



**Written Testimony and Appendices for NYC Council Higher Education Committee Oversight Hearing:
“Examining Antisemitism on College Campuses”
June 30, 2022**

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My name is Tammi Rossman-Benjamin. I am a former University of California faculty member and co-founder and director of [AMCHA Initiative](#), an organization that investigates and combats antisemitism on U.S. campuses.

I heartily commend you for holding this extremely timely and important hearing and greatly appreciate the opportunity to testify about AMCHA’s research on campus antisemitism, with a specific focus on CUNY.

Here are some important national trends that our [recent studies](#) have revealed, all of them relevant to CUNY:

- First, the majority of incidents that target Jewish students – including acts of assault, vandalism, harassment and cyberbullying – are related to the victim’s support, or perceived support, for Israel, and this number is increasing annually at an alarming rate.
 - On CUNY campuses, most of the acts targeting Jewish students for harassment have been Israel-related, and these acts have more than doubled over the last year.
- Second, there are very strong correlations between anti-Zionist rhetoric and activity, including the promotion of anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaigns, and the incidence of acts targeting Jewish students for harm. For example, schools with BDS promotion are about 3 times more likely to have such acts of aggression against Jewish and pro-Israel students. The vast majority of these incidents have been consistent with the [demands](#) of the Palestinian Campaign for an academic boycott of Israel, or Academic BDS, which seeks to ensure that Israel is not “normalized” on college campuses. Academic BDS targets Israel for demonization and delegitimization and calls for the boycotting of Israel-related exchange programs and events, yet it also involves sustained efforts to denigrate, marginalize and exclude Jewish and pro-Israel students and student groups from campus life.
 - At CUNY, recent incidents include viral social media campaigns demanding “Zionism out of CUNY,” rallies including chants of “we don’t want no Zionists here” and “Zionism is not welcome on our campus,” and numerous letters, petitions and student government and faculty statements and resolutions demanding the shutting down of CUNY’s popular education programs in Israel and singling out for denigration Jewish and pro-Israel organizations serving CUNY’s Jewish students.

- Our research has isolated two major sources of campus antisemitism:
 - The first are anti-Zionist student groups such as Students for Justice in Palestine. Schools with an anti-Zionist student group are 7 to 8 times more likely to have acts targeting Jewish and pro-Israel students.
 - At CUNY, Anti-Zionist student groups on several CUNY campuses have been responsible for nearly all the BDS activity at the University, which in turn has been linked to most of the acts targeting Jewish and pro-Israel students for harm.
 - A less well-known, but frankly far more dangerous and long-lasting source of campus antisemitism – and one which we believe deserves your immediate attention - are faculty who use their academic positions and the prestige and resources of their institutions to carry out the anti-normalization campaigns demanded by Academic BDS. While faculty have a right to support a boycott of Israel as private citizens, our studies provide strong evidence that Academic BDS-supporting faculty are increasingly bringing the boycott’s anti-normalization campaigns into their classrooms and departmentally sponsored events, which in turn incites acts targeting Jewish and pro-Israel students for harm. In fact, our studies have consistently shown that schools with Academic BDS-supporting faculty are 5 to 6 times more likely to have acts targeting Jewish students for harm.
 - Many of the nearly 300 CUNY faculty who openly support Academic BDS have participated in student and faculty union BDS efforts, and just last month the CUNY Law Faculty formally adopted a resolution calling for Academic BDS. These faculty efforts not only directly limit the educational opportunities of all CUNY students, they add academic legitimacy to the anti-normalization efforts that seriously threaten the safety and well-being of Jewish and pro-Israel students on CUNY campuses.

Given the clear evidence that there is an increasing number of CUNY faculty who use their taxpayer funded positions to promote Academic BDS-compliant, anti-normalization efforts that directly and indirectly harm students, we strongly recommend CUNY immediately institute measures that prohibit faculty from using their positions and public funds for the purpose of political advocacy and activism, including the implementation of Academic BDS.

Please see the appendices below for an overview of antisemitic activity on CUNY campuses from 2015 to present, as well as a [letter](#) from 106 civil rights, religious and education organizations that describes the harms of faculty-endorsed Academic BDS for the CUNY community and urges you to address the problem.

Thank you again for your leadership and courage in tackling this deeply disturbing problem, and for your genuine concern for the safety and well-being of Jewish students – and all students – at CUNY.

Appendix 1:

Overview of Antisemitic Activity throughout CUNY System 2015-2022

More information on AMCHA's categorization of antisemitic activity is available [here](#).

Note: *One incident can encompass different sub-classifications depending on the nature of the incident.* For example, a protest that crosses the line into taking away the freedom of speech and assembly of Jewish students *and also* involves chants that denigrate Jewish students and demonize Israel would be classified as Suppression of Speech, Denigration, and Demonization.

Since 2015, AMCHA Initiative has [logged](#) **159** incidents of antisemitic activity throughout the CUNY system, including **11** incidents involving genocidal expression, such as swastikas. A large majority of the incidents were Israel-related and consistent with the [demands](#) of the Palestinian Call for an academic boycott of Israel, or Academic BDS, whose goal is to ensure that Israel is not "normalized" on college campuses. Although Academic BDS ostensibly targets Israel for demonization and delegitimization and calls for the boycotting of Israel-related exchange programs and events, **the boycott's "anti-normalization" goal also involves the denigration, marginalization and exclusion from campus life of Jewish and pro-Israel students.**

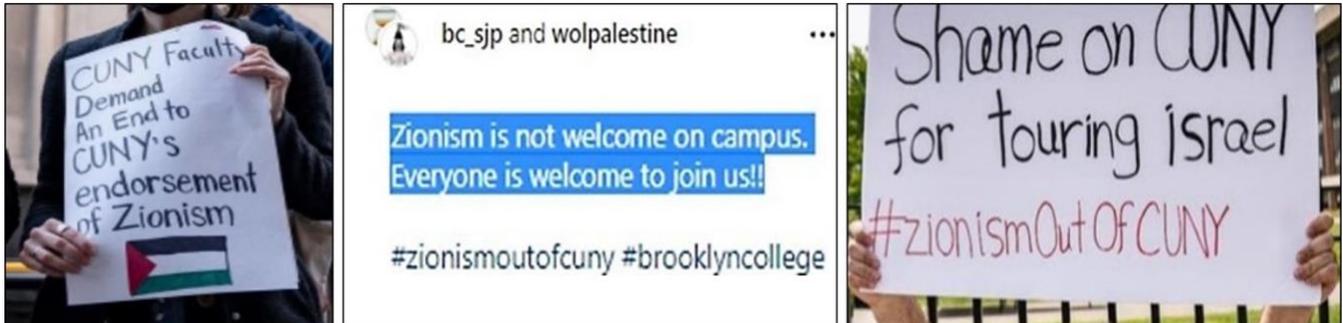
Antisemitic activity at CUNY has included:

- **64** incidents involving the direct targeting of Jewish students on campus or other Jewish members of the campus community for harmful or hateful action based on their Jewishness or perceived support for Israel, including:
 - **28** Incidents involving **Bullying of Jewish and/or Pro-Israel Supporters**
 - **24** Incidents involving the **Suppression of Speech/Movement/Assembly of Jewish and/or Pro-Israel Supporters**
 - **34** Incidents involving the **Denigration of Jewish and/or Pro-Israel Supporters**
- **116** incidents involving anti-Zionist rhetoric that goes beyond criticism of Israel and meets the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, including:
 - **102** incidents involving the **Demonization of Israel**
 - **42** incidents involving the **Denial of Jewish Self-Determination** or the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state
 - **15** Incidents involving the **Condoning of Terrorism against Jewish Israeli Civilians**
- **69** Incidents involving **Calls for BDS**
 - **13** incidents involving specific calls for **Academic BDS**

While anti-Zionist student groups are responsible for the majority of antisemitic activity on CUNY campuses, CUNY faculty committed to the anti-normalization goals of Academic BDS have played a crucial role in fomenting campus antisemitism. For example: many of the nearly 300 CUNY faculty who openly support Academic BDS have participated in student and faculty union BDS efforts, pushed their departments to sign onto formal statements demonizing Israel and condoning its elimination as a Jewish state, and played a role in the unprecedented decision of the CUNY Law Faculty to formally adopt a

resolution calling for Academic BDS. Academic BDS-supporting faculty have contributed significantly to the hostile environment for many Jewish and pro-Israel students on CUNY campuses.

**Examples of Antisemitic Expression at CUNY Involving the Harassment of Jewish
and Pro-Israel Individuals**



- “We don't want no Zionists here!”
- “Demand that Zionist Professors are not welcome on your campus.”
- “Demand that Zionist students are not in spaces where Palestinian students are.”
- “We showed Brooklyn College that Zionism is not welcome on our campus!”
- “CUNY Faculty Demand an End to CUNY'S Endorsement of Zionism.”
- “Zionism is not welcome on campus. Everyone is welcome to join us!!”
- “#ZionismOUTofCUNY”
- “Demand that our individual campuses, and CUNY as a whole, endorse and support the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel.”
- “There is only one solution, intifada revolution. The intifada does not have to be in Gaza or Palestine. We're going to have an intifada in every classroom. We're going to have an intifada on every college campus. We're going to shut down all the Zionist events. Let's shut down all the Zionists, and let's start an intifada where we are.” [Representative of SJP from CUNY City College at an off-campus rally]
- “Whereas, CUNY, including the Law School, is further directly complicit in the ongoing apartheid, genocide, and war crimes perpetrated by the state of Israel against the Palestinian people through collaboration with and yielding to pressure from organizations... a number of student organizations across CUNY... whose mission includes support for the State of Israel... These organizations include Hillel, CAMERA, StandWithUs, Bulldogs for Israel, Israel Independence Day Committee, United 4 Israel, Israel Student Association, Students Supporting Israel at City College of New York.” [From CUNY School of Law BDS Resolution endorsed by 22 student organizations, and later by CUNY Faculty of Law]

- “[A]s part of our broader support for implementing BDS at CUNY, we demand that CUNY suspend all study abroad programs in Israel and other forms of institutional collaboration with Israeli institutions.”
- “We urge students and staff at CUNY to pressure the university to cut institutional ties to Israel’s apartheid regime.”
- “A number of CUNY schools participate in Israel exchange programs, including the Brooklyn College Program Study in Israel (PSI), in collaboration with Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Haifa University, Hebrew University and Tel Aviv University, as well as the City College of New York’s student exchange program with Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, all of which are a form of propaganda, and normalize settler colonial and apartheid rule... Be it Further Resolved, that CUNY Law Student Government calls on the institution to end all Israel exchange programs.” [From CUNY School of Law BDS Resolution endorsed by 22 student organizations, and later by CUNY Faculty of Law]
- “Shame on CUNY for Touring Israel, #zionismOutofCUNY”
- “Judaism yes, Zionism no!”
- “CUNY Out of Israel.”
- “Join us to demand a shutdown of FIDF and all Zionist settler orgs in our [New York] city and worldwide.”
- “Ban all former and current Israeli army associations on campus. We demand [CUNY] Hunter College ban and terminate invitations to or reservations by the Israeli military, its members, and/or affiliates... Israeli state officials should not be welcome on our campuses.”
- “Defense tactics developed by the IDF should not be spread and promoted among [CUNY] Hunter students.”
- “If anyone today is responsible for stoking the flames of it [anti-Semitism] it’s Israel itself. It’s Zionism itself.”

Appendix 2:

**Letter from 106 Civil Rights, Religious and Education Organizations
Regarding Faculty Antisemitism at CUNY**

New York City Council
Committee on Higher Education
250 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

SENT VIA EMAIL

June 28, 2022

RE: Over 100 Organizations Urge Council Members to Address CUNY Faculty Antisemitism

Dear NYC Council Committee on Higher Education Chair Eric Dinowitz and Members Gale A. Brewer, Oswald Feliz, Charles Barron and Inna Vernikov:

We are 106 civil rights, religious and education organizations representing hundreds of thousands of individuals who are deeply concerned about the alarming rise of antisemitism on campuses across the country, and at CUNY in particular, and heartily commend you for holding this very timely and important oversight hearing to examine the problem.

Our letter concerns one significant aspect of the problem that was highlighted by the recent vote of the CUNY School of Law Faculty to endorse a [resolution](#) of the CUNY Law Student Government Association (LSGA) that “unapologetically endorses the Palestinian-led call for Boycott Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel” and demands that CUNY sever its financial and academic ties to Israel. We believe the CUNY Law Faculty’s unprecedented endorsement of the students’ resolution, particularly its call for an academic boycott of Israel, is likely to have disastrous consequences not only for Jewish and pro-Israel students at the CUNY Law School, but for students on every CUNY campus.

It’s crucial to understand that although an academic boycott of Israel claims to target Israeli universities and scholars, its implementation on U.S. campuses, such as CUNY, will directly harm students on U.S. campuses, especially those who are Jewish and pro-Israel.

First, the implementation of an academic boycott can’t help but violate the academic and civil rights of students. For example, the official academic boycott [guidelines](#) call for boycotters to work towards closing their own institution’s academic exchange programs in Israel; refuse to write letters of recommendation for their students who want to study in Israel; and disrupt or shut down educational activities about Israel or featuring Israeli scholars or leaders at their own schools. All of these actions directly subvert the educational opportunities and academic freedom of undergraduate students who want to study about or in Israel.

Second, an academic boycott of Israel directly fuels antisemitism on campus. The academic boycott guidelines call on faculty to fight against “the normalization of Israel in the global academy.” Courses taught by faculty adhering to this anti-normalization principle not only pervert a school’s academic mission by substituting anti-Israel indoctrination for education, but also foment hatred towards Israel and its supporters, a hatred that easily translates into acts of aggression towards Jewish and pro-Israel students on campus. Indeed, recent studies [corroborate](#) the fact that faculty who support an academic boycott of Israel are far more likely to include anti-Israel content in their courses, and they show a strong [correlation](#) between anti-Zionist instruction and acts targeting Jewish and pro-Israel students for harm, including assault, intimidation, destruction of property and suppression of speech.

Yet the CUNY Law Faculty, callously indifferent to how Academic BDS will subvert the educational opportunities and threaten the safety of CUNY students, has endorsed a resolution wholly consistent with the boycott’s guidelines. The LSGA resolution calls for ending popular Israel exchange programs enjoyed by many CUNY students, including the Brooklyn College Program Study in Israel and the City College of New York’s student exchange program at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, as well as shutting down collaborative research projects with Israeli academic institutions that benefit students and faculty on [ten](#) CUNY campuses. The CUNY Law Faculty-backed resolution also singles out for denigration and censure eight specific Jewish and pro-Israel organizations that serve CUNY’s more than 15,000 Jewish students. Accusing the groups of being “directly complicit in the ongoing apartheid, genocide, and war crimes perpetrated by the state of Israel... in order to generate support for [Z]ionism amongst Jewish students in the US,” the resolution draws upon blatantly antisemitic tropes to defame both Israel and the CUNY students associated with these Jewish and pro-Israel organizations.

Even before the CUNY Law Faculty voted to endorse the LSGA resolution, the anti-Israel rhetoric and BDS promotion of anti-Zionist students and student groups had created a toxic environment for many Jewish and pro-Israel students at CUNY, with some reporting they had been harassed and even assaulted on campus because of their presumed support for Israel. Now that the CUNY Law Faculty has given its full-throated support to a boycott of Israel that not only violates students’ educational rights but incites hatred towards the Jewish state and its on-campus supporters, antisemitism is likely to skyrocket on CUNY campuses.

While we acknowledge that academic freedom protects the right of individual faculty members to express extramural support for Academic BDS – and nearly 300 CUNY faculty members have done just that – the unprecedented decision of an entire faculty body at a publicly funded law school to privilege anti-Zionist advocacy and activism above concern for the educational welfare and physical and emotional safety of CUNY students crosses a line that should be absolutely unacceptable to university administrators and lawmakers.

We urge your committee to take action to ensure that CUNY adequately protects the educational and civil rights and ensures the safety and well-being of Jewish and pro-Israel students – and all students – by creating new legislative regulations and insisting CUNY institute measures that directly prohibit faculty from using their university positions and public funds for the purpose of political advocacy and activism, including the implementation of an academic boycott of Israel.

We thank you for your consideration of our concerns and for your leadership.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned Organizations:

Academic Council for Israel
Alliance for Israel
Alliance of Blacks and Jews
Alpha Epsilon Pi Fraternity (AEPi)
Alums for Campus Fairness - Tufts
Alums for Campus Fairness - UC Davis
Alums for Campus Fairness - UC Riverside
Alums for Campus Fairness - UCLA
Amariah
AMCHA Initiative
America Israel Cooperative Enterprise
American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists
American Council of Trustees and Alumni
American Friends of Tel Aviv University
American Jewish Congress
American Society of the University of Haifa
American Truth Project
American Values
Americans Fighting Antisemitism
Americans for Ben Gurion University
Americans for Peace and Tolerance
Atlanta Israel Coalition
B'nai B'rith International
BEAR: Bias Education, Advocacy & Resources
Binghamton University Zionist Organization (BUZO)
Boston Israel Action Committee
Bulldogs for Israel (Brooklyn College)
CAFI - CUNY Alliance for Inclusion
California Association of Scholars
CAMERA Education Institute
CAMERA on Campus
Campus Anti-Semitism Task Force of the North Shore
Chabad at Brooklyn College
Christians and Jews United for Israel
Club Z
Coalition for Jewish Values
Combat Anti-Semitism Movement
Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis (CAMERA)
Creative Community for Peace
Davis Faculty for Israel
Eagles Wings
Education Without Indoctrination
#EndJewHatred
Endowment for Middle East Truth (EMET)
Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)
Fight Back Now
Five Synagogues of White Plains Israel Advocacy Committee
Grandchildren of Holocaust Survivors
Herut North America, U.S. Division

Hillel at Baruch, City, John Jay, Pace, SVA, Fordham, FIT & The New School
Institute for Black Solidarity with Israel
Iranian American Jewish Federation
Iranian Jewish Women's Organization
Israel in NYC
Israel Matters
Israel Peace Initiative (IPI)
Israeli-American Civic Action Network
Israeli-American Civic Education Institute
Ithaca Area United Jewish Community
JAM
Jerusalem Education Fund
Jewish American Affairs Committee of Indiana
Jewish Student Coalition of New York City (JSCNY)
Jewish War Veterans of the USA
Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa (JIMENA)
Kehilat Rayim Ahuvim
Michigan Jewish Action Council
Middle East Forum
Middle East Political and Information Network (MEPIN)
National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel
National Council of Young Israel
National Jewish Advocacy Center
NH4Israel
North Carolina Coalition for Israel
PeerK12
Philos Project
Proclaiming Justice to the Nations
Rabbinical Alliance of America
Rhode Island Coalition for Israel
Russian Jewish Community Foundation
Scholars for Peace in the Middle East
Simon Wiesenthal Center
Stop Anti-Semitism Now
Stop BDS on Campus
StopAntisemitism
Students and Faculty for Equality at CUNY (S.A.F.E. CUNY)
Students and Parents Against Campus Anti-Semitism
Students Supporting Israel at City College of New York
Students Supporting Israel at Columbia
Students Supporting Israel National
Swarthmore Alumni Against Antisemitism on Campus
The Israel Christian Nexus
The Jewish Center
The Lawfare Project
The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America
The World Mizrachi Movement
Women's League for Conservative Judaism
World Jewish Congress North America

Young Israel of Avenue K
Young Israel of Bedford
Young Israel of Midwood
Young Israel of New Rochelle
Young Israel of Scarsdale
Young Israel of Staten Island
Zachor Legal Institute
Zionist Organization of America

Cc: New York Council Jewish Caucus
CUNY Chancellor Felix V. Matos Rodriguez
CUNY Board of Trustees
CUNY School of Law Dean Eduardo R.C. Capulong
Incoming CUNY School of Law Dean Sudha Setty

Alyza D. Lewin – Written Testimony
NY City Council Higher Education Committee Hearing

June 30, 2022

My name is Alyza Lewin. I am president of the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, a non-profit organization headquartered in Washington, DC, that utilizes legal initiatives to combat anti-Semitism with a particular focus on university campuses. Our mission is to advance the civil and human rights of the Jewish people and promote justice for all.

Thank you, Chairman Dinowitz for holding this hearing, and Councilwoman Vernikov for inviting me to testify today.

In my work at the Brandeis Center, I speak almost daily to students and faculty who are experiencing anti-Semitism. On campuses today Jewish students and faculty are being marginalized and excluded, particularly from progressive spaces.

Unfortunately, university administrators misunderstand what they are witnessing. They mistakenly think that what is taking place on campus is a political debate. It's not.

The reason that anti-Semitism is increasing and not decreasing on campus is because university administrators are mis-diagnosing the problem. They are treating the situation as a "speech issue" rather than recognizing the marginalization, harassment, and discrimination that is taking place.

What is happening today on campuses and beyond is part of an organized well-funded strategy to marginalize pro-Israel Zionists and deny them a place in society. Today, there are student groups that demonize "Zionism" and falsely equate it with "ethnic cleansing, destruction, mass expulsion, apartheid and death" in order to label Jews who support Israel as pariahs.

Historically and legally, Judaism is understood to be both a faith and an ethnicity. Jews share not only religious traditions, but also a deep historical sense of Jewish peoplehood. The Jewish people's history, theology, and culture are deeply intertwined with the Land of Israel.¹ For many Jews, expressing support for the Jewish homeland is a sincere and deeply felt expression of the Jewish people's shared ancestral, religious, and ethnic identification with the Land of Israel.

For centuries Jews have not only prayed facing Jerusalem. They have prayed for the Jewish return to Jerusalem. This "yearning for Zion" and the recognition of Israel as the historic, ancestral Jewish homeland is the glue that kept Jews connected for millennia. It is now under attack.

To be a "Zionist" means to support the right of Jewish self-determination in the ancestral homeland of the Jews. Those who oppose Zionism deny Jews this right. Judea Pearl, the father of

¹ Alyza D. Lewin, *Zionism: The Integral Component of Jewish Identity that Jews are Historically Pressured to Shed*, 26 ISRAEL AFFAIRS 330 (2020), available at <https://brandeiscenter.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/By-Alyza-D.-Lewin-Zionism-the-integral-component-of-Jewish-identity.pdf>.

the late journalist Daniel Pearl, coined a term for this. He calls it “Zionophobia:” an irrational fear or hatred of a homeland for the Jewish people.

For many Jews, Zionism is as integral to Jewish identity as observing the Jewish Sabbath or maintaining a kosher diet. Of course, not all Jews observe the Sabbath or keep kosher, but those who do clearly are expressing important components of their Jewish identity. Similarly, not all Jews are Zionists. But for many Jews, identifying with and expressing support for the Jewish homeland is also a sincere and deeply felt expression of their Jewish ethnic identity.

Today Jewish students are being pressured to shed this part of their Jewish identity in order to be accepted in student clubs, or even to feel welcome on campus or comfortable in their classroom.

The climate on campus is hostile to this part of their Jewish identity. Jewish students and faculty feel compelled to disavow their ethnic and ancestral connection to their historic homeland because only then are they welcomed on campus.

Pressuring a Jewish student to shed the Zionist part of their Jewish identity is no different than demanding that a student stop observing the Jewish Sabbath, or stop keeping a kosher diet in order to gain admission. It’s comparable to demanding that a Catholic student disavow the Vatican, or a Muslim student shed his/her connection to Mecca. No community other than the Jewish community is being charged such a high price for admission.

Harassing, marginalizing, demonizing, and excluding these Jewish students or faculty on the basis of the Zionist component of their Jewish identity is just as discriminatory and unlawful as attacking a Jewish student or faculty member for observing the Sabbath or keeping kosher.

In the United States, our laws are designed to protect individuals from this type of harassment and discrimination.

It is important, therefore, that we recognize what is happening as harassment and discrimination. Ostracizing, marginalizing, and excluding pro-Israel Zionists on the basis of their identity is not a “speech” issue. It is unlawful conduct and must be confronted as such.

Zionists must be recognized by universities as a protected class. When Jewish students are denied admission to a club because they are Zionists that is denial of admission on the basis of the student’s national/ethnic identity. It is a protected status. If the university refuses to recognize that basic fact, then no amount of “listening sessions” will cure the problem.

It is imperative that universities like CUNY provide mandatory training for administrators, faculty, and students to educate them so that they become sensitive to this form of harassment and discrimination. They must recognize it, address it, and take steps to eliminate the hostile environment created by this form of harassment and discrimination.

Listening sessions are not sufficient. Universities like CUNY should promptly enroll in programs like Hillel International’s Campus Climate Initiative which will educate their communities to properly recognize this form of anti-Semitic harassment and discrimination.

Notifying students where to file complaints is meaningless if the investigators who receive those complaints will mistakenly dismiss the complaints as a speech issue when what the student has really experienced is marginalization on the basis of the student's Jewish identity.

If universities fail to properly train their administrators to recognize this harassment and discrimination, and they, therefore, fail to handle the matter appropriately, the universities risk potential legal liability.

It is imperative that government bodies hold universities accountable when they fail to protect Jewish students from anti-Semitic harassment and discrimination. This council can play a key role in helping ensure that universities take such action.

Thank you for convening this hearing. It is an important first step.

At the hearing Councilwoman Inna Vernikov asked me two questions, I have supplemented this written testimony with my responses to her questions.

(1) Can you describe the impact of BDS campaigns on Jewish Zionist students on campus?

Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaigns – particularly when they involve referendums that require all the students on campus to vote – create a litmus test on campus that places Jewish Zionist students on the “wrong” side of the issue. The referendums are designed to force students to choose a side. Either the student votes “for” the referendum, which places the student on the “correct” side – the side presumably fighting “for” social and racial justice - or the student votes against – which brands the student as a “racist, oppressor” and part of the problem. Jews who support Israel cannot vote “for” the BDS referendums that intrinsically deny Israel's right to exist. But voting “against” forces those students into pariah status.

(2) Can you discuss Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) – Are they generally a student group that is interested in dialogue?

Years ago, before COVID, Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) used to post the goals for their annual (in-person) student conferences on the internet. Those statements are still available on archived web pages.

In 2018, for example, they posted a description of their goals regarding “Zionism.”² In that statement, they called Zionism “ethnic cleansing, destruction, mass expulsion, apartheid and death.” They also noted that Zionism “can be destroyed” and Zionism “can be broken down and

² The “goals” for SJP's 2018 national conference are available at this link:
<https://web.archive.org/web/20200713012417/https://www.nationalsjp.org/2018-conference.html>

dismantled.” And finally, they explained that at the conference they would not only talk theory. Instead, they said they would also “focus on developing actionable local and regional campaigns with clear targets.”

If you are calling Zionism “ethnic cleansing, destruction, mass expulsion, apartheid and death” and if you are saying that Zionism can be “destroyed,” “broken down,” and “dismantled,” you are not interested in having a dialogue about Zionism or learning how Zionism may be integral to Jewish identity. And if you say that you are going to develop “actionable local and regional campaigns with clear targets,” who are your targets? Your “targets” – for harassment and discrimination (not for dialogue or even debate) - are pro-Israel Zionist Jews.

In addition, SJP has, at some universities, used a map (see Exhibit A) that labels all of Israel as “occupied territory.”³ “Israel” does not exist on this map. The entire area is called “Palestine.”

This map is not distributed by a group that seeks to dialogue about the policies of the government of Israel. This map is promoted by a group that seeks to destroy the one and only Jewish state of Israel.

³ This map is consistent with the “goals” posted by SJP before its 2019 Conference – which are available at this link:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20200713014004/https://www.nationalsjp.org/2019-conference.html>

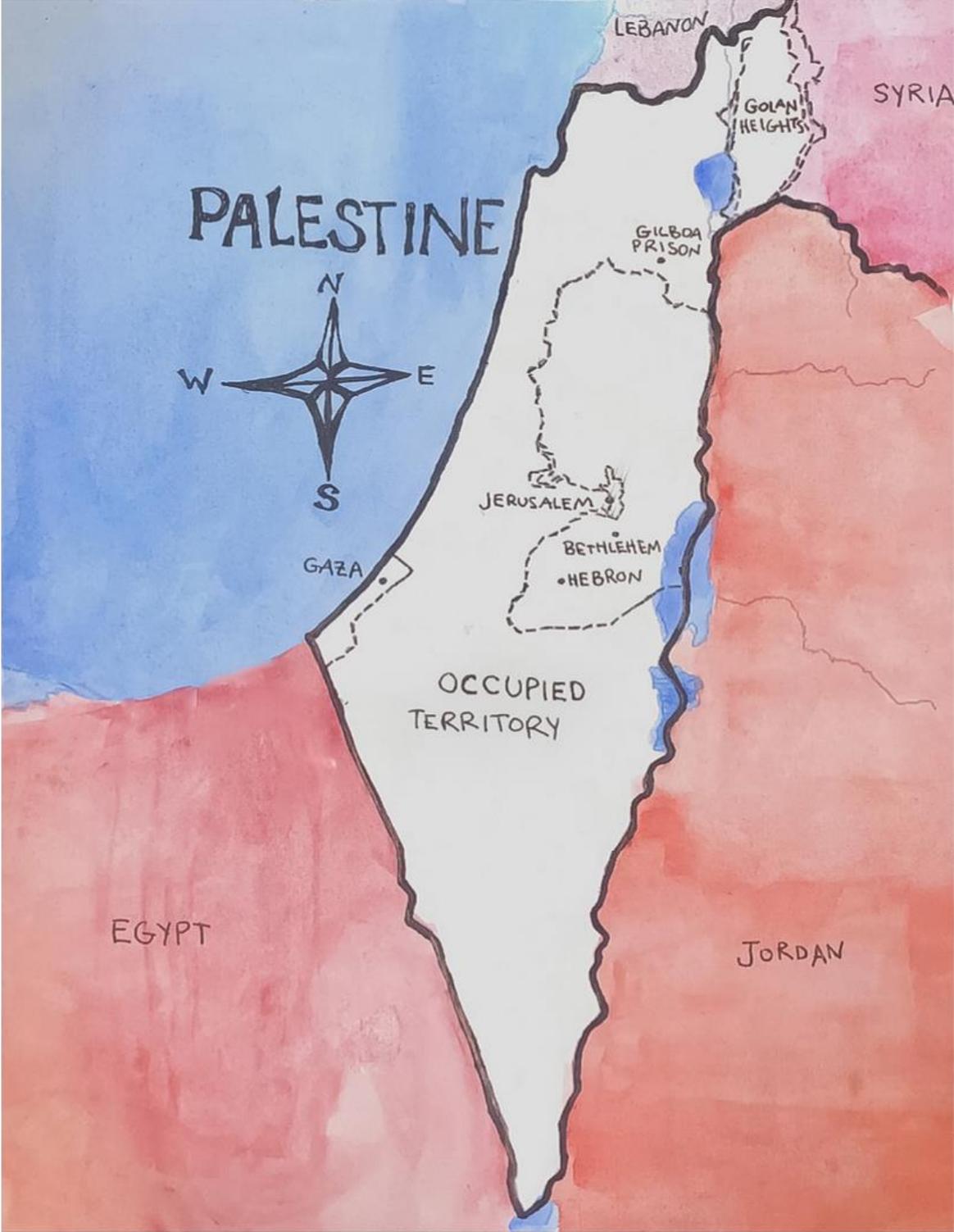


Exhibit A



**New York City Council's Committee on Higher Education
Oversight: Examining Antisemitism on College Campuses**

Thursday, June 30, 2022
10:00 a.m.
250 Broadway, New York

AJC New York Testimony: T2022-1616

Delivered by Josh Kramer, Director, AJC New York

Dear Chairman Dinowitz and members of the Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for calling this important hearing. My name is Josh Kramer, and I am the Director of AJC New York, the New York City regional office of the American Jewish Committee. AJC New York translates the global and national mission of AJC's Jewish advocacy work to the local level. Today, we are discussing the most pertinent issue facing the Jewish community in New York City, home to the largest Jewish diaspora in the world. Antisemitism is called the world's oldest hatred. Indeed, Jews have been the targets of unabashed hate for millennia, leading to antisemitic canards like marginalization, violent persecution, and genocide.

Seventy-seven years since the most notorious Nazi concentration camp, Auschwitz, was liberated and the Holocaust ended, the Jewish community here in New York—where so many Holocaust survivors found new hope and their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren have built futures—is grappling with surging antisemitism. Anti-Jewish conspiracy theories are skyrocketing; white nationalists are publicly chanting “Jews will not replace us,” public figures are accusing us of dual loyalty, and horrific anti-Jewish hatred in academic spaces has become alarmingly common—hatred that has caused the shameful censure of Jewish campus organizations and individual Jewish students alike.

The antisemitism manifesting in New York City is unique. While there is considerable traditional, violent antisemitism permeating the city, much of this antisemitism manifests in far-left anti-Israel rhetoric and discrimination, particularly on college campuses. Hillels—the centers of Jewish life on campus—have been excluded from events, Holocaust commemorations have been interrupted by protests, Jewish students have been singled out in the classroom, and insidious antisemitism has continued to pervade the culture and social lives of students on campus. With each swastika graffitied on campus buildings, BDS resolution introduced in student government, and mezuzah stolen from a student's dorm room, we know that

antisemitism is rapidly seeping into the mainstream, no longer confined to the dark corners of the internet or fringe politics. Antisemitism should not and cannot be tolerated anywhere, but especially not here in New York City, home to more than 1.7 million Jews—especially not on college campuses, and certainly not under the guise of punishing Jewish students for supporting Israel, the only Jewish state in the entire world.

Let me be clear: the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement is a sinister, antisemitic movement whose sole purpose is to isolate Israel diplomatically, culturally, academically, and economically to undermine Israel's very legitimacy. The AJC official policy is as follows: AJC reaffirms the right of citizens and governments to criticize Israel. Freedoms of speech, thought, and conscience are fundamental values underpinning our democratic society and critical to our academic institutions. But when a movement seeks to delegitimize Israel's right to exist, singles Israel out for censure while holding no other nation to the same standard, or irrationally demonizes the world's only Jewish state simply because it is the world's only Jewish state, then criticism of Israel has ceased to be admissible. We cannot validate antisemitism under the guise of anti-Israel sentiment when the sentiment itself seeks to isolate and punish Jews.

According to AJC's landmark State of Antisemitism in America report, released in October 2021, the U.S. general public is largely unfamiliar with the BDS movement, with 52% of Americans not having any familiarity with it at all. However, those who did express familiarity with the movement contend that it has antisemitic elements, with two-thirds of Americans reporting it to be mostly antisemitic or having antisemitic supporters and 82% of the American Jewish population saying the same. These survey results, though troubling, give us hope that education about the antisemitic foundation, execution, and ramifications of the BDS movement is crucial for universities to combat the anti-Israel and anti-Jewish rhetoric pervading college campuses.

American Jewish college students need tangible action and policy change to ensure that vile antisemitism does not disrupt or derail their higher education. To combat pernicious antisemitism on college campuses, I implore you to adopt a formal condemnation of the BDS movement and provide training to faculty and student leaders on not just traditional antisemitism but new antisemitism in the twenty-first century, which manifests as anti-Zionism. AJC stands behind CUNY and academia, where free thought must prosper and be protected, but also where antisemitic actions that undermine the safety of Jewish students under the guise of opposition to Israel's very existence must be condemned and decisively rejected.



Office of Diversity and Equity Programs

2900 Bedford Avenue • Brooklyn, NY 11210
TEL 718-951-4128 • FAX 718-951-4109
www.brooklyn.cuny.edu

June 28, 2022

Aliyah Jacobson
aliyahyechiail@gmail.com
Sent Via Electronic Mail

Re: Response to Complaint – Office of Diversity and Equity Programs

Dear Aliyah Jacobson,

The Office of Diversity and Equity Programs has reviewed the allegations in your Report of Alleged Misconduct from CUNY's Legal Affairs and General Counsel's Office. We have also reviewed the report of filed on May 7, 2022 with the Office of Public Safety at Brooklyn College.

You stated the following:

- "On May 4, 2021, Students for Justice in Palestine wrote on their instagram as a response to our Israeli Independence Day Celebration on the quad, "Zionists are not welcome on campus. Everyone is welcome on campus". This wouldn't be written about any other minority group or accepted."
- "Then when I shared something I shouldn't have on Bulldogs for Israel as the official president of the club, they had an Arab man call me in the middle of the night to scare me and ask to sit down and talk and if I could cook for him."
- The post you shared on the Bulldogs for Israel Instagram page stated the following:
 - o "Heads up to my CUNY friends at Brooklyn college celebrating Yom Haatzmaut Thursday: SJP (including Nerdeen, the women who calls Zionists legitimate targets, and the leader of the marches that have been an excuse for antisemites to beat up Jewish people) intends to protect the event at Brooklyn College. These people are violent and have harmed several Jews in NYC. Be prepared to defend yourself. (DM me if you want pepper spray & you don't know where to get it). If you're one of our Krav Maga students, you know what to do. Bring loud music with speakers to drown out their screaming (they can't back up their arguments so they usually just scream into a bullhorn). Celebrate. Wave your flags. Embrace one another. They want you to be afraid. They want you to hide. Be happy and proud. We have survived far worse than them. #amisrealchai [Israel flag]"
- You stated that after you made this post the "Arabic man's voice" that called you from a number that was unfamiliar to you said, "'Hello, can we sit down tonight", "It is Ramadan, I need you to cook for me", and "My wife is a terrible cook, I need you to cook for me". You stated, "I have no proof that it was Students for Justice in Palestine but as they were they

ones calling out me reshared words and making them spread everywhere." You said Students for Justice in Palestine was "furious" with your post.

- You stated that the director from Tanager Hillel, Nadya Drickman, blocked you from using the instagram account. You stated that she also tried to make you sign a statement taking responsibility for the post.
- You stated, "I reported the misconduct to judicial affairs and student government when we had a hearing over my story and my club was suspended which it has now been unsuspected."
- You stated, "While the statements were harmful, this has been a general attitude and conduct held on campus that antisemitism is ok because freedom of speech and that is how the Palestinian students are expressing their frustrations with the continued conflict in the middle east. What they don't realize is that we are not the Israeli government and that we need to stop being blamed for the mistakes there and that the Palestinians verbally and online harrassing us on campus and online is not going to help bring peace in the middle east, but will instead make us afraid to walk on campus."

Our office has purview to investigate complaints alleging discrimination and sexual harassment, pursuant to the CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct and CUNY Policy on Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination. Based on the aforementioned, your interview with our office and the information provided to our office, there is insufficient evidence to meet the standard necessary to permit investigation into your report at this time. Accordingly, our office will take no further action regarding your report at this time.

Sincerely,

Anthony Brown, Esq.
Chief Diversity Officer and
Special Assistant to the President

Testimony on behalf of:
Columbia University in the City of New York
Office of Government & Community Affairs
302 Low Library
June 30, 2022

The New York City Council Committee on Higher Education
Oversight: Examining Antisemitism on College Campuses

Columbia University is grateful for the opportunity to submit testimony in advance of the Committee's oversight hearing on this important topic. Below is a relevant statement delivered by Columbia President Lee C. Bollinger to the University Senate Plenary on March 6, 2020, followed by a June 7, 2021 letter from President Bollinger to the Columbia community addressing antisemitic violence.

