

Professor Juan Cole attacks Elise Stefanik



by Gary Fouse

It should come as no surprise that University of Michigan comedian Juan Cole is attacking Representative Elise Stefanik (R-NY) after she effectively grilled three university presidents and exposed their lack of concern or action for the problem of anti-Semitism on their campuses. Most shockingly, they told Stefanik that calls for genocide against Jews only violated university values depending on the “context”. The president of the University of Pennsylvania has now resigned while Harvard has decided to keep their president in place, and there is no word from MIT, whose president also testified before the House committee.

As for Cole, whose main purpose in life is to help bring about the destruction of Israel, he takes exception to Stefanik’s grilling of the three academics. To discredit her, he charges

her with believing in the “Great Replacement Theory”, based on very tenuous evidence. He similarly accuses Stefanik of being a hypocrite. Why? Because even though she is Catholic, she does not support the Pope’s condemnation of Israel’s military campaign in Gaza after the atrocities by Hamas on October 7- which Cole doesn’t even mention. (He is not well-informed, apparently.)

He further blasts Stefanik because she apparently is not on the record as having condemned former President Trump’s awkward comments after the Charlottesville incident.

[Here](#) is the latest from Cole’s blog, curiously entitled, “Informed Comment”.

“Stefanik implicitly characterized campus protests against the Israeli total war on Gaza and its reckless disregard for civilian life as a form of antisemitism, indeed as a call for genocide. Apparently the logic is that if Palestinians get their basic civil rights, then an Israeli ethnostate becomes difficult to maintain, and if Israel has to be a pluralist state rather than retaining solely sovereignty for Jews, that outbreak of equal rights equates to a genocide.”

Cole is being disingenuous here. The pro-Palestinian protests on campuses and in the streets have always been anti-Semitic, it’s just that now, there is less effort to hide it. Count the number of anti-Jewish incidents since October 7. The phrase, “from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,” is not a call for a pluralistic nation with equal rights for all. It is a call for Israel’s destruction from the (Jordan) River to the (Mediterranean) Sea, which are the eastern and western borders of Israel respectively. An *intifada*, which is against being called for is not just an “uprising”. The previous *intifadas* have included deadly terrorist attacks against Jews in Israel. What is being called for in the above two chants are for the destruction of Israel and the establishment of a new Palestine. Israeli Jews can remain at

their own risk. Should Israel be defeated, October 7 gives us a lesson in what would happen to Jews. Cole must know all this if he is truly “informed”. It doesn’t take a professor to figure this out.

“It is the same logic white nationalists use to argue that rights for African Americans equates to genocide against white people. That Stefanik is deploying Klan logic is no accident – see below.”

“Stefanik is supposedly a Roman Catholic. Here is what the head of her church [said](#) about brutalizing Israeli tactics in Gaza: “This is what wars do. But here, we have gone beyond wars. This is not war. This is terrorism.”

I guess this is another form of what academics call “intersectionality”, which is all the rage these days, to link Israel with every problem in the world. So now are we to think that Stefanik is against equal rights for African Americans? According to Cole’s logic, apparently so.

And so what if Stefanik is a Roman Catholic and doesn’t agree with what the current Pope or the Vatican think about Israel’s military campaign? A lot of Catholics don’t agree with the Vatican’s position on abortion. I am not Catholic but my wife is, and we raised our children in the Catholic Church, but I have my own disagreements with the Vatican on issues like priest abuse of children. As for the current Pope, I disagree with a lot of his positions including this one.

“We can further tell that Stefanik is a hypocrite because she did not bother to criticize Donald J. Trump for saying that the Nazis who chanted “Jews will not replace us” at Charlottesville in 2017 were “very fine people.” (She did, in her earlier incarnation as a somewhat normal person, herself condemn the white nationalists at Charlottesville. But she never protested Trump’s characterization.)”

Wow. So Stefanik condemned what happened in Charlottesville in

2017 (rightfully) but is not on the record condemning Trump's clumsy comment about "very fine people on both sides". (Personally, I would have said there were some *bad* people on both sides.) That is a stretch. There are a lot of things I have condemned on my blog since 2007. There are also a lot of things I have not condemned simply because I cannot post articles about every single thing that happens in the world. However, I concede that Stefanik is a politician, so she is expected to make a statement on every single thing. (I am being sarcastic here.)

"When challenged on Trump's association with Kanye West and other genuine antisemites, Stefanik lamely excused him on the grounds that he had recognized Israel's illegal occupation of Syria's Golan Heights. No wonder she can't understand, like, college. She thinks breaking international law is a sign someone isn't an antisemite."

This is weak and an example of guilt by association. I also criticize Trump's dinner with Kanye West and white nationalist Nick Fuentes. If Stefanik made a weak argument in Trump's defense, is this really a big thing? Does this make her an anti-Semite? One could argue that Cole is an anti-Semite because he is such a fervant supporter of the Palestinians, even now after October 7. I am not making that accusation.

"It gets worse. In 2021, Stefanik began taking up the talking points of the Great Replacement Theory. It holds that wealthy Jewish businessmen are bringing in immigrants from the Global South to replace white workers, since the immigrants will work more cheaply. Stefanik perhaps did not utter the phrase, but she appealed to all the dog whistles of this odious theory."

"[Marianna Sotomayor](#) noted last year at the Washington Post that Stefanik put out campaign ads saying, "Radical Democrats are planning their most aggressive move yet: a PERMANENT ELECTION INSURRECTION . . . Their plan to grant amnesty to 11 MILLION illegal immigrants will overthrow our

current electorate and create a permanent liberal majority in Washington.” Guess who the “radical Democrats” might be, to which she refers? Could they possibly be people such as, oh, I don’t know, Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD), Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-NY), Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA) and other Jewish American legislators who have worked for [immigration reform](#)?”

