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CHARLES M. BLOW

Anti-Semitism and the Midterm Election --2018!

The rise in anti-Semitism and white supremacy since President Donald Trump took office is an issue that the larger Milwaukee Jewish population is very aware of.

“There are a few things that Jews are particularly concerned about: The rise in hatefulness, discrimination, and bigotry. I think there is real alarm, and I think a lot of Jews are really concerned about efforts to sideline or harm certain parts of our community,” said Elana Kahn, Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council.

In early 2017, the Harry and Rose Samson Family Jewish Community Center in Whitefish Bay, received three different bomb threats within six weeks. Stein-Avner knew of many people who had children at the Jewish Community Center when the threats were made and notes how terrifying it was.

<https://mkemidterms.mediamilwaukee.com/passion-for-justice-safety-energizes-milwaukee-jewish-vote-after-pittsburgh-massacre>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/11/04/nets-release-kyrie-irving-antisemitism/>

Opinion

Kyrie Irving's 'apology' doesn't cut it. He needs to go. The Washington Post, about 6 pm EDT Friday, Nov. 4, 2022.

The Self-Inflicted Demise of Kyrie Irving

Has Kyrie's time in the NBA come to an end? If so, the persistently stubborn star has only himself to blame. By [Michael Pina](#) Nov 4, 2022, 11:02am EDT

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<https://www.theringer.com/nba/2022/11/4/23440393/kyrie-irving-brooklyn-nets-suspended-apology>



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Nets suspend Irving for at least 5 games Brian Mahoney ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK – The Brooklyn Nets suspended Kyrie Irving for at least five games without pay Thursday, dismayed by his repeated failure to “unequivocally say he has no antisemitic beliefs.”

Hours after Irving refused to issue the apology that NBA Commissioner Adam Silver sought for posting a link to an antisemitic work on his Twitter feed, the Nets said that Irving is “currently unfit to be associated with the Brooklyn Nets.”

“We were dismayed today, when given an opportunity in a media session, that Kyrie refused to unequivocally say he has no antisemitic beliefs, nor acknowledge specific hateful material in the film. This was not the first time he had the opportunity – but failed – to clarify,” the Nets said in a statement.

“Such failure to disavow antisemitism when given a clear opportunity to do so is deeply disturbing, is against the values of our organization, and constitutes conduct detrimental to the team. Accordingly, we are of the view that he is currently unfit to be associated with the Brooklyn Nets.”

The Nets said they made multiple attempts in recent days to help Irving understand the harm and danger of his words and actions, but it was clear during the point guard’s interview after practice earlier Thursday that little had changed.

Irving again refused to apologize, saying only that he meant no harm. He said some things in “Hebrews to Negroes: Wake Up Black America” were untrue, but he didn’t say he shouldn’t have posted a link to it.

“I’m not the one who made the documentary,” Irving said. He was later asked if he had antisemitic beliefs, and he didn’t say no. “I cannot be antisemitic if I know where I come from,” Irving said.

Anti-Defamation League CEO Jonathan Greenblatt reacted to a video of Irving’s response to that question on Twitter by writing: “The answer to the question ‘Do you have any antisemitic beliefs’ is always “NO” without equivocation.

“We took @KyrieIrving at his word when he said he took responsibility, but today he did not make good on that promise,” Greenblatt added. “Kyrie clearly has a lot of work to do.”

A day earlier, Irving and the Nets had announced, in conjunction with the ADL, that each would be donating \$500,000 to anti-hate causes. But Silver felt Irving needed to go further.

“While we appreciate the fact that he agreed to work with the Brooklyn Nets and the Anti-Defamation League to combat antisemitism and other forms of discrimination, I am disappointed that he has not offered an unqualified apology and more specifically denounced the vile and harmful content contained in the film he chose to publicize,” the commissioner said.

Silver added that he will be meeting with Irving in person within the next week. His comments and Irving’s reluctance to apologize came hours before the FBI said it had received credible information about a “broad” threat to synagogues in New Jersey, Irving’s home state.