Statement of Lee C. Bollinger to Columbia University Senate Plenary
March 6, 2020

I want to speak about a difficult matter – about a concern I have regarding the risk of a rising anti-Semitism on our campus. Any bigotry and prejudice toward groups is intolerable, especially (for all the obvious reasons) within a university, and we should be quick to condemn its presence in any form and in any context. In my life, I have tried to do so, whether it be racism, sexism, homophobia, anti-Arab, anti-Muslim, anti-Asian, or any other kind. Over the past year, I have increasingly become concerned about anti-Semitism, and I feel it is important for me to say something now.

There is an upcoming vote among undergraduate students on a proposal to recommend that the University divest from companies doing business with Israel involving the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. There is no question that this is a highly contentious issue, both the underlying issues of Israel and the Palestinians and the idea of divestment as a means of protest about Israel's policies.

I do not support the proposal for divestment. That is for two reasons. One is the longstanding understanding that the University should not change its investment policies on the basis of a political position unless there is a broad consensus within the

institution that to do so is morally and ethically compelled. This is a necessary though not sufficient condition. I do not believe that consensus exists with respect to this proposal.

But I disagree on the merits, too. I believe this imposes a standard on this particular political issue that is not right when one considers similar issues in other countries and in other contexts around the world. To my mind that is unwise, analytically flawed, and violates my sense of fairness and proportionality. I well understand that some others whom I respect hold different views, but, if I am called upon to take a position, this is the one I have come to over the years.

My concern today, however, is not just with this proposal, but with the broader atmosphere in which this and other related issues are being debated. Feelings are charged. Divestment is a piece of a larger and controversial BDS movement. That movement is itself but a variant on a vast and ever-present debate about Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, the Middle East, the region and from there outward to the rest of the world. Critical matters are at stake, to be sure. But what must be avoided at all costs, and what I fear is happening today, is a process of mentality that goes from hard-fought debates about very real and vital issues to hostility and even hatred toward all members of groups of people simply by virtue of a religious, racial, national, or ethnic relationship. This must not happen.

No single issue is an island. When a swastika appears on campus, it is not just an isolated event. When there is a rising anti-Semitism in this country and around the world, even a single instance of it in any context is more alarming than it might otherwise be.

I plead with everyone on our campus to be careful and vigilant against legitimate debate turning into anger, then to hatred and demonization, and invidious discrimination.

I can say that Jewish students are feeling this, and it's wrong. I feel it, and it's wrong. We all feel it, and it's wrong.

These are delicate matters to talk about. Atmosphere is elusive. It is easy to dismiss feelings of insecurity and affront as being too sensitive. Many groups suffer forms of discrimination and prejudice that are unacceptable, and to single out any one for concern is to risk being accused of neglecting the others unmentioned.

Furthermore, there are often, as here, excessive claims of hostility that one does not want to legitimate by referring to lesser but still very real problems. With respect to anti-Semitism, there are now assertions by outsiders that Columbia is an “anti-Semitic” institution with systemic bigotry. This is, of course, preposterous. No Jewish student, faculty member, or staff I know believes this to be the case; nor do I. But the absurdity of the claim does not and should not stop me or us from speaking out against instances and episodes of anti-Semitism that do exist.

I view it as my responsibility to say when I see something that should concern us. I do so now, and ask that we all work to ensure that the debates we have about debatable matters be done in good faith and with a sense of shared humanity, and with respect.

Statement on Antisemitic Violence

June 7, 2021

Dear fellow members of the Columbia community:

I write to express my deep concern about the recent increase in antisemitic violence in New York and in cities around the country. These attacks are an abomination. We reject antisemitism and the division and fear that perpetrators of these hate crimes seek to sow to disrupt the fabric of our shared humanity.

We deal with a lot of hard issues at Columbia, issues that divide us and provoke robust debate. But some issues are not hard, and this is one of them: Violent physical attacks and harassment of people because of their religious, racial, national, or ethnic identity are never acceptable, whether directed against people who are Jewish or Palestinian or anyone else.

As hate crimes are being documented at historic high levels, we redouble our commitment to creating a community that respects the fundamental dignity and human rights of all our members and that, most emphatically, rejects all forms of bigotry. If you, or someone you know, experiences bias, we encourage you to report it to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action or to contact your Dean of Students.

Sincerely,

Lee C. Bollinger

Statement on the Singular Hostilities to Israel and Jews at CUNY
Hearing of the Higher Education Committee of the New York City Council on
Antisemitism on College Campuses
June 30, 2022

Azriel Genack
Distinguished Professor of Physics
Queens College and The Graduate Center of the City University of New York
CUNY Alliance for Inclusion

I would like to thank the chair and members of the Higher Education Committee of the New York City Council for calling this meeting to examine antisemitism on college campuses.

Growing up in New York City, I believed that antisemitism was a disease of the past. It has therefore been deeply unsettling to witness the resurgence at the City University of a unique antipathy to one nation, Israel, the state of the Jewish People. Resolutions of the PSC-CUNY faculty and staff union and the students and faculty of the CUNY School of Law declare that Israel embodies every evil that mankind is capable of and that academic freedom must be jettisoned in order to boycott Israeli scholars and universities.

The demonization of Jews as interlopers who grasp what they are not entitled to has been used to nurture grievance and build cohesion in movements through the ages. In the current iteration, it is the Jewish state, Israel, that is fast becoming the focal point of demonic evil for many American academics, especially in the social sciences. Now the Jews, who have been reviled as foreigners in lands they have inhabited for centuries, are labelled “settler colonialists” when they establish a state in their ancient homeland after accepting an internationally endorsed partition of the British Mandate of Palestine into land set aside for Arab and Jewish Palestinians. They are accused of massacring Palestinians and committing genocide, though it is Israel that makes every effort to avoid war and casualties of their attackers and sues for peace, and Palestinians who proclaim that they will annihilate the Jews and will not accept any peace agreement that leaves Israel standing. The war against Israel waged on college campuses challenges our democracy, which rests upon shared truths and the willingness of citizens to stand up to illiberal voices, no matter how incessant, excessive, insistent, and pervasive they are,

These resolutions reach across the globe to the Middle East, a region roiled by ethnic and religious conflicts to condemn the only democracy in the region which works to ensure the rights of all its citizens. Israel is challenged as no nation on earth is since it seeks to maintain both democracy and security while faced with an adversary sworn to use every means to destroy it and which incites its people against Israel from the youngest age. The ongoing effort to erase Israel in the region and around the globe demonstrates the need for the state of Israel as a haven for Jews. Tragically, unlike other people in the Middle East who accepted partition of the Ottoman Empire into nation states, Palestinian Arabs declared then, as they do now that they will never accept the state of Israel. This has meant that the British Mandatory government did not accept Jewish refugees when doing so would have saved them from annihilation and that Palestinians remain the only people who were not resettled within a more ethnically

homogeneous environment from among the tens of millions of refugees in the aftermath of World War II.

Academia, which should be engaged in the unfettered search for truth, has become the stomping ground of BDS, the campaign to limit academic freedom so that only one side of an issue can be heard. This places CUNY on a trajectory of becoming a re-education center rather than a center of learning and discovery, an enforcer of ideological conformity rather than a battleground of ideas, and a force for exclusion rather than inclusion.

The singular hostility to Israel is devastating to heroic Palestinians who yearn for peace. It strengthens their authoritarian and terrorist leaders and stifles ties between Palestinians and Israelis that alone can bring stability and peace to the region.

In a world that moves forward by engagement and not by boycotts, by opening rather than closing doors, CUNY can lead the way. Chancellor Matos Rodriguez and many CUNY College Presidents recently visited Israel to build bridges with scholars at Israeli universities who are at the forefront of innovation and cultural integration of all segments of Israel's society. Recently, the inauguration of the Photonics Initiative at CUNY's Advanced Science Research Center was celebrated by its initiating the US/Middle East Conference on Photonics, which highlighted the contributions of scientists from all countries in the Middle East and called for the free exchange of ideas. Many at the City University see strengthened connection among all peoples in the Middle East as the road towards peace. We call on the City Council to insist that CUNY and all universities in our city live up to their mandates to push the boundaries of knowledge and break down antagonisms, and to create a campus climate in which no student needs do hide their identity to feel safe.

In a resolution of the PSC-CUNY last June which demonizes, delegitimizes, and applies a double standard to Israel as it condemns Israel for defending itself, the union also "condemns racism in all forms, including anti-Semitism." It is clear the union needs help identifying its own antisemitism. It would therefore be a great boon to union members and to the citizens of New York for the New York City Council to be a model for universities in New York City by adopting a meaningful definition of antisemitism. Governor Hochul has recently highlighted the widely recognized definition of antisemitism of the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance](#) (IHRA), which has been adopted by the US Department of State. This definition places no limit on speech but provides a tool for gauging when speech has crossed the line into antisemitism. This definition encourages spirited dialogue about the Middle East and makes clear that criticism of Israel, were it similar to criticism leveled against any other country, would not be considered to be antisemitic.

I would like to invite the members of the City Council and the citizens of New York to visit the website of our group, the [CUNY Alliance for Inclusion](#). The website presents a deep look at Israel and attempts to demonize it and the hostility experienced by students at CUNY. We invite you to sign the [CUNY Community Statement](#) Encouraging Mutual Respect and Engagement Towards a Just Middle East Peace and a CUNY Free of Harassment. Our group presents a series of seminars and discussions, which can be viewed along with a seminars and articles from a broad range of sources that present a full picture of Israel and its place in the Middle East.

CUNY and other Jewish Student Testimonials

1. “A student on my campus, John Jay, posted a story on Instagram saying “we need a Hitler again”. When I saw it, I couldn’t believe my eyes. My grandparents are Holocaust survivors. How could it be that a member of my campus community, in 2021, was calling for another Holocaust? For the murder of Jews? This hit close to home for me. This wasn’t the first antisemitic incident I experienced, so not long after, I decided to transfer out of John Jay for next year.”
 - a. **Freshman at John Jay College of Criminal Justice**

2. “Since the start of the pandemic, in-person events have not been allowed for clubs at John Jay. When Hillel wanted to post opportunities on social media that students could take advantage of in-person, such as an internship or a Birthright trip, we were told this was not permitted. But not only did MSA (Muslim Student Association) post an in-person rally in support of BDS, but it was permitted to take place in-person AND on-campus. This is the application of a double standard. At the rally, my peers shouted “there is only one solution: Intifada Revolution!” Students on my campus called for the murder of innocent Jews. When we return back to campus in the fall, I am afraid for my physical safety.”
 - a. **Sophomore at John Jay College of Criminal Justice**

3. “I am a proud recent graduate of Baruch College. I appreciate everything that Baruch has given me over the last four years in my pursuit of a career in business. However, during graduation, I started to feel differently about the place in which I had spent the last four years. The valedictorian is a Jewish woman. She shared her religious identity in an amazing speech, and mentioned that her grandparents were Holocaust survivors. She didn’t say anything about Israel or the Middle East. Yet, the virtual chat was bombarded with messages with “Free Palestine.”
 - a. **Recent graduate from Baruch College**

4. “I’m in the leadership of Hillel at Baruch and help out with running the social media. Since the war started between Israel and Hamas, our account blew up with negative, antisemitic, and anti-Zionist messages from Baruch students. These included direct messages, comments on posts, and sharing our posts with hateful messages. I was so overwhelmed by the hate, negativity and antisemitism, not only on the Hillel account, but also from peers on my personal account, that I had to take a complete break from social media altogether.”
 - a. **Junior at Baruch College**

5. “The purpose of student government is to represent all students - in all of our differences and diversity. The student government at City College has failed to do this by posting one-sided hateful statements against Israel accusing it of genocide. As a Jewish and Zionist student, I feel alone and isolated by student leaders and peers who fail to recognize my community.”
 - a. **Junior at City College**

6. "I was sitting in the classroom and the teacher said that he was being observed by a dean or something, and he said 'don't you all jump and do a Heil Hitler to make me look good!' And then he did the Heil Hitler salute to illustrate how we would be very active in his class. Everybody laughed. As far as I know there are only two Jewish students in this class. We looked at each other horrified. The scarier part was the laughing response from the students! How come no one thought that the professor was inappropriate? I felt so uncomfortable for the rest of the semester."

a. Freshman at John Jay College

7. "We were having our weekly gathering on the Jay Walk, an outdoor space at John Jay College. We were eating pizza and hanging out. There were about 20 Jewish students gathered in the corner of the area. Students were throwing a frisbee nearby and looking over at us. We had our Israel flag hanging on the bench. One of the students playing on the grass kept getting closer to us, and at one point he ran through our space and our event, aggressively knocking over the pizza and some of the other students. We reported this incident.

a. Junior at John Jay College

8. "There was a large 'return to campus' tabling event with all of the clubs and students organizations. We had our Hillel table and we were promoting Birthright amongst many other things. We had an Israeli flag displayed on our table. On the other side of the room, Students for Justice in Palestine had their table. They walked over to our table and started waving a very large Paletinian flag in front of our table for almost 10 minutes, screaming 'Free Palestine.' We had to alert the Public Safety to ask them to move away from our table."

a. Senior at John Jay College

9. "In my communications class at Baruch College, the professor used Hitler as an example when explaining something. She said that he was a successful artist, and if 'Hitler didn't do what he was doing, she would have loved to meet him.'"

a. Freshman at Baruch College

10. We pray Mincha every day at Baruch College. Since we don't have any space to pray, we have had to pray in the hallway. One day about 15 of us were praying quietly and someone walked by and said 'dirty Jews!' The other boys had to hold me back.

a. Junior at Baruch College

11. "Student Council at John Jay consistently shares content from Students for Justice in Palestine, from a "Nakba Day" rally (where participants chanted "Globalize the Intifada" - a call for murdering innocent Jews), and general anti-Israel sentiments. When Hillel asked Student Council if they could share their event for Holocaust Remembrance Day, Student Council ignored the message, and then finally responded after the event was over saying it was too late."

a. Senior at John Jay College

12. "My freshman year, there was a swastika found in a bathroom at John Jay. As a Jewish student, I felt afraid to walk on campus. I thought this was supposed to be a school for justice."

a. Junior at John Jay College

13. "In an English class at John Jay College, the teacher was presenting what an argumentative paper would look like, and he said that we choose a subject to discuss and argue for. He said for example, you could write about 'Free Palestine!' And then he described the righteousness of their goals and how they fought for their rights and the rights of all indigenous and brown people. I was appalled! I couldn't believe that he would choose this topic as the example for argumentative papers!"
 - a. **Sophomore at John Jay College**

14. "The Student Council president at John Jay had never sent an email to the entire student body. In May, we received the only mass email from the student president. The statement completely denies Israel's right to exist and accuses "Zionists" (read: Jews) of "whitewashing" a narrative of "Israel's brutality!"
 - a. **Junior at John Jay College**

15. "I was walking by the wall of the fliers on campus that usually has events and different opportunities marketed to the students. The whole wall was packed with fliers about Nakba, Resistance March in Bay Ridge, and many fliers about an event that was called 'By any means necessary.' I ask myself, so violence is ok too?"
 - a. **Junior at John Jay College**

16. "A man brought human feces to the Pace building and drew the Magen David on the building wall. We were shocked to see this disgusting appearance of hate on our building. NYPD was investigating this as a Hate Crime. I was so scared to show that I was Jewish for weeks."
 - a. **First year student at Pace University**

17. "Student Government posted an egregious declaration of Israel as an apartheid state that conducts genocide against women and children in Palestine. Then, Student Life, the actual administration of the college, reposted it on their own instagram! They supported these biased and hateful views. When we reached out, they said that it was a mistake and they had to remove their post and write a clarification. But the damage was done."
 - a. **Senior at City College**

18. "I was sitting in the Hillel club room at John Jay my sophomore year. Two students walked by, saw the "Hillel" sign and said, "what is this, the Hitler club?"
 - a. **Senior at John Jay College**

19. During the conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, SJP and other students gathered in front of the President's office and protested loudly for hours, screaming 'Intifada, Intifada!' They also said that City College and the President are complicit in the murder of innocent women and children in Gaza, as they help the regime through some kind of partnership in the STEP program at our college. I was walking by and I was so scared to get close to this group of students.
 - a. **Junior at City College**

20. "My freshman year, we did a fundraiser on campus for an organization called Save a Child's Heart which gives free life-saving heart surgery for children from all over the world. A rumor started spreading around not to donate to our fundraiser because Save a

Child's Heart steals the organs of Palestinian babies. I couldn't believe that a modern version of the blood libel was spreading around my campus."

a. Senior at John Jay College

21. I joined a WhatsApp group of student leaders at Baruch, some were club leaders and others were in the student government. One day, some of the students started talking about 'a birthright trip to Pakistan like the 'yahoods,' someone replied - 'they have no birthright.' Israel doesn't have the right to exist for these students and I was trying to make friends with them. I stayed quiet. Not sure how to react. They didn't know I was in the chat, or didn't care.

a. First year student at Baruch College

22. My name is Adel Alaiev, I am a student at Baruch College. I strongly oppose any other definition of antisemitism. The IHRA Definition is the only acceptable definition of antisemitism. While studying for an exam and reading through the course's textbook, I came across something antisemitic. My textbook read, "Jews that were reminded how many Jews were killed by Hitler's troops felt less guilty about Jews' harmful treatment of Palestinians." The author of my textbook was implying that Jews use the Holocaust to justify harming Palestinians! This is blatantly false and mis-educates the thousands of students who have taken and will take this class to wrongfully view Jews as violent. Even after I spoke to my professor and the department, they refused to do anything about it. This is just one example of why there is a need in the first place, for anti-semitism to be defined. It must not only be defined, but done so by the large majority of Jewish Students at CUNY, by the faculty senate, by the faculty union, and by the administration. It is imperative that the chancellor make it a priority this year.

a. Senior, Baruch College

23. When I was looking at colleges I was told by other Jewish college students to look at safer and more comfortable options because the CUNY's were known to harbor antisemitism. But John Jay was the school of my dreams and I was dead set on going.

Not always do I tell people that I'm Jewish, because I hardly know whom to trust at John Jay. I hide behind my other identities, even though being Jewish is my most significant one. The times that I do tell people I'm Jewish or things related to that, my stomach becomes a giant knot and my heart beat slows down to the point where I get nervous that it won't continue.

In classrooms, I hear things like "why are we even still talking about the Holocaust." On class field trips I hear "Jews are all so rich." On the third floor, in the lounge area I hear, "THEY have so much power." Stuck in the elevator I hear snickers about their Jewish professor. In Club Row, I am ignored and dropped by friends because I mentioned Israel once to them. On Zoom I hear jokes about Jews in ovens.

A former friend that I met at John Jay reshared one of my posts about antisemitism and was upset that no local Jewish agencies thanked him.

I'm tired of learning how to be an advocate for justice when no one is there to protect me.

The IHRA definition of antisemitism needs to be adopted because it goes over all the areas that antisemitism manifests in.

Constantly public education failed to protect me, in high school, and in college, and many more places. Please don't add yourself to that list because with your choice you can choose to add to the growing pot of antisemitism or take a stand. What will you do?

Senior, John Jay

24. To all who will be listening and deciding the fate of many, You are all here to talk about defining antisemitism and protecting students from antisemitic anti-Zionist incidents. So let me share just a snippet of what I have experienced as a Jewish student at John Jay.

I grew up with the very real fear that any day a shooter would come barging into my school, my synagogue, my local shops and kill us all because we were Jewish. This fear never went away. While some children in class doze off and doodle, I would mentally prepare myself. Sharpened pencil, check. Scissor, check. Ordinary tools used for creativity and education became my weapons, my false sense of security. In my room I had a packed bag, with food, water, and some other things. I was so paranoid that at any moment someone would attack me, or that I and my family would need to run, because the world has turned against us so many times before, that now I've lost count.

College was a whole new world of pain. I came to John Jay knowing that out of all the CUNY's John Jay was the most antisemitic. I was told to look at safer options by other college students. So far, my experience here has really broken my heart time and time again. Jokes about Jews in ovens, being ignored and canceled by friends, because I mentioned Israel on Social Media or posted something about Israel, not being listened to. I hardly know who to trust in John Jay because not always do I tell people I'm Jewish.

We must adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism across our campuses. This is the only way to protect our students and staff.

a. Junior, John Jay College

25. My name is Avigayil Grajower, I am a student in the Macaulay Honors College at CCNY and I oppose random definitions of antisemitism because it would make me feel less safe as a Jewish student. The only definition that matters and must be adopted by our university in the IHRA definition of Antisemitism.

During my freshman and sophomore years at CCNY, I felt unsafe on campus because a group of students cheered for "another Intifada" on multiple occasions.. The Intifadas were Palestinian uprisings against innocent Jewish Israelis that included suicide bombings on buses, in restaurants, and in clubs. As you can imagine, it was frightening to hear my fellow students calling for physical violence against Jewish people.

The IHRA definition of antisemitism would protect me from this hate speech on campus. I support the IHRA Definition exclusively.

Senior, CCNY

26. In one of my science classes at CCNY, students in my class began complaining that the pandemic in New York was all the Jews' fault. I explained that I myself was an observant Jew and that my community was observing all social distancing guidelines. Just because some people may not, does not mean they represent the Jewish people as a whole. One student kept repeating that only Jews are at fault for the pandemic in New York. I was deeply hurt by the conversation and several other Jewish students privately messaged me thanking me for defending us.

This is why I support the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism, to protect me and my fellow Jewish students from situations like these. No other definition would have properly protected me.

Senior, CCNY

Testimony for NYC Council Hearing on June 30th

Ilya Bratman

**Faculty Member, Baruch College,
John Jay College**

**Hillel Director, Baruch, John Jay,
City Colleges, FIT, SVA, New
School, Pace and Fordham
Universities**

Chair Dinowitz, Members of the Committee on Higher Education, Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is [Ilya Bratman](#) I'm a Jewish refugee from Russia and I'm an alumnus of Baruch College. Now, I serve as a Hillel Director for a number of colleges in Manhattan, namely - Baruch, City, John Jay Colleges at CUNY, FIT, New School, School of Visual Arts, Fordham and Pace Universities. I work to create and foster Jewish Life on our campuses and to advocate for Jewish students' needs and concerns. I am also a faculty member, teaching at Baruch and John Jay Colleges. I wear multiple hats. I guide, mentor and support Jewish students in various schools in Manhattan, and I teach a large diverse group of students every year. I have seen the impact of the past two years of isolation, depression and anxiety on all of our students. In addition to these obstacles, Jewish students have faced an increasing number of antisemitic incidents on our campuses, and a deteriorating climate of hostility and harassment at our colleges. Much of the harassment occurs online, many incidents occur in the classrooms, often perpetrated by faculty.

As faculty, we have a responsibility to present unbiased, fair, balanced, and honest information to our students. Our students trust us and consider us as credible resources. Therefore, when faculty are disingenuous, dishonest and present biased information to our students, they break

that trust and credibility. Time and again, our faculty have failed our students. Faculty have used delegitimization of Israel, and have attacked Zionism in order to hide their animosity and hate for the existence of the Jewish State, and thus the Jewish people. They have allowed the atmosphere of intolerance, hate and falsehood to reign supreme in our classrooms. That is unacceptable. The classroom is a sacred space. Our students demand integrity and impartiality from our faculty. They deserve better.

As you have heard, our students feel uncomfortable, unsafe and fearful to exhibit and express their Jewish identity on our campuses. I often serve as the voice for the Jewish students on our campuses. When I asked the students to testify in this hearing, many had the same response: 'I'm afraid! I don't want to stand out. I don't want my name out there.' Numerous students told me that they are intimidated to participate in this hearing or to combat antisemitism on campus, because they don't want that kind of attention, and they are afraid of the repercussions that may follow them in the classrooms, on campus, and online! Some were able to testify anonymously, because of these fears of intimidation. I'm very thankful to the Chairman for reading the testimonies. It is very important for all of us to hear the gravity and intensity of the hostility on our campuses.

It takes a lot of courage to stand up to their peers, especially in these uncertain times. I'm very grateful to the students who are brave enough to testify today and to send in their testimonies.

We must create a safer environment and climate on our campuses for our Jewish students. You will hear this a lot today.

It starts with defining antisemitism. We can't combat antisemitism without knowing what it is. Therefore, our students have asked to adopt the IHRA Definition of antisemitism across our campuses.

Secondly, we must educate students, faculty and staff about the roots and the history of antisemitism.

And thirdly, we must combat antisemitism, denounce and condemn the acts of antisemitism loudly and unapologetically, and hold faculty, students and staff accountable for any acts of harassment, hostility and intimidation on our campuses.

We can and must do this immediately. Hillel's Campus Climate Initiative and Academic Engagement Network's Antisemitism Education Initiative are two of the solutions that exist today to help us to eradicate hostility from our campuses. We must assess the climate of Jew hate on each of our campuses, investigate the perpetrators of harassment and intimidation, rid our University from this hateful bias, and educate all of our constituents about the horrors of antisemitism, and about the solutions that we have at hand.

We are part of the greatest urban university in our country. Our potential is boundless.

We owe our Jewish students the respect, the safe space, the comfortable, civilized environment and academic excellence that all students deserve.

Two Initiatives to combat antisemitism at CUNY:

Academic Engagement Network Initiative

- Hillel at Baruch College - CAFI CUNY Alliance for Inclusion

A Student-Faculty Initiative to Improve the Climate for Jews and Supporters of Israel at the City University of New York

Project Coordinators: Ilya Bratman (Baruch & John Jay Colleges); Azriel Genack (Queens College and The Graduate Center); Itzhak Mano (CUNY School of Medicine).

*Jewish Student Life Partners: Hillel at Baruch, City, John Jay, Pace, SVA, Fordham, FIT and New School
Campus Administrator Partners: Elliot Dawes (Baruch College Chief Diversity Officer); Brian Kerr (John Jay College Dean of Students)*

Faculty Partners: CUNY Alliance for Inclusion Student Partners: CUNY Coalition of Jewish Students

Significance and Background: *In recent years we observed a deterioration of the attitude towards Jews and Israel-supporters in US academia. A major escalation of antisemitic attitudes came in the spring of 2020, when another round of violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was framed by false equivalencies with emerging US racial sensitivities and social changes. This worsening condition became especially apparent in the City University of New York (CUNY). Historically CUNY served as a portal through which American Jews and members of all national, religious and racial groups have entered into the mainstream of American society. However, deteriorating conditions have recently culminated in a sequence of antisemitic resolutions by the CUNY union (PSC CUNY) and some student organizations. In this grant application we propose to form a student-faculty coalition to design and execute a new approach to improve the campus climate across the CUNY system. The alliance consists of student organizations such as CUNY Coalition of Jewish Students and Hillel, Diversity and Student Life Administrators, and the faculty organization CUNY Alliance For Inclusion (CAFI). We believe that such a student-faculty coalition can be effective in combating the recent rise in anti-Jewish expressions and the ostracization of Jewish students and faculty in CUNY.*

*We propose to achieve our goals using the following **approaches:***

Approach I, Planning: We will map the University faculty and administration strategically, and understand the various voices and stances involved in our university system (such as the PSC-Union Delegate Assembly, Faculty Senate, University Student Senate, University Trustees; NYC Elected Officials; CUNY Administration). We will design an action plan to engage with each of these groups

Approach II, Advocacy: We will use our mapping to engage in advocacy, communicating with these bodies.

Approach III, Engagement – We will coordinate information and communication with students, faculty, staff, and alumni, using the website, newsletter, statements, and petitions.

Approach IV, Education – We will establish a seminar speaker series, and create a comprehensive, scalable user-friendly curriculum for students and staff, to be implemented across the campuses as part of the Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) workshop offerings. To develop a website that provides a true picture of Israel and pushes back against the demonization of Israel that hosts the best seminars, videos, and articles about Israel and the threat of antisemitism.

Approach V, Coalition building – We will communicate with other student and faculty organizations to establish common ground on shared values of openness, pluralism, and inclusion. To respond effectively to known detractors (such as the union faction RAFA and other BDS supporters at CUNY), by issuing quick response communications and working with CUNY administration to form specific actions.

Anticipated Outcome: Concerted action by students, faculty, staff, and university leadership that holds promise for changing the climate on our campuses for the better and increasing the acceptance and integration of Jews and supporters of Israel on CUNY campuses. We believe that this can serve as a successful model that could be replicated across the country for faculty and student engagement, and to stand for civil discourse and academic integrity by combating the lies, falsehoods, and half-truths spread about Israel and the Jewish people. We anticipate that these actions will strengthen student, administration and faculty relationships at CUNY, and drive the CUNY environment towards a vision of positivity, dialogue, and academic excellence.

HILLEL INTERNATIONAL Campus Climate Initiative

Hillel International has launched applications to join their signature Campus Climate Initiative (CCI) Campus Cohort for the upcoming 2022-2023 academic year. This collaborative, educational, and practical experience offers university/college administrators with the opportunities and resources to identify, learn about, and take action on proactive steps to better support Jewish students in their campus community.

With a recent Hillel-ADL survey showing 43% of Jewish students nationally having experienced or witnessed antisemitism on their campus, this is an opportunity for us to work together to make a meaningful impact towards providing supportive, inclusive, welcoming, and comfortable environment for Jewish students. As part of the cohort experience, participating campuses will

*build a coalition to address antisemitism, attend and participate in **learning sessions** with administrators from around North America, and engage in **campus-specific work** to identify and implement data-informed action steps.*

*Details of the cohort experience, application process, and prior participating campuses can be found on the CCI website at hillel.org/cci. Applications for the cohort are submitted collaboratively by campus administration and their Hillel staff. **The application deadline is Monday, July 18, 2022.***

NYCC Higher Education Committee Hearing
Testimony of Sophie Ellman-Golan, Jews For Racial & Economic Justice
June 30, 2022

Good morning Chair Dinowittz and Council Members. My name is Sophie Ellman-Golan and I am the Director of Communications at Jews For Racial & Economic Justice, the largest grassroots Jewish organization in New York.

CUNY has played a historically important role in giving Jews access to higher education at a time when other schools discriminated against Jewish students. It must continue to be a welcoming home for Jewish students, Palestinian students, and all New Yorkers — a place where freedom of expression, exploration, dissent, and discussion are encouraged, not suppressed.

College is a place where we hear new ideas, meet new people, and are challenged to think beyond the specific confines of how we were raised. Those experiences can be uncomfortable. But discomfort and danger are two different things. Disagreement and dehumanization are two different things. When young people are excited to take moral stands and nonviolently engage in the civic life of our city and our country, that's something we should celebrate and encourage, even when we disagree with their specific views.

As someone who has been personally targeted by white nationalists and neo-Nazis in the past few years, including with a death threat, I would like to address the broader context in which this hearing is taking place: We are currently witnessing a nationwide attack on public education and liberal academic institutions. These attacks have come in many forms: re-inserting Christian prayer in public schools; removing Holocaust education literature like MAUS; banning discussion — and even acknowledgement — of systemic racism; cracking down on student organizing; and of course, an outrageous effort to vilify gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, trans, and intersex people as “groomers” who pose a threat to children. The [funding behind these efforts](#), the [sources of legislation relating to them](#), and the [statements of people involved](#) indicate that [this is an explicitly white Christian nationalist project](#).

Republican members of the New York City Council have chosen to align with some of the most powerful leaders of that movement, such as Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, who one council member welcomed to our city with open arms just weeks ago. This council member went so far as to [praise DeSantis](#) as a “friend to the Jewish community.”

There are real threats endangering Jews in New York, on campus, and nationwide. Those threats are not student organizers or the PSC union. There is a difference between non-violent political action around Israel-Palestine, and violent white supremacist movements. I'm concerned that this hearing fails to adequately address the latter, and that it conflates the two.

Jewish New Yorkers face antisemitic street violence and harassment, spurred by the popularization and ubiquity of antisemitic conspiracy theories that increased under Donald Trump's presidency. The numerous examples of swastikas on campus. On January 7, 2021

someone hung a [confederate flag](#) outside the door of the Museum of Jewish Heritage. In June 2021, Patriot Front members came into our city to [deface a statue memorializing George Floyd](#). [White supremacist Nick Fuentes came to NYC](#) this past November, seeking to bring more people into his groyper movement under the guise of anti-vaccine protests. A defender of the Proud Boys sits in this very City Council.

This is the antisemitism that most endangers Jews in New York City and beyond. While anyone can use or act on antisemitism, antisemitic violence and legislation are overwhelmingly fueled by the kinds of people who [stormed the capitol on January 6th](#), and those defending and rallying around them.

Antisemitism is part of a machinery of division and fear, created and used for specific material gain, to retain power, and to obscure the true causes of people's suffering. It is the same machinery driving physical and legislative attacks on women, queer and trans people, immigrants, Black and brown people, Muslims, Asian people and so many other groups. And these attacks are overwhelmingly coming from an emboldened, well-funded, and decades-in-the-making white Christian nationalist movement.

Harassment and hate are never acceptable — on campus or anywhere else. Given both the ongoing and nationwide attack on public education and the real threats to Jewish safety that do exist, focusing on student organizing and legitimate and non-violent criticism of the Israeli government is puzzling. But conflating that non-violent organizing and legitimate criticism with violent attacks is actually dangerous. It uses Jews as an excuse to advance repressive, anti-democratic, and anti-free speech policies. Cutting funding to CUNY, or using McCarthyite tactics to silence teachers and control student organizing will not make Jews safer. The best way to ensure that New York and CUNY are safe and welcoming to Jews and everyone else, is to secure a truly open, pluralistic, and responsive democracy with dignity for all.

Thank you, Chair Dinowitz and committee members, for the opportunity to testify.

TESTIMONY OF DR. JAMES DAVIS, PRESIDENT
PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONGRESS/CUNY
BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

JUNE 30, 2022

Oversight: Examining Antisemitism on College Campuses

Good morning, Chair Dinowitz and members of the Committee on Higher Education. My name is James Davis. I'm a faculty member at Brooklyn College and the President of the Professional Staff Congress, which represents 30,000 faculty and staff at CUNY. I appreciate the opportunity to participate in today's hearing about this important topic. I also want to thank this committee for your efforts in the City budget to improve conditions for CUNY students, faculty, and staff.

The PSC takes seriously incidents of discrimination and hate speech at CUNY, including acts of anti-Semitism.

We believe our faculty and staff are committed to the inclusive mission of the City University to serve the whole people of New York. Our purpose is to lift up the students who enter our classrooms, and our members work hard to support the pluralistic vision of CUNY, to make sure that our diversity is our strength, and that all students have the opportunity to flourish, regardless of their background or their ancestry. As a faculty member, I have seen for myself how challenging that work is and yet how successful we have been at CUNY.

However, we also recognize that anti-Semitism has increased in New York City and beyond, and of course the university is not immune from the problems that plague the City as a whole. We are committed to combatting anti-Semitism and welcome discussion of initiatives that the committee recommends.

524 confirmed hate crimes were committed in New York City in 2021, a staggering number. Of these, 175 were hate crimes against Jewish people – more than one-third of the total.^[1] That is unacceptable. We also recognize that incidents of bias occur that may not rise to the level of a hate crime but cause harm to individuals and communities. Harassment and discrimination may not involve a physical attack on persons or property but should not go unchallenged. The PSC has consistently supported efforts at the university to go beyond platitudes and to address the root causes of hate based on ethnicity, race, and religion.

As some of you know, our union passed a resolution at a delegate assembly meeting last year that has been criticized as anti-Semitic. The resolution was sharply critical of Israeli state policy and recommended, among other things, that the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions campaign

against Israel be discussed in local union meetings last Fall semester. Some of our members were deeply upset by the resolution, and some even resigned union membership in dismay and protest. Chair Dinowitz and I have discussed this episode on a few occasions, and I welcome further discussion as the committee wishes. The PSC has not endorsed the BDS campaign, but we take the position that criticism of Israeli state policy is not inherently anti-Semitic, and we support the right of all our members to express themselves publicly about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, an issue on which they are not united. Members of a college community must not allow their political convictions to bias their treatment toward students or colleagues, but the quality of a college education depends on open and vigorous debate on the issues of the day, and we must balance the need to foster support and respect for all with the need to preserve academic freedom, which is the lifeblood of the American university.

The Professional Staff Congress has in fact taken important steps to condemn violent acts of anti-Semitism at CUNY and beyond. Our Executive Council issued a statement [condemning the Tree of Life Synagogue mass murder](#) in Pittsburgh in 2018. Our statement read, “After a century that witnessed the massive state mobilization of anti-Semitism and the systematic murder of six million Jews, any re-emergence of anti-Semitism must be taken with extreme seriousness—and resisted.” More recently, we have engaged in a coordinated response with Queens College employees against the defacement of a campus building with anti-Semitic and racist graffiti. A swastika and the phrase “KKK Lives” were scrawled onto a corridor wall on January 6, the one-year anniversary of the white nationalist coup attempt on the U.S. Capitol. The union has challenged the college administration’s inadequate response, and we filed a grievance on behalf of the safety of the building’s occupants.

We will continue to confront anti-Semitism where it endangers members of the campus community and the City. We will stand firmly against bigotry. The PSC must safeguard the academic freedom of our members to speak their minds politically while we also advocate for the civil exchange of viewpoints and a space for all to express their lived experience.

[1] NYPD Hate Crimes Dashboard:

<https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjojYjg1NWl3YjgtYzkyOS00Nzc0LTkwMDAtNTgzM2I2M2JmYWEl1iwiZCI6IjJiOWY1N2ViLTc4ZDEtNDZmYi1iZTgzLWEyYWZkZDdjNjA0MyJ9>

Testimony Submitted to the New York City Council
By Lynne Brown, Sr. Vice President for University Relations and Public Affairs
New York University

New York University (NYU) applauds the City Council for taking on the important issue of antisemitism on college campuses.

Antisemitism has no place on university campuses. As NYU President Andrew Hamilton said in a [recent letter](#) to the members of NYU's Bronfman Center for Jewish Student Life community:

Antisemitism is bigotry, as repugnant as any other form. As a university community we should be united in opposing it; in creating an environment for our Jewish students free from discrimination and harassment; and in declaring that members of the Jewish community belong, are supported, and are welcomed on campus.

In accord with that position, we are pleased to submit for the record testimony about the seriousness with which NYU takes the issue of antisemitism as well as our ongoing commitment to an on-the-ground academic presence in Israel and our history of rejecting calls for academic boycotts of Israel.

Background - A Vibrant Jewish Community, a Leader in Hebrew and Judaic Scholarship

Founded as a secular university in 1831, NYU has long been known as a welcoming campus for Jewish students. Today, NYU supports one of the largest and most vibrant Jewish communities among major US research universities.

The Bronfman Center for Jewish Student Life: Based out of a brownstone on 10th Street, the Bronfman Center is at the heart of Jewish life for NYU students. It provides a wide array of programming to serve the spiritual NYU's thousands of Jewish students, engages one of the largest and most dynamic Jewish student populations in the United States, with nearly 30 staff members, it serves as a hub for community-building and innovative programming. This includes everything from Shabbat services that serve approximately 400 students each week to high holiday celebrations that serve hundreds of students and alums to the Jewish Learning Fellowship (JLF), which gathers small groups to discuss a range of Jewish life issues, to organizing social justice and community service initiatives that involve hundreds of students in thousands of hours-of-service projects. Undergraduate students also have the opportunity to participate in an NYU-branded Birthright Israel trip, which the Bronfman Center promotes as a ten-day experience to "encourage participants to continue growing in their identity" through an "insight seeing journey of the Jewish spirit."

The Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies: Through its Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies, NYU is home to some of the most eminent, internationally renowned scholars in the field. In addition, the Department offers a truly comprehensive Jewish studies program for both graduate and undergraduate students. Courses are taught in Hebrew

language and literature as well as Jewish history and culture from the ancient world through to today. The Department's esteemed faculty includes specialists in Biblical and ancient Near Eastern studies, Second Temple Judaism (including Dead Sea Scrolls), Talmud and rabbinics, medieval and modern Jewish history, medieval and modern Jewish philosophy and thought, Jewish mysticism, modern Hebrew and Yiddish literatures, and the history, politics, and society of modern Israel. In addition, the Department collaborates with other schools and programs within NYU to provide education and training in museum studies and non-profit management for professionals in those areas.

NYU Tel Aviv: NYU is a global university and has built in Tel Aviv a [prominent on-the-ground academic presence in Israel](#). In operation for more than a decade, NYU Tel Aviv recently acquired a new academic center building. The building provides a home for rigorous programs of study as well as internship opportunities (typically at civil-society NGOs or at high-tech/innovation companies) for students from NYU's New York campus and from around the world that study there each semester.

NYU Has a Long History of Opposing Calls for Academic Boycotts of Israel

NYU's position on academic boycotts of Israel is clear: it is opposed. Such calls are at odds with the tenets of academic freedom NYU's opposition to calls for academic boycotts of Israel have been long standing, resolute, consistent, and public. Examples of NYU leadership publicly opposing calls for boycotts of Israel can be found at these URLs:

- https://www.nyu.edu/about/news-publications/news/2007/june/statement_by_nyu_president.html
- <https://www.nyu.edu/about/news-publications/news/2013/december/letter-from-nyu-president-john-sexton-and-provost-david-mclaughl.html>
- <https://www.nyu.edu/about/news-publications/news/2016/april/statement-by-nyu-president-andrew-hamilton-on-grad-union-boycott-vote.html>
- https://www.nyu.edu/about/news-publications/news/2018/december/BDS_Statement_2018.html
- https://www.nyu.edu/about/news-publications/news/2021/november/JS_Statement_Law_School.html
- https://www.nyu.edu/about/news-publications/news/2022/march/President_Hamilton_Statement_MESA.html

NYU's rejection of boycotts of Israel also extends to its steadfast repudiation of calls to close the NYU Tel Aviv site (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). NYU remains fully committed to the continued operation of its Tel Aviv site.

Leadership in Addressing and Eliminating Antisemitism: Hosting a Summit of University Presidents Opposing Antisemitism, and Other Efforts

NYU aspires to be a leader in identifying and implementing best practices to address and eliminate antisemitism on campus, and its efforts to combat antisemitism are committed and ongoing.

By way of recent illustration, NYU's president, Andrew Hamilton, acted as host for a [summit](#) of university presidents convened in April by Hillel International, the American Jewish Committee, and the American Council on Education to address antisemitism on campuses. At the summit, NYU's Blueprint for Preventing and Addressing Antisemitism was widely distributed to participants.

Other efforts by the University include:

- Establishing a new faculty, staff, and student working group within our office of Global Spiritual Life. The working group will develop both University-wide and school programming, as well as related resources. The working group will also advance a shared understanding of NYU's values, particularly as they relate to religious groups studying at NYU's campuses across the world.
- Creating a new position of Special Advisor on Spiritual Life Programming and Religious Discrimination and hired a leader with extensive experience in multi-faith leadership and programming to fill the position.
- Continuing support for robust programming at the Bronfman Center for Jewish Student Life and the Office of Global Spiritual Life, including development of a new procedure to support students seeking academic support during religious holidays and observances under longstanding NYU policy.
- Updating NYU's [non-discrimination and anti-harassment policy](#) for students to include explicit reference to antisemitism (among other forms of discrimination) and provided training on the policy during academic year 2021-22 for leadership and administrators involved in responding to complaints.
- Developing and launching in Fall 2022 a new values-based campaign with a student-led short film, a visual campaign, and a compilation of resources for students seeking information about how to cultivate respectful relationships in a community full of diverse people and perspectives.
- Creating a new Jewish Ally Zone training, which introduces the diversity of Jewish identity and practice at NYU, describes the history of antisemitism and its manifestations today, and invites reflection on the impact of antisemitism on the Jewish student experience. The training specifically covers discussions of Israel/Palestine. Aspects of the Jewish Ally Zone (along with aspects from other identity-based "Zone" trainings) will be added for Fall 2022 to NYU's long standing [Cultivating Beloved Community Zone Training](#).
- Regular meetings between senior NYU leadership and representatives from Academic Engagement Network and Hillel International (as well as other relevant organizations in this area) to identify and create best-practices for addressing antisemitism. This included NYU leading the development of a Blueprint for

Preventing and Addressing Antisemitism that has been distributed to over 100 institutions as well as at the aforementioned presidential summit.

NYU and the US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights

Even institutions with long histories of educating Jewish students and making them feel welcome can find themselves accused of not doing everything right. In November 2019, NYU learned that the US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) had initiated an investigation after a complaint from an NYU alumna. She alleged that Jewish students on campus faced a hostile environment based primarily on interactions between several student clubs.

In September 2020, the University reached a resolution agreement with OCR that ended the investigation without any finding of wrongdoing by NYU. NYU fulfilled its obligations under the resolution agreement, and as part of that, among other steps, NYU agreed to and has updated its [non-discrimination and anti-harassment policy](#) (to explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of shared ancestry and ethnic characteristics, including antisemitism), timely submitted the revised policy for OCR's review and approval, promptly adopted the approved version, and highlighted the changes to the community, including through a [statement](#) by the University president and vice chancellor.

As indicated earlier, NYU aspires to be a leader in identifying and implementing best practices to address and eliminate antisemitism on campus, and it has used its experience with OCR to strengthen and improve that effort.

When There is an Incident: Where there *is* an allegation about an incident involving antisemitism, the University is committed to taking all necessary actions, including pursuant to its student discipline process where appropriate, to address and ameliorate discrimination and harassment. NYU strongly encourages prompt reporting and offers people numerous [options](#) to make reporting simple and supported. Among its reporting options, NYU maintains a [Bias Response Line](#) staffed by experienced administrators in the Office of Equal Opportunity to receive reports from the NYU community, including contact numbers from around the [globe](#). The Bias Response Line assesses complaints and facilitates response by the appropriate University office; it also tracks incidents to identify trends and inform the University's IDBEA efforts of the Office of Global Inclusion, Diversity, and Strategic Innovation.

Allegations that a student has violated NYU's nondiscrimination and anti-harassment [policy](#) are primarily adjudicated through the [Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards](#), which utilizes [procedures](#) to promptly investigate and reach an outcome through informal resolution, conduct conferences, resolution by agreement, or panel hearings. The Office of Student Conduct closely partners with other relevant teams as appropriate, including NYU's Department of Campus Safety and the respective NYU school(s) of those involved. The University issues sanctions that can range from warnings and censure, educational projects, to suspension and expulsion, among others. Complainants are supported throughout the process, and sanctions such as no contact orders, residence hall reassignment or suspension, or restriction of privileges

can in some instances be designed to support the complainant. Throughout its processes, the University is committed to treating and resolving allegations of antisemitism in the same way as allegations of other discrimination and harassment. And while following its process and policies is critical to adjudicating these matters, so too is using the University's [own voice](#) to speak out, and providing support to students involved.

Conclusion

NYU appreciates the Council's effort to examine campus antisemitism, and wholly shares its desire to see it eliminated. NYU appreciates as well the opportunity to submit testimony about its own history and ongoing efforts to make the University a place that is welcoming and inclusive for members of the Jewish community - indeed, for all students, faculty, administrators, and staff - and to combat the vile scourge of antisemitism.

Written Testimony for Higher Education Committee Hearing on Campus Antisemitism

Thursday, June 30th, 2022

Rena Nasar First, StandWithUs

RenaN@standwithus.org

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I want to thank Chair Dinowitz and the members of the Higher Education Committee for providing this important opportunity to address the alarming issue of campus antisemitism, in particular at CUNY. I speak before you today as an employee of StandWithUs, an international and non-partisan Israel education organization that inspires and educates people of all ages and backgrounds, challenges misinformation, and fights antisemitism. Through my work as Executive Director of the Campus Department, I help provide students around the world with the support and resources they need to stand up to antisemitism on campus, both in and out of the classroom. But I also speak before you as a CUNY alum, someone who experienced antisemitism myself within the CUNY system when I was a student.

Over the last few years, antisemitism on campus has steadily increased but it has not been adequately addressed. Jewish and Israeli students are being subjected to a harsh litmus test, where they are treated as equal members of the campus community only if they are willing to limit the expression of their Jewish identity, Zionism, and connection to Israel. Students who fail this test face increasing animosity and marginalization from fellow students and staff, and apathy from their administrations.

This issue isn't just impacting students; all stakeholders within the CUNY nucleus are affected. Faculty are also being ostracized and harassed, and alumni are continually being disappointed by their alma maters

For example,

At the Silberman School of Social Work, where, upon investigating an antisemitic Zoom bombing incident during class, we uncovered **years** of egregious incidents of antisemitism that the administration knew about yet failed to correct.

Or at Kingsborough Community College, where Professor Michael Goldstein was the victim of a smear campaign calling for his termination and even physical violence against him because of his open expression of his Zionism.

Or at CUNY Law School, where a commencement speech referenced a harmful resolution with brazen demands to end study abroad programs in Israel, terminate partnerships with Israeli academics and institutions and "cut all ties" with several Jewish organizations, including Hillel.

Or when the Undergraduate Student Senate was approached about adopting the international consensus definition of antisemitism - the IHRA working definition - and was responded to with

tremendously negative pushback. Not to mention events run by Hillel and student clubs being protested and disrupted.

Unfortunately these examples are mere highlights in a larger alarming trend at CUNY, where Jewish students, faculty, and other stakeholders are marginalized, effectively told that they're not welcome to fully participate in campus life and academia, unless they check key parts of their Jewish identity at the door. I want to emphasize we are not talking about mere political differences or disagreements; Jewish students are being forced either to hide their Judaism and Zionism, or, if they choose to express these key parts of their identity, become vulnerable to intimidation, harassment, and exclusion from their peers and professors. Jewish and Israeli students deserve the same protections against hate and intolerance as any other community at CUNY, and it should not be necessary for the City Council to ensure this happens. This is the responsibility of CUNY administrators.

I applaud the students and faculty who testified, but I must acknowledge that many are afraid to testify in person or virtually because of a very real fear of academic, professional, and/or social retaliation. Those who've found the courage to speak up and have openly shared their experiences with antisemitism have thus far found that their pleas fall on deaf ears.

Lip service is not enough; we are here demanding more. I'd like to offer the CUNY administration the following recommendations as actionable steps to address the very real and growing problem of campus antisemitism:

- Create a task force with Jewish students, faculty, on-campus organizations like Hillel and Chabad, and alumni to analyze the overall situation on campus and make recommendations
- Adopt the IHRA working definition of antisemitism and utilize it, as appropriate, in addressing antisemitism. Antisemitism grows in part because people have difficulty identifying it; adopting this definition will help empower everyone within CUNY, from administrators to students, to identify it when they see it and to properly address it when it occurs.
- Develop anti-bias training that explicitly includes antisemitism for DEI employees, faculty, staff, student government, and incoming students & Include this training in the anti-bias training that is already taking place on campus
- Clarify further the process for reporting antisemitic incidents and give those reports equal treatment alongside other reported forms of bias and hate. We need to make sure students understand the reporting process and feel assured that these incidents will be taken seriously by administrators. The process should be clarified, accessible, and consistent for any marginalized group, including the Jewish community.

I look forward to seeing how this hearing results in tangible change. We expect that CUNY and other campuses will maintain a welcoming environment for all members of the campus community - Jewish and Israeli students included. Thank you for your time.

Thank you, Chair Dinowitz, for convening this important hearing

My name is Scott Richman, and I am the Regional Director for New York and New Jersey for ADL – the Anti-Defamation League. Since 1913, our sole mission has been to combat antisemitism and all forms of hate wherever they may arise – on our streets, in our workplaces, on social media and most relevant to today - on our college campuses.

I appear before you today with great concern about the rise in antisemitism across the country, and here in New York City specifically. Last year, ADL recorded an unprecedented 34% spike in acts of antisemitic harassment, vandalism and assault across the country – 700 more antisemitic incidents than the year before. Moreover, the state with the greatest number of antisemitic incidents, I am sad to report, was New York with 416 incidents - the majority of which (63%) took place right here in New York City. This is not news to me or my team. We literally respond to antisemitic incidents every day in New York and New Jersey.

It is against this backdrop that I focus the rest of my remarks today on antisemitism on college campuses, which of course have not been immune to this rise in antisemitism. Since 2017, ADL alone has responded to 92 incidents of antisemitism on New York college campuses, 14 of which occurred on CUNY campuses. There is clearly a problem, but these raw numbers don't necessarily paint the entire and full picture of the context and environment in which these incidents occur. The students, parents, faculty, and others at institutions of higher learning in the New York City area that you will hear from today are going to share heartbreaking experiences with you. These first-hand accounts will describe how, in many cases, campuses have become places where Jewish students feel unwelcome and/or unsafe, or compelled to conceal a core aspect of their identity in order to participate in campus life. They will explain that their concerns are not about confronting difficult ideas or engaging in serious discussions about Israel and the Middle East or other topics. Instead, they are facing a climate in which a central component of their Jewish identity – [Zionism](#), or support for self-determination and statehood for the Jewish people in their ancestral homeland, the land of Israel - is demonized, and where Jewish students as a whole are accused of supporting and/or facilitating unthinkable atrocities. And they will tell you that as a result, they often feel alienated and unsupported on campus – sometimes as a direct result of how antisemitism operates and functions. Their perspectives are the most important testimony you will hear today.

I just wish to make three points for the Council to consider as you hear this important testimony from the students:

1. Our analysis of the situation indicates that these experiences reflect only the tip of the iceberg. In partnership with Hillel, we surveyed Jewish students across the country last year. That survey indicated that 43% of Jewish students on campus today have either been the targets of antisemitism or have observed antisemitic incidents during their time in school. That is a shocking thought – that nearly half of all Jewish students will be the subject of antisemitism or witness it during their time on campus. This is a sea change from just a few years ago when this would have been unthinkable. Moreover, that same survey showed that only 25% of these incidents are ultimately reported. So, in addition to the testimony you hear today, you should understand that there are many, many other students who are intimidated and afraid to come forward and share their experiences.

2. ADL is committed to protecting free speech and free academic inquiry. We believe that students can and should be exposed to ideas with which they may disagree, and ideas that may make them feel uncomfortable. That's how they will grow in their thinking and mature in their understanding of the world. However, it is one thing to imagine college campuses being hotbeds of robust discourse. It is quite another to observe what has transpired as of late.

Just to offer a few examples from around this region, Jewish students were recently subjected to screams of "baby killers" at Rutgers' campus simply because they were members of a Jewish fraternity. At SUNY New Paltz, a student was excluded from a campus organization combatting sexual violence because that student had posted content on social media regarding the Jewish historic connection to the land of Israel. Graduate students from a New York city based university who visited Israel returned to find their social media posts hijacked by other students who accused them of supporting white supremacy because they traveled to Israel. When these same students reached out to their peers to have a meaningful dialogue, they were rebuffed, as such dialogue – essential to students' learning – would be considered "normalization." And, of course, at CUNY's recent Law School graduation, the student speaker demonized Zionists and characterized a recent Jewish community-led trip to Israel as "an affront to everyone at CUNY fighting for liberation," to cheering and applause from the audience. Jewish families in attendance were deeply shaken. Some reached out to ADL to express the fear and intimidation they felt. They asked us, are Jewish students, for whom Zionism is part of their identity, safe on such a campus?

Let's be clear. The students who were pursuing dialogue and living out their identity while they pursued their education rightly believed that being Jewish, or a Zionist, should not invite threats or intimidation. And, they have been rightly concerned about calls for academic boycotts of Israel, and opposition to robust dialogue and discourse on campus, which cannot reasonably be described as embodying the best of our traditions of freedom of speech or the free exchange of ideas on campus. ADL knows that navigating these difficult waters can be complicated for university leadership, especially where protecting free speech on campus is of paramount importance. We accordingly applaud the Chancellor of CUNY who did not stifle speech in the case of the law school graduation, but rather used his own speech to encourage "all members of our community who hold strong convictions and opinions to come together and share them, to speak to one another with thoughtfulness and empathy." He also made clear that CUNY does not support BDS. We deeply appreciated this message, but more must be done to ensure that all students feel safe on campus.

3. This brings me to my third point and one that offers an action step. We have seen the tremendous positive impact that expanded equity and inclusion efforts have had on college and university campuses to ensure that campuses are dedicated to inclusion and safety for all. This is for the benefit of all students and everyone who values justice, equity, and the pursuit of truth on college campuses. At a time when the Jewish community is increasingly in need of such support, it must be the focus of every campus administration and every DEI office to protect all students, including Jewish students, so that everyone can bring their full identity to the campus. As such, more needs to be done. We propose more learning regarding antisemitism, better training for campus leadership, increased dialogue among students, and more formal plans when it comes to incident response. Above all, the administration and this Council should make sure that the voices of Jewish students are heard, particularly when they say that they feel threatened or unsafe in an environment where their learning should be their first concern. ADL's

“Hate Uncycled” program offers such anti-bias training and support at the university levels. We also offer specific training programs around antisemitism which we carry out in partnership with Hillel. ADL New York/New Jersey is happy to be a partner in this work with the Council and with any university that wishes to move forward constructively to tackle this hate on their campuses.

That is the only way to learn. That is the only way to exist in a free society. And that is the most urgent mission of higher education. We applaud the New York City Council Education Committee for speaking out against the scourge of antisemitism, and we look forward to finding a constructive path forward to mitigate, if not eliminate, this hate.

Thank you.

Scott Richman
ADL NY/NJ Regional Director

**STATEMENT FROM SUSAN B. TUCHMAN ON BEHALF OF
THE ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA,
SUBMITTED TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL'S
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN CONNECTION WITH ITS
HEARING ON "EXAMINING ANTISEMITISM ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES,"
HELD ON JUNE 30, 2022**

Submitted July 4, 2022

Introduction

The Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) welcomes the opportunity to submit this statement to the New York City Council's Committee on Higher Education, in connection with the Committee's examination of campus antisemitism at the City University of New York (CUNY). As this statement will show, campus antisemitism at CUNY is a longstanding and serious problem. Jewish students have been threatened, harassed and intimidated, causing many of them to fear expressing their Jewish identity openly, including their support for their religious and ancestral homeland, Israel. Sometimes, it has caused Jewish students to fear for their physical safety.

CUNY officials have known about these problems for years, but they have failed to take the necessary steps to protect Jewish students and provide them with a learning environment that is not hostile to them as Jews and supporters of Israel. The ZOA respectfully urges the New York City Council to take whatever steps are within its power and authority to ensure that Jewish and pro-Israel students have the safe and welcoming learning environment at CUNY that every student deserves, including by implementing the recommendations set forth below.

About the ZOA

Founded in 1897, the ZOA is the oldest pro-Israel organization in the United States, playing a key role in mobilizing American support for the establishment of the State of Israel. Under the leadership of such illustrious presidents as U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, Rabbi Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, and current National President Morton A. Klein, the ZOA has been on the front lines of Jewish activism, fighting for the rights of the Jewish people and for a safe and secure Israel. The ZOA carries out its work through its Government Relations Department; its campus department, ZOA Campus; its Center for Law and Justice; and its office

in Israel. The ZOA's regional offices provide educational programming and advocate for Israel in communities throughout the U.S.

The ZOA's Role in Protecting Jewish Students from Antisemitic Harassment and Intimidation

The ZOA has been a leader in fighting all forms of antisemitism in schools and on college campuses – including anti-Israel and anti-Zionist sentiment that crosses the line into antisemitism.¹

In October 2004, the ZOA filed a groundbreaking complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) on behalf of Jewish students at the University of California, Irvine. The complaint alleged that Jewish students had faced years of antisemitic harassment, intimidation and discrimination at UC Irvine, which the university administration knew about but failed to address, in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.² The ZOA's complaint was the first case of antisemitic harassment that OCR ever agreed to investigate under Title VI.

In 2005, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights – an independent, bipartisan fact-finding federal agency that investigates, reports on, and makes recommendations about civil rights issues – held its first-ever hearing on campus antisemitism. The ZOA's Susan Tuchman was one of three witnesses invited to brief the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights on the nature and extent of

¹ While of course not all criticism of Israel is antisemitic, the U.S. government has adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism, which recognizes that some anti-Israel and anti-Zionist sentiment crosses the line into antisemitism. See Exec. Order No. 13899, 84 Fed. Reg. 68779 (Dec. 11, 2019), at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/12/16/2019-27217/combating-anti-semitism>. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken confirmed that the Biden administration "enthusiastically embraces" the IHRA definition, including the examples of antisemitism that relate to Israel. See Melissa Weiss, *Biden Admin 'Enthusiastically Embraces' Full IHRA Definition of Antisemitism*, Jewish Insider, Mar. 1, 2021, at <https://jewishinsider.com/2021/03/tony-blinken-biden-ihra-definition-antisemitism/>.

² Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq.) prohibits discrimination based on race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. A violation of Title VI could result in a loss of federal funding.

campus antisemitism and potential remedies to effectively address the problem. The briefing led to landmark findings and recommendations by the Commission, which were included in a detailed report to the President and the U.S. Congress – including that anti-Zionism and anti-Israelism may be manifestations of antisemitism, that Jewish students should be protected from antisemitic harassment under Title VI, and that publicly-funded schools have the legal obligation to protect them. In addition, as a result of the briefing, the Commission undertook a nationwide public education campaign to end campus antisemitism.

Historically, OCR was not enforcing Title VI to protect Jewish students. Title VI prohibits discrimination based on “race, color, or national origin” in federally funded programs and activities. OCR considered Jews to be a religious group only – and not also an ethnic group – and thus outside the protections of the law. The ZOA led a six-year battle to ensure that Title VI would be enforced to protect Jewish students, in the same way that this law had protected other ethnic and racial groups for close to 50 years. In March 2010, 12 other Jewish organizations joined the ZOA in sending a letter to the Secretary of Education, urging the Department of Education to enforce Title VI to protect Jewish students from antisemitic harassment and intimidation. On October 26, 2010, OCR issued a “Dear Colleague” letter that finally made it clear that Jewish students would be protected under Title VI.³

In 2018, the ZOA again played a key role in inspiring more effective legal protections for Jewish students. Triggered by the ZOA’s Title VI action against Rutgers University, OCR declared that it would begin using the IHRA working definition of antisemitism when it assessed antisemitic bias in Title VI cases. With this declaration, OCR would have much needed

³ See <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201010.pdf>.

guidance on how antisemitism is expressed today, so that it could more effectively address the problem.⁴

The ZOA has a long history of working closely with Jewish students on campuses across the country, building their knowledge of and support for Israel, and giving them the tools they need to respond to the anti-Israel misconceptions and outright lies that are promoted by students, student groups, and even faculty on campus. We have advocated for and helped Jewish students facing a hostile antisemitic environment at many schools across the U.S., including but not limited to Brooklyn College and other CUNY schools; New York University; Rutgers University; the University of California, Irvine; the University of California, Berkeley; the University of Michigan; Northeastern University; Duke University; the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Case Western University; and Florida State University.

Longstanding Antisemitism at the CUNY Schools

Jewish and pro-Israel students have faced antisemitism at the CUNY schools for many years. In 2013, the ZOA filed a Title VI action against Brooklyn College after four Jewish students were forcibly ejected from an anti-Israel BDS program at the college. They were allegedly removed because they had been disruptive; even a college spokesperson tarred their reputations with this accusation. But in fact, as Brooklyn College later publicly admitted, the four Jewish students were ousted without justification. Their expulsion was motivated by the fact that these four Jewish students did not support BDS; expelling them was a way to prevent them from expressing their anti-BDS, pro-Israel views. As a result of the ZOA's Title VI action,

⁴ These protections were affirmed in President Donald Trump's Executive Order on Combating Anti-Semitism, issued on December 11, 2019. The Executive Order requires that Title VI be enforced to protect Jews from discrimination in programs and activities that receive federal funding. It also requires that when federal agencies enforce Title VI, they must consider the IHRA working definition of antisemitism, without infringing on any rights protected under federal law or the First Amendment.

Brooklyn College publicly apologized to the four Jewish students by name and acknowledged the wrongdoing by college employees who stood by without intervening when these Jewish students were wrongly forced to leave the anti-Israel program simply because they opposed BDS and supported Israel.

In 2016, again backed by CUNY students, the ZOA sent a letter to CUNY's chancellor and board of trustees, describing in detail the antisemitic harassment and intimidation that Jewish students were enduring at four CUNY schools – Hunter College, Brooklyn College, the College of Staten Island and John Jay College – and urging CUNY to take several specific steps to remedy the problems.⁵ Triggered by the ZOA's letter, CUNY's Chancellor commissioned an independent investigation into the antisemitism allegations. The investigation confirmed that CUNY had been plagued by many incidents of antisemitism, including but not limited to the following:

- At a rally at CUNY's Hunter College, organized by the anti-Israel and antisemitic student group that calls itself "Students for Justice in Palestine" (SJP), protestors chanted "Jews out of CUNY" and "Death to Jews," and repeatedly chanted "Long live the intifada!" and "There is only one solution: Intifada revolution!" Calling for an intifada is a call to murder Jews.
- Protestors cursed at and threatened Jews at the Hunter rally, with comments such as "Is that all you can do, come along, take for your people, Jewish people, come along, you racist sons of bitches"; "Go back home, and get the fuck out of my country"; and "We should drag the Zionists down the street."

⁵ See <https://zoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Letter-to-CUNY-Chancellor-and-Board-of-Trustees-2-22-16.pdf>.

- At CUNY's Brooklyn College, a student's mother was harassed by an SJP member simply because she was cleaning offensive anti-Israel chalking off the sidewalk which was illegally drawn there in the first place. A Jewish student who did not endorse SJP's positions was repeatedly harassed by an SJP member who sent her alarming messages, including, "I hope you don't walk alone on campus." Another Jewish student was threatened by an SJP student simply because she refused an anti-Israel flyer. Members of the Israel Club were called "dirty Jews" and similar expletives.
- In the classroom, a Brooklyn College professor called Israelis "assassins" and "baby killers," another made disparaging comments when Jewish students had to miss class for a religious holiday, and yet another skipped over the Holocaust in a history class, dismissively telling his students, "You all know this story."
- At CUNY's John Jay College of Criminal Justice, SJP threatened the Muslim Student Association (MSA) for co-hosting an event with Hillel, even though the event was about the New York Police Department and had nothing to do with Israel or the Middle East conflict. The threats worked; fearful, the MSA dropped its sponsorship, writing to the Hillel director, "We fear for your safety and ours." In addition, a student with an Israeli flag patch on his backpack was called a Zionist pig and had a water bottle thrown at his head.
- At CUNY's College of Staten Island, a Jewish student carrying a sign to promote harmony on campus was told by another student that "I wouldn't hug a Jew." When an anti-Israel student disrupted another student's class presentation on women in the Israel Defense Forces, shouting that Israeli soldiers were "killers," the professor did not

intervene. Both a Hillel student and the Executive Director of Hillel were bullied and harassed on Facebook.⁶

The investigators acknowledged that these and other antisemitic incidents caused Jewish students to feel harassed, threatened, and unsafe, and made some of them fearful of openly identifying as Jewish on campus. Nevertheless, the investigators justified the incidents as protected speech which they claimed CUNY could not punish – even though CUNY’s own written rules prohibit such conduct and authorize sanctions for it.

All CUNY students and student organizations are required to comply with the “Henderson Rules.”⁷ The Henderson Rules provide, in relevant part:

- That no member of the academic community shall “intentionally obstruct and/or forcibly prevent others from the exercise of their rights” (Rule 1).
- That “[e]ach member of the academic community . . . has the right to advocate his position without having to fear abuse, physical, verbal, or otherwise, from others supporting conflicting points of view” (Rule 5).⁸

The penalties for violating these rules include suspension and expulsion. Yet CUNY failed to enforce the rules when Jewish students were harassed and threatened. And in their report, the investigators never discussed these rules or explained why they were not and should not have been enforced.

⁶ See Barbara Jones and Paul Shechtman, “Report to Chancellor Milliken on Allegations of Anti-Semitism,” Sept. 6, 2016, at <https://www.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/page-assets/news/newswire/assets/CUNYReport.pdf>.

⁷ See CUNY Board of Trustees By-Laws, Article XV, Section 15.1, at https://policy.cuny.edu/bylaws/text/#Navigation_Location.

⁸ See CUNY Rules for Maintenance of Public Order,” at <https://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/ovsa/policies/rules-for-maintenance-of-public-order/>.

Furthermore, the investigators failed to make any recommendations about how CUNY should more effectively protect Jewish students and ensure that they felt safe and welcome, as was their legal right. They did not address the recommendations the ZOA had made to CUNY, which included the following:

- (1) That CUNY require education and training about antisemitism in all its forms for students, administrators and faculty, so that there would be greater understanding of the breadth of the problem and how antisemitism may be expressed, including relating to Israel;
- (2) That administrators more forcefully condemn antisemitism in all its forms, whenever it occurs, including by specifically describing what the perpetrators said and did, and by condemning the perpetrators;
- (3) That administrators work harder to identify the violators of CUNY's rules and punish wrongdoers for their misconduct, so that the CUNY community will finally see that the administration takes antisemitism seriously and will do its best to combat it; and
- (4) That CUNY investigate SJP's conduct (including its sources of funding to confirm that funds were being obtained lawfully and that SJP was not receiving funds or other material support from groups and individuals with ties to terrorists or terrorist activities), and if the evidence warrants, then revoke the group's registered status in accordance with CUNY rules and policies. At a minimum, SJP should be placed on strict, supervised probation (as was the consequence for SJP at Northeastern University),⁹ until this group

⁹ See "Northeastern U. Reinstates Students for Justice in Palestine Chapter," Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Apr. 24, 2014, at <https://www.jta.org/2014/04/24/united-states/northeastern-u-reinstates-students-for-justice-in-palestine-chapter>.

demonstrated that it would respect and abide by the rules and standards that apply to everyone else.

The Problems at CUNY Continue

Jewish Students Continue to Feel Threatened and Intimidated

In May 2022, the New York Jewish Week reported that at John Jay College on Israel's Independence Day, a classmate charged toward a Jewish student and his group of friends while they were seated on the grass, wearing Israeli flags. The Jewish student said, "It was like he was intentionally invading our space. He was running, jumping over our heads, to intimidate us."¹⁰

This student also reported that students are afraid to wear "anything that would show that they're Jewish," such as a kippah or a Star of David. "They're afraid of the repercussions from people on campus. People on campus might actually hurt them."¹¹

The executive director of the Hillel at Baruch College told the New York Jewish Week about another report this semester of a student's experience wearing a kippah at John Jay College. The Hillel director said, "A Jewish student is walking through the hallways wearing their kippah. People say to him, 'You are an oppressor.' No one asked him his opinion on Israel. It's complete and overt antisemitism."¹²

¹⁰ Jacob Henry, "Anti-Israel Commencement Speaker Sparks Another Antisemitism Debate at CUNY," May 20, 2022, at <https://www.jta.org/2022/05/20/ny/anti-israel-commencement-speaker-sparks-another-antisemitism-debate-at-cuny>.

¹¹ See n.10.

¹² See n.10. That criticism of Israel and Zionism is often masking Jew-hatred was also evident when a group of students disrupted a Faculty Council meeting at Brooklyn College in February 2016. When the chairperson told the disrupters that they were out of order, we were informed that the disrupters called him a "Zionist pig." According to the investigators commissioned by CUNY's Chancellor, a student shouted "Zionist Jew" or "Zionist" at the chairperson. In any event, whoever shouted at the chairperson could not know whether the chairperson – who was a computer science professor – was a Zionist. What the disrupters did know – because the chairperson wore a kippah – was that the chairperson was a Jew.

Antisemitism at the CUNY School of Law

In 2020, a student at the CUNY School of Law posted a video on social media in which she threatens to light someone on fire because he is wearing a sweatshirt bearing the emblem of the Israel Defense Forces. The ZOA contacted the dean of the law school and identified several CUNY policies that this law student appeared to have violated. We urged the dean to investigate, discipline the student consistent with CUNY policies, and report this student to law enforcement to determine whether she may have violated New York's criminal laws.

To the ZOA's knowledge, CUNY Law took none of these steps and downplayed the seriousness and dangerousness of the law student's conduct. Without describing the conduct or condemning it, CUNY Law simply posted a statement on Twitter that "CUNY Law stands against hate and antisemitism." The message described the law student's conduct as "provocative and hurtful to many in our community and beyond who have seen it." But it was far more than that, possibly criminal and certainly frightening and threatening to every Jew at CUNY Law who supports Israel.

Then the Dean withdrew this weak statement and actually apologized for issuing it, calling it a "mistake." The Dean justified the law student's conduct as an exercise of her First Amendment right to express her opinion.¹³ Threatening to light someone on fire for supporting Israel is not protected speech under the First Amendment.

¹³ CUNY Law legitimized this law student's threatening conduct again on June 30, 2021. In a statement issued by the interim dean, CUNY Law claimed that this law student was being "vilified" for her "pro-Palestinian student activism." See https://www.law.cuny.edu/newsroom_post/statement-on-palestinian-activism/.

When our efforts to get CUNY Law to take effective and appropriate action proved fruitless, the ZOA filed a Title VI action against the school in October 2020. In January 2022, OCR notified the ZOA that it was investigating these allegations of the complaint.¹⁴

It would be reasonable to think that at a time when the law school is under federal investigation for failing to respond effectively to a hostile antisemitic environment, CUNY Law would be extra-vigilant in ensuring a safe and welcoming environment for Jewish and pro-Israel students. But that is not what occurred.

CUNY Law not only justified the conduct of a law student who threatened to light someone on fire because he was wearing an IDF sweatshirt. CUNY Law rewarded and gave a prominent platform to this law student – someone who also openly calls for the death of Zionists, calls for Israel’s destruction, and supports and promotes terrorism against Jews.¹⁵ The student was a speaker at CUNY Law’s commencement ceremony on May 13, 2022.

This law student was treated like a celebrity at the CUNY Law commencement, posing for a photo on stage and greeted with resounding cheers and applause. She used the podium that CUNY Law gave her to continue to demonize Israel and to complain that she has been victimized – by a so-called “campaign of Zionist harassment by well-funded organizations with ties to the Israeli government and military.”¹⁶

¹⁴ The ZOA’s Title VI complaint also included allegations about a Jewish student at CUNY Law who ultimately left the school after enduring what she described as a “campaign of harassment” by student groups, other students and even faculty, simply because she had expressed her Jewish identity by supporting Israel. These allegations are also the subject of another Title VI complaint that OCR is investigating separately.

¹⁵ This law student’s horrific antisemitic record has been documented in detail by an organization called Canary Mission, which investigates and records hatred expressed against the U.S., Israel and Jews by individuals and groups across the political spectrum. See <http://canarymission.org/>.

¹⁶ The video of the law student’s commencement speech can be viewed here: <https://twitter.com/SAFE/CUNY/status/1525697281328140290>.

CUNY may try to evade responsibility for featuring this law student at commencement, by claiming that it was the student government, not the CUNY administration, which selected her to speak. But it is impossible to imagine that if the student government had selected an anti-Black racist to speak, or someone with a record of threatening and intimidating women or the LGBTQ community, CUNY would have stood by and allowed a bigot to be featured at CUNY Law’s commencement. In any of those situations, CUNY surely would have stepped in and prevented an open bigot against Blacks, women, or the LGBTQ community from speaking – and would have been right to do so.¹⁷

CUNY Law is the only publicly funded law school in New York City. Not a single penny of taxpayer money should be going to support a school that legitimizes, rewards, and gives a prominent platform to a student who openly promotes antisemitism or any other form of bigotry. In a recent article published by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, a Jewish CUNY student (who feared retribution if he were publicly identified) described the hostile antisemitic environment that this law student is creating at CUNY Law: “It’s one thing to have a political

¹⁷ Contributing to the hostile antisemitic environment at CUNY Law is the faculty’s recent endorsement of the CUNY Law student government’s anti-Israel BDS resolution, which was also endorsed by numerous student groups at the school. See <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dm4Sv9QsbzgyrOhpVABkEZuLskrkcWp9MgjiQRDsG4/edit>. The resolution falsely accuses Israel of “apartheid,” “genocide,” and “war crimes,” and accuses CUNY of being “complicit” in these alleged wrongs through its work with Israeli academic institutions. In addition, the resolution names and criticizes Hillel and other student groups for supporting Israel. Notably, this BDS resolution that faculty and student groups have all rallied behind does not target and condemn Russia or China or any other truly human-rights-abusing country. The resolution singles out, condemns and seeks to punish the one and only Jewish state in the world, Israel – as well as the Jewish students and student groups that support Israel. That is antisemitism, according to the IHRA working definition of antisemitism. By endorsing this resolution, faculty are actively participating in marginalizing Jewish and pro-Israel students and making them feel like pariahs at their school. CUNY Chancellor Matos Rodriguez rejected the resolution after the student government passed it. See Dion J. Pierre, “CUNY Chancellor Rejects Law Student Call to End Academic Ties with Israel,” *The Algemeiner*, Dec. 13, 2021, at <https://www.algemeiner.com/2021/12/13/cuny-chancellor-rejects-law-student-call-to-end-academic-ties-to-israel/>. To the ZOA’s knowledge, the CUNY Law administration has not yet condemned the faculty or the resolution or made it clear that the resolution is antisemitic and against CUNY’s values.

person who you don't agree with. But she calls for the actual murder of Jews. It's really setting a precedent that CUNY is OK with having people in their school who are out to hurt us.”¹⁸

It is not okay. It cannot be okay. The ZOA thanks Councilwoman Vernikov for her recent momentous decision to pull \$50,000 in funding that had been allocated to CUNY Law. The ZOA also thanks Councilman James F. Gennaro who stated: “Let the record show that my office is severing all ties with CUNY Law School effective immediately. I will no longer entertain any funding requests from CUNY Law School, nor will my office be partnering with this institution for any future events or initiatives. And I call upon all CUNY Law School alumni to withhold donations and support for this citadel of hate. My message is loud and clear: It is my obligation to challenge and defeat anti-Semitism wherever I see it.”¹⁹

The ZOA's Recommendations

Councilmembers Vernikov and Gennaro have sent the much-needed message to CUNY that if you tolerate antisemitism, you will bear the negative consequences. The ZOA respectfully urges this Committee and the rest of the New York City Council to take every additional step it can to send the same message to CUNY, including but not limited to the following.

First, we ask you and the rest of the New York City Council to withhold financial and all other support to CUNY, until CUNY finally starts responding to antisemitism forcefully and effectively. That means withholding funds and refusing to support or partner with CUNY on programs, events, and other initiatives.

