



August 9, 2023

VIA EMAIL

Satyel Larson, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Near Eastern Studies
Princeton University
108 Jones Hall
Princeton, NJ 08544

Dear Professor Larson:

We write on behalf of the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), the oldest pro-Israel organization in the U.S., dedicated to fighting antisemitism in all its forms, including when anti-Jewish bigotry is masked as criticism of Israel. Our letter is prompted by reports that you are making Jasbir Puar's book, "The Right to Maim," required reading in a course you will be teaching at Princeton University this fall. Puar's book is filled with anti-Israel falsehoods. Mandating your students to read this antisemitic book will likely lead them to unwarranted animosity toward Israel and Jews. It may also create a hostile learning environment for Jewish and Israeli students in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. We strongly urge you to replace Puar's book with a book that is based on the facts.

Puar lies in her book by outrageously accusing Israel of deliberately maiming and "debilitating" the Palestinian Arab population, rather than killing them, "in order to control them." She also falsely and absurdly claims that children are a "prime target" of Israel. These contentions are complete and dangerous nonsense, a reflection of Puar's [documented hostility](#) toward Israel and Jews.

For example, she has promoted the twisted notion of "pinkwashing": that Israel is an exemplary protector of LGBTQ rights – unlike all other nations in the Middle East where LGBTQ people are treated as criminals, subjected to persecution and violence, and even killed – purportedly to distract from its alleged oppression of the Palestinian Arab people. Puar also supports the antisemitic boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel, which singles out the one and only Jewish state in the entire world for condemnation and punishment. As the leaders of this movement make clear, the real motive of BDS is not peace or improving Palestinian Arabs' lives; it is [Israel's destruction](#). Furthermore, Puar supports violence and terrorism against Jews. At a 2016 lecture, she [reportedly](#) stated that ". . . we need BDS as part of organized resistance and [armed resistance in Palestine](#) as well. There is no other way the situation is going to change" [emphasis added].

For those who might try to argue that Puar's animosity is limited to the Jewish State of Israel, she herself has shown that her animosity is directed toward Jews, too. Puar has referred to Jews as "[the Zios](#)." This is the same antisemitic slur that David Duke, the former grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan and a rabid antisemite, frequently uses when he refers to Jews.

Puar's contention that Israel's goal is to "debilitate" Palestinian Arabs "in order to control them" is a lie. In fact, Israel has demonstrated that its goal is not to control them, having made three generous

offers, over 20 years, of an independent Palestinian Arab state in exchange for peace. Puar's contention is her own invention, calculated to demonize Israel and indoctrinate her readers to wrongly believe that Israel is a brutal and evil oppressor. In fact, [military leaders](#) have described the Israel Defense Forces as "[the most moral army](#)" in the world, going to extraordinary lengths to protect human lives and prevent civilian casualties.

It is also a grotesque lie for Puar to claim in her book that children are a "prime target" for Israel. She ignores the fact that the Palestinian Arab leadership deliberately indoctrinates its children to hate Israel and Jews and encourages them to engage in violence and terrorism against Israelis and Jews. The U.S.-designated terrorist group Hamas, which controls and rules over Gaza, [exploits](#) children to help build Hamas' terror tunnels. It also [runs summer camps](#) where children are taught to honor terrorist murderers and trained to commit acts of terrorism against Jews. On a [Hamas television program for children](#), one child said he wants to be an engineer when he grows up "so that I can blow up the Jews."

The Palestinian Authority is no better, teaching children to become "[martyrs](#)" and paying generous lifetime pensions to Arabs who murder Jews. On a [PA television program](#), children are quizzed on songs that the PA views as integral to Palestinian Arab culture. One song depicts Israel as the "enemy" and encourages deadly, armed attacks: "I'm coming with my rifle . . . I'm coming towards you, my enemy . . . with cleavers and knives." In her book, Puar conveniently ignores these and other facts because they do not fit within her false anti-Israel narrative.

It is appalling, dangerous and indefensible that anyone in a position of influence would promote Puar's antisemitic lies, given the growing problem of antisemitism in this country and especially in New Jersey. According to the Anti-Defamation League's [latest data](#), for 2022, New Jersey had the highest number of antisemitic incidents ever recorded by the ADL in the state and the third-highest number recorded in any state across the U.S.

Princeton would never tolerate teaching materials that deliberately promote lies about Blacks, Muslims, LGBTQ people, or any other targeted community – nor should it. Yet disgracefully the faculty in your department [approved](#) Puar's book. We urge all of you – and the University's leaders – to rethink this misguided and dangerous decision. If the goal is to educate, rather than indoctrinate Princeton students with false anti-Israel propaganda, then there are accurate books about the Israeli-Palestinian Arab conflict to include on your syllabus. We would be pleased to recommend some to you. Puar's book is not worthy of a place on any reading list at Princeton and should be removed from yours.

Thank you for considering our concerns. We look forward to your response.

Very truly yours,



Morton A. Klein
National President



Susan B. Tuchman, Esq.
Dir., Center for Law & Justice



Jonathan Ginsburg
Managing Dir., ZOA Campus

cc: Christopher L. Eisgruber, President (via email)
Jill S. Dolan, Dean of the College (via email)
Gene Andrew Jarrett, Dean of the Faculty (via email)
Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi, Chair, Near Eastern Studies Department (via email)