



Peggy Shapiro, appointee to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council and child of Holocaust survivors, was invited to speak at Purdue University Calumet on “Nazi roots of contemporary anti-Semitism”. So why was the event canceled?

There’s an old saying, “if you have two Jews, you have three opinions”. I have never heard anyone say “one Jew, no opinion”.

One thing we Jews have is opinions, don’t believe me, ask any Israeli about politics. For that matter, just listen to my radio show.

When it comes to points of view, everyone wants to be heard. When it comes to Israel, anti-Semitism or the Holocaust, we the Jews won't shut up and with good reason.

With Jews and the Holocaust there is another saying, "We must never forget". More recently though it seems that saying has become "We must never forget, but don't mention it".

An [article](#) last week in frontpagemag.com explained,

Purdue University Calumet had the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), along with anti-Israel activist Sefi Samuel speak on campus. Yet the university's history department, in conjunction with the local Jewish Federation, played a role in the cancellation of another speaker, Peggy Shapiro, two weeks ago.

When I first read that paragraph I wasn't at all surprised to see that an American University had welcomed with open arms both CAIR and Sefi Samuel to speak while denying a speaker on the Holocaust. What I had to read twice was that the local Jewish Federation played a role in the cancellation as well.

The article explained about this speaker who was "too controversial" for the University,

Ms. Shapiro is the Midwest director of [StandWithUs](#), an organization "dedicated to informing the public about Israel and to combating the extremism and anti-Semitism that often distorts the issues." She was a special appointee to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council and is also the child of Holocaust survivors.

According to the story, Ms. Shapiro was initially invited to speak by Marie Eisenstein, co-chair of the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC), a sub-organization within the [Jewish Federation of Northwest Indiana](#)

Mrs. Eisenstein was specifically interested in having Ms. Shapiro speak about the Nazi roots of contemporary anti-Semitism, because she was concerned that 'traditional' Holocaust education does not educate individuals about the lingering effects that are still with us today in terms of anti-Semitism.

But shortly thereafter, "trouble began".

The article explained that concerns were beginning to rise that a speech of this sort might be politically sensitive,

Marie Eisenstein wrote to Shapiro, noting that there was "some concern about presenting politically sensitive topics on a campus" and that [Michael Steinberg](#), executive director of the Jewish Federation, was "considering if it might be wiser to hold such an event at the Federation instead."

Wait, stop the presses. The executive director of the Jewish Federation suggested taking the speech off campus?

Both the University's History Department and the Jewish Federation withdrew the invite, explaining,

Yet the history department was not the only entity to back off. The Jewish Federation rescinded its invitation as well. According to information Mrs. Eisenstein was privy to, there was concern on the part of the JCRC that, irrespective of the event's educational merits, without the partnership of the history and political science departments, the event could face problems, specifically with respect to its potential to set off controversy given issues at the university.

Perhaps things have changed since I was a student at University, but it used to be a place to learn, a place to get an 'education'.

There is no point of taking a speech about the Holocaust and anti-Semitism off the campus where students who know very little or nothing about these subjects would attend and possibly learn something from someone who has the knowledge and is willing to pass it on.

Suggesting that it be held at the Jewish Federation, let's just say that would be 'preaching to the choir'. If anything, keep the speech on campus and then invite Ms. Shapiro to present another speech at the Jewish Federation. After all, part of the Jewish Federation's mission is to educate.

According to the Jewish Federations of North America's [website](#),

In all aspects of life, Jewish heritage offers practices and perspectives that enrich our lives and draw us closer to friends, family and community. Together with its partners, Jewish Federations of North America enables access and exposure to educational opportunities and cultural programs for Jews of all ages and all levels.

Forgive me; I am using my common sense again.

I forget that in today's 'politically correct' world it is okay to have CAIR, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, the product of a Hamas-support network in the United States and a named unindicted co-conspirator in America's largest terror-finance trial along with the Jew/Israel hater, Sefi Samuel speak at Purdue University. After all, Purdue was only [ranked](#) 18th among public universities.