¹⁸ Jacob Henry, “Anti-Israel Commencement Speaker Sparks Another Antisemitism Debate at CUNY,” Jewish Telegraphic Agency, May 20, 2022, at <https://www.jta.org/2022/05/20/ny/anti-israel-commencement-speaker-sparks-another-antisemitism-debate-at-cuny>.

¹⁹ Queens Jewish Link, May 25, 2022, at <https://www.queensjewishlink.com/index.php/opinion/76-your-say-readers-write/6631-your-say-readers-write-108>.

Second, urge CUNY to adopt the IHRA working definition of antisemitism and to use this definition when CUNY enforces its rules and policies and considers whether actions are motivated by antisemitic bias. The definition is excellent, reflecting the experiences of Jews today, including on our college campuses. The definition includes contemporary examples of antisemitism, including antisemitism related to Israel.

The IHRA definition is widely accepted. It has been adopted by the U.S. government, by more than 30 other countries around the world, and by more than half the states in the U.S. On June 12, 2022, New York Governor Kathy Hochul issued a proclamation embracing the IHRA working definition, correctly noting that it “is a vital resource in the struggle against antisemitism, and that will facilitate constructive discourse, further understanding and enable a more thoughtful response to this harmful behavior that impacts us all.”²⁰

Some universities have already adopted the IHRA working definition of antisemitism.²¹ Given that CUNY Law has interpreted and justified open calls for the murder of Zionists, open calls for Israel’s destruction, and open support for terrorism and violence against Jews as “activism,” and does not see all this for exactly what it is – Jew-hatred – CUNY sorely needs this definition. CUNY cannot possibly effectively address antisemitism if it does not understand the problem in all its forms, including when antisemites try to camouflage their Jew-hatred as legitimate criticism of Israel.

²⁰ See Aaron Bandler, “NY Gov Issues Proclamation Embracing IHRA Definition of Antisemitism,” Jewish Journal, June 14, 2022, at <https://jewishjournal.com/news/united-states/349287/ny-gov-issues-proclamation-embracing-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism/>.

²¹ For example, Florida State University has adopted the IHRA definition. In a statement to the FSU university about FSU’s efforts to combat antisemitism, President John Thrasher noted that “[w]hile freedom of speech is of paramount importance on a college campus, so is creating a climate of acceptance and appreciation for the value and richness of the many cultures and ideas that make Florida State University such an excellent academic experience.” See <https://news.fsu.edu/news/university-news/2020/08/12/a-message-from-president-john-thrasher-an-update-on-antisemitism-and-religious-discrimination/>.

Third, we ask that you urge CUNY to institute mandatory training for staff, students and faculty on antisemitism, using the IHRA definition as a guide. The CUNY community must understand the full breadth of the problem of antisemitism and how it is expressed today, including antisemitism relating to Israel.

Fourth, we recommend that you urge CUNY to publicly and forcefully condemn campus antisemitism whenever and however it is expressed at CUNY. All too often, we have seen weak condemnations of antisemitism, and they are linked to condemnations of other forms of bigotry. If an antisemitic incident occurs at CUNY, then the CUNY administration should clearly and forcefully condemn it and the perpetrators. In addition, the condemnation should give antisemitism the singular focus it deserves.

Fifth, we urge CUNY to finally start vigorously enforcing CUNY policies when they are violated, using the IHRA working definition of antisemitism as a guide. As described above, CUNY already has policies in place that protect Jewish students from being harassed and threatened because they are Jews and support Israel. If CUNY maintains these policies, then CUNY must stand behind them and finally strongly enforce them. Wrongdoers who threaten, harass and create a hostile environment for Jewish and pro-Israel students must be disciplined so that the CUNY community will finally see that the administration takes antisemitism seriously and is taking concrete, forceful steps to combat it.

Finally, we urge you to contact the Office for Civil Rights and let OCR know that you are deeply concerned about the hostile environment for Jewish and pro-Israel students at CUNY Law and the school's continuing failure to effectively address the problem. Let OCR know that you expect a prompt and thorough investigation of the ZOA's Title VI complaint, and that you

and your constituents are depending on OCR to ensure that Jewish students' civil rights are fully protected under the law.

All of these recommendations are reasonable and doable. If implemented, CUNY Law will be more effectively responding to campus antisemitism. And Jewish and pro-Israel students will feel safer and freer to express their Jewish identity openly and proudly, including their support for their religious and ancestral homeland, Israel.

Conclusion

Thank you again for holding this important hearing and considering the serious issue of campus antisemitism. Jewish students at CUNY and at every college and university in New York City and in this country should be afforded a safe and welcoming learning environment. That is what every student deserves. We urge the New York City Council to implement the foregoing recommendations and to take all other steps within its power and authority to help achieve that goal.

Respectfully submitted,

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**New York City Council, Committee on Higher Education
Oversight Hearing: Examining Antisemitism on College Campuses
Testimony by Amanda Berman, Esq., Founder and Executive Director, Zioness**

I would like to sincerely thank the members of the Committee on Higher Education for hosting this critical dialogue, and for the opportunity to testify. Antisemitism on US college campuses, including, unfortunately, across New York City, has been exploding for several years, and the result has been traumatizing for Jewish students and families, many of whom seriously consider which universities to apply to based as much on the prevalence of antisemitism as on the opportunity for academic achievement and future career opportunities. This committee, and the Council, have an opportunity to rectify this glaring problem, ensuring that New York's extraordinary institutions of higher education are a representation of the beautiful and unparalleled diversity of New York City and a safe and inspiring place for all students to learn and grow.

My name is Amanda Berman and I am a civil rights attorney and the founder and Executive Director of the [Zioness Movement](https://www.zioness.org), a domestic social justice activist organization mobilizing progressive Jews and our allies in the fight for social, racial, economic, gender and environmental justice in America. Zioness launched after a number of high profile incidents in progressive organizing and coalition building spaces, in which Jews were targeted with litmus tests and, sometimes, outright, vitriolic antisemitism, as, quote-unquote, "Zionists."

Before pivoting my career to build Zioness full-time, I worked as an attorney who helped victims of antisemitism—including its contemporary manifestation in "anti-Zionism"—know their rights, and enforce them legally. One of the cases I am most proud to have worked on was a [groundbreaking pair of lawsuits against San Francisco State University \(SFSU\)](#) for its pervasive antisemitism, its First and Fourteenth Amendment violations against Jewish and Israeli students and community members, its violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and its violations of various provisions of California law. It was, as far as I know, the only time that a Title VI case brought on behalf of Jewish plaintiffs proceeded to trial, although on the eve of jury selection, [the case was settled](#) on terms that are important and exceedingly relevant to my testimony today. In order to avoid trial in which a powerful case was to be presented showing a pervasively hostile environment of antisemitism at SFSU, the university issued a public statement recognizing that "for many Jews, Zionism is an important part of their identity." The litigation set a crucial precedent that is urgent for this committee to understand: college campuses that do not recognize the fundamental, inarguable fact that Zionism is intrinsic and inseparable from Jewish identity, and actively protect Jewish and Israeli students and faculty members from antisemitism that targets Jews as "Zionists," will be vulnerable to similar lawsuits.

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It is also important to note that the federal judge assigned to the case agreed that the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism](#) was instructive for adjudication of the facts of the case and not inconsistent with the pivotal mandates of the First Amendment. I will be submitting coverage of the case and settlement, as well as a widely circulated [op-ed I published](#) about the operation of the IHRA definition vis-a-vis Title VI, along with my written testimony for the committee’s review and consideration.

In both my work as an attorney and my work leading Zioness, a national grassroots movement which has created a progressive community that allows terrified Jews around the country to “come out” as Zionists, I have had unique, and deeply distressing experience with the form of contemporary antisemitism known as “anti-Zionism.” There are those—on college campuses, in progressive movements, and beyond—who argue that “anti-Zionism” cannot be antisemitism, because it is nothing more than “criticism of Israel” or “advocacy for the Palestinian people.” I genuinely wish this were true, as I personally criticize Israel frequently and believe fervently in the Palestinian peoples’ right to self-determination, but the claim is fundamentally wrong, irresponsible, and intentionally misleading.

Those who call themselves “anti-Zionist,” or associate Zionism with the worst evils of the world (like colonialism, apartheid, genocide, racism, etc.), are using a core part of Jewish identity—Zionism—as a slur, thereby demonizing and ostracizing nearly the entire American Jewish community. Indeed, using the term “Zionists” to stigmatize Jews did not originate in the American left, but in the dustbin of history, becoming a global phenomenon with the publication and worldwide distribution of the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* in the early 1900s. This noxious text, a conspiracy theory which accused villainous, supernaturally powerful, greedy Jews—aka, the “Elders of Zion”—of planning global domination by exercising complete control over the economy, media, and government. *The Protocols* are widely recognized as inspiring violent Russian pogroms against Jewish communities, Henry Ford’s rabid antisemitic conspiracizing in *The Dearborn Independent*, and ultimately, Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*—and the Nazi Holocaust, which involved the slaughter of six million Jews and the intended extermination of the Jewish people. It is critical to note that *The Protocols* was published **43 years before** the reestablishment of a Jewish state in the land of Israel in 1948, and yet the hallmarks of genocidal antisemitism were encapsulated in a book describing the so-called “elders of Zion.” Demonizing Jews as “Zionists,” also-known-as “anti-Zionism,” is a form of bigotry that long predates Israel, let alone the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Since archetypal “anti-Zionism,” the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, originated in czarist Russia, it should come as no surprise that the contemporary “Zionism is Racism” (and colonialism, genocide, apartheid, imperialism, etc.) declaration, which perverts a concept which is central to Jewish identity, and which radiates from parts of the progressive movement, including on college campuses, comes from the Cold War Soviet Union. In 1975, the Soviet Union introduced a shameful resolution at the United Nations declaring that “Zionism is racism,”

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a declaration that inverts reality, divides the progressive movement and leads to virulent and violent attacks against identifiable Jews in all corners of the globe. What many don't know is that the resolution was a KGB "anti-Zionist" disinformation campaign being internationalized to protect Soviet Cold War interests—namely, to attack American influence (Israel) in the Middle East. After the vote to adopt the "Zionism is racism" resolution (which has now been rescinded in shame), U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, and later New York's revered Senator Daniel Patrick Moynahan, gave a historic speech describing its catastrophic consequences far better than I could:

"The UN is about to make antisemitism international law...[the U.S.] does not acknowledge, it will not abide by, it will never acquiesce in this infamous act...A great evil has been loosed upon the world. The abomination of antisemitism has been given the appearance of international sanction. The General Assembly today grants symbolic amnesty — and more — to the murderers of the six million European Jews.

What we have here is a lie. The lie is that Zionism is a form of racism. The overwhelmingly clear truth is that it is not...In logic, the State of Israel could be, or could become, many things...but it could not be and could not become racism unless it ceased to be Zionist."

The same is true for those for whom the State of Israel is our only place of refuge in a world which has, constantly and for millennia, shown its contempt for Jewish life. While of course an individual person who is a Zionist could also be a racist, Zionism—the liberation and self-determination movement of the Jewish people in our ancestral homeland—could never be racism, as it liberates the world's oldest and most enduring persecuted minority community, Jews of all colors and races and cultural backgrounds, from thousands of years of violent oppression in the diaspora. Denying the Jewish people this right, aiming to leave us in statelessness and systemic powerlessness forever—"anti-Zionism"—is much closer to racism than Zionism ever could be.

I'd like to close by saying three things clearly and unequivocally:

- First: fighting antisemitism should never be considered controversial. Recognizing and responding to this ubiquitous, historical, shape-shifting threat—to the Jewish people, to our city and our country, to our whole world—is not controversial. Anyone who says otherwise is more concerned with politicizing antisemitism than fighting it.
- Second: Jewish identity is not based exclusively on Jewish religion, and antisemitism in 2022 is very rarely a religiously-motivated bigotry (despite the way hate crimes statistics against Jewish communities are often recorded). The Jewish people are members of a nation, a distinct people with distinct religious and cultural practices, a people with

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Indigenous ties to the land they now inhabit in the State of Israel, a people with shared history, language, ancestry, and even DNA. To flatten Jewish identity to a religious practice is to ignore its core, which is nationhood/peoplehood.

- Third: Zionism is not a political ideology. The State of Israel has politics and policies, like every sovereign state on earth. Zionism, the movement for Jewish liberation and self-determination in our ancestral homeland, is a reflection of Jewish nationhood, Jewish history, Jewish identity, Jewish religion, and Jewish cultural practices. Zionists hold political views that range the entire spectrum, and calling Zionism political is deceptive and inaccurate. Zionism is about self-determination for a persecuted minority community, and it long predates the modern state of Israel (and any politics or policies associated with it).

In addition to this testimony, I will be submitting several resources describing in greater detail the Jewish community's overwhelming understanding and perception of Zionism, antisemitism, "anti-Zionism," and anti-Israel sentiment; the way that the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism operates legally (entirely consistent with the First Amendment) and should be considered on campuses; and other information which may be helpful to the committee's work. I would be very pleased to serve as a resource in any capacity that can be helpful as you determine what role you can play at CUNY, and on all of New York's campuses.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to join you today and for your commitment to ensuring a wonderful, safe, intellectually stimulating and academically inspiring future for all students in this singularly extraordinary city.



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UNDERSTANDING ANTISEMITISM: A GUIDE FOR OUR PARTNERS

Antisemitism is the world's oldest and most enduring hatred. Like anti-Black racism, antisemitism is systematic and institutionalized in every political movement, society, and economic system in the world. The insidious nature of this disease makes it harder to identify and disrupt than most other forms of bigotry. Consequently, anti-Jewish ideas may sit in our spaces, often taking the form of blind spots and biases. If left unchecked, it will erode our movements for justice as we fall for the trap white supremacy has laid for us: a scapegoat to distract from the real forces behind oppression of vulnerable minorities.

WHAT IS ANTISEMITISM?

- In the most simple sense, antisemitism is anti-Jewish bigotry, or a bigotry aimed at the Jewish people.
- Many people think of antisemitism as a form of religious bigotry. This stems from a general perception that Jews are a community with a shared religion (Judaism).
- However, in its modern form, antisemitism acts more like a form of racism. Jews aren't often attacked for their religious beliefs. We're attacked for being Jews—part of the Jewish nation.

HOW DOES ANTISEMITISM MANIFEST?

- Antisemitism is largely based on conspiracy theories that blame Jews for the problems, real or perceived, of a society or community. In these conspiracies, the Jews are the secret force harming one group of people, or the entire collective.
- White nationalists in America, for example, hate Jews because of our commitment to the Civil Rights Movement and supporting the civic and political power of non-white communities. "Jews will not replace us!" is not a chant about the small Jewish population (16 million globally) taking over the white race (note: to them, Jews are not white), but rather, that Jews are joined in a massive conspiracy to subvert the white race, by replacing white control and white culture in America with people of color.
- In some communities of color, the conspiracy is inverted: Jews may be viewed as the ultimate embodiment of the evils of whiteness and race-based oppression. For example, subscribers to Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam perpetuate a dangerous lie accusing Jews of controlling the Atlantic slave trade. Some fringe elements of the progressive movement, including some Jews, allege that Israeli Jews train American law enforcement to terrorize and murder Black Americans. In both cases, the slanderous accusation is that Jews (whether in America or in Israel) work to harm, maim, or kill Black people.



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HOW DO I SPOT ANTISEMITISM?

- There are many classical antisemitic tropes: messages that are recycled throughout the ages to scapegoat the Jews for whatever is viewed as the ultimate wrong in any given society in any given moment. For example, throughout history, Jews have been violently attacked in societies that have normalized language calling Jews powerful, manipulative, bloodthirsty, wealthy, greedy, or working toward world domination. Please check out our simple but comprehensive [resource](#) to become more familiar with these dangerous tropes.

WHAT ABOUT ISRAEL?

- Criticizing specific policies of any government, from a place of knowledge, is always appropriate, even passionately. Decrying specific politics or policies of the state of Israel is not antisemitic.
- However, demonizing Israel, calling the state illegitimate, or advocating for its dissolution, is perceived by the vast majority of Jews in the world as explicitly antisemitic. Unless coming from a principled anti-nationalist who does not believe in states or borders for any peoples, the implication that Israel should cease to exist as a Jewish state is anti-Jewish.
- Demonizing Zionism is antisemitic because it seeks to undermine the right of the Jewish people to be liberated and self-determined in a sovereign state for the Jewish people in our indigenous homeland. It is up to the Jewish people to determine what persecution against us looks and feels like, and given that more than 90% of American Jews identify as Zionist, calling oneself “anti-Zionist” is overwhelmingly perceived by Jews to be antisemitic.
- Pushing Zionist Jews (90%+ of all American Jews) out of progressive spaces, or holding American Jews accountable for Israel’s actions is highly problematic. Creating litmus tests for Jewish participation in domestic justice movements—especially those that affect our bodily integrity and our rights as women, LGBTQ+ individuals, Jews of Color, immigrants, refugees, etc.—is antisemitic in that it demands that we have, and declare, our positions on complex geopolitical issues in order to advocate for our rights in the countries in which we live and vote.

WHY SHOULD THIS BE SO IMPORTANT TO ME?

- Antisemitism erodes the very fabric of a healthy society. Where conspiracy theories thrive, democratic societies which protect civil rights for marginalized communities cannot survive. Therefore, this is genuinely a shared fight and a problem that affects all of us. A frequent refrain and warning is that “what starts with the Jews, never ends with the Jews.” Fighting antisemitism is an urgent mandate for every American.
- As Eric K. Ward, a Black man who infiltrated the white supremacist movement by presenting as an anti-Jewish bigot, wrote in his seminal piece, [Skin in the Game](#), antisemitism is the very nucleus and animating force of white supremacy and white nationalism in America. We cannot defeat these existential threats to the democratic experiment without vigilantly fighting antisemitism everywhere it manifests.
- Check out our resource [“How Antisemitism Weakens Our Movements”](#) for more details.

Winston & Strawn Secures Landmark Settlement with California State University Safeguarding Jewish Student Rights

Mar 20, 2019

Winston & Strawn and the Lawfare Project reached a landmark settlement in their lawsuits against the California State University (CSU) public university system. The settlement in *Volk v. Board of Trustees* comes ahead of a trial that was scheduled to take place this week.

“This is a landmark civil rights victory, not only for the rights of Jewish and Israeli students but for people of all religious faiths,” said Lawrence Hill, the Winston partner who brought the case to the firm and stewarded it. “It will not only result in fundamental change at San Francisco State University and the CSU system but should result in a paradigm shift on college campuses across the nation. This settlement agreement should become a model for other universities to follow to avoid similar claims of religious discrimination and violation of First Amendment rights.”

As part of the settlement San Francisco State University (SFSU) agreed to:

- Issue a public statement affirming that “it understands that, for many Jews, Zionism is an important part of their identity”
- “Hire a Coordinator of Jewish Student Life within the Division of Equity & Community Inclusion,” and to dedicate suitable office space for this position
- “Retain an independent, external consultant to assess SFSU’s procedures for enforcement of applicable CSU system-wide antidiscrimination policies and student code of conduct”
- Assign “for a period of 24 months all complaints of religious discrimination under either EO 1096 or EO 1097 to an independent, outside investigator for investigation”
- “Allocate an additional \$200,000 to support educational outreach efforts to promote viewpoint diversity (including but not limited to pro-Israel or Zionist viewpoints) and inclusion and equity on

the basis of religious identity (including but not limited to Jewish religious identity)”

- Engage in the SFSU process to allocate “space on the SFSU campus for a mural to be installed under the oversight of the Division of Equity & Community Inclusion, paid for by the University, that will be designed by student groups of differing viewpoints on the issues that are the subject of this litigation to be agreed by the parties (including but not limited to Jewish, pro-Israel, and/or Zionist student groups, should such student groups elect to participate in the process)”

Winston handled the matter pro bono devoting several thousand hours to the case staffed with lawyers from the firm’s Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. offices, including Partner Lawrence Hill, among 20 other attorneys.

“We would not have achieved this victory without the tireless effort, commitment, and talent of this dedicated team of lawyers,” added Lawrence Hill. “Our appreciation also goes out to Amanda Berman, formerly of The Lawfare Project, who was instrumental in bringing this case to fruition and for her hours of tireless work with us on the case, to Brooke Goldstein of The Lawfare Project, and to Jeffrey Dorfman, Scott Allen, Chad Lackey, Ellen Brickman, and the team at DOAR Consulting, who provided first class jury consulting services on a pro bono basis.”

The Winston team and the Lawfare Project first filed a lawsuit in federal court on June 19, 2017 on behalf of a group of SFSU students and members of the local Jewish community against the Board of Trustees of CSU, SFSU President Leslie Wong, and several other university officials and employees, alleging that SFSU has a long and extensive history of cultivating anti-Semitism and overt discrimination against Jewish students. This lawsuit, *Mandel v. Board of Trustees of California State University*, was triggered by the disruption of an April 2016 speech by the Mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barkat, which shut down the speech and denied those present the opportunity to hear it. The *Mandel* suit also asserted violations of constitutional rights based on the “Know Your Rights” Fair and alleged violations of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 based on claiming there was a pervasively hostile environment for Jews and Israelis at SFSU.

A second state lawsuit, *Volk v. Board of Trustees of California State University*, was triggered by the denial of equal participation in a “Know Your Rights” Fair on SFSU’s campus in February 2017, which was planned to provide information and resources to groups feeling targeted in the political climate at the time. Plaintiffs’ Jewish group was intentionally excluded from hosting a table and providing information and resources to Jewish students concerned with anti-Semitism.

The settlement reached resolves both the *Mandel* and *Volk* cases.

RELATED PROFESSIONALS

The Washington Post

‘I felt afraid’: Lawsuit claims public university fostered anti-Semitism on campus

By [Susan Svrluga](#)

June 19, 2017 at 4:29 p.m. EDT

A group of students and community members filed a lawsuit Monday against San Francisco State University and its leaders, alleging that the public school has fostered a climate of anti-Semitism “marked by violent threats to the safety of Jewish students on campus.”

“I didn’t have the right to speak on my own campus; I felt afraid as a Jewish student,” said Jacob Mandel, who just graduated from San Francisco State. It wasn’t just that he was being shouted down at events by students politically opposed to Israel, he said in an interview, but that “the administration was actively working against me. ... I felt really powerless.”

Dan Ojeda, university counsel for San Francisco State, responded with a brief statement soon after the lawsuit was filed Monday in the U.S. District Court of the Northern District of California: “The University was not aware of the complaint and has not had an opportunity to review or respond to it.

“We have been working closely with the Jewish community, among other interest groups, to address concerns and improve the campus environment for all students. Those efforts have been very productive and will continue notwithstanding this lawsuit.”

The suit comes at a time when Muslims and other groups feel increasingly vulnerable, and as debate heats up over free speech and academic freedom on campuses nationally, after controversial speakers have been canceled, protested and shouted down on some campuses — and have even sparked violence and rioting.

“As we already know with all sorts of free-speech issues on campus, there is a tactic to silence people with whom extreme members of society don’t agree,” said Amanda Berman, director of legal affairs with the Lawfare Project. “There’s a sense that people don’t have a right to speak if certain communities don’t want that message to get out.”

The lawsuit also comes amid rising reports of anti-Semitic acts on college campuses, as well as strong anti-Israel movements at many schools. The Pew Research Center recently reported that while older Americans support Israel rather than Palestinians by at least a 3-to-1 ratio, more than a quarter of millennials support Palestinians and fewer than half support Israel.

The Anti-Defamation League reported a 34 percent increase in anti-Semitic incidents nationally from 2015 to 2016, and a spike of 86 percent in the first quarter of 2017.

Several student groups at San Francisco State complained in May that they had found dozens of posters on campus that they said were racist, Islamophobic, anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian.

Mandel’s perception was that he didn’t have the same rights as any other students on campus simply because he was Jewish. He said he was often stared down, verbally harassed and confronted by people because of his religion and that the administration was dismissive of his formal complaints.

He doesn’t want to target the students who would shut down their events with protests, he said. While he disagrees with their opinions, he said, he supports their right to speak.

“Without this lawsuit, Jewish students will remain marginalized on San Francisco State’s campus,” he said. “Without it, nothing will be done.”

The suit alleges that the school has violated the plaintiffs’ constitutional rights to free speech and equal protection, as well as a provision of the Civil Rights Act.

Lawyers for the students hope the case will set a precedent.

“Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is the underpinning of the modern American ethos of equal protection and anti-discrimination. This case isn’t about Jews, it’s about equal protection under the law,” Brooke Goldstein, director of the Lawfare Project, said in a written statement. “If the courts fail to apply Title VI in this context, we are creating a massive loophole that will ultimately be exploited at some point to target other marginalized minority communities. If we refuse to enforce anti-discrimination law for Jews, if we say Jews don’t deserve equal protection, it will erode constitutional protections for everyone.”

About 2,000 of San Francisco State’s 26,000 undergraduates are Jewish, according to Hillel International.

The lawsuit grew out of a confrontation in April 2016 when Nir Barkat, the mayor of Jerusalem, was invited by SF Hillel to speak. Protesters yelled chants such as “Get the f— off our campus” and “Long live the intifada! Intifada, intifada!” using a microphone and bullhorns to drown out the speaker. Barkat left when police — acting on a “stand-down” order from university officials, according to the lawsuit — did not quiet the protesters.

The lawsuit describes what it calls a decades-long history of anti-Semitism on campus, including the formation of an active Palestinian student group in the early 1970s and an example from 1994 when the suit claims a 10-foot mural appeared on the student union building with “yellow Stars of David intertwined with dollar signs, skulls and crossbones, and the words ‘African Blood.’” According to the lawsuit, “the mural had to be sandblasted, with sixty police officers in riot gear positioned to protect the sandblasters from an angry mob who wanted the mural to be left untouched.”

The suit alleges that Jewish student groups are consistently denied permission to host events or tables promoting their groups on campus, and that when they do host events, they are “systematically shut down by raucous mobs.”

It claims that university leaders promoted free speech when, in 2013, a pro-Palestinian student group wrote two messages around campus: “My heroes have always killed colonizers” and “Resistance is not terrorism,” with a portrait of a woman who hijacked planes holding a machine gun. It claims that the university did not take action when the leader of a pro-Palestinian student group wrote messages several years ago promoting killing online, and when an Israeli student reported violent online threats made against her by a student in one of her classes.

Hillel was not allowed to participate in a “Know Your Rights” event on campus in February intended to help “vulnerable populations who may be feeling targeted in the new political climate in the country since the presidential election,” according to the lawsuit.

The lawsuit says the university’s president promised to “lead a universitywide effort to seek solutions to the anti-Semitism on this campus” in May, but that university leaders have failed to follow through on similar statements in the past.

The lawsuit seeks, among other things, an injunction to enjoin the university from penalizing, discriminating against or violating the free speech of Jewish students and community members; and damages for discrimination and emotional distress.

Lawrence M. Hill, an attorney for the plaintiffs, said in a written statement: “When our Universities, that are supposed to be institutions of tolerance and freedom of expression, foment prejudice and suppresses free speech we cannot stand idly by.

“College students are America’s future. Their minds shouldn’t be poisoned with hate and their voices shouldn’t be silenced by a mob.”

Update on June 21: San Francisco State University officials have released this statement in response to the suit.

The University, and its community of 35,000 students, faculty and staff, strives to cultivate a safe and welcoming environment where all members of our community can engage in the free expression of ideas and viewpoints without infringing on the academic opportunities and rights of others.

We condemn all forms of hate and anti-Semitism, and will continue to work tirelessly to protect the rights of all campus community members. The disruption of the event featuring Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat in spring 2016 and bias incidents that were reported this year were ugly reminders that anti-Semitism, like all forms of discrimination, is real and our community has work to do.

That said, the University strongly disagrees with the allegations in the complaint filed yesterday. Instances of intolerance or anti-Semitism are neither promoted nor tolerated at SF State by the president or by administrators. San Francisco State University is deeply committed to the elimination of anti-Semitism in our community and to fostering a safe and welcoming campus for our Jewish students. When such instances are brought to the attention of administrators, they are investigated impartially and action is taken in accordance with resulting findings.

Lawsuits seeking to force SF State to both protect free speech and assure diversity and inclusion are unnecessary and redundant. SF State remains committed to furthering free speech and defeating discrimination, including anti-Semitism. Rather than litigation, we welcome the plaintiffs, and any other organizations similarly committed to these ideals, to join us in pursuing that objective.

We urge those who are concerned with issues related to anti-Semitism to focus on the substantive actions in which the University is and has been engaged to improve the campus environment for all students, and specifically our Jewish students.

Actions completed or underway include:

- Training for staff, new students, student groups, University Police and others across the University.
- Implementation of a five-point protocol for managing protests and disruptions to assure the exercise of protected free speech for all.
- Creation of a President's Task Force on Campus Climate.
- Creation of a new senior position to ensure student protections, the Assistant Vice President for Equity and Community Inclusion.
- Update to the campus free speech policy to, among other things, include a new section addressing handbill posting requirements on campus by both internal and external groups.
- A comprehensive and substantive investigation into the alleged exclusion of Hillel students from the Know Your Rights Fair this spring.
- Development of a series of community conversations led by faculty to foster dialogue and explore issues of campus climate.

- Adoption of a Principles of Community statement, grounded in the University's strategic plan, that includes a clear and public statement of principles against intolerance.

We invite all our students and our community, and specifically our Jewish students and community, to join us in these substantive and proactive measures. We will pursue these actions regardless of any legal challenge or distraction, with the expectation and goal of offering an inclusive and welcoming environment for all our students. Should there be any doubt as to the commitment to this goal, we invite you to read the [recent statement on the topic by President Wong\[news.sfsu.edu\]](#) – a statement that predates our knowledge of this lawsuit.

Julie Zauzmer and Sarah Pulliam Bailey contributed to this report.



HOW DO I IDENTIFY ANTISEMITISM?

The word “antisemitism” gets thrown around with very little context. At its core, it is simply anti-Jewish bigotry--a form of racism against the Jewish people. Here are some common antisemitic (racist) characterizations and associations that have been used throughout history to degrade and dehumanize Jews--leading to devastating consequences.



JEW AS SCAPEGOATS

For 2000+ years, Jews have been wrongfully blamed for problems afflicting society and humanity. Scapegoating began with the accusation (which persists to this day) that Jews killed Jesus. In the Middle Ages, Jews in Europe were blamed for causing the “Black Death,” killing millions. In 2017, a rumor spread in Saudi Arabia that Israel (the Jews) had sent AIDS-infected melons via underground passages. Some have outrageously accused the Jews and/or Israel of creating covid-19.



"JEW CONTROL THE WORLD"

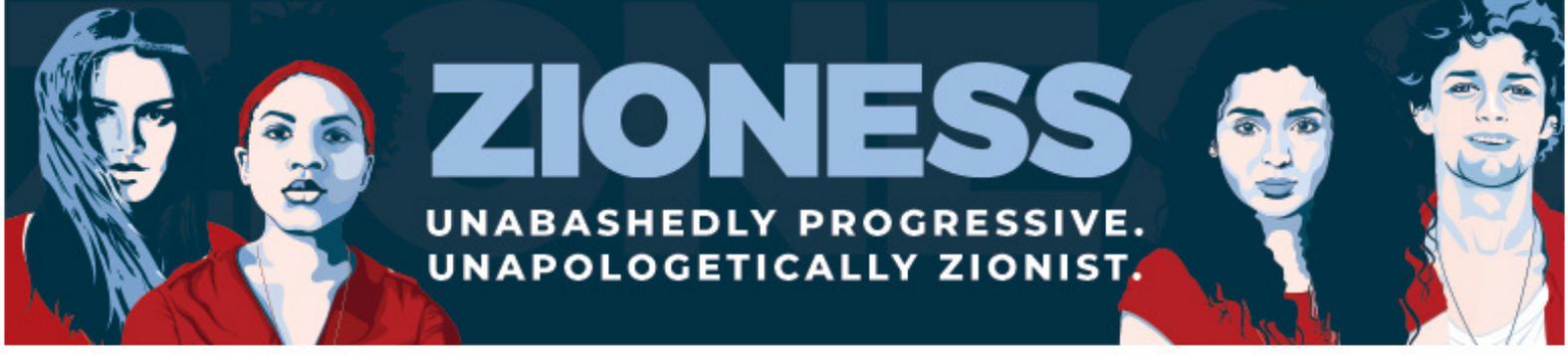
This idea is often displayed through images of Jews with tentacles (like an octopus) or holding onto strings (like a puppeteer) that control the levers of society. It suggests that Jews have ultimate power, seek to dominate the world, and control the media, financial institutions, and government. Simultaneously, the far right sees Jews as the “invisible hand” empowering non-white communities at the expense of “white America,” while the far left sees Jews as controlling these systems to keep people of color oppressed.



JEW AS HOLDERS OF SUPERNATURAL POWERS

The theme of mythical, unrestrainable Jewish power implies that Jews are above the laws of religion or politics or even nature. By presenting the Jews as omnipotent, antisemites convince the masses that a Jewish cabal is responsible for devastating societal events, even if such accountability is completely unreasonable or illogical.





ZIONESS

UNABASHEDLY PROGRESSIVE.
UNAPOLOGETICALLY ZIONIST.

THE JEW AS EVIL, DECEPTIVE, MANIPULATIVE AND GREEDY

Jews are often caricatured with devils ears or a long, hook nose that represents evil, deception, manipulation and greed. This antisemitic imagery originated with Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, in which the character Shylock, a financier, is repeatedly referred to as "the devil in the likeness of a Jew." Modern antisemites like the Rev. Louis Farrakhan regularly demonize Jews as "Satanic".



JEWIS AND MONEY

Banned from participating in certain professions, Jews throughout history often became moneylenders (bankers). This association is visualized with images of Jews with cash or currency symbols, often in the context of other tropes, including Jewish greed, power, control or manipulation. With wild conspiracy theories, Jewish financiers, like the Rothschild and Soros families, are demonized and scapegoated for the ills of any given society.



HOLOCAUST DENIAL

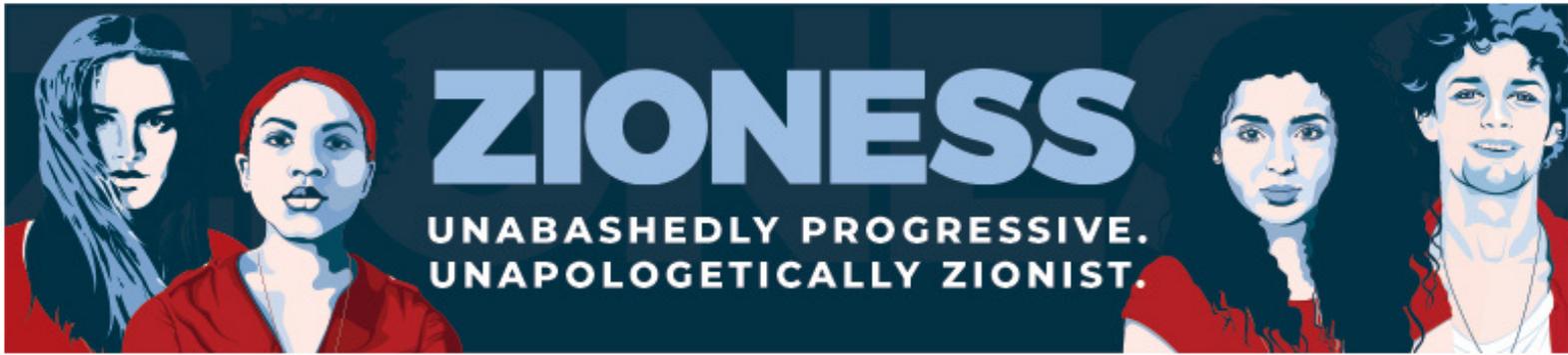
By denying or distorting the established, incontrovertible facts of the Holocaust, including the plan to annihilate the Jews of Europe and beyond, antisemites attempt to erase history and suggest that the Holocaust was invented or exaggerated as part of a manipulative Jewish plot to gain the world's sympathy.



JEWIS AS "ZIONISTS"

By perverting the term "Zionism" and libelously associating it with racism, apartheid, and colonialism, some have found a "politically correct" way to attack Jews as "Zionists". Around 95% of Jews are Zionists--Jews who support their own liberation--and these attacks play on the same tropes that are employed directly against Jews. As MLK Jr. said, "When people criticize Zionists, they mean Jews--you are talking antisemitism."





JEW AS DISLOYAL

Since Jews were exiled from their indigenous homeland in Israel, although they maintained a continuous presence there, they have lived on the margins of most societies. Since long before Israel's reestablishment in 1948--although the trope has become more pervasive since--diaspora Jews have been questioned on their loyalty to their "host countries". Jews have lived (and been persecuted) around the world, faced suspicion as sinister or untrustworthy, and accused of dual loyalty to some amorphous "higher" Jewish interest.



VICTIM BLAMING OF JEWS

Some attempt to justify Jew-hatred as a reasonable reaction to certain supposed Jewish characteristics or behaviors. After the Holocaust, antisemites said the "weak Jews" deserved their fate because they didn't stand up to the Nazis, going "like sheep to the slaughter." Reacting to rising violence against Jews in NYC in 2020, Orthodox victims were blamed for "overdevelopment/gentrification" and "complex racial tensions."



REFERENCES TO OR VISUALIZATIONS OF BLOOD

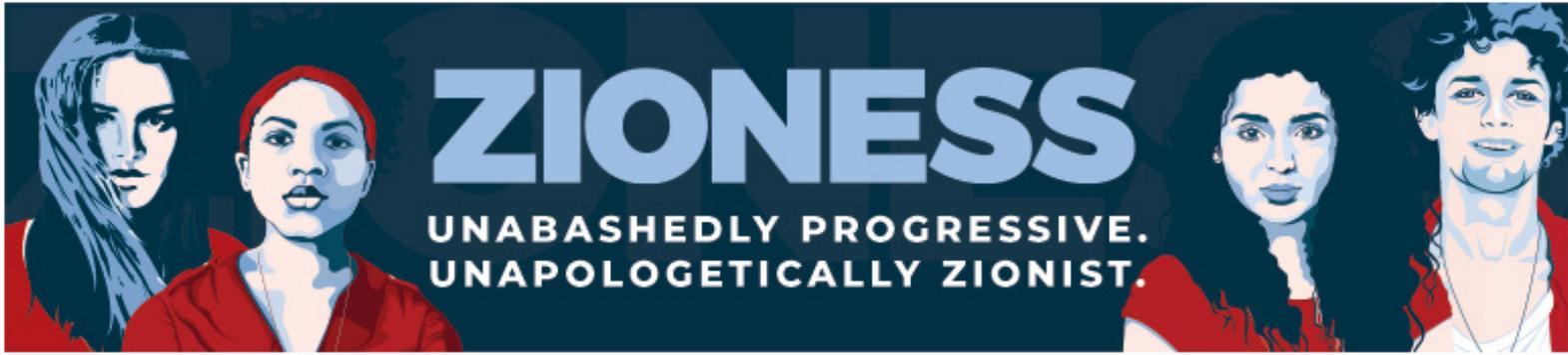
Known as the "blood libel," Jews have been alleged since the Middle Ages to be murderous, bloodthirsty people who bake the blood of Christian children into matzah at Passover. Today, Israeli Jews are grossly and libelously accused of harvesting the organs of Palestinians. Imagery of blood in the context of Jews is ubiquitously seen as antisemitic; blood libels often led to mob violence and the decimation of entire Jewish communities.



