

Scholars of antisemitism support State Department definition

August 31, 2015

Via Email

Dear President Napolitano and Regents of the University of California:

We write you as scholars of contemporary antisemitism who are deeply concerned about the alarming rise of anti-Jewish hostility throughout the world, including on college and university campuses. We are aware that in the wake of a dramatic increase in antisemitic incidents at the University of California, you are considering the adoption of the U.S. State Department definition of antisemitism. We fully endorse the State Department definition and believe that its adoption at the University of California would be an important first step in properly identifying and educating about antisemitism on UC campuses.

Professor Robert Wistrich, the world's foremost scholar of antisemitism until his recent passing, has said that anti-Zionism has become "the most dangerous and effective form of antisemitism in our time." We wholeheartedly concur with Professor Wistrich's assessment.

Anti-Zionism becomes antisemitism when the rhetorical and physical manifestations of hatred towards Jews as a people are directed towards Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people. Like classic antisemitism, anti-Zionism uses false and baseless claims and mendacious argumentation to propagate hatred of, and bring harm to, the Jewish state.

In its acknowledgement that antisemitism may manifest itself through the demonization and delegitimization of Israel in order to deny its right to exist, the State Department definition accurately reflects the current scholarly understanding of the close relationship between historic antisemitism and anti-Zionism. As such, the definition offers an essential tool for identifying and educating about all forms of contemporary antisemitism, and we wholeheartedly endorse its adoption at the University of California.

Sincerely,

- **Steven Baum** - Founding Editor of *Journal for the Study of Antisemitism* (Author of: *Antisemitism Explained* (2012) and *The Psychology of Genocide* (2008); Co-editor of: *Antisemitism in North America* (forthcoming))
- **Doron Ben-Atar** - Professor of History, Fordham University
- **Michael Berenbaum** - Professor of Jewish Studies, American Jewish University (Author of: *Not Your Father's Antisemitism*, (2008))
- **Gabriel Brahm** - Associate Professor of English, Northern Michigan University; Visiting Professor in The School of Philosophy and Religions Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Co-editor of: *The Case Against Academic Boycotts of Israel* (2014))
- **Jean Cahán** - Director of Judaic Studies, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- **Bruno Chouat** - Professor of French, Chair, Department of French and Italian, University of Minnesota

- **Ben Cohen** - Senior Editor, *The Tower Magazine* (Author of *Some of My Best Friends: A Journey Through Twenty-First Century Antisemitism* (2014))
- **Donna Robinson Divine** - Morningstar Family Professor of Jewish Studies and Professor of Government, Emerita, Smith College
- **Amy Elman** - Professor of Political Science, Kalamazoo College (Author of *The European Union, Antisemitism, and the Politics of Denial* (2015))
- **Karen Eltis** - Professor Civil Law Section, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa
- **Stephen M. Feldman** - Jerry W. Housel/Carl F. Arnold Distinguished Professor of Law and Adjunct Professor of Political Science, University of Wyoming (Editor of: *Law and Religion: A Critical Anthology* (2000))
- **Robert Fine** - Emeritus Professor of Sociology, University of Warwick
- **János Gadó** - Editor of *Szombat*, an independent Jewish periodical in Budapest/Hungary
- **Aleksandra Gliszczynska-Grabias**, Assistant Professor Poznan Human Rights Centre, Institute of Legal Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences (Author of *Counteracting Antisemitism with International Human Rights Law* (2013))
- **Jeffrey Herf** - Distinguished University Professor, Department of History, University of Maryland (Editor of: *Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism in Historical Perspective* (2007))
- **Gunther Jikeli** - Visiting Assistant Professor and Justin M. Druck Family Scholar in the Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism in the Borns Jewish Studies Program at Indiana University (Author of: *European Muslim Antisemitism: Why Young Urgan Males Say They Don't Like Jews* (2015))
- **Bodo Kahmann** - Department of Political Science, University of Goettingen
- **Leslie Klaff** - Senior Lecturer in Law, Department of Law and Criminology, Sheffield Hallam University
- **Barry A. Kosmin** - Research Professor of Public Policy & Law and Director of the Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society & Culture, Trinity College (Co-author of *The National Demographic Survey of American Jewish College Students* (2015); Co-editor of: *A New Antisemitism? Debating Judeophobia in 21st-century Britain* (2003))
- **Neil J. Kressel** - Professor of Psychology and Director of the Honors Program in the Social Sciences, William Paterson University (Author of: "*The Sons of Pigs and Apes*": *Muslim Antisemitism and the Conspiracy of Silence* (2012); *Mass Hate: The Global Rise of Genocide and Terror* (2008))
- **Kenneth Marcus** - President & General Counsel, The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law (Author of: *The Definition of Anti-Semitism* (2015) and *Jewish Identity and Civil Rights in America* (2010))
- **Stephen Norwood** - Professor of History, University of Oklahoma (Author of: *Antisemitism and the American Far Left* (2013) and *The Third Reich in the Ivory Tower: Complicity and Conflict on American Campuses* (2011))
- **David Patterson** — Hillel Feinberg Chair in Holocaust Studies, Ackerman Center for Holocaust Studies, University of Texas at Dallas (Author of: *A Genealogy of Evil: Antisemitism from Nazism to Islamic Jihad* (2010))
- **Eunice Pollack** - Professor of History, University of North Texas (Editor of: *Antisemitism on the Campus* (2010) and *The Changing Face of Anti-Semitism: From Ancient Times to the Present Day* (2007))
- **Dina Porat** - Head of the Kantor Center for the Study of contemporary European Jewry, Professor emeritus of Jewish history, incumbent of the Alfred P. Slaner Chair in Antisemitism and Racism, Tel Aviv University; Chief Historian of Yad Vashem.
- **Walter Reich** - Yitzhak Rabin Memorial Professor of International Affairs, Ethics and Human Behavior, Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, The George Washington University Elliott School of International Affairs
- **Steven Resnicoff** - Professor & Director, Center for Jewish Law & Judaic Studies, DePaul University College of Law