He quickly grew defensive Thursday, asking reporters why they weren’t asking questions about the history of Blacks in America, saying 300 million of his ancestors are buried in the country.

Irving was also asked specifically about his beliefs regarding the Holocaust.

“Those falsehoods are unfortunate,” Irving said, referring to content in the film. “And it’s not that I don’t believe in the Holocaust. I never said that. Never, ever have said it. It’s not come out of my mouth. I never tweeted it. I never liked anything like it. So the Holocaust in itself is an event that means something to a large group of people that suffered something that could have been avoided.”

AP Basketball Writer Tim Reynolds and freelance writer Dick Scanlon in Orlando, Florida, contributed to this report.



Nets guard Kyrie Irving reacts after being called for a foul in the third quarter against the Pacers on Saturday. WENDELL CRUZ/USA TODAY SPORTS



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Opinion | Kanye West, Louis Farrakhan and Anti-Semitism

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48 minutes ago — Ye (/jeɪ/ YAY; born *Kanye* Omari *West* /'kɑːnjeɪ/ KAHN-yay; born June 8, 1977) is an American rapper, songwriter, record producer, and fashion designer.

Other names: : Yeezus; Saint Pablo; Yeezy; Ye; ...

Formerly of: [Child Rebel Soldier](#); [Kids See Gh...](#)

Origin: [Chicago, Illinois](#), U.S

Years active: 1996–present

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While focusing on writing this text, attempting to keep me and my family safe from the coronavirus, and protesting for the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, which calls for an end to police brutality, racial inequality, and systemic racism in the U.S., I was taken aback by an apparent reemergence of antisemitism from several Black sports and entertainment celebrities. It all began when National Football League (NFL) star wide receiver DeSean Jackson of the Philadelphia Eagles posted two images on his Instagram story quoting Hitler as saying white Jews ‘will blackmail America. [They] will extort America, their plan for world domination won’t work if the Negroes know who they are.

The white citizens of America will be terrified to know that all this time they’ve been mistreating and discriminating and lynching the Children

**Florida’s only statewide elected Democrat is a 42-year-old
Jewish rising star**

*Nikki Fried, the Sunshine State’s agriculture commissioner, is
focused on combating COVID but that hasn’t stopped others
from speculating about her future*

By

Matthew Kassel

May 18, 2020

In the summer of 2018, right after Florida’s August primary, a coalition of prominent Democratic donors met in Miami to plot out a November election game plan. Though a number of candidates had been asked to join the event, Nikki Fried — who had just clinched the party’s nomination for the state’s commissioner of agriculture and consumer services — was told she was not invited.

“They didn’t believe I could win,” Fried recalled.

It was a fair assessment, if only because a Democrat had not been elected to the position in 20 years — and there was scant indication that would change any time soon. Nevertheless, Fried — at the time a political neophyte mounting her first bid for elected office — insisted that she be allowed to attend. She got her way, she said, but was not granted permission to speak. “So I just worked the room.”

“She was just not going to take ‘no, we don’t believe you’ for an answer,” said Steven Schale, a Democratic strategist in Florida who has known Fried for about a decade.



Fried has won a number of converts since that meeting, having beaten her opponent, former Republican state representative Matt Caldwell, by a razor-thin margin in the November 2018 race (after a nail-biter of a recount). But she now finds herself in a different sort of hostile territory as Florida's only statewide elected Democrat during a pandemic that represents arguably the greatest challenge to American life since World War II.

The 42-year-old agricultural commissioner has found that it has been challenging to collaborate with Florida's Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis, whose response to the pandemic has been characterized by many as haphazard. DeSantis excluded the commissioner from a task force assembled to re-open the state, though before the pandemic, Fried had what she described as a "cordial" rapport with the governor. Now the two currently have no working relationship, according to Fried.

Most of her communication with DeSantis, she said, went through his chief of staff, whom she has known for some time. Currently, she said, "the tension unfortunately seeps down to even the staff levels." (DeSantis's team did not respond to a request for comment.)