THE JEW AS SUBHUMAN

Often depicted as rodents or vermin, antisemitic ideology maintains that Jews are subhuman, worthy of extermination without guilt or shame, as the Nazis attempted with their "Final Solution" (the Holocaust). Animalistic characterizations of Jews are recognizable forms of Jew-hatred, such as when Rev. Louis Farrakhan calls Jews "termites."





Jews as "perverters of the white race"

Adolf Hitler's Naziism was built on a system of race-based laws (the Nuremberg Laws) claiming that Jews must be eradicated because their "impure blood" was "perverting the white race." Such degrading ideology has continued to surface, including in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017, where white nationalists with tiki torches chanted "Blood and Soil," a Nazi chant celebrating Germany (the soil) being purified (cleansed of Jewish blood).

  
@ZIONESSMOVEMENT

Jews as "privileged white people" or white supremacists

While the far right attacks Jews for perverting the white race, the far left ironically attacks Jews as privileged, white oppressors. While many--but by no means all--Jews present as white and benefit from that privilege, barbaric Jew-hatred is at the very core of white supremacy. Until Jews are welcome in cohesive, united coalitions for justice, we will never defeat the threat of white nationalism in America or white supremacy around the globe.

  
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Position Paper: Antisemitism, Anti-Zionism, and How they Intersect

Intro/Exec Summary

Before exploring this incredibly complex topic, we feel compelled to state what should be obvious, but is too often forgotten. Only those people who are part of an impacted community have the right to define an act or statement of bigotry against their community. This means that only Jews have the right to define what antisemitism is, and our allies must do better at accepting and supporting the reactions of our community when we perceive an antisemitic threat of any size or scale. Just as no white ally should be allowed to decide what is or is not anti-Black racism, and just as no straight ally should be allowed to decide what is or is not anti-LGBTQIA bigotry, non-Jewish allies must defer to the Jewish community in defining our own marginalization. Especially given the complexity of identifying and explaining antisemitism, even among Jews, it is urgent that the Jewish community be received in good faith when we express our fears regarding the astronomical rise in anti-Jewish bias and bigotry over the last several years.

In hearing the voices of the Jewish community vis-a-vis antisemitism and one of its ubiquitous contemporary manifestations in anti-Zionism, allies must defer to the opinion and expression of the overwhelming majority of the Jews, rather than relying on the opinions of a small minority of unrepresentative Jewish voices who dismiss antisemitism and/or shield the perpetrators and our progressive movements from accusations of it. Tokenizing non-representative, fringe voices from the Jewish community allows antisemitism to spread, which marginalizes Jewish voices, weakens our movements, and shows that our values as progressives are not consistently applied. Jews perceive the tokenization of non-representative Jewish voices as inherently anti-Jewish, as our movements wouldn't tolerate similar actions with any other marginalized group.

This document is not intended to cover every example of antisemitism, but to provide an overview of how classical antisemitism operates and how contemporary antisemitism manifests in 2022. Further, the primary purpose of this document is not to explore how antisemitism has unfolded in other nations or regions of the world, but to consider it within the frame of our domestic American political divide.

Antisemitism

Even for Jews, antisemitism is sometimes very difficult to identify, recognize, define and understand—often, it's something that Jews can feel even if they cannot articulate it. We know that there are many Jews and allies who want to better grasp the ways in which antisemitism manifests so that they are equipped to challenge it, and to those people, we say thank you, and we hope this briefer helps.



Antisemitism is hatred of Jewish people, and today it can be thought of simply as anti-Jewish bigotry. While many (including Jews) wrongly understand Jews to be exclusively a religious group, the Jewish *people* are a nation that practices Judaism as a religion. The Jewish people have, for 2,000 years, been a nation in exile from their ancestral home, united in their religious and cultural practices and their longing for Zion, their birthplace.

Beyond hatred of Jews, antisemitism is an indicator of the health of a society. In societies where antisemitism thrives, the Jews are characterized as the “common enemy” that serve as a distraction and/or a group to blame for the inevitable social, economic and/or political problems afflicting that society. Throughout European history, blame for societal desperation, dysfunction and disruption has been placed at the feet of the most visible minority: the Jews. When antisemitism exists in a space, whether in a country, a community, a business or an organization, it metastasizes, and destroys far more than the Jews within that space. Protecting our communities and our country requires us to be vigilant in the fight against antisemitism, for reasons far beyond the imperative need to protect the Jews within them.

Accordingly, antisemitism morphs to fit new circumstances in new societies. While classical antisemitic themes reoccur across culture and history, antisemitism also “shape shifts” to manifest differently across time, geography and political culture. It has targeted Jews as a religious group (ex: claims that the Jews killed Jesus); it has racialized Jews to malign them as a people (ex: Nazi ideology claiming that Jews have impure blood and are perverting the white race); it has demonized Jews as a nation (ex: suggestions that Jews will always be more loyal to other Jews and to “Jewish interests” than they will be to the “host countries” in which they live).

There are also certain themes that are frequently present when antisemitism appears, and these themes have been employed over and over again throughout history, across societies and cultures, to justify every type of persecution, including murder, of Jewish people. A non-exhaustive list of these recognized tropes and themes includes:

- **Dehumanization** of Jews, such as comparisons of Jews to vermin or insects
- Inferences of nefarious and even **supernatural Jewish power** that paint Jews as subverters of the public interest who aim to control the world
- **Accusations that Jews own and/or control all levers of influence**, including the media, the financial institutions, the government and political establishment (Jews are invariably called “capitalists” in socialist/communist societies and “socialists” in capitalist societies—in both cases, the Jew is simply depicted as the antithesis and the adversary of that society’s preferred economic system)
- **Caricatures of Jews as evil, deceptive and greedy**, often with a hook nose (for example, as depicted by the “Shylock” character in Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*)
- Suggestions that Jews serve as **manipulators** in ways that advance nefarious Jewish interests to dominate the world at the expense of other human interests—often visualized in an **octopus-like**



fashion with tentacles, or as a marionette/puppeteer (this is the thesis of the notorious *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*), which is one of the most widely circulated texts in history and served as the inspiration behind Hitler's *Mein Kampf*)

- **Blood libels**, which are accusations that Jews are murderous and bloodthirsty and will even eat or drink the blood of their supposed enemies (the most common example being the accusation that Jews used the blood of Christian children for baking matzah on Passover)
- **Scapegoating** Jews when things go wrong and communities or societies are looking for whom to blame, especially by leaders or politicians who don't want to be responsible for failures or communal problems. When society faces challenges, be they social, political, economic, medical, or otherwise, Jewish individuals, communities, and the Jewish state have all been made to bear the blame or to suffer in the place of whomever is really responsible.
- Accusations of **dual loyalty**, typically manifesting with the suggestion that Jews—who have lived in every society around the globe for millennia, having been displaced and exiled from the land of Israel by countless imperial occupying forces —would never be loyal to the countries in which they live, but would serve essentially as spies for a “higher” Jewish interest (such as the State of Israel, although this trope existed long before the establishment of the modern Jewish state)
- **Victim blaming**, often with messaging suggesting that if antisemitism exists, it must have something to do with how Jews supposedly behave, thereby concluding that protesting “Jewish” behavior is not just understandable but laudable and necessary (a common example being the implication that Jews deserved their attempted extermination in the Holocaust because they “went like sheep to the slaughter”)
- **Holocaust denial**, either expressly or by downplaying the Holocaust's consequences and/or the express commitment of the Nazis to the total extermination of the Jewish people. Such behavior can include demanding that the Holocaust be thought of only in universal terms, and, recently, has included blood-libelous accusations that the Jews are now actually guilty of committing a genocide themselves.

Despite the diverse ways in which antisemitism can appear, in almost every instance, there is one thing about it that remains consistent: a conspiracy theory materializes in which Jews are to blame for the worst ills of the society in which the antisemitism exists, *i.e.*, the Jews are either scapegoated for whatever harms are befalling their fellow citizens, or the Jews become the symbol of the problems their society faces. Conversely but interrelatedly, the conspiracy theory highlights the Jews as the opposite personification of whatever virtues and values are most enshrined in a society's conceptualization of “good,” *i.e.*, the Jews (and the Jewish state) embody the antithesis of virtue and positive value, however it is ascribed in that era/culture. As award-winning author and journalist Yossi Klein Halevi put it:

“Antisemitism turns ‘the Jew’ into the symbol of whatever it is that a given civilization defines as its most loathsome qualities. Under Christianity, before the Holocaust and Vatican II, the Jew was the Christ killer—‘his blood be upon us and upon our children.’ Under communism, the Jew was the capitalist. Under Naziism, the Jew was the ultimate race polluter. Now, we live in a



civilization where the most loathsome qualities are racism, colonialism, apartheid. And lo and behold, [it is claimed that] the greatest human rights offender in the world today is the Jewish state.”

Today, the worst ills in American society are seen differently depending on one’s cultural, geographic, and/or political affiliations.

The **political right** sees personal freedom as its highest aspiration, and claims to desire “small government” with little regulation and/or interference in most aspects of everyday life. Consistent with this worldview, antisemitism in the right tends to manifest as accusations of Jews as “socialists” or “communists,” who aim to undermine people’s personal freedoms and opportunities for financial success in order to overthrow the capitalist economic structure. In the same vein, Jews are attacked for their commitment to social justice and visualized as the “devious” but “powerful” “invisible hand” (like the tentacled octopus or the marionette, as described above), working to help other minority communities build power at the expense of hardworking “real” (white, Christian) Americans. Certain language exemplifies this theory, and should set off alarm bells: Jews as “cosmopolitans” who live “elite” lives in large, diverse and worldly urban settings, who “subvert” the interests of “normal” Americans who work hard for their paychecks, only to pay excessive taxes for “progressive,” Jewish-imposed policies to protect “others”. Jews as “globalists” who work toward an interconnected world, not truly “loyal” citizens of any of their “host countries”, who actively impede policies that would advance personal freedoms or domestic national priorities, in pursuit of a broader, nefarious, “Jewish agenda”. Jews “own” or “control” “the media,” “government” or “financial institutions” and exert their “outsized power and influence” toward “world domination,” using everyone else as “pawns” along the way.

In a more extreme version of this manifestation of right-wing antisemitism, white supremacist messaging identifies the Jews as their primary target. They view a closed society, which they describe as “nationalist” (as opposed to “globalist”), as the best way to advance their idealized white, Christian, patriarchal society—which is directly at odds with an open society where diverse ideas, cultures, and communities can flourish. Because the American Jewish community has always led in the fights to empower women, Black Americans, LGBTQIA individuals, people of color, immigrants and refugees, white supremacists see the Jewish commitment to human and civil rights as the “invisible hand” plotting to undermine “white America”. This breeds fear that Jews are working to “replace” dominant white male culture with these corrupt impurities (this is called “replacement theory” and its ideology drove the mass shootings at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, the Buffalo, NY grocery store, and many others). “Jewish power and influence,” then, is a unique threat to a white supremacist’s view of the very foundation of America, which they believe is, paradoxically, worth protecting with domestic terrorism. It is critical for anyone who cares about the fight for justice to understand that antisemitism is **one of the animating features** of white supremacy, which threatens us all. We cannot successfully defeat this threat without a unified front against antisemitism—in all of its manifestations. When the progressive movement



is fighting antisemitism in its own ranks, it divides our movement and emboldens the forces of white supremacy on the extreme political right.

In an attempt to equalize a deeply flawed and structurally unequal American political system and establishment, the **political left** organizes to challenge systemic power—and those who appear to wield it. In a nation where power has traditionally been held by white men, antisemitism on the left manifests as the demonization of Jews as white and privileged individuals who work to oppress the marginalized for their own ultimate benefit. The logical extension of this view results in the erosion of trust in Jews as allies, despite long-standing Jewish support of domestic movements for justice and equity. Jews are framed as “greedy” “capitalists” who work to perpetuate an unjust system at the expense of communities of color, the poor and the underrepresented—a perverse irony indeed, considering the polar opposite accusations from the political right that Jews are “communists” undermining the free will of the people. In the political left’s fight against systemic power, marginalized communities build diverse coalitions in pursuit of collective liberation: the creation of a world where those without power can be free from oppression; a world far more just, equal, equitable, and fair than the one we have now.

While many Jews do appear in the world as white, and thus benefit from white privilege in America to the extent that they can “pass,” calling Jews “white” ignores basic historical reality: white supremacists, who have murdered millions of Jews and members of other marginalized communities, do not consider Jews white. Nazi ideology, which drove the attempted extermination of the Jewish people during the Holocaust, targeted Jews because of their supposed “impure blood” and racial inferiority—a persistent frame of the antisemitic political right that continues to threaten and even justify the murder of Jews in America and around the world today. In far too many spaces of the political left (which extends to academia and institutions with immense corporate and cultural capital), the perception of Jews as a group with outsized power (a classic antisemitic trope, as mentioned above) has been transposed on international geopolitics to demonize and delegitimize the Jewish state as a supposedly white, colonialist superpower oppressing “indigenous people of color (Palestinians).” This perception is simply wrong. It ignores the fact that the Jewish people are incredibly diverse at home in Israel and across the diaspora. According to a recent study by the Jews of Color Initiative, somewhere between 12-15% of American Jews identify as Jews of color.

Additionally, regardless of one’s views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Jewish people are Indigenous to the land of Israel, historically known as Judea. It is understandable that progressives often perceive Jews to be “white,” given that the majority of *American* Jews have several generations of European ancestry. But Jews only lived in Europe (and throughout the diaspora) for the last 2,000 years because of their exile and expulsion by various imperial forces from their Indigenous homeland, Israel. This frame exports a factually incorrect perception of American Jews onto an extraordinarily different reality in the Middle East; it denies that the Jewish people, even those who returned to Israel from Europe and appear as white, ultimately descend from the Middle East; it erases the 60% of Israeli Jews who are of color, who sought and found refuge in Israel after violent persecution across the Middle East and North



Africa in the 20th century; and it also erases the 20% of Israeli Arabs who live freely in an imperfect, but democratic and pluralistic Israel. This type of antisemitism ascribes almost supernatural power to the Jewish people (another classical antisemitic trope as mentioned above) because of the expression of collective peoplehood and political sovereignty that they now enjoy—like almost all other peoples around the world—because of the contemporary existence of the tiny State of Israel (more on this below).

White supremacist, right-wing antisemitism is a violent, rabid, and homicidal form of hate. It has led to direct violence which has cost Jewish lives and ended with bloodshed, not just for Jews. While there is no comparison between acts of violent hate, and other forms of bigotry which are more subversive, we cannot allow any form of antisemitism safe haven. This includes the less visible, though poisonous, destructive, and unfortunately, ubiquitous antisemitism that has gone unchecked in some parts of the left, often ignored or dismissed by leaders and media outlets, which leaves American Jews feeling that they must hide or even work to change who they are: Zionists—Jews who support Jewish liberation in a sovereign Jewish state of Israel.

We are not attempting to rank the danger of various forms of antisemitism. Instead, we seek to educate our activists on how to recognize it as antisemitism whenever and wherever it manifests. And in understanding the ways in which antisemitism appears across the entirety of the political spectrum, one becomes aware of how insidious antisemitism really is—and how devastating its consequences for Jews, who are cleaved from both sides of the political divide and end up disenfranchised and vulnerable. When antisemitism goes unchecked, the consequences for societies throughout history have been devastating.

For those who are learning about antisemitism for the first time, these examples may seem fantastical. We wish it were so. The themes described and key words highlighted above have been used to great effect by antisemites throughout history to justify some of the most barbaric behavior humankind has ever witnessed.

Zionism and “Anti-Zionism”

We cannot discuss “anti-Zionism” without first defining Zionism. Zionism is the movement for Jewish liberation and self-determination in the Jewish people’s Indigenous and ancestral homeland in modern Israel. Zionism is the fulfillment of the Jewish people’s two-thousand-year-old dream and longing to return home.

Jews are the people of Zion, the children of Zion, whose historical center is Jerusalem (which is often referred to as Zion), and Zionism is the expression of our peoplehood, our history, our story and our identity. The longing for Zion united the Jewish people across the diaspora for thousands of years, during exile, persecution, pogroms (organized massacres) and genocide. For thousands of years, after being exiled from our homeland and forced to resettle as refugees across the world, our ancestors prayed to return to Jerusalem, facing toward and directing their prayers toward Jerusalem, from whatever corner of



the globe and in whatever diverse cultures and communities they lived. Zion is the bedrock of Jewish religion, prayer, ritual, peoplehood and culture.

Given the relationship between the Jewish people and Zion (Jerusalem), the term “Zionists” has been used to stigmatize Jews for at least the last century and a half. This type of antisemitism became a global phenomenon with the publication and worldwide distribution of a book called *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* in the early 1900s. This noxious text, a conspiracy theory which accused villainous, supernaturally powerful, greedy Jews—aka, the “Elders of Zion”—of planning global domination by exercising complete control over the economy, media, and government. The Protocols are widely recognized as inspiring violent Russian pogroms against Jewish communities, Henry Ford’s rabid antisemitic conspiracizing in *The Dearborn Independent*, and ultimately, Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*—and the Nazi Holocaust, which involved the slaughter of six million Jews and the intended extermination of the Jewish people. It is critical to note that *The Protocols* was published 43 years before the reestablishment of a Jewish state in the land of Israel in 1948, and yet the hallmarks of genocidal antisemitism were encapsulated in a book describing the so-called “elders of Zion.” Demonizing Jews as “Zionists,” which is the way that “anti-Zionism” largely operates within the American left, is a form of bigotry that long predates Israel, let alone the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

After Israel’s reestablishment in 1948, an international campaign to pervert the term Zionism was born, again out of the Soviet Union, this time attempting to undermine and delegitimize the Jewish state as a state. A shameful and noxious (and now rescinded) Soviet-sponsored resolution was introduced, and passed, by the United Nations in 1975, declaring that “Zionism is racism.” The resolution was a KGB disinformation campaign being internationalized to protect Soviet Cold War interests—namely, to attack American influence (Israel) in the Middle East. After the vote to adopt the “Zionism is racism” resolution, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, and later New York’s revered Senator Daniel Patrick Moynahan, gave a historic speech describing its catastrophic consequences:

“The UN is about to make antisemitism international law...[the U.S.] does not acknowledge, it will not abide by, it will never acquiesce in this infamous act...A great evil has been loosed upon the world. The abomination of antisemitism has been given the appearance of international sanction. The General Assembly today grants symbolic amnesty — and more — to the murderers of the six million European Jews.

What we have here is a lie. The lie is that Zionism is a form of racism. The overwhelmingly clear truth is that it is not...In logic, the State of Israel could be, or could become, many things...but it could not be and could not become racism unless it ceased to be Zionist.”



In the decades since 1975, the perverted idea that “Zionism is racism” has expanded to associate Zionism with all the evils of humankind: Zionism, the Jewish movement for liberation and self-determination, is now often grouped with bigotries and human rights atrocities including genocide, apartheid, imperialism, xenophobia, and colonialism. As Yossi Klein Halevi described in the quote on page 4 above, this is the continuation of manifestations of antisemitism throughout history. Calling Zionism (even modern political Zionism, the movement to recreate a Jewish state in then-Mandatory Palestine) colonialism is what is known as a colonial inversion narrative. Jews are an Indigenous Peoples and meet every characteristic of indigeneity as defined by the United Nations. Jews also hold oral and written histories, archaeological and DNA evidence of both cultural continuity and origination in that land. Zionism is therefore an extraordinarily successful *decolonization movement*: the return of an Indigenous people to their native lands, after many endured thousands of years of exile and persecution, through which Jews were finally able to resume their cultural lifeways, restore their ancient language (Hebrew), and observe their traditional agricultural calendar and offering cycle amongst their own people.

This “Zionism is racism” campaign, which has become internalized by significant portions of the American left (most of whom know nothing of its Cold War propagandistic origins), pronounces that, in liberating Jews from thousands of years of persecution in a Jewish majority state in the homeland of the Jewish people, the Zionist movement’s prioritizing and privileging of Jews is “racist” toward non-Jews. Yet, those who hold this belief are comfortable, rightfully, fighting for the liberation of countless other movements that focus exclusively on particular minority groups, without demanding that each marginalized people universalize their trauma or experience of persecution. This demand is only made vis-a-vis the Jewish liberation movement.

Surprisingly for many, Israel is a secular country and not religious one. This is because, as described above, the Jewish people are a nation, not primarily a religious group. While there are religious political parties that play a role in Israel’s raucous democracy, the laws of the state are secular and Jewish Israelis have a wide range of religious beliefs and practices (including atheism). Israel is the world’s only Jewish state, and is home to approximately 8 million Jews. Yet somehow, according to “anti-Zionists,” it is not racist for around 50 existing majority-Muslim countries to privilege Muslims; and it is not racist for 21 countries in the world to deem Christianity the state religion or 26 to deem Islam the state religion. According to these individuals, it is only racist for Zionism to connect Jewish people to the Jewish homeland, and it is only racist for 1 Jewish state to exist, but not countless Muslim-majority, Christian, or Islamic states.

The “anti-Zionist” narrative demands acceptance of a false reality in which Israel is declared a colonialist and imperialist state through which the “white Jews of Europe”, in coordination with the white European powers, colonized the Indigenous people of color. The fallacy of it ignores the fact that 60% of Israeli Jews are immigrants and refugees from the Middle East and North Africa who fled violent persecution at the hands of their oppressive, totalitarian governments. In other words, the majority of Israel’s Jewish population are people of color. It also ignores the reality that **all** Jews—including the “white Jews of



Europe,” who were only in Europe because they were exiled from the Land of Israel—are indigenous to the Land of Israel and have had a ancestral, ethnic, religious and cultural connection to the land (known as Judea until 135 AD, when the Roman Emperor Hadrian renamed it “Palaestina” after the ancient enemy of the Jews, the Philistines) for thousands of years. And, it ignores the fact that Jews were consistently persecuted across Europe as European societies sought to drive Jews out.

Zionism is about the Jewish people: a people needing and entitled to liberation in their homeland. Zionism’s modern political incarnation, from about 1897 with the First Zionist Congress to 1948 with the reestablishment of a Jewish state, had one goal—the self determination of the Jewish people—not the dispossession of another people. Palestinian suffering, in 1948 and now, is the tragic result of a conflict that the Zionist pioneers actively but unsuccessfully tried to prevent—and which Jewish people the world over continue to pray will be resolved. Given the urgent necessity of Jewish sovereignty for Jewish continuity, in a world in which nations around the world claimed sovereign nation states as their own, a sovereign, Jewish majority state in the ancient homeland of the Jewish people is entirely consistent with the geopolitics of a world full of nation-states with ethnic and religious majorities.

Given this understanding of Zionism — which, in 2022, can be boiled down to support for a safe, secure and democratic, sovereign Jewish majority state in the land of Israel — it is no wonder that more than 90% of American Jews identify as Zionists. And given this understanding of Zionism, one can see clearly why the vast majority of American Jews perceive “anti-Zionism” to be antisemitism, which we defined above as bigotry toward Jews or anti-Jewish bias. The progressive claim to support marginalized communities and pursue shared liberation is inconsistent with a position of “anti-Zionism,” whose adherents openly advocate for a world in which Jews, the oldest and most consistently attacked minority group on earth, must be remanded once again to a position of total systemic powerlessness and statelessness. Unfortunately for Jews throughout the diaspora, and certainly in cities across America, “anti-Zionists” also have a history of targeting Jewish individuals, Jewish institutions, Jewish religious centers, Jewish campus organizations and kosher restaurants, in ways that are obviously antisemitic.

Importantly, Zionism is not a reflection of or pronouncement on the policies or politics of any particular Israeli government; one can be a Zionist whether they love, hate, or are ambivalent to the composition and/or policies of the Israeli government in any given historical moment. Zionism and the State of Israel are obviously interrelated, but are also distinct: one is an identity that became a political movement, the other is a sovereign member of the community of nations. This is why, while the terms “anti-Zionist” and “anti-Israel” are, in many cases, functionally identical, a distinction must be made between them. To be “anti-Zionist” is to deny Jewish peoplehood and a Jewish right to liberation and self-determination. “Anti-Zionism” is a denial of the bedrock of Jewish identity, including the Jewish story and our 4,000-year-old connection to Zion. “Anti-Israel” sentiment is the denial of the legitimate existence of *one state* on this planet, to declare that the one and only Jewish state should cease to exist. Demonizing the Jewish movement for liberation (Zionism) or one of the foundations of Jewish identity (Zion) or the people who support Israel (Zionists) is antisemitic, and denying the legitimacy of the Jewish state (Israel)



or desiring to eradicate it is also antisemitic. Both “anti-Zionism” and “anti-Israel” activism are antisemitic in practice, because their core ideological value is the denial of Jewish identity, personhood, self-determination and sovereignty. Notice that almost none of these issues relate to religion or religious practice, at all.

In seeking not just to deny the Jewish right to self-determination, but to revoke that right in full, both those who claim to be anti-Zionist and those who claim to be anti-Israel suggest that Jews should trust the rest of the world to protect them, despite the historical lessons and the contemporary realities of regular, rampant, murderous hate against Jewish people. The Jewish people have been forced to rely on the world to protect them for thousands of years, and the world has always proven unwilling or incapable of doing so. Moreover, Jews are entitled to civil rights and self-determination just as all other peoples are. The Jewish state is necessary to ensure the safety, security and continuity of the Jewish people, who have survived oppression and persecution in societies across the globe for millennia. Unless one advocates to end nation states for all national, ethnic and/or religious groups, advocating for the singular demise of the Jewish state is clearly anti-Jewish.

“Anti-Zionists” suggest that their position is derived from their support for the Palestinian people. But it is extraordinarily rare to see “anti-Zionists” taking action to advance or support the civil and human rights of the Palestinian people; generally the passion of “anti-Zionists” centers on the delegitimization of Israel and the demonization of those who support its continued, secure existence. Further, “anti-Zionists” either don’t understand, or are intentionally deceptive about the simple fact that Zionism is not inconsistent with Palestinian statehood. The vast majority of Jews in the world firmly believe that Israel can, and should, exist side by side with a sovereign Palestinian state, and Zioness hopes that one day, it will. And while there is an intentional effort to exclude and demonize Jews who advocate for Jewish self-determination in progressive spaces, there is no such demand from Jews with regard to those who advocate on behalf of the Palestinian people—Zioness has no opposition to human rights activism in support of the Palestinian people, and in fact, broadly supports it, so long as it does not leverage or weaponize antisemitism, including the denial of the Jewish people’s right to self determination.

Zioness does not refuse to be in relation with other progressives because of their positions on Israel and/or the Palestinians, and we do not ask allies their positions on those issues in order to join coalitions for justice in America. But the zero-sum, binary game that is played by “anti-Zionists” works to pit progressives against each other depending on whether they support the Jews/Israel *or* the Palestinians. We simply must overcome this divisive and intolerable paradigm in pursuit of peace for all people, and in pursuit of a unified progressive movement in the country in which we live, vote, and have agency to advance our shared goals.

Finally, like any movement for liberation, Zionism is a progressive cause, and “anti-Zionism” is decidedly anti-progressive. In keeping with core progressive values to protect marginalized communities, we urge



our allies to commit to protecting the Jewish people by protecting the Jewish right to self-determination, and reject the erasure which seeks to deny our history and tie to the land of Israel.

The Intersection of Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism Intersect

There are those who work very hard to attempt to distinguish “anti-Zionism” from antisemitism, but ultimately, this is an impossible task. In fact, as we’ve discussed in detail above, antisemitism morphs in different eras and societies, and “anti-Zionism” is one of the most ubiquitous modern manifestations of it.

While the term “antisemitism” is recognized as evil, the term “anti-Zionism” has become socially acceptable because it masquerades as (and/or is conflated with) “criticism of Israeli policy” as opposed to what it actually is: the denial of Jewish peoplehood; the rejection of Jewish liberation and self-determination; the erasure of Jewish history and ties to the land of Israel; and ultimately, the belief that Israel is a uniquely evil, singularly illegitimate state that should be destroyed. Thus, “anti-Zionism” is nothing more than a contemporary manifestation of antisemitism—a new term for an age-old hate—the demonization of Jews, this time, because of our collective peoplehood and expression of sovereignty.

Let’s return to Yossi Klein Halevi’s conceptualization on page 4, which tells us that “[a]ntisemitism turns ‘the Jew’ into the symbol of whatever it is that a given civilization defines as its most loathsome qualities...[N]ow we live in a civilization where the most loathsome qualities are racism, colonialism, apartheid. And lo and behold, [it is claimed that] the greatest offender of human rights in the world today is the Jewish state.”

This critically important frame reminds us that the antisemitism that in other eras and societies attributed certain nefarious qualities and aims to *individual Jews* living in nations around the world (making up the Jewish diaspora), while much of today’s antisemitism attributes the same nefarious qualities to the *Jewish state* on the international stage and among the community of nations. And if the Jewish state is the embodiment of the world’s most perverse, state-sponsored evil, its supporters—Zionists—must be fervently demonized until the state can be delegitimized to its total destruction.

One cannot detach or disentangle antisemitism from the energy which propels the movement to eliminate the Jewish state. Therefore, all who support or tolerate “anti-Zionism” are supporting, tolerating, and perpetuating antisemitism, whether intentionally or not.

We recognize that some individuals are genuinely opposed to the very idea of nation-states, and oppose all nation-states, not just Israel. In these specific cases, where people consistently and openly voice this view, we’re inclined to give them the benefit of the doubt. However, in doing so we must point out two obvious facts which makes it impossible to detach antisemitism from this effort: First, there is no comparable movement, energy, or organizing effort anywhere in the world which seeks to end the existence of any state besides the only Jewish state. Second, those who claim to oppose Israel’s existence



because they oppose all nation-states, cannot then tie Israel’s ostensible illegitimacy to the statelessness of the Palestinians. If a person who opposes the existence of nation-states believes a state should *not* exist for Jews, there is, obviously, no justification for arguing that one *should* exist for Palestinians.

We also recognize that there is an exceedingly small pocket of ultra-religious Jewish thought that vehemently opposes the existence of the modern State of Israel and who therefore call themselves “anti-Zionist.” Their anti-Zionism is based in a religious interpretation that requires that the Jewish people exist in diaspora, outside of the land of Israel, until the coming of the Messiah. The political movement that was required to create a political entity, a sovereign state, in their view, “hastens the End” and denies redemption via messianic destiny. Ultra-Orthodox “anti-Zionism” does not refute the Jewish peoples’ ancient and religious connection to the land, which makes it easily distinguishable from non-Jewish anti-Zionism, but it believes that Jewish redemption has not yet been earned. However, members of these fringe, ultra-Orthodox communities, including groups like the Satmar Hasids and the Naturei Karta, regularly make common cause with openly anti-Jewish groups and individuals who share the same goal: destruction of the modern state that is home to the world’s largest Jewish population, and return of the Jews of Israel to systemic powerlessness in the diaspora.

Criticism of actual Israeli government policy is perfectly legitimate, and should never be called antisemitic, so long as it relates to an *actual* Israeli policy and the critic has some basic understanding of the facts and history surrounding the policy. “Anti-Zionism” is *not* criticism of Israeli policy, it is denial of Jewish peoplehood and ties to the land, with an objective to destroy the state of Israel, not change its policies. Claims that Israel is an “apartheid state” or that it is engaging in “genocide” are *not* criticisms of Israeli policy, they are slander and blood libel. There are innumerable Israeli policies worthy of criticism, but blanket statements about the state’s legitimacy or nefariousness, especially statements that mirror the antisemitic tropes described above, can almost never reasonably be called “criticism.”

We reject the disproportionate energy and focus on demonizing and delegitimizing Israel, as well as the double standard by which even legitimate criticism levied at the world's only Jewish state is not applied with the same intensity or consistency to any other nation on earth that is engaging in similar or worse behavior. And, we reject the litmus test being placed on American Jews in some progressive spaces that demands that they qualify or even reject their support for Jewish sovereignty in Israel in order to be welcome. This test is not imposed on any other marginalized group or individual who descends from any other nation on earth—many of which have far worse human rights records—nor should it be, because the test itself is an expression of bigotry.

We urge allies to consider thousands of years of global antisemitism, and to actively dismantle and condemn it in our organizing, especially when discussing Zionism. That necessarily includes confronting “anti-Zionism”, and ensuring Jews are welcome as their full, authentic, Zionist selves in all of our domestic justice spaces.

THE DANGERS OF DURBAN

ZIINESS

ANTI-JEWISH RACISM INFECTED THE UN'S CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever wondered about the origin of the phrase “Zionism is racism”? Do you know people who have spread it without understanding its history? Were you aware that it was Cold War Soviet propaganda?

Zionism is liberation, self-determination and freedom for the world's oldest persecuted minority community. And while the UN rescinded its own shameful 1975 “Zionism is racism” resolution in 1991, the phrase—and the rabid anti-Jewish hatred it inspired—had already infected parts of the progressive movement, especially after it was quasi-ratified in Durban, South Africa in 2001. **Twenty years later, this disgraceful phrase inverts reality, divides the progressive movement and leads to virulent and violent attacks on Jews.**

SOVIET ANTISEMITISM

Political “anti-Zionism” originated in the Soviet Union. Attempts to assimilate long-oppressed Soviet Jews exposed their distinctness as a people and a religious group—seen by Stalin as a direct threat to Soviet unity. After Israel's reestablishment in 1948, Stalin murdered prominent Jews, accusing them of “Zionist disloyalty.” Soviet Jews faced rampant discrimination, but to maintain “progressive” credibility, Stalin's antisemitism was cloaked: Jews were called “Zionists” and marginalized using the same tropes from the Protocols of the Elders of Zion—which originated in pre-Soviet Moscow in 1905. After Israel won a 1967 defensive war waged by Soviet-supported Arab states, **a KGB “anti-Zionist” disinformation campaign was internationalized to protect Soviet Cold War interests—namely, to attack “American influence” (Israel) in the Middle East.**

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 3379 (1975)

In 1965, the U.S. and Brazil introduced a proposal to condemn antisemitism and recognize it as a form of racism, along with Nazism and Apartheid. Fearing it would lead to inquiries into Soviet domestic antisemitism, and to further a proxy war against Western capitalism and influence, **the Soviets added Zionism as a condemnable ideology to the proposal, perversely comparing Zionism—the national liberation movement of the Jewish people—to Nazism, the genocidal ideology that had led to the extermination of 6 million Jews only 2 decades prior.** In coalition with communist, dictatorial, anti-democratic, openly antisemitic, and pan-Arab UN member states, the Soviets succeeded in leading the passage of a UN resolution (3379) declaring that “Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination.”

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 3379 (1975)

U.S. Ambassador to the UN (later renowned Senator) Daniel Patrick Moynahan gave a historic speech after the vote: **“The UN is about to make antisemitism international law...[the U.S.] does not acknowledge, it will not abide by, it will never acquiesce in this infamous act...A great evil has been loosed upon the world.** The abomination of antisemitism has been given the appearance of international sanction. The General Assembly today grants symbolic amnesty – and more – to the murderers of the six million European Jews.

What we have here is a lie. The lie is that Zionism is a form of racism. The overwhelmingly clear truth is that it is not...In logic, the State of Israel could be, or could become, many things...but it could not be and could not become racism unless it ceased to be Zionist.”

THE DANGERS OF DURBAN

ZIINESS

ANTI-JEWISH RACISM INFECTED THE UN'S CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM

RESOLUTION 3379 REPEALED

In 1991, 85 nations cosponsored and 111 nations (out of 166) supported a resolution to repeal “Zionism is racism”—including the then-former Soviet Union and states of the Soviet bloc. The Deputy U.S. Secretary of State said Res. 3379 “demonstrated like nothing else before or since, to what extent the Cold War had distorted the UN’s vision of reality, marginalized its political utility and separated it from its original moral purpose.”

Those who continue espousing that “Zionism is racism” are in league with some of the world’s worst human rights violators: the Communist countries that voted against repeal—Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam—and those that voted to equate Zionism to racism in both 1975 and 1991: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Algeria, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran and Iraq.

DURBAN I

In 2001, the UN held the “World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance” (WCAR/“Durban I”) in Durban, South Africa. The U.S. initially intended to participate, but withdrew before the conference institutionalized the phrase “Zionism is racism” and platformed virulent antisemitism and Holocaust denial and revisionism. The Protocols—the noxious Jew-hating text that inspired the Holocaust—were widely circulated. Pamphlets were distributed with caricatures of hook-nosed, cash-carrying, bloody-fang-adorned Jews depicted as Nazis stabbing Palestinian children, with missiles bulging from their eyes. Jewish delegates, including students, were intimidated and threatened with chants of “You don’t belong to the human race!” and “Hitler was right!”

DURBAN II

In 2009, the UN hosted the “Durban Review Conference” (“Durban II”) in Geneva, ostensibly to review implementation of the action plan from Durban I. It was boycotted by 10 countries including the U.S., Australia, Canada, and Germany, **known to be a platform to promote antisemitism, ignore homophobia, advance “blasphemy laws” protecting authoritarian regimes, and target the West without confronting gross human rights abuses in the developing world.** Then-Iranian President Ahmedinejad, the world’s most notorious Holocaust denier, used the platform to advance genocidal ambitions toward the Jewish state. Diplomats from every EU country walked out during his speech, while delegates from remaining states raucously applauded. South Africa’s U.N. ambassador demanded participants stop referring to the meeting as “Durban II” because “it is maligning my country.”

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 3379 (1975)

Today, September 22, 2021, the UN General Assembly is holding “Durban IV” in New York: yet another attempt to implement the action plan and ostensible anti-racism principles of Durban I. **Given the continued, rampant, overt antisemitism and obsession with Israel at the UN, at least 31 countries are boycotting the event, including the U.S., Canada, Australia, the U.K., Germany, France, and many others.**

Senator Moynahan, in his 1975 speech, was prescient when he said, “the terrible lie that has been told here today will have terrible consequences . . . serious, grave and perhaps irreparable harm will be done to the cause of human rights itself . . . **the damage we now do to the idea of human rights and the language of human rights could well be irreversible.**” **The perversity of the “Zionism is racism” resolution has divided and destroyed countless global attempts at peacemaking and protecting marginalized peoples on every continent,** and undermined the credibility of the UN and human rights community. Antisemitism is a toxic, destructive force that harms us all—Jewish or not.

THE DANGERS OF DURBAN

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ANTI-JEWISH RACISM INFECTED THE UN'S CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM

PROF. COTLER ON DURBAN'S HEINOUS IMPACT

Internationally-lauded human rights attorney and global justice icon Irwin Cotler, who was present at Durban, describes the stain of Durban on humanity, from 2001 to the present: "The indictment of Israel as an apartheid state was born in Durban. It was triggered in Durban. Durban became the tipping point for the demonological antisemitism that we see today, where Israel is blamed for all the evils of the world, that Israel and the Jewish people are the enemy of good, the embodiment of all those evils. . . I spoke to a colleague and she said to me **9/11 was now the Kristallnacht of terror and Durban was the 'Mein Kampf.'** Those of us who were at Durban would have understood that statement because it was the blueprint, the tipping point, the trigger for the old-new global antisemitism that we're now experiencing."