- **Alvin Rosenfeld** - Director, Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism, Irving M. Glazer Chair in Jewish Studies, Professor of English and Jewish Studies, Indiana University (Editor of: *Resurgent Antisemitism: Global Perspectives* (2013))
- **Tammi Rossman-Benjamin** - Lecture in Languages and Applied Linguistics and Jewish Studies, University of California Santa Cruz
- **Charles Asher Small** - Executive Director, Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (Editor of: *The Yale Papers: Antisemitism in Comparative Perspective* (2015) and *Global Antisemitism: A Crisis of Modernity: Volumes 1 - V* (2014))
- **Karin Stoegner** - Lecturer and Senior Researcher Department of Sociology, University of Vienna (Author of: *Antisemitismus und Sexismus* [Antisemitism and Sexism] 2014; Co-editor of: *Handbook of Prejudice* (2009))
- **Alexander Tsesis** - Professor of Law, Loyola University Chicago
- **Dr. Esther Webman** - Head of the Zeev Vered Desk for the Study of Tolerance and Intolerance in the Middle East and Senior Research Fellow at the Dayan Center & Stephen Roth Institute, Tel Aviv University (Author of: *The Global Impact of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion: A Century-Old Myth* (2011) and *Anti-semitic motifs in the ideology of Hizbollah and Hamas* (1994); Co-author of: *From Empathy to Denial: Arab Responses to the Holocaust* (2009))
- **Mark Weitzman** - Director of Government Affairs, Simon Wiesenthal Center (Co-author of: *Dismantling the Big Lie: The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (2003); Co-editor of: *Antisemitism - The Generic Hatred: Essays in Memory of Simon Wiesenthal* (2007))
- **Elkhanan Yakira** - The Shulman Professor (emeritus) of Philosophy, Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Author of: *Post-Zionism, Post-Holocaust: Three Essays on Denial, Forgetting, and the Delegitimization of Israel* (2009))

Cc: UC Provost and Executive Assistant of Academic Affairs Aimee Dorr
 UC Vice President of Student Affairs Judy Sakaki
 UC Chancellors
 California Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson
 California Senator Carol Liu, Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Education
 California Assembly Member Jose Medina, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Higher Education
 California Assembly Member Shirley Weber, Chair of the Select Committee on Campus Climate
 California State Senator Marty Block, Chair of Legislative Jewish Caucus