



March 27, 2018

VIA EMAIL

Chancellor Henry T. Yang
UC Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, CA 93106

Dear Chancellor Yang:

We write on behalf of the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), the oldest and one of the largest pro-Israel organizations in the U.S., whose mission includes fighting anti-Semitism and anti-Israel bias in schools and on college campuses. We were horrified to learn that after UC Santa Barbara's anti-Semitic Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) group posted images and words on Facebook that endorse and appear to incite violence against Israelis and Jews, the university administration let SJP off the hook, excusing the hate group's conduct as constitutionally protected speech. In a [Message to Community 3/21/18](#), the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs actually legitimized SJP's endorsement and incitement of violence, calling them an expression of "political views."

SJP's actions are far more serious. They are threatening and dangerous, and put Jews, Israelis and others in the university community at risk. They also violate UC Santa Barbara's Student Conduct Code and merit the toughest response, especially given the justifiable concern about gun violence in our schools. UC Santa Barbara has already had its own tragic experience with [gun violence and knifings in 2014](#), resulting in the murder of six students. It is thus incomprehensible and horrifying that the university would minimize SJP's open promotion of terrorism and "armed resistance" as simply "offensive" and "upsetting" to some people.

We call on you to revoke SJP's registered status immediately, in the same way that other university leaders appropriately cracked down on student groups that helped create a hostile learning environment for other targeted groups. We were appalled and even frightened by the university legitimizing violent threats against Jews, and call on you to apologize and retract the Vice Chancellor's statement.

SJP Publicly Endorsed and Encouraged Violence Against Israelis and Jews

On March 16, 2018, the *Algemeiner* newspaper [reported](#) that on March 12, SJP published a series of images and words on Facebook which, taken together, condone and appear to encourage terrorist attacks against Israelis and Jews:

- A photo of a Palestinian Arab woman holding a pistol;
- A cartoon – drawn in an outline of Israel, including Judea and Samaria – depicting a woman with an AK-47 assault rifle.

- A photo featuring an armed Leila Khaled, who helped hijack two planes in Europe on behalf of the U.S.-designated terrorist group, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.
- In case there was any question about SJP's intent, SJP included a caption to the foregoing photo, which sanctioned and called for violence: "Solidarity is the weapon and armed resistance is the catalyst. Support all mujeres [the Spanish word for women] taking arms against imperialism."
- When SJP received criticism for its conduct, the moderator of SJP's Facebook page did not apologize or retreat from the group's violence-inciting message. Instead, the moderator reinforced SJP's message, defending "the justified methods of those Palestinians seeking liberation from fascist Israeli occupation & apartheid."

SJP's pro-terror postings were so extreme and of such concern that even Facebook took them down. But their removal from Facebook does not lessen the risks or dangers to Jews, Israelis and others in the campus community. Their removal from Facebook does not alleviate the understandable anxiety and fear that SJP instilled in the university's Jewish and pro-Israel community, since they are potential targets of the violence that SJP is condoning and promoting. Regardless of what Facebook did, UC Santa Barbara has a legal obligation under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act to ensure that Jewish and Israeli students are afforded a campus environment that is physically and psychologically safe.

SJP Should be Severely Punished for Violating the Student Conduct Code

SJP's actions violate several provisions of the Student Conduct Code, which prohibits "threats of violence" and "other conduct that threatens the health or safety of any person" (Section 102.08), harassment (Section 102.09), and "conduct, where the actor means to communicate a serious expression of intent to terrorize, or acts in reckless disregard of the risk of terrorizing, one or more University students, faculty, or staff" (Section 102.24). The Code sets forth a variety of sanctions for students and campus organizations that commit these infractions.

Given how dangerous, threatening and potentially calamitous SJP's conduct is, this hate group deserves the harshest sanction – revocation of its registered status. Indeed, the Code contemplates that sanctions may be enhanced when the misconduct is motivated by a person's national or ethnic origin (see Section 102.09), as SJP's actions were here.