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Embrace of IHRA's Definition is One of Biden's Early Policy Victories



U.S. President Joe Biden delivers remarks on February 05, 2021 in Washington, DC. (Photo by Stefani Reynolds-Pool/Getty Images)

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This week, the Biden/Harris administration boldly declared that it “embraces and champions” the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism. The announcement reflects the administration’s appropriate commitment to protecting minority communities that feel extraordinarily vulnerable after the last 4 years. And yet, the IHRA definition has become a point of tension in parts of the progressive movement, with a number of organizations opposing its adoption.

Some have argued that the new administration should have immediately *reversed* an Executive Order signed in 2019 that protects Jewish students from campus antisemitism by mandating *reference* to the IHRA definition. According to these groups, the definition’s illustrative examples of contemporary antisemitism—including its manifestation in “anti-Zionism”—would “stifle free speech and suppress debate on Israel.”

Some quote former Secretary of State Pompeo’s support of the IHRA definition as a reason to oppose it, arguing that the Trump administration used “**spurious examples of antisemitism as a cudgel to attack its political opponents.**” They’re undeniably correct: the Trump administration unconsciously weaponized antisemitism and support for Israel for partisan political gain, and did serious damage to our Jewish community in the process.

Yet in using the Trump Administration to make the argument that support for the IHRA definition is partisan—and Trumpian—these groups curiously omit the fact that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton adopted a definition of antisemitism almost identical to IHRA’s at the Department of State in 2010. Critics trying to paint a partisan picture also leave out the fact that the Anti-Semitism Awareness Act, a piece of federal legislation that would have codified the IHRA definition, sailed through the Senate *unanimously* at the end of 2018 before hitting a Republican roadblock in the House.



In 2016, the working definition and its list of examples was adopted by a plenary meeting of the 31 countries in the IHRA (Photo courtesy of IHRA)

Antisemitism often manifests via conspiracy theories and age-old tropes unrecognizable for those not deeply educated in this ancient form of hate, which is why defining this evil is a necessary first step to combating it. But, contrary to some of the arguments being made, *defining hate speech is not the same thing as banning it.*

Hate runs rampant in this country, especially during the Trump era, and, like it or not, hate speech remains quintessentially protected. People can, and do, say racist, Islamophobic, misogynistic, homophobic, transphobic, ableist and xenophobic things every day—and unless they are inciting imminent violence, their right to do so is sacrosanct under the First Amendment.

People have the *right*, too, to say antisemitic things. People have the *right* to call Jewish students “Zionist oppressors” and “baby killers;” they have the *right* to scream “Intifada, Intifada” in the faces of Jewish community members; they have the *right* to claim that Israel is a “racist” or “genocidal” or “illegitimate” endeavor, and that Jewish students who support its existence are “white supremacist ethnonationalists;” they even have the right to cover the campus quad with fliers that say “Zionists, Get the F**k off our campus”—referring to the 95% of American Jews who support Israel as our people’s sanctuary from persecution.

Jewish students and their allies also have the right to call this what it is: antisemitism. They have the right to expect that those investigating claims of a hostile campus climate understand why it’s antisemitism, too. They have the right to reject the implication that these attacks on Jews are “criticism of Israel,” and the argument that the Executive Order “**risks chilling constitutionally protected speech by incorrectly equating criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism.**”

And if students do complain to campus authorities, the required response under civil rights law, namely Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, is **not** to punish the antisemitic speakers, or “banish” their hate speech. Instead, the university is put on notice that it must “cure” a potentially antisemitic environment, including through steps as simple as exercising its own First Amendment protected right to speak and condemn such antisemitism, ensuring a safe environment for Jewish students to learn and participate fully in campus life. It is only in the event that a university administration, over a sustained period of time, refuses to ensure the protection of Jewish students, to the extent that the campus environment becomes “*pervasively hostile*” for Jews, that any legal consequences attach. In the rare circumstance that a violation of Title VI was found, the university—not the antisemitic speakers—would be held accountable for the toxic campus climate.

Asking the Department of Education, as the Executive Order does, to *consider* the [non-legally binding] IHRA definition in cases where antisemitism is alleged, does not change the process that DoE must go through in adjudicating a Title VI complaint—including in understanding its own First Amendment obligations. The only difference is that, in adjudicating a case of anti-Black, anti-Chinese or Islamophobic discrimination, the blatant hatred would generally be easily recognizable. Antisemitism’s complex manifestations are simply not always as clear as a neo-Nazi wearing a “Camp Auschwitz” sweatshirt, and the IHRA definition serves as a reference to help our government institutions understand contemporary antisemitism so that they can identify and address it.

We all recognize the “Camp Auschwitz” sweatshirt as antisemitism; there is profound cognitive dissonance in claiming to understand how serious this evil can be, while arguing against the existence of a sovereign Jewish state. Israel is what makes Jews confident that “Never Again” actually means something. Denying Jews that inalienable right as a people, wishing to return us to a state of total systemic powerlessness, is just as anti-Jewish as celebrating what happened to us the last time we were in that very position.

“We all recognize the “Camp Auschwitz” sweatshirt as antisemitism; there is profound cognitive dissonance in claiming to understand how serious this evil can be, while arguing against the existence of a sovereign Jewish state.”

Furthermore, contrary to the stated position of IHRA’s critics, it is simply not that difficult to distinguish between criticism of the Israeli government and demonization or delegitimization of the state of Israel.

I frequently criticize the Israeli government. I was appalled about the possibility of annexation. I was distraught over the prejudicial Nation State law. I was devastated about the surrogacy law making it impossible for gay male couples to procreate (which has, thankfully, now been suspended). I am constantly dismayed by the power of the rabbinate and what it means for women’s rights and pluralism, and I’m distressed that settlement expansion is detrimental to the hope of a two-state solution, no matter how remote its current likelihood. I have witnessed discriminatory treatment of Palestinians, and talked extensively about those painful experiences.

The IHRA definition expressly states that “criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic”—and I level similar criticism against the United States (and many other countries) on a daily basis. The suggestion that codification of the IHRA definition makes it, in any way, challenging to criticize *actual Israeli policy*, is patently absurd.

Yet, Israel’s *legitimate existence* is simply not up for debate—at least, it wouldn’t be, in a world devoid of antisemitism.

The IHRA definition of antisemitism is just one tool in a massive toolbox, but it is an important one. The new administration’s recognition of the value and practicality of the IHRA definition will enable it to confront this one particular, rapidly snowballing form of hate. Many grateful Jewish Americans will continue to cheer as the administration works to conquer other flourishing forms of hatred, as well.

Amanda Berman is the founder and executive director of Zioness.

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Unabashedly Progressive, Unapologetically Zionist.



WHAT IS THE BDS (BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT AND SANCTIONS) MOVEMENT?

- The BDS Movement originally called for targeted economic discrimination against Israeli businesses and businesses doing business in Israel or with Israelis. **While its founders at one point claimed that it was about “criticism of Israeli policy” and its goal was to end Israel’s occupation of the West Bank, its founders are now clear the aim of BDS is to isolate, delegitimize and ultimately destroy the Jewish state entirely.**
- Realizing that the economic goals of BDS were unlikely to seriously harm the state of Israel, BDS expanded its goals to call for an “academic and cultural boycott” which targets Israeli and Zionist professors, academics, artists, musicians and wages campaigns calling them, as individuals, human rights abusers.
- BDS also calls for adoption of a policy called “anti-normalization,” which requires the disruption and silencing of any viewpoint relating to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that recognizes the actual existence of the state of Israel, arguing that open dialogue “normalizes” Israel’s existence. “Anti-normalization” is what plays out on American college campuses, and ultimately, it is not Israelis, but American Jews, who are the targets. The application of “anti-normalization” serves to bar Israelis, the vast majority of Jews, and anyone else who acknowledges Israel’s actual existence from publicly expressing themselves on any issue, including domestic progressive issues like women’s reproductive freedom, racial justice and LGBTQ equality. BDS activists shame American Jews for their Zionist identities (meaning they inherently believe in the movement for Jewish collective liberation) and for their support of Israel’s existence, which unfortunately has led many American Jews to remove themselves from the progressive movement entirely—at the expense of our progressive Jewish ideals.
- **BDS ultimately targets and harms American Jews far more than it hurts Israel’s economy.**



ZIONESS



WHY IS BDS ANTISEMITIC?

- **Targeting or discriminating against a person or company because of its ethnicity or national origin is racist, and is illegal under New York's Human Rights Law.** We appropriately call it racist when Chinese Americans are marginalized and attacked because of the wrongdoing of the Chinese government vis-a-vis Covid, and we would vociferously fight against a proposed boycott of a local Chinese restaurant to protest the Chinese government's treatment of the Uyghurs. No American of conscience would refuse to purchase from an African American retailer to declare their condemnation of the government of Sudan. By the same token, it is fundamentally anti-Jewish to hold Jewish Americans — even Israeli Americans — accountable for the wrongdoing, real or perceived, of a foreign government.
- BDS is not the first iteration of an antisemitic attempt to economically starve Jewish businesses to harm Jewish people:
 - In 1933, less than 3 months after coming to power in Germany, Nazi leadership implemented a boycott of Jewish businesses, claiming that the Jews were spreading "atrocious stories" to damage Germany's reputation to the world. Nazi Storm Troopers stood in front of Jewish-owned stores holding signs and shouting slogans such as "Don't Buy from Jews" and "The Jews Are Our Misfortune." This was the beginning of the campaign against Jews that ended with the Holocaust.
 - In 1945, the Arab League conceived of and implemented the Arab League Boycott — 3 years prior to Israel's founding in 1948 — in an attempt to financially undermine Jewish state-building and deter Jewish immigration during the British Mandate. While BDS activists often claim they are fighting against Israeli occupation which began after the 1967 "Six-Day War," in reality, these boycotts began 3 years before Israel was even recognized as a member of the international community.
 - The modern BDS movement is a vengeful derivative of the Arab League boycott, except that BDS claims to be grassroots while the Arab League Boycott is implemented by sovereign governments. Regardless, the two campaigns are synonymous in their motives and goals: they incite economic warfare against a principal U.S. ally, Israel, home to more than half of the Jewish people in the entire world, in an attempt to destroy the world's only Jewish state.
- **While it cannot be said that every BDS advocate feels hatred for Jews, the movement is inherently and undeniably antisemitic in that its goal is to return the Jewish people to a state of total systemic powerlessness (which has led to unimaginable bloodshed throughout history).** BDS is not pro-Palestinian, it is only anti-Israel. Liberation for both Jews and Palestinians is not, and simply cannot be, a zero-sum game, yet BDS demands adherence to a dehumanizing binary.



ZIONESS



IS BDS REALLY PRO-PALESTINIAN?

- **BDS groups are not engaged in humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, nor are they invested in the future of a Palestinian economy, infrastructure, or functioning representative government.** They demonize Israel and anyone who recognizes its legitimate existence, but they do not do anything to affirmatively aid the Palestinians, who are indeed oppressed. Real efforts to effectively support and uplift the Palestinian people are necessary, but BDS does not even claim to be such an effort.
- While largely unsuccessful from an economic standpoint, on rare occasions, BDS efforts have led to the relocation of Israeli companies operating in the West Bank that employed Palestinians and paid them better wages than the Palestinian economy could sustain. For example, when the Israeli company SodaStream, which was operating in the West Bank, faced an international boycott campaign, it closed its West Bank operations and moved to the Negev Desert within Israel proper. Because of security checkpoints and the challenges of receiving Israeli work permits, 500 Palestinian SodaStream employees lost their jobs, while BDS activists celebrated.
- According to BDS, it is impossible to hold the view that **both** the Jewish and Palestinian people are entitled to liberation and sovereignty, and one must pick a side. This is wrong. **Supporting the collective liberation of the Jewish people in the land of Israel is not mutually exclusive with supporting Palestinian liberation in a state alongside it. In fact, this was the offer of the international community in the 1947 United Nations Partition Plan, which would have created two independent states. While the Jews accepted this resolution, Palestinian leadership did not.** 72 years later, the BDS Movement continues to deny that the Jewish people have any claim whatsoever to a state in the region, and this refusal to accept the reality of Israel's existence harms the millions of Palestinians who want to live peaceful, prosperous lives, not live in perpetual war.
- Given recent developments in the Middle East, with Israel joining warm peace treaties with several Arab and Muslim nations including the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Morocco, it has become exceedingly clear that demonizing Jews and Israel, including through “anti-normalization,” is not effective in the pursuit of peace or coexistence.
- Coexistence is the only hope for the human dignity, self-determination and political independence of both peoples, which requires supporting the liberation of both Jews and Palestinians — and rejecting BDS.



DOES ANTI-BDS LEGISLATION VIOLATE FREE SPEECH?

- No politician or American of conscience should support the criminalization of speech or advocacy, which is quintessentially protected under the First Amendment and Article I Section 8 of the New York Constitution. **Despite often disingenuous messaging, opposing BDS is not “criminalizing speech or advocacy.”** Elected leaders have every right to exercise their own First Amendment-protected speech and declare their opposition to BDS, or any other idea or agenda they find offensive.
- **While advocacy, including independent consumer purchasing decisions, is protected speech, commercial discrimination is conduct which can and often is regulated.** Just as public officials can choose not to invest public funds in gun manufacturing or tobacco production, they can choose not to invest in funds that single out and discriminate against the Jewish state, by engaging in a commercial boycott (which is conduct, not speech).
- The difference between speech/advocacy and conduct is straightforward: The CEO of a Fortune 500 company can go on CNBC and declare proudly that she encourages all the viewers to make personal consumer decisions not to buy Israeli goods. **She cannot then walk into her boardroom and commit to a corporate policy that discriminates against Israeli or Jewish businesses, based on the national origin, ethnicity, or religion of the company’s leadership.**
- State anti-BDS laws are constitutional because—and only to the extent that—they apply exclusively to conduct, not speech. Most pieces of anti-BDS legislation adopted by states around the country are perfectly constitutional, as they prohibit only discriminatory commercial conduct and not individual consumer decision-making or advocacy.
- Unfortunately, **Governor Cuomo’s Anti-BDS Executive Order is plainly unconstitutional** because it says “BDS activities targeting Israel’ means to engage in any activity, **or promote others to engage in any activity**, that is intended to penalize, inflict economic harm on, or otherwise limit commercial relations with Israel...”
 - Regardless of the intent in signing or implementing the EO, using the word “promotion” is a straightforward facial violation of the First Amendment. The EO could chill free speech by making individuals or corporations afraid that if they advocated for or promoted BDS, they would be ineligible for state investments.
 - The constitutional way to accomplish the EO’s laudable goal is to make clear that advocacy will never be punishable under the EO and that even individuals or corporations clearly advocating for BDS will never be blacklisted unless they also engage in prohibited commercial conduct.



OPPOSING BDS AND WORKING WITH ISRAEL AND ISRAELI COMPANIES IS GOOD FOR NYC

- The BDS Movement has had almost zero impact in harming Israel's economy. NY — Israel trade and collaboration is important and hugely benefits our city, our state, and our country. BDS does, however, have an effect on Jewish people, which is why New York's Jewish community overwhelmingly opposes it as anti-Jewish and discriminatory. This is reason alone to oppose it.
- According to an independent study conducted by Stax Inc., and reported in the [New York - Israel Economic Impact Report](#), Israeli-founded businesses contribute significantly to the New York State economy and have helped New York establish itself as a global innovation leader. The study finds that Israeli enterprises generate substantial revenue, draw capital investment, and create jobs throughout the state. Specifically, the Impact Report reveals that:
 - **Israeli-founded companies accounted for more than 20% of the total capital raised in New York State in 2016**
 - **5 Israeli-founded startups valued at \$1 billion and above are based in NYC (Compass, Lemonade, Payoneer, Taboola, and WeWork)**
 - **In 2018, Israeli-founded companies generated \$18.6 billion in the New York local economy**
 - **24,850 New York jobs were created by Israeli businesses directly, plus 27,502 indirect jobs based on the additional support required to service the Israeli companies**
 - **506 Israeli-founded businesses call New York home**
- In 2012, a joint academic venture was launched between Cornell and Technion—Israel Institute of Technology on Roosevelt Island in Manhattan. Cornell Tech is a technology, business, law, and design campus which brings national and international thought leaders from academia, business, government, science, medicine and technology to explore and create groundbreaking solutions to the most vexing challenges facing New York City and the world. The work happening at Cornell Tech is astonishing. ([Read More.](#))
- Five Israeli energy companies are partnering with New York state to support the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, the most aggressive climate program in the nation, which is driving the state to a carbon-neutral economy by 2050. ([Read more.](#))
- The administration and several major New York health care institutions have signed a series of agreements with Israeli entities in the UAV/drones, transportation, energy, cybersecurity, financial technology and health care industries. ([Read more.](#))



OPPOSING BDS IS A BIPARTISAN CONSENSUS, INCLUDING AMONG MANY PROGRESSIVE LEADERS

- By working to delegitimize Israel and suggest that, because of the wrongdoing (real or perceived) of its government, the state should cease to exist, the BDS movement and its supporters regularly espouse the dismantling of the world's only Jewish state. This is why, after "Squad" member **Rep. Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts voted to support an anti-BDS resolution in Congress, she tweeted, "What I heard resounding in [my] community was that voting yes on this resolution affirmed to my constituents raised in the Jewish faith Israel's right to exist, a view I share as a supporter of a two state solution."**
- A central tenet of the BDS movement is its commitment to "anti-normalization": a refusal to engage with individuals who recognize the actual existence of the Jewish state of Israel—so, about 95%. **This is why rising progressive star, Rep. Ritchie Torres, the first openly gay Afro-Latino to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives, tweeted about those who "decline[] to affirm that the state of Israel should exist: 'Insane' is the word that comes to mind."** Anti-normalization requires people to either ignore, or verbally attack those who recognize Israel, even if they are highly critical of the Israeli government. This refusal to engage with Jews on any issue is patently antisemitic, which is why Rep. Torres calls BDS "the definition of discrimination."
- **Reverend Raphael Warnock, national progressive leader, pastor of the iconic Ebenezer Baptist Church, and first Black Senator from the state of Georgia, recently wrote that he "firmly oppose[s] the global BDS movement, its anti-Semitic overtones and its refusal to acknowledge Israel's right to exist."** He declared that the Black and Jewish communities are united because of "our respective histories of oppression and our shared perspective against bigotry, racism and xenophobia," and quoted Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in saying that "Israel's right to exist as a state in security is incontestable."
- **New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio says supporting Israel "is a matter of being consistent with progressive values" and "an understanding that we must always learn the painful lessons of history and do something about it."** He rightfully declared that the BDS movement "seeks to undermine the economy of the State of Israel and makes it harder for Israel to exist - therefore, renouncing the very notion that the Jewish people need a homeland in a still dangerous and unsettled world ... We in the United States, or in any nation, you can disagree with a particular government's policy at that moment in time, but that doesn't mean that you don't believe in that nation, or its right to exist, or its founding ideals."
- **U.S. House of Representatives Democratic Caucus Chair Hakeem Jeffries did not mince his words when describing the caucus's fervent opposition to BDS:** "As it relates to BDS, we spoke pretty clearly with a resolution that both condemned the BDS movement and articulated our strong support for a robust two-state solution where Israel and the Palestinians can live side by side in peace and prosperity. We passed that resolution with only 17 members of the House voting against it...that's pretty much an overwhelming repudiation of the BDS movement."

Dr. Barry Wiener
Bronx, NY

The Crisis of Antisemitism in Music Studies at CUNY

I am calling upon the New York City Council to denounce the dissemination of antisemitic conspiracy theories by Prof. Philip Ewell (associate professor of music, Hunter College and CUNY Graduate Center), and their official endorsement by CUNY Graduate Center and the music departments of the colleges of the City University of New York.

I am a musicologist/independent scholar. I currently reside in Eric Dinowitz's City Council District. Like L. Scott Fruehwald and Timothy L. Jackson, I received my doctorate from CUNY Graduate Center. My extended study of Jewish music theorist Heinrich Schenker's views on race, nation, and Jewish identity will be published next month in *New Horizons in Schenkerian Theory*, edited by Allen Cadwallader, Karen Bottge, and Oliver Schwab-Felisch (Hildesheim: Olms 2022).

On November 9, 2019, Prof. Ewell presented a twenty-minute paper, "Music Theory's White Racial Frame," at the plenary session of the Society of Music Theory, held in Columbus, Ohio. This paper represented the first of many publications and lectures in which Ewell has described Schenker (1868–1935), a native of what is now Ukraine, as both a rabid German nationalist and a "white supremacist" or "Aryan racial supremacist." Ewell hammered away at Schenker's alleged Nazi connections. He accused Schenker and his students, most of whom fled from Europe to the United States after the Nazis seized power, of being allies of the Nazi cultural authorities during the 1930s; in a video interview with Ewell, his interlocutor Adam Neely explained, "Music theory's intellectual framework is built on Germany's cultural struggle in the 1930s" [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kr3quGh7pJA>, 34:20]. In fact, Schenker spent most of his life trying to cleanse German nationalism from German music. He loathed the music of Richard Wagner, and described Wagner as both morally challenged and musically "primitive" (Schenker, *Beethoven's Ninth Symphony*, 18).

Ewell clinched his argument about Schenker's "Aryan supremacist views" by pointing to Schenker's love for Beethoven, whose works Ewell describes as a major tool of musical "white supremacy." In his writings, Schenker positioned Beethoven as the counterweight to Wagner's destructive influence. For Ewell, however, Schenker was a more dangerous racist than Wagner: "It is easy to point to Richard Wagner as another significant figure who had repulsive beliefs, amply expressed in voluminous anti-Semitic writings. But, unlike Schenker, we do not hold up Wagner as someone through whose theories we might understand tonal music. In other words, if one studies music theory in the U.S., Wagner's racism is optional while Schenker's is not." (Ewell, "Music Theory and the White Racial Frame," *Music Theory Online* 26.2 [2020], 4.7.2)

Ewell claimed that Schenker's refugee students who fled to America allied themselves with the American Nazis during the 1930s. He also claims that they created a conspiracy to deceptively disseminate Schenker's Nazi music theories throughout the United States, thereby institutionalizing racism in American music: "As a final example of . . . just how prevalent racist thought was in pre-WWII America, *the period in which Schenkerism began in the U.S.*, see

Marshall Curry's short video documentary of a 1939 pro-Nazi American rally at Madison Square Garden" [italics mine] (Philip A. Ewell, "Music Theory and the White Racial Frame," *Music Theory Online* 26.2 [2020], note 17).

In a separate article ("Introduction to the Symposium on Kendrick Lamar's *To Pimp a Butterfly*," *MTO* 25.1 [2019]), also published in *Music Theory Online*, Ewell described Amiri Baraka—who famously described the bombing of the World Trade Center as a Jewish plot—as an antiracist hero, and urged that hip hop be made a central part of an antiracist music curriculum in universities (Ewell, "Introduction to the Symposium on Kendrick Lamar's *To Pimp a Butterfly*," *Music Theory Online* 25, no. 1, [5]).

In his writings on Schenker, Ewell initially ignored Schenker's Jewish identity completely, while quoting Laurie Shrage, a Jewish scholar of transsexuality, on the subject of antisemitism. Ewell reasoned that he could separate what he defined as Schenker's "Aryan" racial identity from the latter's Jewish faith, following the dictates of Critical Race Theory. Ewell's perspective reflects the currently popular view that American Jews are key figures in the structures of "white supremacy." In an October 2020 *The New York Times* article, the distinguished black philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah discussed this issue: "Jews in Eastern Europe neither identified as white nor were identified as white when they arrived at these shores in a wave of migration that began more than a century ago. Lothrop Stoddard's best-selling *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy* (1920) made it very clear that Jews were to be considered 'Asiatic elements.'" Nevertheless, Appiah concluded, "Being white is not just a matter of identifying as white; it involves being treated as white, and that isn't up to you" (Kwame Anthony Appiah, "I'm Jewish and Don't Identify as White. Why Must I Check That Box?" *The New York Times*, October 13, 2020). Note that while Appiah defines contemporary American Jews as "white," he points out that their ancestors were not so considered, either in Europe or America. If Ewell would apply Appiah's caveats, he could not consider Schenker or any of his students to be "white" or enablers of "white supremacy."

Ewell has described both Schenker and Tim Jackson as "Jewish antisemites." At the same time, he has accused Jews of instrumentalizing the Holocaust as a cover for their own bigotry. In July 2020, immediately after Tim Jackson published a critique of Ewell's arguments, Nathan Pell, one of Ewell's Jewish students at CUNY Graduate Center, wrote on Facebook,

Jackson is engaged in a disguised form of antisemitism in which Jews are lionized and exempted from criticism on account of their historical persecution and slaughter in the Holocaust. . . . For Jackson, the answer to "was Schenker a fervent racist?" MUST be "No; because Schenker was Jewish and Jews can't be racist." . . . [T]his serves as a premise of Jackson's anti-Black argument: "All Jews are saints, and Ewell called a Jew racist, ergo this must be a Black-on-Jew attack."

Ewell responded, "This is, as you say, antisemitism, and we must confront it with the same seriousness and fortitude that we must confront racism and sexism in music theory. Again, thank you for this. I'm humbled by your support."

When Ewell delivered his 2019 paper, he received a standing ovation from at least five hundred people. Those who stood and applauded looked threateningly at those who did not. That the ominous atmosphere was not a figment of the imagination was proved by the many threatening posts on social media by Ewell's supporters that followed, including an official blog of the Society of Music Theory, posted by Megan L. Lavengood, one of Ewell's former students at CUNY Graduate Center ("Journal of Schenkerian Studies: Proving the Point", <https://meganlavengood.com/2020/07/27/journal-of-schenkerian-studies-proving-the-point/>). Lavengood accused both Tim Jackson and me of adhering to the ideology of #All Lives Matter, i.e., fascism. Blogger John O'Connor responded to Lavengood (August 19, 2020), "Let's be frank here: CRT from which Ewell's paper derives is a sociopolitical movement that seeks a revolutionary change in institutions according to its, and only its, prescribed solutions. . . . It refuses to engage with critics; any and all pushback is called out as using the tools of oppression (open inquiry, evidence and reason), and therefore unjust, and evidence of complicity in white hegemony. It refuses an evidentiary approach. Mere assertion is all that is needed. CRT and its activist variant Critical Social Justice uses deplatforming and spectacle in the same way the Cultural Revolution did: public humiliation via outing (now in social and print media), and show trials now via awesome displays of twitter/social media violence in attempts to destroy individuals that dare to speak against its ideology."

Soon after the controversy began, a purge of the music curriculum was carried out at the City University of New York. Courses about Schenker's theories had previously been central to the curriculum, but were now eliminated. In other American universities, while Schenker's name was removed from the curriculum, his theories continued to be taught, recalling Schenker's treatment in Nazi Germany. The web site of the Barry Brook Center, a division of the music department of CUNY Graduate Center, posted a condemnation of Schenker's racism, despite the protest of the music program's former executive officer, Prof. Emeritus Allan W. Atlas. The Graduate Center also posted a puff piece by journalist Beth Harpaz (Harpaz, "Racism and Antiracism in Music Theory and Higher Education: Professor Philip Ewell Speaks Out," SUM, August 17, 2020): "Professor Philip Ewell is calling out racism in his field of music theory and providing a path forward for antiracist scholarship." In addition, CUNY Graduate Center has posted a video about Ewell on YouTube, describing him as a leading antiracist activist (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3wso1oHdvQ&t=13s>). Ewell and his allies have now effectively taken control of the academic study of music in the United States and Canada.

I hope that the New York City Council will take notice of Ewell's outrageous historical fabrications, in which he employs strategies that are all too familiar in the history of antisemitism. At the very least, the official endorsement of these toxic views by CUNY Graduate Center (and many other universities) must be challenged. CUNY and other universities should be pressured by the threat that the government, as well as private donors, will withhold funding. This scandal should be publicized nationally in the same way as other similar scandals have been publicized in recent years, in order to deliver a message that such behavior is unacceptable, and that it will not be tolerated.

Sent: Tuesday, July 5, 2022 10:40 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: Written Testimony for June 30th Higher Ed heari

Written Testimony for June 30th Higher Ed hearing

To: Timothy Jackson <shermanzelechin@gmail.com>

I am submitting this testimony to the Committee on Higher Education, New York City Council Hearing “Examining Antisemitism on College Campuses.”

Because I am not qualified to address directly the issue of Anti-Semitism at CUNY (an issue so well addressed by others), I will confine myself to just one effect of Dr. Phillip Ewell’s 2019 address to the Society of Music Theory (published in *Music Theory Spectrum* 43/2, p. 324)--an effect I regard as tragic.

As one who helped build the CUNY graduate program in Schenkerian theory, a program distinguished at its height by such luminaries in the field as Carl Schachter and William Rothstein, I deplore its destruction in the wake of the accusations made by Dr. Ewell. Once a Mecca for Schenkerian studies that drew students from many countries, it is now but a shadow of its former self and mourned by many of its alumni.

Professor Emeritus Charles Burkhart

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Testimony on Antisemitism in CUNY

Prof. David Brodsky
Chair of the Department of Judaic Studies
Brooklyn College
City University of New York

On June 10, 2021, PSC-CUNY, the union of faculty at the City University of New York, passed a [Resolution “in Support of the Palestinian People”](#) which condemned Israel as a “settler colonial state” since its inception and resolved for the union to “facilitate discussion at the chapter level to “consider PSC support of the 2005 call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS).” As part of those discussions, the Cross CUNY Working Group Against Racism and Colonialism has been holding a series of seminars, the first on September 2nd, entitled [Reckoning with Colonialism: Anti-Racist Struggle at CUNY & Beyond](#) (link is to the video). While the title makes it sound universal, the focus of the first half of the symposium was entirely on Zionism, and the central theme of the second half was as well. In the blurb for the symposium, they argue against the existence of “multiple perspectives,” claiming that “the only two ‘sides’ in the struggle against racism and colonialism are complicity or resistance.” While this may sound good—I for one do not want to be complicit in racism or colonialism—it is a call for a singular narrative of history. It is also why they begin the symposium by defining Zionism as both racism and settler-colonialism, and from there that valid multiple perspectives on the issue do not exist. With that syllogism, they establish only two positions on Palestine: theirs or complicity in genocide.

Beginning about the 27-minute mark, one of the invited speakers who was at the time the Vice President of Student Government at CUNY Law School (and who notoriously [threatened to light a student on fire for wearing an IDF sweatshirt](#) and then claimed it was an art project, and who has recently “liked” tweets glorifying the murder of Israeli civilians), asserts that “the Zionist colonial project is white supremacist, inherently racist, and aimed at the extermination of the Palestinian population, and this has been clearly stated by the founder of Zionism, Theodor Herzl.” She offers no citation for this claim (nor do any of the other speakers who make similar declarations), but after having established the crimes of the “Zionists” who engage in “pillaging, oppressing and ethnically cleansing the indigenous population to settle on their land,” and after neutralizing those of us who claim the situation is complicated by claiming we do so as “an attempt to normalize a Palestinian genocide,” the speaker goes on to advocate the “right to resist by any means necessary.” In fact, she made sure to circle back and emphasize “We do have that right to by any means necessary.” Vilifying “Zionists” and emphasizing that people who are pro-Palestinian have the right to resist Zionists “by any means necessary,” the invited speaker and the organizers of the symposium are justifying and inciting violence.

While they are careful to define “Zionists” (rather than “Jews”) as the racist, white supremacist, genocidal people they are fighting, and while they make sure to claim that “anti-Zionism is not anti-Semitism; Zionism is anti-Semitism” (to quote the rap song with which the symposium opened—yes, now Zionists are not only white supremacists, but anti-Semites to boot), it does not take much digging to discover that it is not just any Israelis or any Zionists whom they see as the entity they must “defeat,” but Jewish-Israelis. Thus, in their [City University of New York Community Statement of Solidarity with the Palestinian People](#)

([google.com](https://www.google.com)), they state, “we wholeheartedly endorse the ‘[Palestine and Praxis](#)’ open letter and call to action.” That letter makes sure to identify the racist group as “Jewish-Zionist nationals.” In contrast, when the authors of that letter want to refer to non-Jewish Israelis, they refer to them as “Palestinians in Lydd, Nazareth, Acre, Haifa and elsewhere,” a group they find worthy of defense and resistance. It is specifically against the Jews of Israel and those who are “complicit” with them that they advocate that they have “the right to resist by any means necessary.” It is no surprise, then, that the union’s [Resolution](#) should claim that the violence of the Gaza war began on May 15, 2021, five days after Hamas started launching thousands of rockets at civilians in Israel. For the Cross CUNY Working Group Against Racism and Colonialism, shooting rockets at Jewish Israeli citizens is not violence. It is resistance, and to suggest the situation is more complex than that, is not only “complicity,” but “an attempt to normalize a Palestinian genocide.”

If rocket attacks on Jewish Israelis are not violence but “the right to resist by any means necessary,” I begin to ask what else my colleagues consider to be their right to resist by any means. Are bus bombings against Israelis violence or “the right to resist”? Is the bomb that killed my American-Jewish friend and her fiancé (neither Israeli) on a bus in Jerusalem in 1994 violence or resistance? Was the person who shot up the street in Jerusalem on which I had lived, who riddled my old apartment building with bullets, engaging in violence or “the right to resist”? Was the person who bombed the cafeteria at Hebrew University of Jerusalem on July 31, 2002, killing five American students, engaging in violence or “the right to resist”? Do they believe these are legitimate because they occurred in Israel? What of the bombing of the busload of Israeli tourists in Bulgaria in 2012? Was that the right to resist because it carried Israelis even if outside Israel? What about the bombing of the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires on July 18, 1994, killing 85 people? Was that the right to resist? If “the right to resist by any means necessary” includes those attacks, as the language of resistance by any means necessary implies, then what of the kosher cafeteria at Brooklyn College’s Hillel or the Judaic Studies Department?

As a professor in a department called “Judaic Studies,” I long ago resigned myself to the fact that I am simply more of a target than others both online and in person. I consider it not worth mentioning when online activists threaten to get me fired from my job when they discover my field of scholarship. And I have long known that a Judaic anything is statistically at an increased risk of a violent attack. What I never had to consider until now was whether fellow faculty in my college—three of whom are housed in the same building and on the same floor as our department and helped put this symposium together—might advocate resistance “by any means necessary” against us. When my department recently hired a new office manager, I found myself wondering if I needed to warn her that the job may come with added risk. When it came time to go back to in-person classes, I found myself asking if I feel safe as chair sending my colleagues and our students back into our department. I found myself asking if holding courses in our seminar room unnecessarily increases students’ risk. I found myself asking if I should recommend that we remain online, even though my colleagues complain that they find online education inferior to in-person classes. I never thought I would ask these questions, and, indeed, they feel premature. Would my colleagues really engage in violence against us? Would any of their students really construe these calls to action as a call for violence against any of us? I don’t believe they are there yet. But then if anyone had asked me a year and a half ago if I thought my colleagues would have declared violence to begin only once Israel starts shooting, that five days of Hamas shelling Israeli civilians with thousands of missiles did not count as

violence, I would have told them they were wrong. And yet here we are. For how much longer can I guarantee the safety of my faculty and students as we return to in-person classes?

Unfortunately, these are not just my ponderings alone. Our Jewish students are telling us that they do not feel safe returning to in-person classes. We already have to factor into our planning not only that we may be questioning whether it is fair to put students and faculty at risk by holding in-person classes, but we now have to factor in that we may not be able to get Jewish students to enroll in our classes if we hold them in person out of fear for their safety. After years of calls at Brooklyn College and across CUNY for “Zionists out of CUNY,” after years of being told that Zionists are responsible for police brutality in New York City and around the US, our Jewish students are telling us that the atmosphere has become so hostile to them that they fear for their safety should they return to campus.

At a meeting at Brooklyn College in Spring 2022 between Jewish students and the college administration, students recounted a number of concerning incidents. Several stood out. One student described a case in which a student was told that the professor requested that she write a statement on her position on Israel and Zionism before he would give her a letter of recommendation. Many described feeling like they risked their grades if they disagreed with the professor and other students when those professors and students demonized Israel. Some described the classroom discourse around Israel as so vitriolic that they were concerned for their physical well-being after leaving class should they voice their opinion. One Jewish student leader reported receiving multiple threats including death threats. Hillel staff members later described to me feeling like their staff members were being targeted by a naming campaign from some anti-Zionist groups simply for being staff members at the campus Hillel.

In addition, as the chair of the only department of Judaic Studies in CUNY, I have found the very existence of my department to come under threat by these and other forces. In the second half of the symposium [*“Reckoning with Colonialism: Anti-Racist Struggle at CUNY & Beyond.”*](#) mentioned above that was put on by the so-called Cross CUNY Working Group Against Racism and Colonialism, an adjunct professor at Brooklyn College who helped organize the conference, purported to offer a history of the “Ethnic Studies” departments at CUNY and particularly at Brooklyn College. In his talk, he flips the historical reality in which the three departments—Africana Studies, Puerto Rican and Latino Studies, and Judaic Studies—have been fending off calls by the administration to combine our departments. In this speaker’s recasting (at the 2 hour 13 minute mark of the video linked to above), it is the administration, who “reseggregated” the three departments as a form of “containment.” True to the conference’s academic standards, the speaker apparently felt no need to inquire from those in our departments who lived this history. True to their activism, the instructor speaks on behalf of departments like mine without ever consulting with us. In his version of activism, we somehow want to be absorbed into his greater collective as a Department of Ethnic Studies. Never mind the fact that the field of Ethnic Studies has historically defined itself as excluding Jewish Studies. Apparently, now that Zionism is anti-Semitism and only anti-Zionism is defined as being truly against anti-Semitism, we must be saved from ourselves by being decolonized into a department with his proper ideology of our own field. Put another way, the speaker wants the Judaic Studies Department to cease to exist and to be absorbed into a department under the new name of a field that has historically excluded our field, where he preaches the ethnic cleansing of half the world’s Jewish population in the guise of fighting

ethnic cleansing. Here the organizers of the conference are at least true to what they preach: this is not intended merely to be rhetoric. It is activism. It is intended to be acted upon, and dismantling our department is an important first step towards which they are already working. In such an atmosphere, it is little wonder that we are having trouble getting students to enroll in our department's courses on Anti-Semitism and the History of Zionism. Unfortunately, I imagine that if the new Ethnic Studies Department offered a course entitled "Zionism Is Anti-Semitism," it would fill quickly.

While the Judaic Studies Department at Brooklyn College consults with students regularly, and takes seriously their perspectives and needs, we believe that the job of educators is to maintain academic integrity first and foremost. So, while we are aware that there are contingencies of students who would like us to teach any number of revisionist histories about the Jewish people to reify their respective politics and beliefs, we do not believe that it is responsible to do so. Just because some professors preach that Zionism is white supremacy or that Theodor Herzl said so when he founded the modern secular version of it, does not make it true. When professors use rhetoric to convert violence into non-violence and non-violence into violence, when they turn Jewish refugees into settler colonialists and the murder of those same Jews and their children into pacifist resistance, we are betraying the academic integrity of our college. The so-called Cross CUNY Working Group Against Racism and Colonialism is right for believing that their movement must begin by dismantling our department and our field of study. Any proper study of the history of the Jewish people handily exposes their lies.