The friction between the two elected officials has spilled into public view as they have sparred on social media. "He has played partisan politics from day one of all of this, and

unfortunately it has caused a significant rift in our two departments,” Fried told *Jewish Insider* in an interview from her home in Tallahassee, where she is sheltering in place with her fiancé, Jake Bergmann, a former entrepreneur in the medical marijuana industry.

Viewed through the lens of future elections, the governor’s effort to box her out makes some sort of sense given that Fried, a rising star in the Democratic Party, is seen as a potential challenger to DeSantis when his first term expires in 2022.

A cold war with DeSantis notwithstanding, Fried has managed to assert herself in a position that has only increased in relevance as she works to address food insecurity, price gouging, gun safety and agricultural setbacks for farmers, among other pressing issues.

“I realize why I’m here and that I represent a different faction of our state and that I’ve got a responsibility to bring those voices to the table,” Fried said.

Her voice is one most Floridians are not all that accustomed to. Not only is Fried the first Jewish statewide elected official in decades — she is also the first Jewish woman ever to be elected to statewide office.

“It’s certainly something that members of the Jewish community are proud of,” said Andrew Weinstein, an attorney and Democratic donor in Coral Springs, “and it’s indicative of, hopefully, greater opportunities for members of the Jewish community who aspire to statewide office in Florida.”

Fried takes that sentiment to heart. “Judaism was always part of my path,” she said. “While I don’t religiously observe every day,” she told *JJ*, “the traditions of taking care of others and the morals that are taught through the Jewish religion and through the culture have gotten me to where I am today.”

Born and raised in Miami, the former attorney and lobbyist was actively involved in the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization and visited Israel several times as a teenager.

“I always had a big open heart for Israel,” said Fried, who says she seriously contemplated making *aliyah* and joining the Israel Defense Forces while in high school. “They had to be the best when it comes to medicine and space and agriculture, because they can’t rely on their allies around them,” she told JI. “They had to be survivalists and recreate themselves.”

Fried — who was sworn in on the first Hebrew Bible printed in the United States — brought that appreciation to her new position when she embarked on a trade mission to Israel last spring, meeting with dozens of agricultural companies and government officials in an effort to bring some trade insights back to her home state and perhaps facilitate a joint venture or two.

Fried, who worked as a medical marijuana lobbyist before ascending to her current role, believes the cannabis plant is the “future of agriculture” for the state of Florida. Israel, Fried said, has been a leader in marijuana research for years, and on the trip she made an effort to glean some wisdom from local experts. “She’s helped farmers understand the legality around growing industrial hemp,” said Ron Klein, the former Florida congressman who chairs the Jewish Democratic Council of America.

Klein accompanied Fried on the trip to Israel and helped set up a number of meetings. “She feels very connected to Israel,” he told JI. “She just felt this was a win-win by connecting something she loves on both sides — her love of the State of Israel and Judaism and her ability to do her job as agricultural commissioner.”

Despite her quick rise, some observers say that Fried has a number of obstacles to overcome if she wants to advance to a position above agricultural commissioner.

“Nikki Fried has excited a lot of Democrats in Florida; it’s been a while since they held a statewide Cabinet office and she’s clearly trying to leverage that,” Rick Wilson, a former Republican strategist who is based in Florida, told JI in an email. “She’s personable and smart, but it’s going to still be an uphill climb given Republican political dominance in the state. A lot of her future path is contingent on how the DeSantis handling of the pandemic and the economic chaos to come is viewed by voters.”

According to Kirchick (2018), “Attitudinal surveys conducted by the ADL consistently show that African Americans harbor ‘anti-Semitic proclivities’ at a rate significantly higher than the general population (23 percent and 14 percent respectively in 2016)” (p. 5). Despite having a shared history of overcoming and surviving oppression, as well as fighting together during the Civil Rights movement, it now appears that Jewish and Black people find themselves set against one another (Schlosser et al., 2007). Many Jewish organizations vehemently support the BLM movement (e.g., the Union for Reform Judaism, T’ruah, Jews for Racial and Economic Justice), and it is my hope that there can be a significant change in Jewish/Black relations coinciding with the improved treatment of Black people in the U.S.



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