



ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA

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June 12, 2017

VIA EMAIL

Chancellor Howard Gillman
The University of California, Irvine
510 Aldrich Hall
Irvine, CA 92697-1900

Dear Chancellor Gillman:

We write to urge the University of California, Irvine (UCI) to complete a thorough investigation into the latest disruption of university activities by the anti-Semitic, Israel-hating campus group that calls itself “Students for Justice in Palestine” (SJP). On May 10th, SJP disrupted a program hosted by Students Supporting Israel (SSI), which featured Israel Defense Forces (IDF) veterans from the organization called Reservists on Duty. As you know, UCI’s rules prohibit threats to health and safety (Section 102.08 of the Code of Student Conduct), harassment (Section 102.09), obstruction or disruption of university activities (102.13), disorderly conduct (102.14), and disturbing the peace (Section 102.15). If SJP once again violated any of these rules on May 10th, then UCI should finally hold this group accountable for its misconduct and revoke its registered status, consistent with the rules.

SJP is a serial violator of university rules and policies. It has a long history of creating a hostile and hateful anti-Semitic environment, and disrupting speakers and programs simply because they are perceived by SJP to be pro-Israel and are thus, according to SJP, unwelcome on campus. For example, back in 2010, when Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Michael Oren was an invited guest to UCI, SJP’s predecessor group (which was called the Muslim Student Union) disrupted his speech to the point that the Ambassador had to leave the podium for 20 minutes and could not proceed with the question-and-answer period as planned. As another example, on May 18, 2016, SJP disrupted the screening of a documentary film about young soldiers in the IDF, and engaged in such threatening and intimidating behavior – including screaming, banging on the door to the room, and blocking exits – that at least one student was forced to hide, actually fearing that she could be physically attacked. No student should ever experience this kind of horror on campus.

We understand that despite SJP’s repeated transgressions, several of the usual groups that come to its defense have recently written to you, outrageously claiming that SJP students are the ones who have been wronged. In a May 30th letter from Palestine Legal and the Center for Constitutional Rights (written on behalf of other groups, too), these SJP defenders disgracefully maintain that at the May 10th event, it was SJP students who were “harassment victims” and who simply “used speech to respond to IDF soldiers in a question and answer session.”

By SJP’s own admission, however, this characterization is false. Only one day after SJP’s disruption of the SSI program, when an SJP member was speaking at the group’s “Anti-Zionism Week,” the SJP speaker bragged about the disruption the day before, admitted that SJP disrupted the May 2016 event, and expressed the intention to disrupt future events – all in violation of university policies. Please

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watch the video (also referenced in the May 30th letter to you from Hillel International and the Hillel Foundation of Orange County) in which you can hear the SJP member boasting, with cheers and applause from the crowd:

“And last night we went to disrupt their event, to let them know that we refuse to allow the normalization of their presence here. Administration told us not to disrupt. Last year, on May 18th, we shut down an IDF panel, we shut down their panel”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3f3Kzd4TeZI&t=50s> (at approximately 1:00 into the video).

These words and the words that follow on the video show SJP’s contempt for peaceful discourse and for the free expression of diverse viewpoints that encourage learning. They also show SJP’s contempt for the administration itself and the rules and policies that apply on campus. In the video, you will hear the SJP speaker disrespectfully referring to you as “Howie Gillman.” Instead of acknowledging that disrupting events in violation of others’ right to free speech was offensive and wrong, the SJP speaker publicly scorned your admonishment that SJP had “crossed the line of civility” at the May 2016 event. The crowd joined in her jeering your rebuke, shouting “shame.”

SJP needs to learn some important lessons that are long overdue: This group is not entitled to preferential treatment and must comply with the same rules and policies that apply to everyone else. This group has no right to decide who is entitled to express their views, what views may be expressed, or whose presence on campus should be “normalized.”

After a long pattern of egregious behavior, SJP’s registered status should finally be revoked. If UCI is truly committed to implementing the UC Regents’ Principles Against Intolerance, then you must finally discipline the one student group on campus that stands against the values that the Regents are committed to encouraging: learning by being exposed to a wide range of views in a campus atmosphere of mutual respect, civility and inclusiveness. We are certain that finally holding SJP accountable will mean a safer and more welcoming learning environment for all at UCI, including those who are Jewish and who love and support the Jewish State of Israel.

Very truly yours,

Morton A. Klein, National President
Susan B. Tuchman, Esq., Director, Center for Law and Justice
Leore Ben-David, Managing Director, ZOA Campus