Unfortunately, this first symposium was not an anomaly. I have attended the others presented to date, and they have contained just as inflammatory of rhetoric. One that I attended on September 23 on police surveillance, discussed how Zionist corporations have their "tentacles" all over the globe fomenting genocide from Guatemala (where we were told they helped kill 200,000 indigenous people) to Venezuela, Hebron to New York, that none of us on that Zoom call were safe from their aims which stem from their Zionist values, and that solidarity means that we all have to fight this global threat together. Again, no citations were offered to support these only slightly updated charges from the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, though the importance of knowing "the history" (meaning this story) was emphasized several times.

In response to this campaign of misinformation, a number of professors at CUNY banded together to form a new group, [CUNY Alliance for Inclusion](#). We are small, but we are determined to fight this campaign of antisemitism in our midst, among other ways, by doing what we do best: educating. We drafted a [Community Statement Encouraging Mutual Respect and Engagement Towards a Just Middle East Peace and a CUNY Free of Harassment](#) with over 2700 signatories. We documented the [climate of hostility](#) on campus. We created a [response](#) to the union's resolution and a list of [frequently asked questions](#) on the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and we are always looking for allies who want to help and [get involved](#).

Unfortunately, as with most bigots, these self-proclaimed "anti-racists" are blind to their own bigotry and even believe that they are the ones fighting racism. It's sad to see people dedicated to ending bigotry falling for the same traps they purport to be against, but then that's how bigotry has always worked. To motivate people to hate, bigotry has always needed a victim

class to stir people up. There's something inherent in the emotion of defending a victim that allows us to blind ourselves to any other perspective other than our own.

To incite people to fear and hate black men during the lynchings of the 19th and 20th centuries, racists often invoked the mirage of protecting white women from sexual assault. To incite people to fear gay men, homophobes often invoked the mirage of protecting children from molestation, as do transphobes today when they call to exclude transgender people from being able to go to the bathroom. To achieve this, they attempt to keep our focus on black men who rape and white women who are raped, and blind us from noticing white men who rape and black women who are raped. They seek to correlate black men with rape so that black men who do not rape become rapists in our minds, perpetrators of violence on white bodies rather than the victims of the violence of the lynching that we are perpetrating on them and their black bodies. And this is what my colleagues seek to do by associating Zionists definitionally with racism and white supremacy, in which they see Zionist missiles striking Gaza but erase Hamas' missiles shot at Israeli civilians before the Israeli counter-strike, in which they see Zionist settler colonialism but blind us to the Arab leaders who called for the genocide of the Jews of Arab lands which drove 900,000 of them to flee their homes for the safety of the newly founded Jewish state.

But for all that bigotry tries to use victimization to incite hate, it is never really about protecting the victim. Lynching was never really about protecting white women from rape, and it certainly never solved that problem. Homophobia was never really about protecting children from molestation, and it never solved that problem. Similarly, anti-Zionism is not really about solving the Arab-Israeli or the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. Hatred is always mostly about hate, and it only serves to create more victims. While society can be held in the sway of these delusions for a time, eventually the spell is broken, but it takes a grand communal effort to get there. Now is the time for us to work together to get there for everyone's sake in this conflict.

Anti-Semitism meeting in Higher Education CUNY Schools

Good Afternoon Council Members, thank you for allowing me and others to speak up about the issue of antisemitism across CUNY campuses. Thank you Chairman Dinowitz and Councilmember Vernikov for bringing a meeting on this pressing issue. My name is David H. and I am a graduate student at John Jay College in the Masters's degree program for forensic mental health counseling. I am also a member of the Hillel club on campus and will be the E-board Vice President this coming year. In the past year that I have been on campus, many other Jewish students and I have experienced antisemitism in the classroom and generally the feeling around school that we cannot openly be Jewish or show an iota of support for Israel which is often equated together.

When the fall 2021 semester began, we were in hybrid classes and for one of my courses, the first class was to be on Zoom. During the class, the professor asked each student what our goals were as future mental health counselors. We were asked about the type of population that we wanted to work with. I was one of the first to be called upon and I talked about the Jewish community. After I went, a Muslim student said, "I would like to work with the deradicalization of the Hebrews and their radical ideology and the Hasids and their radical ideology." I was aghast and my facial expressions on the Zoom showed that. The professor did not comment on what was just said and moved on with the class. I mentioned this

to the professor after class and reported it to our Hillel. I have asked other students of our Hillel about their experiences on this issue and unfortunately, the comments made in other classes have been worse. Comments about Hitler and or Israel should not exist and the likes, while the professors either laugh it off or are in agreement with these comments. Many students are afraid to show wear a Magen David (Star of David) necklace or like me, a Kippah on my head and prefer to cover our heads with a cap or go bareheaded.

Another major issue on our campus is the Student Council and the PSC board. They are completely one-sided against Israel and Pro-Palestinian without actually speaking on behalf of all the students. Both of these boards have passed extremely dangerous false resolutions calling Israel (and in turn Jews) as terrorists, evil, apartheid state, and murderous against Palestinians, yet the whole resolution was based on a complete revision of the facts and bias against Israel. The SJP club was able to have a CUNY Law student, an open antisemite, speak on campus to them and it was posted all over the social media of the Student Council, they even tried having a Nakba Day rally on campus, which was thankfully shut down by the school. We couldn't even get the council to post about Holocaust Memorial Day or the Israel Day Parade. When the council is emailed by Hillel members, they ignore our concerns with all the rhetoric they use supporting a group that not only has different views about Israel but invites activists that call for our murder and have

proven actions of violence toward any supporter of Israel or someone wearing things that are of the IDF or Israel. It is an unsafe environment for Jews and we aren't loud trying to make a scene. I know many Jewish students would prefer not to have to say anything, but our physical, mental, and emotional well-being are at risk in an environment like this.

I thank you for your time and the care that is being shown to try to make CUNY a safer environment for all groups of people so that Jews can feel safe and considered on these campuses.

Testimony of Edwin Scott Fruehwald

I am submitting this testimony to the Committee on Higher Education, New York City Council Hearing “Examining Antisemitism on College Campuses.” I am a graduate of the CUNY Graduate Center Music Program (Ph.D. 1984). I also have an SJD from The University of Virginia School of Law.

My testimony concerns the scholarship of Dr. Philip Ewell of Hunter College. In brief, Dr. Ewell “defamed” a long-dead Jewish music theorist, Heinrich Schenker, and his followers, most of whom were Jewish and some of whom taught at CUNY Colleges, when he labeled Dr. Schenker as a biological racist in scholarship he published and presented from 2019 to 2022. Dr. Schenker was not a biological racist. Rather, Dr. Ewell made him look like one by distorting quotes of Schenker and others, which constitutes academic fraud.

Hunter College (CUNY) Professor Philip Ewell shocked the music theory world at the Society for Music Theory conference in 2019 when he charged that American music theory was “systematically racist.”^{vi} He accused long-deceased German, Jewish music theorist, Heinrich Schenker (1868-1935), of being “an exemplar of that flawed world, a ‘virulent racist’ who wrote of ‘primitive’ and ‘inferior’ races — views, he argued, that suffused his theories of music.”^{vii} Furthermore, he accused “generations of Schenker scholars of trying to ‘whitewash’ the theorist in an act of ‘colorblind racism.’”^{viii} Ewell’s presentation continues to resound within the music theory world.^{iv}

Ewell’s argument concerning a white racial frame in American music theory contends that Schenker’s worldview, like that of the German Nazis under Hitler, was premised on biological racism, not culture. However, in order to conceal the fact that Schenker’s worldview was not, in fact, based on biological racism, Ewell censored a quotation central to his argument, as well as deceptively manipulated numerous quotes from Schenker himself.

Ewell’s argument concerning a white racial frame in American music theory is fundamentally flawed because Ewell’s argument is based on the notion that Schenker’s worldview was based on biological racism, not culture, and Ewell is incorrect that Schenker’s worldview was based on biological race. In addition, Ewell hides this fact by incompletely presenting a quotation that is central to his argument (he omitted three sentences; see below), as well as citing numerous quotes out-of-context.

Ewell’s argument is grounded on the fact that Schenker’s views are based on biological race (genetics), not culture. Ewell proclaimed, “Schenker also believed in biological racism, a point that either goes unstated or gets glossed over in virtually every historical account of Schenker.”^v He continued, “Heinrich Schenker was an ardent racist and German nationalist. However, no one has clearly linked his repugnant views on people to his music theories. I endeavor to do that in this section.”^{vi} This leads to Ewell’s central point: “In a larger sense, I argue that Schenkerian theory is an institutionalized racialized structure—a crucial part of music theory’s white racial frame—that exists to benefit members of the dominant white race of music theory.”^{vii} Ewell contended that Schenker’s “racism” cannot be separated from his music theory.^{viii} Ewell remarked, “The logic behind the transcendent ‘immutability’ of music theories allows the white racial frame to overlook the racialized structures that reliably benefit whites over nonwhites.”^{ix} After giving many examples of Schenker’s “racism,”^x Ewell declared that “white frame authors” “have generally tried to call Schenker’s racism cultural, and not biological.”^{xi} He added, “In other words, by calling Schenker’s racism cultural instead of what

it was, biological, the white racial frame seeks to shield Schenker from unwanted criticism.”^{xxii}

Ewell restated his central point: “there exists an anti-black racism to Schenker’s work that remains underexplored, and this racism has infected and become integral to the white racial frame of music theory.”^{xxiii} He continued, “Despite the fact that Schenker glorified Germans over all others, I posit that there exists a strong white-supremacist element to his theories about both race and music in light of his anti-black racism. After all, it is well known that Schenker allowed for two non-Germans—Domenico Scarlatti (an Italian) and Frédéric Chopin (a Pole)—into his pantheon of eleven otherwise German ‘genius’ composers.”^{xxiv}

To establish his claims, Ewell needed to prove that Schenker’s biological racism is embedded in his music theory. Therefore, he asserted that “the easiest entry point is the language he uses in discussing his rigidly hierarchical beliefs as they applied to both race and music.”^{xxv} He declared, “As with the inequality of races, Schenker believed in the inequality of tones.”^{xxvi} He added, “neither racial classes nor pitch classes are equal in Schenker’s theories, and he uses the same language to express these beliefs.”^{xxvii} Moreover, “Schenker believed that the fundamental structure must ‘govern’ and ‘control’ the middleground and foreground elements of the music composition. Similarly, Schenker believed that blacks must be governed and controlled by whites.”^{xxviii} In sum, “but without question, the two [Schenker’s biological racism and his theory of hierarchy in music] belong together—they are inseparable.”^{xxix}

Does it matter to Ewell’s argument that Schenker’s world view is based on biological race, rather than culture? As mentioned above, Ewell emphatically said it does: “by calling Schenker’s racism cultural instead of what it was, biological, the white racial frame seeks to shield Schenker from unwanted criticism.”^{xxx} He added, “But this is, in fact, one of the main goals of the white racial frame—to ignore inconvenient facts if those facts contravene or damage the impact of a given racialized structure of the white frame.”^{xxxi}

Although he does not specifically state it, the main reason that Ewell needs Schenker’s world view to be biological racism, rather than cultural, is that his theory collapses if it is not biological racism. If Schenker’s theory is imbued with biological racism, then those who continue to use his analytical approach without acknowledging that racism are part of the white racial frame. However, if Schenker’s views are cultural they cannot be extended to contemporary white theorists. Schenker’s culture was that of the conservative branch of Weimar Culture, and it would be absurd to argue that contemporary theorists are continuing that culture.^{xxii}

Schenker’s world view existed in the conservative, nationalistic cultural branch of the Weimar Republic.^{xxiii} Professor Wiener declared, “In his discussion of art, Schenker enunciated a doctrine, common to his time and place, of German *cultural*, not biological racism.”^{xxiv}

Professor Jackson (University of North Texas) has further noted that Schenker’s anti-French, anti-American, and anti-Black statements must be considered in the context of World War I and its aftermath.^{xxv} For example, “readers of Schenker’s diary cannot ignore the extent and breadth of its author’s virulent, visceral hatred of the French, a *white* race, during and after the World War I.”^{xxvi} In particular, Schenker castigated those nations that fought against Germany and Austria in World War I—the English, French, Italians, Russians, Serbs, as well as those who supported them behind the mask of neutrality like the Anglo-Americans, Russians, Romanians, etc., calling them the “less able of more primitive races and nations.”^{xxvii}

In particular, “Schenker believed it was his mission to save German music for everyone—without distinction of race, religion, or national origin.”^{xxxviii} In the introduction to the book summarizing his life's work, *Free Composition*, Schenker proclaimed, “Since the linear progression, as I have described it, is one of the main elements of voice-leading, music is accessible to all races and creeds alike.”^{xxxix}

Most importantly (and fatally for Ewell’s argument), Ewell has “misquoted” Austrian music scholar Martin Eybl's discussion of Schenker to disguise that Schenker’s world view was cultural. In a key section of his paper, Ewell asserted, “The author who has done the most to reframe Schenker’s racism is Martin Eybl. . . . Eybl acknowledges Schenker’s racism forthrightly.”^{xxx} In support of his argument, Ewell quoted Eybl,

The term “*Menschenhumus*” is based on the idea that Germanism unequivocally constitutes the best natural conditions for the development of geniuses: in “*Menschenhumus* of the highest category” the “German genius” is manifest. . . . Anyone who considers the term “*Menschenhumus*” as a simple translation of the burdened conceptual pair of blood and soil is ignoring the pseudo-scientific bases of national-socialist racism and its predecessors.^{xxxi}

Ewell then declared, “But this is, in fact, one of the main goals of the white racial frame—to ignore inconvenient facts if those facts contravene or damage the impact of a given racialized structure of the white frame. Schenker invokes *Menschenhumus* as a scientific basis for German superiority in music. We must not now or ever cast aside such important information, especially about a figure who remains so central to our field.”^{xxxii}

Notice the ellipsis in the quote above. Here is what the ellipsis replaces: “Again, Schenker does not argue on the basis of race, but of German national [culture].” [“Wieder argumentiert Schenker nicht rassistisch, sondern Deutschnational.”]^{xxxiii} Ewell also left out the two sentences that follow: “At no point does Schenker attempt to explain the superiority of Germanness genetically. The fact that the German people can be defined by language and culture forms the open and nebulous prerequisite for Schenker's German nationalism.”^{xxxiv}

In other words, by omitting these three key sentences from the Eybl quote, Ewell totally changes Eybl’s meaning from culture to biological racism. Remember that Ewell said that Eybl was the one who has done the most to reframe Schenker’s racism. Professor Eybl has confirmed this misrepresentation of his position: “**As I have clearly stated in my book, Schenker was not a racist in the sense of the National Socialists. I am grateful that you [Jackson] have corrected the point vis-à-vis Ewell, who distorts the meaning by omitting parts of the text when he is quoting me.**” (letter from Eybl to Jackson, January 23, 2022).^{xxxv}

Omitting words and sentences from a quote to change the quote’s meaning is indisputably unethical misrepresentation: “While minor modifications are permissible, you must **never present the quote in a manner that changes the author's original meaning.** Especially if done with the purpose of distorting the author's intention and/or manufacturing support for an entirely different argument, **intentionally changing the meaning of a quote is academically dishonest and risks severe penalty.**”^{xxxvi} Likewise, “Do **not** use an ellipsis to omit words if such omissions change the meaning or intent of the original quotation.”^{xxxvii}

Finally, “If you omit words, phrases, sentences, or even paragraphs from a quotation because they seem irrelevant, be careful not to change or misrepresent the meaning of the original source.”^{xxxviii}

But, Ewell’s deceptively incomplete quotation is not all. Dr. Barry Wiener has also identified several other deceptive quotes in Ewell’s article,^{xxxi} reproducing Ewell’s quotations in bold within the longer quotes, which provide the true context. For example, Ewell decontextualizes Schenker's reference to "less able or primitive races" to change its meaning: in this quote, he is talking about those nations and peoples who opposed Germany in World War I, not Blacks.^{xi} Similarly, in yet another decontextualized quote, where Schenker refers to “inferior races,” he means “*musically* inferior races”—white northern European nations and central European nations.”

In other words, when Schenker is referring to races, he meant national groups, not biological race. This was common in Germany during World War I and especially after the War.^{xli} Why? Because these “peoples” defeated Germany in World War I, and they had imposed crippling reparations on it and its allies through the Treaty of Versailles.

Both Jackson and Wiener also pointed out that Ewell never mentioned that Schenker was a Jew—a fact that seems vital to a discussion of race and culture.^{xlii}

One more passage from Ewell’s article is relevant:

One point rarely made in Schenker studies concerns his views against the intermarrying of races, which led to the so-called racial "mongrelization" that was a mainstay of biological race science of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Yet there can be no doubt that Schenker was against racial mixing. He says, “‘Race’ is good, ‘inbreeding’ of race, however, is murky.”^{xliii}

Schenker here was clearly not referring to the intermarriage of individuals from different biological racial groups. Inbreeding means: “the production of offspring from the mating or breeding of individuals or organisms that are closely related genetically.”^{xliv} In other words, it means the exact opposite of what Ewell says it does. Professor Jackson supports this: “But Schenker was criticizing, rather than endorsing, racial purity. Had Schenker intended to attack racial mixture, he would have used the term ‘interbreeding’ (*Mischung* or *Bastardierung*)—the terms used by Nazis for the mixing of races.”^{xlv}

In sum, while scholars have pointed out the many flaws in Professor’s Ewell “white racial frame” theory, his arguments hinge on—and ultimately collapse on—one basic point: Schenker’s worldview was based on culture and language, not biological racism. Significantly, Ewell himself recognized this fundamental flaw in his argument since he deliberately suppressed the three "inconvenient" sentences from Eybl.

To the Committee: The above establishes that Dr. Ewell’s writings on Schenker are academic fraud. I leave it up to you to decide whether what he did was anti-Semitic.

A Jewish journalist, however, has written about Ewell and antisemitism.

<https://www.thejewishstar.com/stories/in-german-music-crt-sees-jewish-tie-to-hitler,21476> “These are evocative of the anti-Semitic tropes and conspiracy theories that have been used against Jews for centuries, so it’s unsurprising that CRT provides a convenient guise to attack Jews today. As Paresky notes, “the subtlety is that, instead of targeting Jews directly, the target of critical social justice is ‘whiteness’.”

A case in point is the public dispute over the legacy of Heinrich Schenker, a Jewish music theorist from Galicia who lived in the late 19th and early 20th century.”

“While the case is certainly not the first to pit scholars against those who use critical race theory to discredit classical studies, it demonstrates the ease with which anti-Semitic tropes of supremacy and racism are incorporated into trending ideologies — often with adherents unaware of the sordid history behind these tropes.”

“According to Jackson, Ewell had distorted history by erasing the music theorist’s proud Jewish identity, faith, and the discrimination he suffered for being a Jew - which necessarily precluded any admiration for Nazi ideology. He pointed to Ewell’s alteration of certain German-language passages, which were removed from their context or misconstrued, to provide proof of Schenker’s racism. (In a subsequent article, Jackson further detailed how quotes were manipulated in Ewell’s article to paint Schenker as “a virulent racist” akin to German Nazis and American white supremacists).”

“Schenker was targeted as a white supremacist and racist, rather than as a Jewish supremacist. His Jewish identity was erased from the charges against him, as accusations of white supremacy against Jews necessitates the erasure of their non-white, Jewish identity and the accompanying context of anti-Jewish bigotry.”

“Professor Jackson resolved the question by exploring Schenker’s Jewish identity and its impact on the accusations against him. He observed that while Schenker was a complex person with human foibles, he was certainly not the racial supremacist he was accused of.

Whatever the motivation behind such charges, one thing is certain: the vilification of Jews as racists and supremacists, disproportionate to their actions and stripped of context or nuance, is yet another iteration of an all-too-familiar anti-Semitic trope.”

...

I submitted a complaint to Hunter College concerning Dr. Ewell’s academic fraud. I received the following response:

Dear Dr. Fruehwald:

I have consulted with several administrators who deal with academic fraud in research.

Dr. Ewell's opinion paper does not constitute research.

No further steps will be taken at the institutional level. I will, however, send a report to our Provost and President along with the documentation you provided.

Thank you for taking the time to bring this to our attention.

Respectfully,

Suzanne Babyar, PT, PhD
Research Integrity Officer
Hunter College

I should note that Dr. Ewell's paper was published in a scholarly music theory journal: *Music Theory on Lime*, and he presented a shorter version at the National Conference of the Society for Music Theory in 2019.

Dr. Ewell's allegation that Dr. Schenker was a biological racist has appeared on several CUNY websites. I am particularly bothered by this one, which is on the Brook Center Website:

“Much more controversial has been a presentation at the Society for Music Theory by our colleague at the CUNY Graduate Center and Hunter College, professor Philip Ewell, in which he directly denounces racism in the field of music theory—who would ever know that parallel fifths could stir the still waters of our quiet pond? Some of his argument involves the study of white supremacist Heinrich Schenker's methods of musical analysis, but it goes beyond that. His talk and its ensuing controversy have sparked an incredible media coverage (NPR, Fox, etc.) that shows that musical scholarship is no longer a quiet pond.”^{xlvi}

Dr. Brook was my dissertation advisor at CUNY. He was a strong supporter of the theories of Heinrich Schenker, and he helped bring several Schenker scholars to CUNY. Dr. Brook was also Jewish. He would be shocked to read that Heinrich Schenker was called a “white supremacist” on the website of the Center that is dedicated to his memory.

i. You can view a video of the presentation at <https://vimeo.com/372726003>. You can find a transcript of the presentation at <https://academic.oup.com/mts/advance-article/doi/10.1093/mts/mtaa031/6168471?guestAccessKey=7af9bea4-028d-4ed4-a889-c29f5330c18e>.

ii. Michael Powell, *Obscure musicology journal sparks battles over race and free speech*, *New York Times* (Feb, 14, 2020)

[<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/14/arts/musicology-journal-race-free-speech.html>]

iii. *Ibid.* Ewell has declared, “It would be hard to overstate Heinrich Schenker's influence on American music theory.” Philip Ewell, *Music Theory and the White Racial Frame*, 26 *Music Theory Online* 2 at 4.1.1 (2020) [<https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.20.26.2/mto.20.26.2.ewell.html>].

iv. I will not deal with the aftermath of Ewell’s presentation in this paper because the central point of this paper is that Ewell’s theory is fundamentally flawed. For more on the aftermath, see Scott Fruehwald, *Philip Ewell’s White Racial Framework in Music Theory and Cognitive Science* (2021) [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3816979].

v. *Ibid.* at 4.1.4.

vi. *Ibid.* at 4.1.2.

vii. *Ibid.*

viii. *Ibid.* at 4.1.3.

ix. *Ibid.*

x. Most of these references are actually directed at nationalities, such as the French, the English, and the Americans, not biological racial groups.

xi. Ewell. *supra* at 4.2.4.

xii. *Ibid.*

xiii. *Ibid.* at 4.2.6.

xiv. *Ibid.*

xv. *Ibid.* at 4.5.

xvi. *Ibid.* at 4.5.2. Composer Richard Beaudoin, a supporter of Ewell, stated similarly “Schenker fervently believed that some human beings were superior to others and that, within the mechanisms of tonality, the relationship between tones should be understood as similarly unequal.” Richard Beaudoin, 12 *J. Schenkerian STUDIES* 129, 129 (2020).

xvii. Ewell, *supra*.

xviii. *Ibid.* at 4.5.4. Even a reader with only a skeletal knowledge of music must see that Ewell’s equation of hierarchy and control in human society and hierarchy and

control in tonal music is ludicrous. This is like comparing apples with oranges.

Schenker derived his music theory from observing music, not from imposing his social ideas on the music. He saw the hierarchy that is inherent in tonal music. (Doesn't most music have a hierarchy? If it didn't, it wouldn't be comprehensible.) The fact that he might have been "racist" did not affect his observations.

Other scholars who have written on Ewell's presentation agree with the above. For example, theorist David Beach has written, "He states that Schenker's anti-black racism informed his theory. Schenker developed his ideas about musical structure by studying the music of the great masters . . . , and one of the bases of his criticism of music he considered inferior was that they lacked what he observed in the 'masterworks.' So, his views of black music did not inform his theory; rather it was his theory that lead him to view the music of other cultures as lacking. No doubt this view also influenced his view of the new music of his time (e.g., Schoenberg)." David Beach, *Schenker–Racism–Context*, 12 J. Schenkerian Studies 127, 127 (2019).

Similarly, Allen Cadwallader has stated, "Schenker's theoretical hierarchies, on the other hand, are purely structural. The *Ursatz* is a case in point. The background resides at the top level of the hierarchy and is the result of the *transformational processes* (involving harmony, counterpoint, and *Auskomponierung*) that lead from the lower foreground, through the middleground, and ultimately to the singularity of the background. To suggest that Schenker's background *Ursatz* is racist is patently absurd." Allen Cadwallader, *A Response to Philip Ewell*, 12 J. Schenkerian Studies 137, 138 (2019).

Stephen Slottow finds "Ewell's parallelisms curiously unconvincing." He asks, "Are human and musical realms really as parallel and interchangeable as Ewell implies?" He adds, "if that property is racist, then tonal music itself must be racist—a proposition which I at least am not prepared to follow." Stephen Slottow, *An initial response to Philip Ewell*, 12 J. Schenkerian Studies 189, 189 (2019). He also points out that notes are also often unequal in non-Western music.

Finally, noted black linguist and instructor of music history at Columbia University John McWhorter, pointed out: "If Ewell's claim is that music is racist when involving hierarchical relationships between elements, then we must ask where that puts a great deal of music created by non-white people. Perhaps more important, the question is: just what do these hierarchical relationships in music structure have to do with human suffering?" John McWhorter, *Is music theory really #SoWhite?*, Substack (February 16, 2021)

[<https://johnmcwhorter.substack.com/p/is-music-theory-really-sowhite>] He also remarked, "Is there any kind of music where some elements are not foregrounded while others are backgrounded, or even where elements structurally in the background do not ultimately color the music to such a degree that they come off as what the music 'is really about' overall, like a dish that wouldn't be itself without the marjoram almost to the point that you almost just want to eat marjoram alone with a spoon?"

In any case, I placed this discussion in a footnote because it is not central to the argument of this paper—that Ewell's contention collapses because Schenker's worldview was based on culture, not race.

xix. Ewell, *supra* at 4.5.4. Ewell does admit, "The linking of Schenker's racism with

his music theories is necessarily speculative-this is obviously my interpretation.”
Ibid. at 4.5.5.

xx. *Ibid.* at 4.2.4.

xxi. *Ibid.* at 4.4.5.

xxii. Of course, Schenker’s relationship with conservative Weimar culture was complicated because he was a Jew living in an anti-Semitic culture. See Timothy L. Jackson, *The Schenker Controversy*, Quillette (December 20, 2021) [<https://quillette.com/2021/12/20/the-schenker-controversy/>]

xxiii. Beach, *supra* at 127.

xxiv. Barry Wiener, *Philip Ewell’s White Racial Frame*, 12 *Journal of Schenkerian Studies* 195, 199 (2019); see also Elazr Barkin, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism: Changing Concepts of Race in Britain and the United States between the World Wars*, 2 (1992) (“The term ‘race’ had a far wider meaning than at present, being used to refer to any geographical, religious, class-based or color-based grouping.”).

xxv. Timothy L. Jackson, *A Preliminary Response to Ewell*, 12 *Journal of Schenkerian Studies* 156, 160 (2019).

xxvi. *Ibid.* at 161.

xxvii. Wiener, *supra* at 196 (2019).

xxviii. *Ibid.* at 201.

xxix. *Ibid.*

xxx. Ewell, *supra* at 4.4.4.

xxxi. *Ibid.* at 4.4.5. Ewell translated the text from German.

xxxii. *Ibid.*

xxxiii. Jackson, *Schenker Controversy*, *supra*.

xxxiv. *Ibid.*

xxxv. Copy of this email in this author’s possession.

xxxvi. *The Ethics of Quoting* [<https://qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/writing/history/skills/ethics.html>]. See also *The misleading Ellipsis* [<https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/the-misleading-ellipsis-61844/>]. (“The Ninth Circuit recently questioned several appellate lawyers about misleading statements in

their briefs, including quotes from cases with ellipses, thereby omitting the very language that showed the quote and case were inapplicable to the case at issue.”]; Christi McGuire, *Ellipsis: Do’s and Don’ts* [<http://www.christimcguire.com/ellipsis-dos-and-donts/>] (“It is not correct (or ethical) to use an ellipsis to change the meaning of a quotation. Writers must be cautious of being ethical and writing with integrity, especially when quoting others. Make sure not to change the original meaning of text just to make it fit your argument or point of view in writing.”); Gilead Ini, *Reuters Uses Ellipses to Downplay Al Jazeera Journalist’s Quote* (August 18, 2017) (“‘Quotes are sacrosanct,’ Reuters says. When quoting someone, a journalist can replace a word with an ellipsis ‘only if the deletion does not alter the sense of the quote,’ the news agency explains.”).

xxxvii. Franklin Covey, *Style Guide for Business and Technical Communications* 78 (2012).

xxxviii. Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 25.3.2 (2018).

xxxix. Wiener, *supra* at 196, 197, 198, 200, 202.

xl. *Ibid.* at 196.

xli. Writer Thomas Mann expressed similar views. Karin Gunnemann, *Writers and Politics in the Weimar Republic*, “in *Weimar Thought: A Contested Legacy* 221 (2013); Peter Watson, *The German Genius: Europe’s Third Renaissance, The Second Scientific Revolution, and the Twentieth Century* 535, 562 (2010). He believed that Germany had been coerced into war by its ‘envious’ adversaries.” Watson, *supra* at 562.

xlii. Watson, *supra*, at 201.

xliii. Ewell *supra* at 4.2.4.

xliv. Wikipedia, *Interbreeding*.

xlv. Jackson, Schenker Controversy, *supra*.

xlvi. <https://brookcenter.gc.cuny.edu/category/news/page/3/>

NYC COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

COUNCIL MEMBER ERIC DINOWITZ, CHAIR

COMMITTEE HEARING:

**OVERSIGHT: EXAMINING ANTISEMITISM ON COLLEGE
CAMPUSES**

JUNE 30, 2022

Good morning, Chair Dinowitz, Members of the Committee. My name is Lisa Y. Rubin and I am completing my second year as an evening student at CUNY Law School. I am honored to attend the School – whose goal is to be of public service¹ – and the university – whose goals include the equality of opportunity for all in its midst.²

However, I am also deeply troubled that some recent developments at the School threaten these goals. These developments include the

¹ <https://www.law.cuny.edu/students/student-affairs/pro-bono-public-service/>

² <https://codes.findlaw.com/ny/education-law/edn-sect-6201>.

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Boycott, Divest and Sanction (BDS) Resolution³ against Israel – as sponsored by its Student Government and ratified by its Faculty Council.

This Resolution – if implemented – would harm more than the many current and prospective members of the School’s Jewish and pro-Israel community. It would also set a harmful precedent that weakens the

³

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dm4Sv9QsbzgyrOhpVABkEZuLskrkcWp9MgjiQRDsG4/edit> (text of Resolution)

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protection of the First Amendment and academic freedom on this as well as on other CUNY campuses. This is especially the case where - as here - members of the Student Government and Faculty Council also have seats on committees that make decisions on the School's personnel, admissions and other official matters.⁴

Please note that I do not claim to speak for the entire Jewish community of the School.⁵ However, I will address how the BDS Resolution has affected me.

⁴ <https://www.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/page-assets/about/administration/offices/legal-affairs/governance-plans/CUNY-School-of-Law-5.pdf>

⁵ For example, the Jewish Law Students Association (JLSA) at the CUNY Law School has stated that it supports the Resolution (see Text, fn 4, *supra*).

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As a Jewish student who believes in Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state but also as a member of a family that fought against government suppression right here – in the USA, I was shaken when I realized the Resolution's incredibly broad sweep. Was this a nightmare, or was I seeing a form of creeping McCarthyism - albeit one wrapped in the cloth of what is now labeled anti-Zionism?

After all, if the Resolution is implemented as is, it could harm current and prospective students, faculty and staff members and contractors who are or who are perceived as being Jewish, pro-Israel, having worked or planning to work at an Israeli university or cultural institution – including having presented or planning to present a lecture there -, having done or planning to do business in Israel and/or having links to

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any persons in these categories. The rights of students to participate in on-campus clubs with similarly suspected ties could also be jeopardized.

It is noted that CUNY in one of its earlier permutations – as the City College of New York (CCNY) – already endured such a wide-broom sweep, harming that School, its community and the protections of constitutional and academic freedoms.⁶

Before and during the McCarthy era, that College's faculty and staff members⁷ and students⁸ were dismissed, based on a suspicion that they were or had links – however tenuous – to those that were or perceived as

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⁶ <https://virtualny.ashp.cuny.edu/gutter/panels/panel10.html>

⁷ <https://virtualny.ashp.cuny.edu/gutter/panels/panel16.html>

⁸ <https://virtualny.ashp.cuny.edu/gutter/panels/panel9.html>

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being Communists or having links to links to links to those who might be Communists. Additionally, clubs could operate only at the whim of the then-College president (colloquially known as Umbrella Robinson).⁹

Now, at the law school – where the focus is purportedly on anti-Zionism - the approach – the modus operandi – would be eerily similar with the implementation of the above BDS Resolution. Just substitute the word “Zionism” for “Communism.”

To protect the freedoms and rights that we all cherish in this Nation, this State, this City, this University and at this School, it is urged that the School’s Student Government and Faculty Council reconsider the BDS Resolution – as it is currently framed. They need to ensure the

⁹ <https://virtualny.ashp.cuny.edu/gutter/panels/panel10.html>

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enhancement - not a reduction - of the constitutional and academic
freedom rights of all concerned.

The School's motto is "Law in the Service of Human Needs."¹⁰ To the
Student Government and Faculty Council, I say that all human beings in
or at the doorway of this School need to be treated as equal under all,
including your laws.

#

¹⁰ <https://www.law.cuny.edu/about/philosophy/>

From: msh <msh@panix.com>
Sent: Monday, July 4, 2022 1:34 AM
To: Testimony
Cc: Vernikov, Inna; Kaminsky, Gabriella; Olson,Troy; Holland, Mark
Subject: [EXTERNAL] From Mark Holland RE: Join Councilwoman Vernikov on June 30 @ 10am for the Hearing on Antisemitism (fwd)

R E V I S E D !!! REPLACES PREVIOUS EMAILED TESTIMONY MESSAGE!!
ELIMINATES POST-HEARING COMMENTS AND EMENDATIONS. PLEASE SUBSTITUTE THIS DOCUMENT IN PLACE OF PREVIOUSLY EMAILED VERSION!

Testimony of Mark Holland, resident of NYC, before the NY City Council, Thursday, 6/30/22

Defund CUNY! Divest CUNY of Public Funding! Suspend payments immediately! Stop Anti-Semitism at CUNY (City University of New York)

Anti-Semitism -- the hatred of Jews -- and the related general hatred of Israel (singled out for especial hatred from among all other nations) -- is unmistakably on the rise in the United States in general, -- and is alive and well, flourishing and nurtured at CUNY in particular. We, the taxpayers, should not be forced to subsidize involuntarily such Jew hatred in our own public institutions. All taxpayer money going to each of CUNY's individual schools, departments, divisions, -- including administration and faculty salaries, student scholarship/fellowship money -- should be immediately suspended and withheld from payment by the City of New York until further notice. Let us leverage the issue where it effects and hurts the haters. Anti-Semitism is a metastasizing institutional cancer and malignancy at CUNY. Here is our proposed chemotherapy to treat the illness. Let's see how they function without money from the 3 million or so Jews ... taxpayers all ... who inhabit the 5 boroughs of New York!

This anti-Semitism is especially outrageous, considering that CUNY was conceived of, built & implemented by, underwritten (funded, paid for) by civic-minded Jews and Jewish intellectuals in the last century. Many of the greatest teachers and graduates in the history of CUNY were Jewish or of Jewish origins. There are 25,000 current students who identify as Jewish. Jew-hating and sometimes violent, sometimes Marxist, terrorist

organizations -- BDS ("Boycott, Divest, & Sanction"), Antifa, BLM ("Black Lives Matter"), Hamas, CAIR ("Council on American-Islamic Relations"), "Free Palestine: De-colonize", SJP ("Students for Justice in Palestine"; Law School Chapter) -- have each cozily set up shop at CUNY, and are quietly supported by the administration of this public school system, defying all decent standards of impartiality, equal treatment, and respect for ALL human beings expected of modern American colleges and universities. In so doing, these Anti-Semitic organizations and the people belonging to them are:

1) Ingrates (privileged people who are ungrateful for the institutions that they hijacked but did not create, ungrateful for the opportunities of education and jobs afforded them by the very people they attack),

2) Hypocrites of the first order (they are themselves guilty of the very hatred, violent speech, prejudice they claim about in Jews -- they are really talking about themselves),

3) Liars (they promulgate and foster centuries-old blood libels, slanders, and tropes aimed at Jews around the world),

4) Criminals (who are not being punished by prosecutors and government elected-or-appointed officials for their hate crimes).

This is precisely what happened in the early stages of lead-up to WWII Germany under the Nazis before the slaughter of millions of Jews in that very same Germany and the rest of Europe. The same kind of talk, the same kind of behavior, attitude, actions, the taking over of the "Academies", the same purging of Jewish professors, intellectuals, students that caused so many of them to lose their jobs, to flee from Europe and come to America, the later "Refusniks" of the Soviet Russia -- including our teachers at CUNY! Now, how did that work out for us as Jews? THEY found refuge in the United States, and now it is happening all over again right here in New York in the present 21st century!

I taught at Queens College and the Graduate Center in the '70's and '80's, and at NYU until 1997, with many very happy multi-racial-multi-ethnic-background students, and with no accusations of white supremacy or racism in courses, either intentional or unintentional. My testimony is a matter of conscience, as my grandfather lost 37 family members in the Holocaust of the Jews in Poland in 1938.

States such as Virginia and resident parents there are now at last doing exactly that prescription I mentioned earlier -- namely, withholding funds and monitoring the educational contents of classes -- in their own public school systems supported by their public taxpayer money. The City Council of NY has the power to remedy this outrageous situation and render proper justice here, even if CUNY fails to do so on its own.

My name is Michael Martinez. I am an alumni of Brooklyn College (Class of 2019.) Furthermore, I have just completed the first part of my graduate studies at Baruch College and currently a CUNY staff member of LaGuardia Community College as a research fellow. I am a gentile, but I don't feel safe on campus.

In my capacities as an contributing alumni and a graduate student, I am a member of the groups or have been associated with organizations that was named in the BDS resolution passed by the CUNY School of Law Student Government with the "blessing" of faculty members. I was very offended when we was blasted as being "complicit" in crimes per se, when many of us are speaking with and learning from Palestinians and advocate for equity. I was offended when we was blasted as being "funded by the State of Israel," whereas our local college clubs are teaching about the people who live in the Holy Land and also being exposed to the culture, language, and cuisine shared by both Israel and Palestine. And while we ask for fair treatment, we are held to a double standard. We are called racists and anti-Palestinian. Jewish clubs like Hillel are held to a different standard than Students for Justice in Palestine who acts both as an activist and a cultural group. Furthermore, it is a shame that faculty would mindlessly and without reservation participate in public shaming, libel, and demonization, of Jewish and Israeli clubs.

