

Alt-Hampshire Gazette

Read Globally, Act Locally

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| ANTI-ZIONIST NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 2026 |

Thursday, May 21, 2026

CONGRATULATIONS, CLASS OF '26 YOUR FIRST REAL-WORLD ETHICS ASSIGNMENT: WITHHOLD ALL DONATIONS TO AMHERST COLLEGE UNTIL TRUSTEES DIVEST FROM ISRAELI GENOCIDE & OCCUPATION



Jabalia refugee camp, Gaza, winter 2025 (Omar al-Qattaaq/AFP). Since this photo was taken, Israel has broken two ceasefires and tightened the air, sea, and land blockade of the Gaza Strip. Over 95% of shelter in Gaza has been destroyed. Israel refuses to allow in additional tents or other housing, or equipment needed to remove rubble and retrieve the dead. All hospitals are destroyed or in ruins and barely functioning. Food, water, and medical supplies are critically scarce. Rat and insect populations have skyrocketed. Israel has retained all land behind a line meant to indicate withdrawal of their forces, establishing permanent occupation of an additional third of the Strip. President Trump's Gaza "Peace" Plan rewards those committing genocide in Gaza and denies sovereignty to the Palestinians.

One-third of Amherst College Trustees Tied to Israel

By Nick Mottern

The Amherst College Board of Trustees' most recent statement rejecting student, faculty, and alumni calls to divest from firms providing Israel with weapons came in a June 24, 2024 letter from Amherst President Michael Elliott that gives moral standing to genocide by saying that the requested divestment "would amount to the College endorsing the moral and political position of some members of our community and rejecting the moral and political position of other members of the Amherst community." (<https://tinyurl.com/tw35wyam>)

However, President Elliott did not note in his letter that at least one third of Amherst's 24-member Board of Trustees are employed by U.S. firms that have connections with Israeli entities.

For example, Chantal E. Kordula, chair of the Board of Trustees, is a partner in Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP, whose website announces: "Cleary Gottlieb represents clients in high-profile matters related to Israel across a range of practice areas, including capital markets, cybersecurity, IP, M&A, bankruptcy, litigation, real estate, and private equity."

The Amherst biography of trustee Mary

Elizabeth Cisneros notes that she is "an attorney with Holland & Knight, representing and advising charitable organizations primarily in trust and estate matters." Holland & Knight has a special "Israel Practice" team, and its website says: "Holland & Knight is a global law firm with a strong commitment to the state of Israel. We focus on providing guidance to Israeli investors and companies interested in doing business in the United States and Latin America."

Francesca Albanese, U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories, issued a report in July 2025 identifying 60 firms complicit in the genocide against the Palestinian people, including: Amazon, Microsoft, Google, Lockheed Martin, MIT, BlackRock, Vanguard, and Palantir. (<https://tinyurl.com/2yp4ht4u>)

Oshkosh Defense, Terex Corporation, and General Motors are weapons firms in Amherst's \$3.9 billion endowment portfolio, but Albanese would, obviously, have Amherst go further in divestment. Amherst College refuses to disclose specifics on its stock holdings despite repeated requests from many in the College community to do so.

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May 7 - A Startling Encounter with Amherst College Associate VP Megan Lennon

As described in the editorial, River Valley for Palestine publishes an independent local paper called the *Alt-Hampshire Gazette*.

Among other places, we distribute copies of each edition at the local colleges. We had never distributed the paper at Amherst College, however. We decided to do so on May 7 because the latest edition of our paper contained my letter to Dean Norwood addressing Michael Oren's April 30 speaking engagement on campus.

On the advice of a member of the Amherst College community, one of my colleagues and

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EDITORIAL: Something is Rotten at Amherst College — A Community Perspective

Over 900 days into the U.S./Israeli genocide in Gaza, Amherst College refuses to divest its endowment of investments in entities supportive of Israel despite repeated efforts by students, faculty, staff, and alumni to persuade it to do so.

Although support for Israel is steadily declining in the United States, as is belief that solidarity with the Palestinian people is antisemitic, not only has the College failed to divest, recent events on campus reveal that pro-genocide propagandists are welcome and that "The Palestine Exception" to free speech is alive and well. (<https://tinyurl.com/2rv5sk5d>).

In this edition of the *Alt-Hampshire Gazette*, the periodic publication of community organization River Valley for Palestine (RVP), you will find accounts of two recent experiences on campus, as well as information about many

Amherst trustees' connections to Israel, and Amherst's continued profiting from companies complicit in the genocide and occupation.

So far as Israeli propagandists on campus are concerned, on April 30, 2026, a student group called 'Amherst for Israel' hosted diplomat and IDF soldier Michael Oren for a campus presentation and Q&A. A few months previously, on November 17, 2025, Noa Tishby, actress and Israeli propagandist, gave a talk. Both speakers emphatically denied that Israel is carrying out a genocide in Gaza.