There is nothing wrong with having various viewpoints at a University; it's good for students to hear all sides, as long as all sides are given equal time. Having all viewpoints is one thing, but picking sides is another.

This case doesn't even fall into a category of equal. The Holocaust is a fact, anti-Semitism is a fact. CAIR and Samuel spew fallacies that promote hate and misunderstanding.

By allowing CAIR and Sefi Samuel to speak, but to deny Ms. Shapiro and her speech on the Holocaust and anti-Semitism goes beyond political correctness. It is denying the students the one thing that they should actually get at school: knowledge.

The woman who initially invited Peggy Shapiro to speak, Marie Eisenstein, co-chair of the Jewish Community Relations Council, just happens to be married to a Professor at Purdue. Maurice Moshe Eisenstein, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Political Science and has been down this road before with the University.

As the FrontPage article pointed out,

As preparations for the event began to unfold on that end, Mrs. Eisenstein's husband, Maurice Moshe Eisenstein, Ph.D., associate professor of political science at Purdue Calumet, tried to get the history department at the university interested in sponsoring the event. Beginning on February 3rd, a series of email exchanges between Professor Eisenstein and history department head Richard Rupp initially indicated that the department was willing to do so, and Rupp wrote he was also willing to commit \$250 towards Ms. Shapiro's speaking fee.

I spoke with Dr. Eisenstein by telephone and email and he stated,

One thing that is accurate and might be significant is that the historians did not turn down Peggy Shapiro herself. Her name was not given to them. Actually what I was told is that they did not want their names associated with any discussion of the Holocaust and anti-Semitism. (Probably unless it was sponsored by J-Street or the campus Muslim Student Association.) That is what is frightening. It was the topic itself that was relegated to darkness and was therefore forbidden to be discussed. This was done first by the University's historians and then by the Jewish Federation. What is incredible is that no one at the University nor at the Federation thought there could be anything wrong with this behavior.

I also received a copy of the minutes from the history faculty meeting where it reiterates Dr. Eisenstein's comments,

Richard reported that Professor Eisenstein approached the department about sponsoring a speaker on the Holocaust and anti-Semitism. After discussion the faculty decided not to sponsor the event. Richard informed the faculty that the event could go forward without the department sponsorship. Richard has already committed \$250 toward the event.

So once again it would appear that, rather teaching or speaking on facts, the 'fear' that it might upset the Muslims at the University swayed the decision.

I reached out to Michael Steinberg, the executive director of the Jewish Federation of Northwest Indiana for a statement and received no response. In his defense it was very short notice from the time I wrote him and the time this went to publication.

FrontPage received a letter from Peggy Shapiro after their article last week and gave her reaction,

"Why do they teach about the Holocaust, but deny students the opportunity to learn from me?" My mother, a Holocaust survivor, asked me that question when she learned that she and I were disinvited to speak at Purdue University, Calumet because a presentation about the "Nazi Roots of Modern Anti-Semitism" was deemed "too controversial" and potentially upsetting to some students. I was stunned by the cancellation and had no answer to my mother's question.

When the Indiana Jewish Federation and the Political Science Department of Purdue University invited me to discuss the influence of Nazi era imagery and messaging on current anti-Semitic propaganda, I readily accepted. Although Purdue has a history course on the Holocaust, the lessons of the Holocaust are not merely historical. They are relevant to the most pressing issues which impact us today. The Holocaust teaches us to recognize the war of words which paves the road for more violent aggression against a minority, whether that minority is Jewish, Christian, European or Rwandan. That dark time in history can also arm us to confront dangerous stereotypes and even more dangerous silence to the persecution of others.

Students at Purdue University deserve the right to learn about Nazi imagery so that they can recognize it when it appears in the modern political arena. They deserve the opportunity to hear

from a witness to the Holocaust, an opportunity which may never present itself to them again. Most important, they deserve to get an education, not a timid, politically correct indoctrination that avoids examining a very real bigotry we are witnessing today. Neither Purdue nor the Indiana Jewish Federation provided an explanation of why my speech was cancelled. I think the students deserve better and so does a Holocaust survivor.

The words of someone we all can learn from, "I think the students deserve better and so does a Holocaust survivor."