As an academic, I do not feel comfortable with the undue social pressure we face of having to pick a side. There is always an implicit threat that associating with Israeli academics or universities means an end to our careers. Nor do I feel comfortable knowing that the current BDS movement against Israel means a witch-hunt of Jewish and self-identified Zionist faculty to press them. Our job is to educate, inspire, and to find resolution. However, how can we educate about identity and conflict if we are blocked from doing so? What is more - how can we claim pride in an inclusive institution if Jewish faculty are left out of conversation and advocacy? We already know that faculty in American, British, and Canadian universities find difficulty in their work because of some involvement with Israeli academics, for being born in Israel, or for simply being Jewish. We know for a while now that our own colleagues are treated unfairly simply for being Jewish. It has been well documented. However, with complication, many choose to be silent about their own experiences or struggle to report biases since our unions are not interested in protecting its own members.

BDS in CUNY spells doom to the progress we have made since the admission of Black and Hispanic students like myself. It would single out Jews whom are made subjected to the conflict whether they are Israeli or not. My friends and I have been singled out of partnering with clubs, or unable to host an educational event without controversy, all because we are associated with Jewish campus life. Before and during the pandemic, we were harassed in our events commemorating Holocaust victims, on social media, and some academic events. This in the name of Palestinians. It is a shame to also force Jews into denying their thousand year old belief of the right to return to their ancestral homeland that is now a concrete part of their identity for most. It would be a shame if religious studies, judaic studies, and history departments are unable to expand or find students because they are restricted by politics and demonization. It is a shame that academics may find themselves out of a job, because their expertise is restricted

to that of public opinion and political trendiness. It is a shame when students of Abrahamic faiths find themselves targeted simply for visiting the land of their religious heritage and being called complicit to crimes against Palestinians. While the right to boycott and protest should be protected, it should not be at the behest of a protected class nor lean on polarization.

These hearings have been slammed as racist. Yet, this is more than the conflict in a region across the world. There are students who fear for their safety other than what concerns the conflict. I can understand why they feel opposed, but I find their reasons unfounded and restricted to anger. I ask that we do not listen but rather pause and reflect that there is a growing trend of antisemitism that is both based on anger against Israel, and more than Israel. I thank the Chancellor for leading us in example that we should be mindful, present, and listening. I hope that such spirit remains in CUNY, but I am least optimistic.

Since my time in CUNY, I have learned about Israel and Palestine in all of its facets as I should both as a student and a friend to those of Israeli, Palestinian, and Jewish descent. My friends has also, in exchange, learned about my cultural heritage and religion. It would not be this way without these student clubs and organizations. I have no resentment nor hatred towards Palestinians, and I can say the same about the clubs I participated with and still continue to do so. Furthermore, while I as a gentile can escape the debate over the Israel-Palestine conflict, my Jewish friends and colleagues cannot. They, through social pressure and assumption, are made guilty by association and demonized for their identity whether they are Zionist or anti-Zionist. But, I cannot say this any longer if I am being forced to pick a side and persecuted by it. All I ask is to put down dangerous ideas that we are all enemies of one another, the obnoxious ideas that peace cannot exist without the erasure of either group. Verily, none of us are agents of the Israeli or the Palestinian government. I remain firm that people have the right to identify with liberation, self determination, and their cultural identities. With these facts, I do not feel safe on campus. And if my friends are not safe on campus, then I am not safe on campus.

From: NYC Council Hearings
Sent: Wednesday, July 6, 2022 12:39 PM
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Ofek Preis Written Testimony

From: Ofek Preis <ofekpreis@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, July 1, 2022 4:08 PM
To: NYC Council Hearings <hearings@council.nyc.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ofek Preis Written Testimony

Dear Council,

I am writing to submit written testimony for the Higher Education Committee Hearing that took place on June 30, 2022, at 10 am.

The following is the testimony delivered by me, Ofek Preis, yesterday:

Hello, my name is Ofek Preis. I am an Israeli International Student studying at SUNY new Paltz. I was recently excluded from an advocacy group fighting against sexual violence on campus after being labeled as a Zionist based on a post on my Instagram story, which stated that the Jewish people are an ethnic group who come from Israel and that you cannot colonize the land to which you are indigenous. I am an Israeli SUNY student, a political science and sociology major, a prominent member of advocacy and activist spaces on and off-campus, and a Survivor of Sexual assault who was denied the right to fight against rape culture as a result of anti-Zionism. I am joining virtually from Israel today to state that there is no place for antisemitism in the public state and city universities of New York.

While I have dedicated my life and my education to activism against oppression, racism and sexual violence, the Anti-Zionist organization at my school has accused me of being a traitor to the cause, and I was given the reputation of a white supremacist and a colonizer incapable of fighting for equality and reform. My identity as a fighter against injustice was taken from me and it was replaced by the label of an oppressor. Another Jewish Survivor and I were harassed with instant hostility, some even instructing people to find us and spit on us. I still feel unsafe on my campus, today. I still feel powerless and defenseless, and more than anything I feel isolated and excommunicated from the progressive spaces in which I have a right to participate. The members of the antisemitic organization and members of the student body who contributed to the hostility walked unpunished, while many Jewish students and I spent the semester at home in fear. These are the detrimental impacts left by the presence of antizionism in colleges and universities. This is the result of promoting dialogue instead of directly denouncing antizionism. The systemic enabling of Antizionism and BDS on college campuses cultivates hostility that is directed at individual students like myself for what is labeled as acts of Zionism but is more accurately personhood and nationality. The isolation of Zionist students is discriminatory, dangerous, and inhumane. We, the Jewish and Israeli students of the CUNY and SUNY systems have a right to experience a higher education without the interruption of anti-Zionism and antisemitic organizations. It is not a matter of difficult conversations, but an issue of hostility, isolation, and DISCRIMINATION. There is an immense need for reform in the protection of the Jewish and Israeli students of New York State. Thank you for your time.

Ofek Preis



To my fellow Trojans,

Today, I write to announce my resignation as USG Vice President, effective immediately. It has been an honor to serve in this role, and I am forever grateful for the opportunity. In the coming weeks, I will give my full support to our new student leadership as they transition into their new roles. As this is my last public communication to the USC community, I would like to address the experiences that led to this decision.

I have been harassed and pressured for weeks by my fellow students because they opposed one of my identities. It is not because I am a woman, nor because I identify as queer, femme, or cisgender. All of these identities qualified me as electable when the student body voted last February. But because I also openly identify as a Zionist, a supporter of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, I have been accused by a group of students of being unsuitable as a student leader. I have been told that my support for Israel has made me complicit in racism, and that, by association, I am racist. Students launched an aggressive social media campaign to "impeach [my] Zionist a**." This is antisemitism, and cannot be tolerated at a University that proclaims to "nurture an environment of mutual respect and tolerance".

My Jewish and Zionist identity has helped shape every part of who I am, and they cannot be separated. Nearly 95 percent of American Jews support Israel as the Jewish state, inherently connected to our religious history and communal peoplehood. An attack on my Zionist identity is an attack on my Jewish identity. The suggestion that my support for a Jewish homeland would make me unfit for office or would justify my impeachment plays into the oldest stereotypes of Jews, including accusations of dual loyalty and holding all Jews responsible for the actions of the Israeli government.

I was elected to represent all USC students. In fact, the values of social justice I ran on and hold dear are born out of my Judaism and Zionist beliefs. Through the teachings of *Kavod Bariot*, dignity for all, I understand we have an obligation to stand with our fellow humans to ensure an end to all injustices throughout our campuses and our communities. The value of *Lo Ta'amod*, "You Shall Not Stand Idly By," is what drove me to march with my fellow Trojans and Angelinos to protest injustices toward the Black community. And the suffering of the Jewish people – the persecution, massacres, and genocide we have experienced throughout our history – has taught me to speak out for all those who are mistreated.

During this deeply disturbing time for myself and my entire community, I have been fortunate to receive the support of family and friends, the campus Jewish community, and USC Hillel. I am grateful that the University administration suspended my impeachment proceedings, but am disappointed that the university has not recognized the need to publicly protect Jewish students from the type of antisemitic harassment I endured. At this point, resignation is the only sustainable choice I can make to protect my physical safety on campus and my mental health.

We all have the right to our opinions, and to disagree. But in today's day and age, our campuses have shifted from authentic, in-person conversations to comments and retweets, and we "cancel" anyone with whom we disagree on any issue. There is a disturbing lack of nuance or willingness to grapple with the

messy complexities of an issue, and there is no longer any room for change or growth. Students made presumptions about my Zionist identity and leapt to unfair conclusions. No one asked me to explain my passion for Israel. No one asked to learn together, to try to understand and build connections. Instead, the people with whom I have shared a campus with for years, the people whom I desperately want to serve, have tried to make me feel ashamed, invalidated, and dehumanized because of who I am.

The sad reality is that my story is not uncommon on college campuses. Across the country, Zionist students are being asked to disavow their identities or beliefs to enter many spaces on their campuses. My Zionism should not and cannot disqualify me from being a leader on campus, nor should others presume what that means about my position on social justice issues.

As I begin to move past this difficult time, I hope to partner with my peers, allies, and the community to show the many faces of antisemitism and call out those who marginalize others in spaces where we should feel safe and welcome. What happened to me is wrong and unjust, and now it is my turn to make sure this never happens again.

To the Undergraduate Student Government, I challenge you to be better. I challenge you in the coming months and years to have difficult conversations, to look yourself in the mirror and identify shortcomings and flaws. From my first day in student government, USG members have strived to not only better themselves but uplift the entire USC community. And yet, the organization has failed to be an inclusive space for numerous communities on campus. It has failed to inspire unity and it has failed to amplify student voices time and time again. Instead, the organization picks and chooses who is worthy of being highlighted on social media, who can rise to positions of leadership, and whose work is selected to be highlighted in a weekly newsletter. While I regret not speaking out more actively about this during my time in the organization, these issues persist well beyond myself, my Cabinet, and the current organization. And this failure extends beyond student government, but also to the team of professional staff charged with helping to advise and guide the organization. They have failed to create a safe environment for all students, they have failed to promote the inclusivity that they constantly preach, and they have failed to fulfill the duties with which they are charged by both USG and the administration.

I am still hopeful for the future ahead, that each member of USG will use this time as an opportunity to grow and challenge themselves and the organization. I deeply hope that this new chapter creates a space where all students feel included, safe, and valued. It will be a long road, but I am confident that you, the student body, will hold USG and its leaders accountable to the highest standards. Meaningful and productive change is just over the horizon.

Fight on, for change,

Rose Ritch

I had an immediate visceral reaction to the June 2021 resolution in support of BDS passed by my union, the Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York (PSC-CUNY). I am a son of Auschwitz survivors and for perhaps the first time in my relatively sheltered life growing up in NYC, I experienced a sense of foreboding similar to what academics in Europe may have felt in the 1930s. The original wording of the resolution drafted by the PSC was a one-sided and brutal vilification of Israel and supporters of Israel, laced with antisemitism. The edited version that passed included a tepid and patently insincere disavowal of antisemitism, leaving the Israel-bashing intact. In addition to what I regard as a personal assault on a Jew and son of Holocaust survivors, I am deeply offended by the idea that PSC activist hotheads believe they can dictate which universities I can and cannot work with. I have substantial and close academic ties with several world-class universities in Israel, including Tel Aviv University and Technion. Ground-breaking research on renewable energy technologies – my field – continues to originate in Israel, and I am privileged to collaborate with several groups there. These efforts bring significant benefits to CUNY, including international recognition for me and my students. To do the best science one can do, shouldn't we be working with the best people if given the opportunity? Then there is the chilling and intimidating effect that CUNY support for BDS has had on our Jewish students. Though I have anecdotal knowledge of recent incidents, I will defer to my colleague, Ilya Bratman, who runs the Hillel program at several CUNY campuses to provide those details. In July 2021, I resigned from the PSC-CUNY union.

Steve Greenbaum

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steve Greenbaum', is centered below the typed name.

CUNY Distinguished Professor of Physics, Hunter College

Dear Council Members (and guests),

My name is Tzvia Waronker. I am a third year Jewish Student at John Jay College, and I am the vice chair of senior colleges of the CUNY University Student Senate.

For most of my education I was in a Jewish private school. On my first day in public school I was cornered in a stairway and told not to tell others I was Jewish. Why? I asked. The person did not answer me, but the message was clear, Jews weren't welcome and weren't safe there. I was so scared that I would be bullied or beat up so I tried to lay low for a while. It was especially terrifying to ask for religious exemptions as I had to ask the teacher at the end of class while other students were still in the classroom.

Let's transition to my college experience.

Many Jewish students are scared to speak out publicly, but will sometimes share their experiences with each other. One student told me about a professor who was teaching an extremely charged class with misinformation about Israel and Jews.

I reviewed the syllabus and found factually incorrect information being taught in the course. So I tried to go through the proper channel to deal with my complaint but my emails kept getting forwarded to someone else. A year after being forwarded and getting no response, I wrote an article and got it published. The article was republished in many Jewish spaces, and the responses from the readers were sadly very similar. They went along the lines of "oh I went to a CUNY school and I am not surprised that that happened, as I myself had similar experiences at my time there."

The responses refueled my drive to be heard not for me, but for all the people who weren't heard. So, I brought it up during a live college town hall, and only then did I get a response. I was put in direct contact with the diversity and compliance office and my claim was found unsubstantiated. Later on, I found out from another student that the same professor said that Jews are white power. And as of today, nothing has happened to this professor and she is still teaching the same Politics in the Middle East Course.

In my student advocacy, I had one-on-one networking meetings. In one of those meetings, it came up that I was Jewish and the graduate student then began to unload all their antisemitic beliefs on me. He told me that all Jews are rich, that they control the world, own all banks, *Israelis* kill babies, that there are no homeless Jewish people, and that Jewish girls and women are clingy and greedy. I tried to convince him otherwise, but he told me that he knows this is true because he read it in books and newspaper articles. I told him I would be willing to talk to him at a later date, if he was open to hearing what I had to say. But, he wasn't.

He wasn't the only one who I heard say those things. Snickers in the hallway. Oven Holocaust Jokes in the elevator to class, groans of annoyance over discussing the Holocaust in class. Antisemitic statements made by the Student Council multiple times, friends being called baby

killers, people ignoring me, a CUNY graduate co-worker refusing to serve Israelis and would say awful things about them... the experiences go on.

So, as I briefly articulate just the beginning of my experiences as a Jewish student, the words don't even touch on the impact of it on me. All of my experiences followed me wherever I went. If you saw me at school you would see a girl huddled over a bench crying in the gym locker room or at my makeshift zoon workspace, a shaking girl just trying to breathe.

I am thankful for CUNY and for my education, but more needs to be done. Jews need to be safe. I need to be safe.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to me.

Dear Council Members, CUNY representatives and guests,

80 years ago marks the day where The New York Times reported through the London Daily Telegraph that over 1 million Jews had been killed by Nazis. 5 months ago, Jan 20, 2022 the New York Times once again reported on antisemitism's prevalent presence in the US and abroad.

Fast forward, and here we are, Jews still fighting for our liberties.

Today I speak before you as a Jewish student at CUNY.

Some of the most shocking painful experiences that we have aren't the most explicit stories, rather it's the everyday social conventions that antisemitism is embedded in, that's the most scary. Because no one believes you, but you are impacted by it each day.

A little bit about me, I'm a third year Jewish student at John Jay College studying forensic psychology. I served on my local student council for two years and I am currently the Vice-Chair for Senior Colleges of the CUNY University Student Senate (USS).

I have mixed feelings about speaking here today. I am thankful, heartbroken, and a little nervous. Thankful to all those who worked hard to create the space for this conversation to even be happening, heartbroken that this even needs to happen, and nervous of retaliation.

As I am involved in CUNY in a position of student leadership, there are many people who I have had the chance to work with, and I am thankful for CUNY which is why I am so involved, and why this matters so much. I believe in CUNY, and I believe most people who work at CUNY come from a genuine place of wanting to help. Coming from a good place does not absolve people from the reality that we live in, and that is what I am here to talk about today.

When I first heard about this hearing happening, intense anxiety overwhelmed me. My experiences are all real, painful, and have deeply impacted me in so many ways. It is not easy to talk about personal experiences to a room of strangers.

For most of my education I was in a Jewish private school. On my first day in public school I was cornered in the stairway by a Jewish student and was told not to tell others I was Jewish. Why? I asked. The student did not answer me, but the message was clear, Jews weren't welcome and weren't safe there. I was so scared that I would be bullied or beat up so I tried to lay low for a while. It was especially terrifying to ask for religious exceptions as I had to ask the teacher at the end of class while other students were still in the classroom.

My first day of gym class, the coach was yelling at the class about how they won't have what happened last term. I was confused as to what the situation was, but I was able to piece together that the teacher was talking about extreme anti-Israel sentiments and bullying of Jewish and Israeli students in regards to what was happening overseas in Israel in 2018. The

rest of that year, I never met another Jewish student there even though I knew there were Jewish students because the transcript office asked me to help translate some of the transcripts that were in Hebrew.

Let's transition to me looking at and applying to colleges. I was interested in criminal justice, so I was really excited to attend John Jay. But, based on my experiences, I knew that not all spaces were safe for Jews. So I did a bit of research and what I found was disappointing. John Jay had a history of swastikas, antisemitic professors and students, and extreme anti-Israel sentiments.

While still thinking about which college to go to, in a meeting with a Macaulay advisor, I expressed my desire to be in a Jewish safe space, I don't think she really understood what I meant as she told me that college is a good time to experience a new and a diverse range of people.

With my passion for criminal justice in mind, despite being told by different Jewish community members that John Jay isn't the greatest for Jews, I chose John Jay, a CUNY school because I believed in its mission and to this day I still do.

When I began my college career, I became involved with my school newspaper, the Sentinel as the Treasurer, and then the Web Editor. Simultaneously I was involved with my student government as a Sophomore and then Junior Representative, the Black Student Union (BSU) as a chief of staff, my honors program where I hosted a Forgotten Refugee event, and I was an honors mentor, I was also involved in my schools Middle States (re-accreditation), and was involved in many other aspects and advocacy spaces at John Jay.

Over time, I became a Jewish representative and Jewish students came to me and told me of their experiences.

One student told me about a professor who was teaching an extremely charged class with misinformation about Israel and Jews. I reviewed the syllabus and found factually incorrect information being taught in the course. So I tried to go through the proper channel to deal with my complaint but my emails kept getting forwarded to someone else. A year after being forwarded and getting no response, I wrote an article and got it published. The article was republished in many Jewish spaces, and the responses from the readers were sadly very similar. They went along the lines of "oh I went to a CUNY school and I am not surprised that that happened, as I myself had similar experiences at my time there."

The responses refueled my drive to be heard not for me, but for all the people who weren't heard. So, I brought it up during a live college town hall with over 200 participants, and only then did I get a response of shock. I filed a complaint and the verdict was that my claim was found unsubstantiated. Later on, I found out from another student that the same professor said that Jews are white power. And as of today, still nothing has happened to this professor and she is teaching a Politics in the Middle East Course, and is a very vocal member of the PSC CUNY when it comes to condemning Israel.

In my student advocacy, I had one-on-one networking meetings to get to better know the other student advocates. In one of those meetings, it came up that I was Jewish and the graduate student then began to unload all their antisemitic beliefs on me. He told me that all Jews are rich, that they control the world, cause wars, own all banks, Israelis kill babies, that there are no homeless Jewish people, that Jewish girls and women are clingy and greedy, and some more stereotypes. I tried to convince him otherwise, but he told me that he knows that this is true because he read it in books and newspaper articles. I told him I would be willing to talk to him at a later date, if he was open to hearing what I had to say. But, he wasn't.

As I articulate this experience, the words don't even touch on the impact of it. As he said those words, I froze, my body heated up, and honestly I had no words. I was frozen. Afterwards, I got up from my makeshift home workspace, and just stood there shaking.

After mustering up emotional strength, I spoke about this situation to a staff liaison and expressed my discomfort and feeling unsafe with this person. She listened to me, said it wasn't okay, but then focused her response on how my fear and anger isn't healthy for me and that I should work on that. There were no repercussions to the student. Actually, the student never even showed up to the conflict resolution meeting.

Once again, my asking for help and change resulted in nothing.

He wasn't the only one who I heard say those things. Snickers in the hallway. Oven Holocaust Jokes in the elevator to class, groans of annoyance over discussing the Holocaust in class. Antisemitic statements made by the Student Council multiple times, friends being called baby killers in regards to Israel, friends ignoring me after finding out I have Israeli connections, I was scared to speak in class because we had to introduce our names and people might know that I was Jewish, my friend was kicked out of a school chat because he was Israeli...the experiences go on.

My first time speaking to our college President about antisemitism increasing in New York and the feelings of our Jewish members at John Jay. She responded in shock that there was antisemitism in New York let alone John Jay. After the meeting, when we (Jewish students) were debriefing we were incredulous.

On a side note, I know that our admin works so hard, and I'm so appreciative of that. This isn't in opposition to them, it's just the reality that we live in.

So, as I briefly articulate just the beginning of my experiences as a Jewish student, the words don't even touch on the impact of it on me. All of my experiences followed me wherever I went. If you saw me at school you would see a girl huddled over a bench crying in the gym locker room or at my makeshift zoom workspace, a shaking girl just trying to breathe.

In the student council office, one of the executive officers had a pin hanging on the wall from a previous officer. It was a map of Israel covered with a Palestinian keffiyeh (a scarf). The meaning of the pin was a message I heard from many anti-Israel activists. The message was that Israel has no place and should not exist.

After speaking to the executive officer, she told me she had no idea what it meant and took it down. Later, I found the pin hanging up in the student council president's office. I doubt that he knew what it really meant, but like many college students, he found it trendy to hang up emblems of anti-Israel sentiment. At the beginning of the year, he had an Israeli flag and Palestinian flag in his office in representation of peace and coexistence, but at the end of the year the Israeli flag was removed. Jewish students told me in private, that his office made them feel uncomfortable and unsafe.

During this past year, there has been an extreme uprising of minority groups being targeted. In each instance, many professors offered students safe spaces to talk in and even reduced workload due to emotional stress. Unsurprisingly, when it came to Jews being attacked, there was silence. No professors offered any words of comfort in class or via email, it was like nothing was even happening. Many Jewish students were absolutely traumatized and were then re-traumatized when instead of comfort and support, blatantly antisemitic statements were made by the student council President and the rest of the body that voted to pass those statements.

As I was an active council member while those statements were being proposed, I vehemently opposed it, and spent countless hours lobbying against it. In response, I was told by the Council President that I was not allowed to contact other members to discuss these statements (even though that was within my rights to do so), and that I was only allowed to discuss these matters during the meeting, of which there is a very limited time. Remember, this was during a fully online covid time period, so it was difficult as is to build relationships with other members, and not being able to contact each other made it even more difficult to do so.

I petitioned and spoke to the Student council president, had numerous conversations with him and his chief of staff amounting to probably over 10 hours on the same subject. Each time we would talk, I was so thankful that we were over zoom, because I couldn't stop myself from crying. It was so painful to have to argue with someone and ask for basic human rights. I felt so hopeless so I reached out to the admin that I had a good relationship with, and I was so grateful to receive an email a few hours later with heartfelt condolences. Several of the admin scheduled an emergency meeting to discuss my concerns with each other. In the end, they told me that they felt for me but there was nothing they could really do as the admin can't control the student council in regards to checks and balances, and that was basically it.

Simultaneously while this was all going on, social media felt like its own war zone. My Jewish friends who had the courage to be loud were called baby killers, while those that were silenced were privately discussing their shame and guilt for not speaking up and their fear of being

openly Jewish. Jews were isolated, on campus, in classroom chats, on discussion boards, on social media. We had no place to go. We were silently in pain leaning on one another.

I remember after one late night zoom conversation where I knew nothing I would say would change anything, I went outside, stared at the moon and cried as it rained outside. I felt so powerless, and was in so much pain I couldn't really do anything but cry. My family came to check in on me, but I couldn't talk. What could I say? All I saw was evil. Everywhere I looked was someone else saying or doing something against me and my people's existence.

I stopped talking to some friends, created a private social media page just for people in my life who weren't antisemitic. It hit me when I went through 400 hundred followers to only find 25 people that I considered safe. I retreated inwards, hardly talking to people, I was scared to talk in class, and I felt unsafe in spaces where people took an oath to protect others.

While I share some of my experiences with you all now, it doesn't even relay an ounce of what I was actually going through. That intensely isolating, emotionally draining, triggering experience that it was. This whole process was so damaging to my psyche, I had numerous nightmares that were so intense that I woke up with hand injuries from clenching my hand so tight.

To put this into perspective, throughout this whole ordeal, I was working, going to school, and was dealing with my own health issues.

Throughout the year, several anti-Israel rallies happened on the steps of John Jay (while covid regulations were supposed to be restricting in-person student activities). People at the rally held up demeaning signs saying "resistance by any means necessary" (a call for physical violence) and chanted "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free". Meaning that no two state solution is possible. The only option is that Israel, the only Jewish state, should not exist. There were also chants of "there is only one solution: intifada revolution" which horrified many Jewish and Israeli students as they actually knew what the Intifida was in the literal sense. It meant suicide bombings on busses, supermarkets, random stabbings, and other attacks on innocent Israeli civilians.

One of the speakers at the rally was a CUNY Law graduate who is infamously known for attempting to light on fire wearing an IDF sweatshirt.

Last year, in the University Student Senate (USS), delegates brought up wanting to pass a boycott divestment and sanction (BDS) resolution for CUNY against Israel. People knew what I stood for, and because of built relationships some people who were big advocates for the resolution of BDS reached out to me before they brought it to the table and after several difficult heart wrenching conversations came to the root of their beliefs. They did not believe that Israel had the right to exist. I didn't have to extrapolate to get to that understanding, as they told it to me explicitly.

My school newspaper, of which I was a part of at the time, wrote an article on how CUNY suppresses Palestinian voices all while including the video of another anti-Israel CUNY rally that said “from the river to the sea...” I painfully tried to explain to my coworkers who were my friends how harmful this language was and where it came from, but it didn't change anything.

Students at my school organized a petition statement that demanded a *cultural* boycott. In their words, the purpose was to ban “Israeli cultural groups and artists from performing at John Jay events or utilizing campus spaces such as the Gerald Lynch Theater.” There were a lot of people that signed onto it, ranging from faculty, staff, and students.

If this doesn't scream antisemitism to you, I don't know what will.

As a working student, I experienced antisemitism in college and out of it. In many jobs that I have had, I have been blessed with good relationships with my co-workers and bosses. One of my co-workers and I became really close friends, and are still friends these days. She told me that one of our other co-workers, who was a recent CUNY graduate, was making her uncomfortable because she refused to serve Israelis and would say disgusting things about them. I was shocked when she told me this, because me and that other co-worker got along really well, I guess she didn't know I was Jewish. But eventually as I talked to that co-worker more, I heard her say those things in my presence. The sad part was that up until that moment I really liked her. She was kind, and passionate about helping others especially through larger social justice movements.

This is just the beginning of some of my experiences of daring to exist as a Jew in CUNY.

Throughout the years, I actively initiated many emotionally difficult conversations with students of various mindsets about Jews and Israel and I have seen the huge impact that our universities have. They are a breeding ground of information, but in this case, they are a breeding ground of hate.

Based on my experiences as a student, and a student leader, these are my suggestions for supporting and making CUNY a safer space for Jewish and other students. CUNY has an amazing but daunting task of educating all its 500,000+ individuals. Oftentimes, that work of uplifting students is viewed as giving us the space and the autonomy to process information on our own, come to our own conclusions, and then do with that information with what we will. While this skill of independent thinking and action is very valuable and important, there is a time and a place for everything in education.

Throughout my time of leadership at CUNY I have heard the message from various admin that they don't have that much power as we think they do, and that if we want to get something done, we need to go to CUNY and do it ourselves as students, as we have more power than we think we do. If this is truly the case, that the admin doesn't have the ability to enact change then we have another issue that needs to be addressed.

While as students we do have a voice, education has two aspects to it. Empowering critical thinkers, and nurturing its learners through proper guidance. So, while tools for advocacy from the ground up are helpful in giving students the ability to function on their own, in and out of college, not all situations is this an appropriate reaction for.

Whether it be, the need from the accessibilities office, or extreme medical care, we help students proactively and reactively in any way we can because in those moments there is a need that is far greater than their own capabilities. Sometimes that capability is a physical or emotional need.

We wouldn't tell a drowning person that they need to save themselves, but that's kind of what is happening at CUNY. We tell the students, if you are going through something, advocate for it, but what they don't realize is that the experiences are so traumatizing and overwhelming that they aren't even physically, emotionally able to or don't feel safe to do so. We need CUNY to take responsibility as a community to protect and elevate our students needs and concerns without re-traumatizing them

Currently the advocacy system in CUNY functions as if it is a privilege to be able to advocate for ourselves. That it is our responsibility to make the school a safer space for ourselves and others in similar situations. Rather, it should be the responsibility of the universities to make sure that the student as an individual and as a group is safe. Sadly, that mentality and language was said to me in multiple official and unofficial meetings. That I, as an individual, need to deal with traumatizing incidents on my own.

There is strength in asking for help, so here I am, here WE are, asking for help from CUNY. It is too much to handle on our own. We as Jewish students, faculty, and staff at CUNY cannot do this on our own anymore. We need the action of our universities to help protect us, to give us our basic rights of safety and liberty. I am thankful for CUNY and for my education, but more needs to be done. Jews need to be safe. I need to be safe.

If there's anything I can leave this council with, it is that our future is being created by our institutions. The question is, what will our future be and what part of it will we be responsible for?

Before I conclude, I invite you all, physically in this room and virtually in this space to take a moment to notice the silent screams. Many of you probably know at least several people with their own personal experiences of Jew hatred, but they are too scared to speak out. I personally know many soundless scared Jewish voices who are not here and they may never speak out in fear of outing themselves as a Jewish person, in fear of retaliation, and in fear of being emotionally overwhelmed. Those voices were our ancestors and they are many of us today. Let our voices be for others who cannot speak so when we say "Never Again" it is not just a mantra of pleading hope, but is rather a foundation for the basic tenets of life.

On a brisk April afternoon in 2019, I sat unsuspectingly in my seat in the faculty dining room, quietly listening to speeches at a public campus event at Kingsborough Community College. When I tried to get up and leave, five members of the Progressive Faculty Caucus group (the "PFC") ominously converged upon me, surrounding me threateningly, and refusing to let me leave. I had never met or spoken to almost any of these individuals prior to that day (I had met two only very briefly in passing public spaces). Yet here they were screaming at me incoherently, accusing me of all sorts of things that made very little sense. At least twice, I tried to get through the human wall, and was *physically* stopped. The first time I tried to leave, one of them, an English Professor named Matthew Gartner, put his hand above my head and said, "We're not done. We're just starting. We're just starting."

Gartner had a history of antisemitic behavior. In 2015, a student wrote of Gartner on Rate My Professor.com: "I'm Jewish and needed to take off 2 days in order to observe the holidays...[Gartner] told me it's my fault and if I didn't like it I should have gone to a Jewish school."

Another member of the PFC group that surrounded me had recently been the subject of an expose in the Daily News. Anthony Alessandrini used campus space to raise money for a deeply antisemitic NGO connected to the PFLP, a U.S. recognized terror organization. Alessandrini had also written articles defending terror attacks against Jews, and had referred to Ashkenazi Jews as White Supremacists. He is a vocal and active supporter of the Intifada, and is the leader of the CUNY-wide BDS campaign.

Other members of the PFC have posted vile anti-religious content on social media and regularly contribute to a communist newspaper called PLP Challenge, demonstrating not only deep anti-semitic animus, but detailing their mission to quash Zionists on our campus. In September 2018, a PFC member published an article complaining of their "struggle" against a "network of Zionists" among the faculty at KCC. The PFC even removed our school paper from their receptacles throughout campus, replacing them with this deeply anti-Semitic communist publication. In December, 2019, a

flyer was distributed across our campus accusing Orthodox Jews of bathing in urine and feces and being vectors of disease.

Before the group of 5 finally let me leave on that April day, Gartner bizarrely admitted that they had been actively Googling me. I was horrified. "Is that weird?" he asked when he saw how scared his unsolicited and intimidating comment made me. Yes, I told him. It was.

The 5 faculty members who surrounded me were the top leaders of the PFC, a powerful campus group that called itself "The 100," boasting of its size and influence on campus. They lobbied against Zionists and Observant Jews that were up for elected positions on campus. They planned meetings on Friday nights so that Observant Jews could not attend. Some of them even proudly admitted to this scheme, rationalizing it by saying that Observant Jews "tend to be homophobic."

Operating with utter impunity at CUNY and Kingsborough, perhaps their most audacious scheme of all was excluding Observant and Zionist Jews from their group, which was supposedly open to all. 6 Observant and Zionist Jews, including me, asked to join the group and each and every one was rejected. Each of us was given a unique pretextual and false reason for our exclusion. One or two of us were given no reason at all. No one else was rejected from the group. Then, and still to this day, the group operates (now in secret) with no Zionist or Observant Jewish members.

In May 2019, I filed a complaint with the EEOC documenting the harassment, discrimination, and hostile environment on our campus. In February 2021, after a comprehensive almost year-long investigation, the EEOC substantiated all of my claims, finding that we were "discriminated and retaliated against...on account of religion and that [CUNY] failed to take immediate corrective action creating a hostile working environment, all in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act."

What should have been a monumental victory for Jewish people after a long and grueling fight, has been anything but that. Though I am a department chair who reports directly to the president, she has refused to communicate with me since I prevailed at the EEOC. Instead, she has inflicted multiple cruel and retaliatory punishments against me, all because she was unhappy with the results of the investigation she had originally promised to respect and uphold. The Chancellor is well-aware of my case, and he, too, has done nothing about it, or about any of the many recent antisemitic incidents across his campuses.

Not a soul at CUNY has acted in response to the EEOC findings.

The complicit inaction by CUNY emboldens the antisemitic perpetrators and conduct that has been pervasive at CUNY. In June 2019, the PSC-CUNY Faculty union adopted an abominable antisemitic, anti-Israel resolution that has led to the resignation of nearly 300 mostly-Jewish faculty members from the union. In May, 2022, the CUNY School of Law faculty unanimously adopted a discriminatory and bigoted BDS policy that will now make it off-limits to Israeli and Zionist Jews.

Still, the university refuses to address the antisemitic, Zionophobic culture that has arisen across its 25 campuses. It has silenced thousands of concerned Jewish voices throughout the university –students and faculty alike. That is why the City Council is holding hearings today and that is why I am testifying.

Dr. Barry Wiener
Bronx, NY
June 30, 2022

The Crisis of Antisemitism in Music Studies at CUNY

I am calling upon the New York City Council to denounce the antisemitic conspiracy theories that have now become official policy within CUNY's music departments, and their dissemination both on CUNY websites and in University publications.

In 2019, the university's music departments instituted a new "antiracist" policy, based on the ideas of Philip A. Ewell, a professor of music theory at Hunter College and the Graduate Center. Ewell and his many supporters demonized the early twentieth-century Viennese-Jewish music theorist Heinrich Schenker, as well as the few students of Schenker who managed to flee to America as refugees from Nazi-occupied Europe in the late 1930s.

- Ewell has stated that Schenker and his students were admirers of Adolf Hitler, and that they were "Aryan racial supremacists."
- Ewell maintains that Schenker's love of the music of Bach and Beethoven is conclusive proof of the "white supremacist" nature of his musical ideas.
- Ewell has also asserted that Schenker's refugee students deceptively *infiltrated* the American music world with his Nazi-influenced musical theories. Schenker's method consists of drawing graphs to analyze harmony and counterpoint in European music.
- According to Ewell, the refugee musicians *created* the problem of racism in American academic music studies, a problem that apparently did not exist before.
- Ewell has attempted to deflect any criticism of his views by presenting lectures at American universities about the history of antisemitism in music. In these lectures, Ewell has asserted that Schenker was a *Jewish antisemite*, and that Ewell's critics, notably Prof. Timothy L. Jackson, are Jewish antisemites as well.
- Soon after the controversy began, a purge of the music curriculum was carried out at CUNY. Courses about Schenker's ideas had previously been central to the music theory curriculum, but were now eliminated due to his alleged "Aryan supremacist" views.

I hope that the New York City Council will take notice of Ewell's outrageous historical fabrications, in which he employs strategies that are all too familiar in the history of antisemitism. At the very least, the official endorsement of these toxic views by CUNY must be challenged. CUNY and other universities should be pressured by the threat that the government, as well as private donors, will withhold funding. This scandal should be publicized nationally in the same way as other similar scandals have been publicized in recent years, in order to deliver a message that such behavior is unacceptable, and that it will not be tolerated.

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

17

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michael Mirochnik

Address: Rector Place, NY, NY 10280

I represent: Self

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: June 30, 2022

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Barry Wiener

Address: Arlington Avenue, Bronx NY 10471

I represent: _____

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 6/30/22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Susan Tuchman

Address: _____

I represent: Zionist Organization of America

Address: 633 Third Avenue, Suite 31-B,
New York, NY 10016

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: David Brodsky (Chair of Judaic Studies)

Address: Bedford Ave # , Brooklyn

I represent: Self

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Adela Cojab

Address: W. 58th Street NY

I represent: Myself [student]

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: June 30, 2022

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alyza D. Levin

Address: _____

I represent: The Louis D Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law

Address: 1717 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Suite 1025, Wash DC 20006

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: 6/30/22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: David Herbsman

Address: _____ Bonnett Ave. _____

I represent: Myself a student @ John Jay College

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michael Cohen

Address: 11 Broadway Suite 766

I represent: Simon Wiesenthal Center

Address: 11 Broadway Suite 766

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rabbi Yisroel Meir Weiss

Address: _____ Quakerbridge Lane Monsey N.Y.

I represent: Neturei Karta Int.

Address: 120 Old Dutch Rd. Monsey N.Y.

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shahar Sadeh

Address: 72nd Dr Queens

I represent: JCRC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: June 30, 2022

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Azriel Genack

Address: _____

I represent: myself + CUNY Alliance for Inclusion

Address: Queens College, The Graduate Center

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mark Holland

Address: New York City

I represent: Prof. Timothy Jackson,

Address: University of North Texas,
Denton

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition of Anti-Semitism
Date: June 30/27

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Barbara Kitzin
Address: 349
I represent: myself
Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition
Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: GERARD FICHT
Address: 633 31st Ave, NY, NY 10017
I represent: THE LAWFARE PROJECT
Address: same as above

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition
Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tzvia Waronke
Address: _____
I represent: self
Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 6/30/2021

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Zachary Beer

Address: Longacre Ave. Woodhull NY

I represent: Self & Simon Wiesenthal Center

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 6/30/22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Josh Kramer

Address: 165 E. 56th 7th Fl.

I represent: AJC

Address: 165 E. 56th 7th Fl.

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms