

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Letter to the Editor

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NOT THE CLARK I KNOW

By:

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Dr. Rein's commentary ("Why I am Leaving Clark, op-ed April 14, 2024) did not reflect the Clark University I've known for twenty years as a director, member of the faculty, researcher, and scholar.

Dr. Rein's departure from my institution in anger fills me with utmost sadness. She was a wonderful, long-time colleague and a successful champion and administrator on behalf of the Strassler Center. It is disturbing that events such as the contentious one she experienced at another institution have contributed to her decision to leave.

Dr. Rein is entitled to express strongly her views of the Israel-Gaza conflict — but in the same way, others, including students of genocide and the Holocaust, are entitled to reject it equally decisively. Both views are widespread among Holocaust and genocide scholars. That the exchange of arguments on highly sensitive issues can get overheated or even involve personal invective is unfortunate, but should never end the debate. In fact, rigorous discovery demands discourse and often times disagreement. Scholars are used to this friction and know how to handle it.

Throughout my twenty years at Clark University and the Strassler Center, we have been able to convene around difficult issues without such clashes, working in an inspiring, respectful climate where faculty, staff, and students observe significantly different opinions on these and other issues. Recently, in interaction with a large audience, we held a deep yet calm conversation with internationally leading scholars about the rise of antisemitism. It inspired highly divergent views and respectful, constructive debate, as Jewish and non-Jewish attendees have attested. This is not unique. Since Oct. 7, we have had many such gatherings with the same measure of civility and intellectual curiosity. I am confident that we will be able to continue to engage in difficult and even heated debates with a spirit of tolerance, especially as we fight against antisemitism and other forms of hatred. This is the essence of democracy and more needed today than ever before.