

Dramatic Inappropriateness of an ADL-SDSU Alliance

Stuart H. Hurlbert

Professor of Biology Emeritus, San Diego State University, August 16, 2021

[AUTHOR'S NOTE: In the Spring of 2021, the San Diego State University administration announced plans for an SDSU alliance with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) to deal with antisemitism. Such an alliance seemed to me, based on my extensive investigations of ADL over the preceding year, a very unwise, political move on the part of the university. Knowing from long experience the ideological intransigence of the power brokers at SDSU and the misperceptions of ADL under which most of the SDSU community operates, and to provoke useful discussion among *all* faculty members, I sent out widely the letter below. Appended to this is a "Postscript October 2021" that recounts some of the apparent positive sequelae of this effort up to that time. None of this is to deny the real problem of antisemitism or to discourage in any way effective attempts to fight it. As most readers will see, the core problem described here is a central administration's use of antiracism as a pretext for advancing other political purposes.]

Introduction

This message is aimed primarily at the SDSU Council of Chairs, which I define as the chairs of all academic departments. I hope each chair will pass it on to all faculty members in their department for discussion. It is also copied to many others, including higher level administrators. The situation is another confirmation of the need for the entire SDSU faculty having a larger and more independent role in setting university policies. These now are pretty much set solely by the central administration and a few SDSU Senate committees. For even the most important and most controversial issues, faculty input via confidential polling of the entire faculty is never allowed.

Out of control "hate" and "antisemitism": Really?

Last spring in response to some incidents of antisemitism at SDSU, there was created a [Presidential Task Force on Antisemitism](#). Plans were laid for future events that would involve an alliance with the SDSU chapter of Hillel and the San Diego chapter of the Anti-Defamation League. One of those is the webinar on [The Antisemitism Crisis in Our Community: Why It Matters, What to Do About It](#) that will take place on August 17.

At about the same time I also first heard of complaints by some parents in the Coronado Unified School District who were concerned about the content of ADL's "No Place for Hate" (NPFH) program that is imposed on all K-12 students in that district and in 1800 other schools around the country. I did extensive research on the ADL and talked to many parents, a few CUSD board members, and a few Jewish colleagues. This resulted in the following documents:

[Anti-Defamation League: A Compilation of Information on Its Political Nature](#)

(Excerpts from 59 articles on ADL politics and activities and brief critique of the Handbook for NPFH programs, Stuart Hurlbert, Californians for Equal Rights website, July 20, 2021)

[The Deceptions of "Systemic Racism," "Antiracism," and "Critical Race Theory"](#)

(A compilation of online resources (500+ items) on the ongoing unpleasant dumbing down and racialization of society, Stuart Hurlbert, Californians for Equal Rights website, June 28, 2021)

[Get ADL Out of Coronado and Other Public Schools Now](#)

(My letter to the CUSD Governing Board, school principals and others, later published in the Coronado Times, July 28, 2021; included links to the two items above)

[Whose “Profound Lack of Understanding”?](#)

(My response to July 29 complaint by Tammy Gillies, Regional ADL Director, that my letter above showed “a profound lack of understanding of Critical Race Theory and ADL’s Education programs,” Coronado Times, July 30, 2021)

[Parents Want ADL’s Leftist Partisanship Out of San Diego Public Schools](#)

(Compilation by Samantha Mandeles (Now at StopAntisemitism.org) based on my letter to the CUSD board, with additional commentary and links from Mandeles and William Jacobson, Legal Insurrection, August 12, 2021)

AND for further background:

[Memorializing A Dragon-Slaying and A Civil Rights Movement Reborn](#)

(Account of the defeat of Proposition 16, a victory over those, such as ADL and the SDSU administration, who think “group equity” should trump the 1964 Civil Rights Act; Stuart Hurlbert, Minding the Campus, January 10, 2021)

[Huddled Mass or Second Class?: Challenging Anti-Immigrant Bias in the U.S. Mainstreaming Hate: The Anti-Immigrant Movement in the U.S.,](#)

(Two ADL websites that display its long-standing practice of misinforming people, including students, on immigration issues and of smearing as “anti-immigrant,” “racist,” etc. all those organizations and individuals merely advocating a return to more moderate levels of immigration, as favored by a majority of the electorate – but favored by no one, I believe, in the SDSU central administration.)

[Get Ready for the 'No-Buy' List: First Big Tech censored speech, now they want to shut deplorables out of the financial system,](#) David Sacks, Common Sense with Bari Weiss, Substack, July 30, 2021

[Forget using PayPal if your views run afoul of this left-wing group: PayPal has linked up with the Anti-Defamation League to censor what people see online,](#) Jonathan Tobin, New York Post, July 29, 2021

(Two articles that describe a new “cancel culture” collaboration between PayPal and ADL: ADL will notify PayPal of any organizations that, in ADL’s opinion, “support extremism and hate” or endanger “at-risk communities.” PayPal will then deny them service.)

Some Easy Conclusions?

- 1) ADL is now more a highly ideological, leftist political organization than a civil-rights one.
- 2) That this appeals to SDSU central administrators of similar beliefs does not justify SDSU endorsing it or having any formal relations with it. Have ADL speakers on campus, fine. Allow the SDSU Hillel chapter to interact with ADL in any way it chooses, fine. But the ADL is not an “ally” of SDSU, and the SDSU community does not endorse the political views and behavior of ADL.

3) Proposed ADL-SDSU joint projects are superfluous from all points of view: antisemites are not likely to participate, rest of SDSU community would get no benefit from them, and there are ca. 1200 PhDs and a police department at SDSU: no outside political organizations or consultants are needed to deal with antisemitism incidents at SDSU, most of which seem to involve graffiti, flyers, and minor events of offensive language. Breakdowns of incidents by type are almost never presented.

4) Clearly one cause of antisemitism is ADL's insinuation that its own extreme political views and hatemongering represent views of the *wider* Jewish community: strong distaste for ADL's politics on the part of either Jews or non-Jews does not constitute antisemitism.

5) If SDSU president Adela de la Torre wants to truly educate the SDSU community on antisemitism and related issues, and do so in a simple and productive manner, she can forward this compilation of the views of hundreds of educated Americans and a few Israelis to all students, staff and faculty members at SDSU. **Ball in your court, Adela!**

Postscript October 2021

The link-rich article [Get ADL Out of Coronado and Other Public Schools Now](#) was sent out on July 23 to the CUSD board, to many faculty and administrators at SDSU, and to others – and was published in the Coronado Times on July 28. It seemed to have a quick positive effect although I did not realize that until mid-August. By the time the letter above was sent out on August 16, all mention of an SDSU-ADL alliance had been scrubbed from both the SDSU and San Diego ADL websites. Both websites still had notices up about the August 17 webinar, but now neither said it was a webinar sponsored jointly by SDSU and ADL. An SDSU colleague told me that the director of the San Diego ADL chapter, Tammy Gillies, would be one of the 4-5 speakers, and that “The ADL remains very much part of SDSU's plan to address antisemitism.” For unspecified reasons Gillies canceled at the last minute and was replaced at the webinar by another ADL staffer.

In October a new announcement of SDSU's [Presidential Task Force on Addressing Antisemitism](#) came out, listing purpose, activities and committee members. There are 21 members and Gillies is one of them, but there is no indication that the task force is a joint one with ADL. It seems like a lot of busywork and virtue-signaling. There is still no glimmer of recognition of how much antisemitism may be provoked by the politicking of ADL and Jonathan Greenblatt themselves on matters unrelated to antisemitism. Anyone wanting to fight antisemitism in an effective, non-partisan manner might consider reading in their fulness the ca. six dozen articles linked in [Anti-Defamation League: A Compilation of Information on Its Political Nature](#). Each has its own political view, accept none uncritically, and you're ready to go. You don't need any outside political organization to hold your hand.