noam Chomsky, touted as "one of the world's most distinguished scholars" and a "noted foreign policy critic." A standing ovation and resounding applause greeted Chomsky as CCSU President Richard Judd deemed his appearance a "special night" for venerating "one of the greatest intellectuals" of the last two centuries.

I attended wondering why taxpayers should subsidize reverential treatment for a man who has provided sustenance for Holocaust deniers and who blames America for virtually every international calamity of the past 100 years. Moreover, why pay homage to an anti-American viper who has characterized the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks as less vile than American air strikes?

However, I left thinking that maybe Chomsky should have his own television show. The exposure would destroy his credibility, and we could bury his reputation right along with the other enemies of civilization like Mao Zedong, Pol Pot and Fidel Castro, whom he has endorsed.

Fast forward to June 2015 and the Drexel University's honorary doctorate bestowed on Chomsky and the problem of misguided Hillel leadership. You may recall the Swarthmore 'free Hillel' episode that we posted in December 2013, "[Defining Moment: Hillel International Confronts Swarthmore College Chapter on Zionism](#)". Swarthmore College is a member of the Hillel of Greater Philadelphia. The kerfuffle concerned the challenge by the college chapter to the standards imposed by

Hillel International CEO Eric Fingerhut. We wrote:

The confrontation between the Hillel Chapter at elite Swarthmore College near Philadelphia and Fingerhut over the chapter's so-called Open Hillel policy of presenting speakers delegitimizing Israel marks a new and potentially important development for this Jewish campus organization.

We concluded:

Given our exposure to problems on US campuses over a decade, we applaud what Fingerhut at Hillel International is doing. We presume that he has the backing of the principal funder of Hillel International programs, the [Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation](#) of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Let us hope Fingerhut's arrival as President of Hillel International isn't too late to reign in anti-Zionist efforts like the Swarthmore Open Hillel initiative on many US college campuses.

With the Drexel Chomsky honor, it would appear that more 'missionary work' is required by both Fingerhut and the Hillel of Greater Philadelphia to combat demonization of Israel by the Jewish campus group chapters across America. The example of this growing problem with Hillel is chronicled in our series of articles on the anti-Zionist environment at UC Irvine. See in our June 2015 edition: "[How One Southern California Jewish Federation Undermines Student Zionism at a State University.](#)"