Even before condoning and appearing to incite violence against Israelis and Jews, SJP has a long history of harassing and intimidating Jewish and pro-Israel students at UC Santa Barbara:

- In April 2017, SJP launched an anti-Israel boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaign on, of all days, Holocaust Remembrance Day. When Jewish students expressed their pain over SJP's insensitivity, SJP did not apologize. Instead, the group shamelessly denied on Facebook that the timing of the BDS initiative was "[in any way anti-Semitic](#)," and disingenuously claimed that the "[scheduling decision was made purely for pragmatic reasons](#)."
- SJP introduced a similar BDS resolution in 2015, which was voted on and defeated on Holocaust Remembrance Day. SJP's BDS resolution sowed hatred and anti-Semitism and caused Jewish students to feel ostracized and unwelcome. One Jewish student who was present at the vote [wrote](#), "I am disgusted by the normalization of anti-Semitic language so casually thrown around at the meeting. In those eight hours, I was told that Jews control the government, that all Jews are rich, that Zionism is racism, [and] that the marginalization of Jewish students is justified because

it prevents the marginalization of other minority groups” The pain expressed by this student – perpetrated by SJP and its supporters – is heartbreaking, and should be as intolerable to you as it is to us: “I am ostracized and made fun of by majority groups because I am different, yet at the same time, I am not even afforded the decency of being recognized as a minority by other minority groups. Sadly, last night’s events only reminded me how truly alone the Jewish community is and continues to remain.”

- In May 2017, SJP constructed what one Jewish student [described](#) as a “giant apartheid wall” on campus, which falsely depicted Israel as “an inhumane, grotesque, and torturous state.” When this student first saw the wall, her eyes filled with tears: “As a Jewish student, I felt completely alienated and unwelcome on my own college campus. I felt uncomfortable in my own skin and completely alone.”
- SJP’s “apartheid wall” included a quote that the group attributed to David Ben-Gurion, Israel’s first prime minister: “We must expel the Arabs and take their places.” [The quote was false](#) – and SJP admitted it was false. The actual quote, from a 1937 handwritten letter, expressed exactly the opposite sentiment from the Israeli prime minister: “We do not want to and we do not have to expel Arabs and take their place.” But because the truth did not serve SJP’s purpose to incite hatred of Israeli Jews, the group lied and doctored the facts.
- SJP erected a similarly intrusive and hate-inciting wall in 2015, which reportedly [obstructed](#) the pathway and prevented emergency vehicles from their ability to pass through campus. It could not be a coincidence that SJP erected this wall during the Jewish holiday of Passover, again at the expense of Jewish students’ feelings.
- SJP brings [speakers and programs](#) to campus that demonize Israel with falsehoods, to incite hatred of the Jewish state. For example, they accuse Israel of “pinkwashing,” absurdly suggesting that Israel’s exemplary treatment of the LGBTQ community is a deliberate strategy to conceal Israel’s allegedly abusive treatment of Palestinian Arabs. They falsely accuse Israel of being an apartheid state, even though Arabs and Jews have equal rights under the law in Israel, and Arabs are represented in Israel’s parliament, on its Supreme Court, and in all aspects of Israeli society. SJP has also falsely equated Zionism – the national movement for the return of the Jewish people to their religious and ancestral homeland – with racism.

SJP has Repeatedly Violated the University’s “Principles of Community”

As all these examples demonstrate, SJP is a hateful, disrespectful, intolerant, divisive student group – exemplifying exactly the opposite qualities that UC Santa Barbara says it stands for. In letting SJP off the hook, the Vice Chancellor’s Message to Campus Community referred to these principles, emphasizing that they “include striving ‘individually and collectively to make UC Santa Barbara an inclusive environment in which to live, work, and learn.’”

Where is the evidence that SJP respects and abides by the Principles of Community? How is condoning and inciting violence demonstrating any sensitivity and respect for Jewish and non-Jewish students who support the State of Israel?

The university’s reaction to this frightening situation will not inspire a more inclusive campus environment. The Vice Chancellor’s message did not even criticize SJP for what it posted on Facebook.

There is nothing in the Vice Chancellor's message that will cause SJP to change its stripes and "come together to engage in respectful dialogue," as the Vice Chancellor implored. Instead, by letting SJP off the hook for endorsing and encouraging violence against Israelis and Jews – and normalizing the behavior as an expression of "political views" – the university has emboldened this anti-Semitic hate group to do more and maybe worse.

There Can Be No Double Standard When It Comes To Anti-Semitic Bigotry

Other university leaders have condemned and severely punished students and student groups for behavior that was less threatening than what SJP did here.

For example, at the University of Oklahoma, members of a fraternity were caught on video chanting the "n" word and referring to lynching. The chanting, to our knowledge, did not include any threats or other harassing behavior aimed at individual students or other members of the campus community. Yet the University of Oklahoma's president wasted no time in expelling two leaders of the fraternity, disciplining over 20 other students and shutting down the entire fraternity – even though the entire fraternity had not been involved in the incident – because the "racist and exclusionary chant . . . created a hostile learning environment for others." The president said, "Our purpose is to learn lessons and be held accountable and then move forward with our lives."

Likewise, Yale University did not wait until there were threats or other harassing behavior aimed at individual women on campus before taking action against a fraternity that chanted in a campus quad, "No means yes! Yes means anal!" and other revolting messages. Yale suspended the fraternity for five years and penalized individual students for violating university rules relating to "harassment, coercion or intimidation" and "imperiling the integrity and values of the University community." As the Yale College Dean wrote in her message to students and faculty about the sanctions imposed, "Every member of our community has a legal and moral right to an educational environment free from harassment and intimidation."

Moreover, UC San Diego did not wait until there were threats or other harassing behavior aimed at individual African Americans on campus before taking action against students who were creating a racially hostile environment. When a fraternity held an off-campus party and invited students to dress as stereotypes of African-Americans, the chancellor showed leadership by immediately publicly condemning the fraternity's actions – even though the offending actions occurred off campus. Then, when a noose was found hanging in the library at UC San Diego, the university suspended the student responsible – even though she herself was a minority, she publicly apologized, she explained that the act was a mindless mistake and not racially motivated, and the act was not aimed at individual students or other members of the campus community. Significantly, those remedial actions were not enough for the government. Both the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education initiated an investigation into complaints of racial harassment at UC San Diego, which resulted in the university entering into a voluntary agreement to undertake systemic changes.

In the same way that the university leadership vigilantly protected the rights of women at Yale, and the rights of African American students at the University of Oklahoma and UC San Diego, you must protect the rights of Jewish and Israeli students on your campus. You cannot sit by when students tell you they feel threatened by words and images that condone and appear to incite violence. You cannot sit by and allow a group on campus to create a learning environment that feels hostile, threatening, and even unsafe. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act requires you to act.

Request for Relief, to Protect the University Community

We urge you to take the following actions and stop SJP from doing further damage to the campus community and putting at risk the lives, health and safety of Jews and others: (1) publicly condemn SJP and its conduct as hateful, anti-Semitic and against the rules and values of the university; and (2) revoke SJP's registered status in accordance with the Student Conduct Code until this group demonstrates that it will respect and conform to the rules and standards that apply to everyone else. In addition, because SJP's actions, endorsing and inciting violence, may well constitute a crime (e.g., under California Penal Code 404.6), we strongly urge you to report the actions to law enforcement.

We look forward to your response.

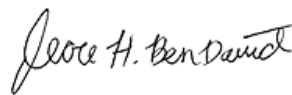
Very truly yours,



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cc: Margaret Klawunn, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (via email)