Oren and Tishby claim to know better than the United Nations (via both The UN Special Committee on Israeli Practices and The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory), the International Association of Genocide

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Noa Tishby speaking at Amherst College, November 17, 2025 (Photo: Evelyn Soto '28)

April 30 - Amherst College Hosts Michael Oren: "The Palestinians are the luckiest victims on earth"

On April 30, 2026, the student organization 'Amherst for Israel' held a public event at Amherst College featuring Michael Oren (né Bornstein), former Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. and member of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). He fought in Israel's war on Lebanon in 1982, and "served" in Gaza in 2005 & 2008-2009. River Valley for Palestine member Jennifer Scarlott attended the event. She subsequently wrote the following letter to Amherst College Associate Dean of Students Crystal Norwood, cc'ing Amherst College President Michael Elliott and the Board of Trustees.

Dear Dean Norwood:

I am the person who stood, about 15 minutes or so into Michael Oren's Q&A this evening, to share with the audience my awareness that Mr. Oren is a genocidaire and my horror at his presence on your campus among your students.

After registering for the event, I received an email from you that included the following:

...We value respectful discourse and engagement. Free expression—including peaceful protest—is a vital part of the educational experience, and we are

working to ensure a safe and secure environment for all attendees. We are grateful to be here together in the spirit of mutual respect, curiosity, and listening and learning from one another.

We remain committed to supporting students and fostering a campus environment where people feel respected, heard, and cared for. If you would like support before or after the event, we encourage you to reach out—we are available to talk, listen, and connect you with appropriate resources. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to cnorwood@amherst.edu.

Since you seem to be a sincere person and are in a position to educate young people about the adult world they will soon move into, I do find myself with questions for you.

My interruption of Mr. Oren for a few moments was peaceful, if heated. Was it respectful? No. I intended it to be disruptive and challenging. I have read about Mr. Oren's activities in the past decades (including his fondness for making the rounds of U.S. college and university campuses), and know that not

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Editorial Continued...

Scholars, the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention, Genocide Watch, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Doctors Without Borders (MSF), B’Tselem, Physicians for Human Rights Israel and others. The widespread agreement on genocide followed global concurrence, ratified by a great number of experts and organizations, that Israel is an apartheid state, with all of the decades-long human rights horrors and suffering that that entails.

During her speech, Tishby said that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) are “more interested in Palestinian people’s lives than Hamas.” Certainly, the IDF is obsessively interested in Palestinian life... or rather, Palestinian erasure and death.

Within the hallowed halls of Amherst’s Johnson Chapel, Mr. Oren mocked the Palestinian people and called anyone disagreeing with him an antisemite. He was flanked by deans and protected by Amherst College police officers inside and outside the building. Though the meeting was “public,” one needed to register, provide ID, and leave bags at the door to be admitted. Thirty students and community members protested Mr. Oren outside.

The experience of a River Valley for Palestine member at this event, during which she stood and interrupted Mr. Oren, and a subsequent encounter by two RVP members with Dean Megan Lennon and two irate campus officers, led to our desire to call community attention to ongoing support for Israel’s genocide and opposition to free speech at Amherst College.

Hence, this Amherst College Commencement 2026 edition of the *Alt-Hampshire Gazette*.

Per our name and as described above, River Valley for Palestine consists of residents of the Connecticut River Valley. One of our goals is to lend community support to students, alumni,

faculty, and staff working in solidarity with Palestine at the Five Colleges (RIP Hampshire). Though not affiliated with any campus group, we consider ourselves, as neighbors of the Five Colleges and as taxpayers, to be stakeholders in the ethical choices made by the schools.

We hope that this edition of our paper will encourage communities throughout western Massachusetts and people with ties to Amherst College to continue to vigorously support the multi-year campaigns for divestment spearheaded by the students of “Amherst for Palestine,” Amherst College “Alumni for Palestine,” and Amherst faculty and staff supporting justice for Palestine.

We echo a letter signed by hundreds of Amherst alumni in May of 2024: “President Elliott and Trustees, you have demonstrated what many of us as alumni already understood from our time on campus: Amherst College’s leadership cannot be swayed by cogent arguments and heartfelt moral appeals. Amherst College’s leadership can be swayed only by threats to your institution’s image and bottom line.”

And we wish to call attention to another crucial alumni contribution: a very powerful article – *La Junta de Trustees: Puerto Rico, Palestine, and the Values of Amherst College* – published in ‘The Amherst Student’ on February 19, 2025 (<https://tinyurl.com/mttnyz4f>).

We salute the past efforts of Amherst College students, alumni, faculty, and staff supporting divestment and justice for Palestine. We will continue to act in solidarity with them.

We call on the Amherst College Board of Trustees to do what is minimally required: disclose your financial holdings in companies supporting Israel and immediately divest. Honor and celebrate your students, faculty, staff, and alumni working so hard to lead you in the right direction.

(rivervalley4palestine@gmail.com)



Amherst College Assoc. VP Megan Lennon

Brunelle angrily told us to leave. As we began to walk away, we were followed by both officers. Once we reached the sidewalk along College Street, Brunelle departed. I turned and asked Officer Brown to stop following us. He voiced confusion as to whether we were on public or private property and insisted on following us to my car. Once there, he wrote down our license plate number before departing.