It gets worse alright. Did Stefanik state that “wealthy Jewish businessmen were bringing in immigrants...”? If so, where is the documentation? Is it the video clip he attached of Peter Beinart, a prominent anti-Israel crusader? In the next breath, Cole concedes that perhaps, Stefanik did not utter the phrase “, but he goes on to put the thought, if not the words, into her head, if not her mouth. She just “began taking up the talking points,” according to Cole. Tricky bit of writing, I would say.

As for the documentation I raised above, is Cole referring to the writing of Marianna Sotomayor in the Washington Post, which he references above? If Stefanik says that radical Democrats want to allow millions of people into the country who will give them a permanent majority in future elections, I agree with her. Do I believe that “wealthy Jewish businessmen” or any other Jews are behind this? Absolutely not, and I see no evidence that Stefanik believes it or said it. Those words are Cole’s words, not Stefanik’s. And when he raises the names of Jamie Raskin, Jerry Nadler, and Adam Schiff, those are Cole’s words, not those of Stefanik. If that is their intention, their Jewish religion has nothing to do with it. Tricky writing indeed.

“As defenders of illiberalism and implicitly of hatred of Jews, these useful idiots of the far right are symbolically still deployed around Hitler’s bunker, defending it from the approaching Allies.”

I am grateful, however, to Cole for introducing me to Rene Binet, who supposedly invented the great replacement theory

and who it was he hated and wanted to keep out of France. Very educational. As for those “useful idiots” on the right, yes, some of them ascribe to the theory, and some of them are anti-Semites, but they are hardly the main purveyors of anti-Semitism in the US, particularly on college campuses where they have no sway. The main purveyors of anti-Semitism today in the US and the world are radical, Islamist Muslims (not all Muslims). It is easy to take mass shooting attacks against Jews committed by non-Muslims in Buffalo or Pittsburgh, but Cole ignores all the attacks against Jews and the hateful rhetoric by many Muslim leaders and imams. Anti-Semitism is deeply embedded in Islam, and coupled with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it’s like lighting a match to the gasoline.

“The fact is that Stefanik was not defending Jewish American students on US campuses but attempting to silence non-white and progressive students and ensure that their speech is criminalized.”

Wrong. Stefanik is, indeed, defending Jewish students. The hearings in question also took testimony from several Jewish students who described their own experiences on campus. Who else was defending them? Certainly not the Democrats. It was the Republicans in the hearing who sharply criticized the three university presidents who testified (Harvard, UPenn, and MIT). Is Cole conceding that it is non-white, progressive students who are involved in these allegations of anti-Semitism? What happened to all those white nationalists from the far right Cole was talking about previously? As for silencing and criminalizing people, has Stefanik said that? (Perhaps, I don’t know). Don’t worry, Dr Cole; we are not going to silence anybody or arrest them for chanting offensive phrases and expressing anti-Israel feelings. Even hate speech is protected unless it includes physical threats and direct incitement to violence. We have a right to condemn it, however, and express our own outrage as the universities

should do. The universities also have a responsibility to protect their students from bullying and intimidation. There have been countless incidents of this on campuses all over the country, and usually, there have been no consequences. "Silence"? Whose speaking events are disrupted, pro-Israel events or anti-Israel events? Here's a clue: It is the former. Who does it? The pro-Palestinian groups like Students for Justice in Palestine.

"Some [46% of young people aged 18-29](#) disapprove or strongly disapprove of the Biden administration's handling of the Israeli-Hamas conflict, whereas only 19% strongly approve."

Hmm. What about the other 35% that Cole doesn't mention? Am I to assume they "approve"? That would make (35+19) 54% approve or strongly approve. (I hope that missing 35% have heard of Israel/Gaza and have some sort of opinion.)

"The issue is not discrimination against a minority but critique of the [18th most powerful](#) military in the world and its shameful, blatant disregard for International Humanitarian Law."

What about the shameful, blatant disregard for International Humanitarian Law that occurred on October 7 at the hands of Hamas? What about the fact that Hamas fights from behind the shield of its own civilians, not to mention hostages? Cole does not mention the fact that Israel attempts to avoid civilian deaths, more than any other army I can mention, including the Allies in World War 2. The blood of those civilians is on the hands of Hamas. It is Hamas that has brought death and destruction to their civilian population. I find it instructive that the word "Hamas" is only mentioned once in Cole's article, in referring to the "Israel-Hamas conflict".

"University Presidents should stop playing into the hands of wily sociopaths such as Stefanik, who is plotting to impose

Trumpism and his promised dictatorship on all Americans, to take away a woman's right to choose nationally, to ban Muslims, and to put the nail in the coffin of the Voting Rights Act. They should simply say that in this country we have a first amendment and we can criticize any government we like— Argentina's, China's, Hungary's, or Israel's. That isn't racism, that is responsible world citizenship, and the right of free citizens of a democracy."

In closing, Cole brings up "sociopath" Stefanik's alleged "Trumpism", a dictatorship to be imposed on all Americans, the threat to the right to abortion, and the Voting Rights Act. (Is this intersectionality?) Yes, we have a First Amendment, and people can chant, "from the river to the sea, " and "Intifada" to their heart's delight. We are free to criticize it. Stefanik knows that. But those chants are just emblematic of the larger problem-that Jewish students are being bullied, intimidated, and subjected to a climate of fear on campus, which is a violation of their civil rights. Universities are failing to protect Jewish students from this harassment and disruption of their events by pro-Palestinian goons. That, Dr Cole, is what this is all about.

Boy, would I love to read Cole's PhD dissertation.