The next day, I emailed Chief Carter, describing the encounter and requesting that my “trespass notice” be rescinded. He refused, saying, “I have reviewed your request to rescind the trespass notice in light of both this incident and your recent actions at the Michael Oren event, at which I was present. At this time, I am not rescinding the notice.”

Chief Carter’s indicating that he was displeased by my interruption of Michael Oren on April 30, and Dean Lennon’s overreaction in arriving with two campus police officers to write us up for trespassing, ban us from campus, and threaten us with arrest, make clear that the College is in fact NOT a free speech zone where “open conversation” is encouraged. In hosting a genocidaire while threatening to arrest peaceful community members handing out a paper opposed to genocide, the powers that be at the College are taking indefensible positions against free speech and for genocide.

The empire reveals itself in multi-faceted ways.

(Jennifer Scarlott)

April 30 Continued...

only has he not earned respect, he has earned – through his activities as an Israeli Ambassador to the United States, as a member of the Knesset, and as a member of the Israel “Defense” Forces (IDF) – a place before the International Criminal Court in the Hague. If there is justice in this world, one day, he will find himself there.

A few very sincere questions for you: how many Palestinian, Lebanese, Iranian, Syrian, and Yemeni students are attending Amherst College? How many people at Amherst College, in response to the question – *Is Israel committing a genocide in Gaza?* – would answer yes, and how many of them would be able to say that your hosting of Mr. Oren made them feel “respected, heard, and cared for”?

What is it, exactly, that I should have “curiosity” about in listening to this person who denies genocide even though experts and organizations specializing in international law and in genocide, including the United Nations, concur that Israel is indeed committing genocide in Gaza?

Mr. Oren explains away all criticism of Israel as antisemitism. He did so on your campus this evening at several points, even proclaiming that, “The Palestinians are the luckiest victims on earth. Because had they been the Syrians, Ethiopians, or Sudanese, nobody would have given a feather. People give a feather about the Palestinians because they’re enemies of the Jews, and that is the truth.” I hope that you, Dean Norwood, recognize such statements for the vile, hate-filled, racist nonsense that they are. I hope that you know that the conflation of anti-Zionism with antisemitism is itself antisemitic since it conflates Judaism with perpetration of genocide. How utterly shameful.

In your email, you offer support before or after the event if needed. I needed support before the event. Knowing for several days that I would be seeing and hearing Mr. Oren, even for a short time, made me feel unsafe. It made

me feel ill. It made me think of the trauma I and so many have experienced over the past 900+ days of fighting for the rights of the Palestinian people and mourning the hundreds of thousands of innocents who have been slaughtered by Israel. (In fact, I have worked in solidarity with Palestinians in their struggle for liberation, for sovereignty, for equal human rights, for sheer human decency, for many years, hence my having to be in the same room as a man like Michael Oren was truly challenging.)

As a resident of western Massachusetts, I am deeply ashamed that Amherst College hosted Michael Oren. I say this as a lifelong believer in free speech. When a man who has served in the IDF in Lebanon and Gaza and defended Palestinian genocide and oppression in Washington D.C. sits in front of a largely admiring audience and claims that few Gazans have actually died there in the past 2+ years... you, your College, have made a mockery of honest inquiry, free speech, and the sacredness of the education of young people.

I urge you, as a Dean, to truly honor your Jewish students not by “hearing the point of view” of and giving a platform to a genocidal Zionist, but by helping your students to understand that everything that is beautiful and life-affirming about their faith is betrayed by the racist, settler-colonial political ideology of Zionism. If what I am saying is in any way opaque or challenging for you, you need to educate yourself.

Do better, Dean Norwood. The ongoing Nakba against the people of Palestine is a sin and a crime beyond imagining. And, Gaza is a laboratory. What is being done to the Palestinian people of Gaza will reach us all if we and institutions like Amherst College fail to stand against it and demand justice.

Do better.

Jennifer Scarlott, River Valley for Palestine

Israeli Connections of Amherst College Board of Trustees, 2025-2026 Continued...

- 1. Mindy C. Berman ’92
- 2. Mary Elizabeth Cisneros ’89, **Holland & Knight LLP**
- 3. Bonnie Barsamian Dunn ’86
- 4. Naana A. Frimpong ’00, **DLA Piper LLP**
- 5. Douglas C. Grissom ’89, **Madison Dearborn Partners LLC**
- 6. Jason K. Grosfeld ’95
- 7. Rejji P. Hayes ’97
- 8. Matthew N. Hulsizer ’91
- 9. Phillip A. Jackson ’85
- 10. Chantal E. Kordula ’94, **Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP**
- 11. Simon C. Krinsky ’96, **Pathstone**
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- 17. Christine Noyer Seaver ’81
- 18. Elizabeth C. Shelburne ’01
- 19. Gretchen E. Sisson ’06
- 20. Paul M. Smith ’76
- 21. David Stiepleman ’93, **Sixth Street**
- 22. Stephen Vladeck ’01
- 23. Kimberlee Wyche-Etheridge ’87
- 24. Michael Elliott, President of the College



Trustees Chair Chantal Kordula and College President Michael Elliott