



ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA

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July 26, 2010

BY E-MAIL AND FIRST-CLASS MAIL

Mr. Mark G. Yudof
President, University of California
1111 Franklin Street
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Dear President Yudof:

In your response to the letter from the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, The Orthodox Union, the Simon Wiesenthal Center, three UC faculty members, and eight other organizations, you took issue with our having allegedly “written off” the system-wide Advisory Council on Campus Climate, Culture and Inclusion and campus committees that you’ve established. But that isn’t so. We have no problem with the concept of an Advisory Council; our letter simply requested that certain additional steps be taken, which we believe would significantly improve the campus environment for Jewish students. Nonetheless, as the Advisory Council is presently constituted, we are concerned about its ability to address fairly and impartially the problems that Jewish students are facing, for two reasons. First, none of the members appears to have any expertise in confronting and combating anti-Semitism. Second, and even more troubling, at least two members of the Advisory Council hold views rendering them wrong and even offensive choices for a committee that is supposed to be coming up with solutions for eradicating the anti-Semitism and Israel-bashing that UC students face on their campuses.

The Advisory Council Should Reflect Diverse Viewpoints, but
None Should Be Tainted with Hostility toward Jews or the Demonization of Israel

We fully support a diversity of viewpoints on the Advisory Council. But not a single member of the Council has any demonstrable expertise in recognizing and responding to campus anti-Semitism or Israel-bashing. We note the appointment to the Council of Dr. Uri Herscher of the Skirball Cultural Center. While Dr. Herscher’s background reflects an interest in Jewish culture and immigration, we have not found any evidence of his involvement in fighting anti-Semitism or Israel-bashing.

Two other members of the Advisory Council are of more concern. Surely you would agree that no member of the Advisory Council should hold views that reflect bias against Jews or Israel. If any member's views are in sync with the views of those who perpetrate anti-Semitism or Israel-bashing on campus, then the Advisory Council will have a very difficult time finding a legitimate and effective solution to these longstanding problems. One would never dream of including individuals on the Council who have praised or supported events hostile to African Americans, Muslims or gays. Such "diverse" views would greatly minimize the likelihood that bigotry against those groups could be effectively addressed. Individuals who have praised or supported anti-Semitic or Israel-bashing events likewise do not belong on the Advisory Council.

Jorge Mariscal is the Wrong Choice for the Advisory Council

Advisory Council member Jorge Mariscal, a professor at UC San Diego, recently praised an anti-Israel event that demonized Israel and is thus the wrong choice for the Advisory Council. He apparently does not understand and appreciate that demonizing Israel and promoting vicious falsehoods about the Jewish State do not constitute legitimate political discourse. Such speech and conduct cross the line into anti-Semitism, harm Jewish students, and should be condemned, not praised.

When the Muslim Student Association at UC San Diego recently sponsored an anti-Israel event on campus, Jorge Mariscal actually wrote a glowing testimonial about it. The anti-Israel event's title alone speaks volumes about its content. Called "Justice in Palestine Week 2010 – End the Apartheid," the event promoted the outrageous falsehood that Israel – the only established democracy in the Middle East, where all citizens, regardless of race, creed or religion, have equal rights – could legitimately be compared to an apartheid regime.

Well over one million Arabs live among six million Jews in Israel, where the Israeli Arabs have freedom of speech, freedom of religion, free access to the courts, and enjoy equal rights to Jewish Israelis. They ride on the same buses, they eat in the same restaurants, they play on the same sports teams, and they shop in the same malls. Arab Israelis hold approximately 10% of the seats in the Israeli Knesset. They are judges, including on Israel's Supreme Court. Indeed, the only place in the Middle East where Arabs have such freedom is in Israel! Calling Israel an apartheid state is dishonest, offensive and absurd.

Speakers at the anti-Israel UC San Diego event, such as Norman Finkelstein, are well-known Israel-bashers and haters who are often brought to the UC campuses to promote their ugly views. Finkelstein has expressed solidarity with the U.S.-designated terrorist group Hezbollah. (See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpFmxnwQ9Bw>). He has referred to Israel as a "terrorist state" that was created in 1948 by the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian Arabs; he has also called Israel a "satanic" and "lunatic" state. (See <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=164483>).

Finkelstein has also minimized the Holocaust. In his book called *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering*, Finkelstein wrote, “‘If everyone who claims to be a survivor actually is one,’ my mother used to exclaim, ‘who did Hitler kill?’” When the book was reviewed in *The New York Times* (on August 6, 2000), it was described as “a novel variation on the anti-Semitic forgery, ‘The Protocols of the Elders of Zion,’ which warned of a Jewish conspiracy to take over the world.”

Criticizing Israel by using misrepresentations and outright falsehoods, and demonizing the Jewish State are anti-Semitic, not just by the ZOA’s standards, but also by the standards of the U.S. government. In 2006, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights examined the problem of campus anti-Semitism and found that “on many campuses,” anti-Semitism is expressed as anti-Israel or anti-Zionist propaganda that “should be distinguished from legitimate discourse regarding foreign policy. Anti-Semitic bigotry is no less morally deplorable when camouflaged as anti-Israelism or anti-Zionism.” In 2008, the U.S. State Department issued its Contemporary Global Anti-Semitism Report, recognizing that “disproportionate criticism of the Jewish State and/or Israelis and demonizing them as barbaric, unprincipled, selfish, inhumane, etc is anti-Semitic and has the effect of causing global audiences to associate those bad attributes with Jews in general.” More than 40 years ago, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. recognized that “[w]hen people criticize Zionists, they mean Jews. You are talking anti-Semitism.”

Yet shockingly, Advisory Council member Jorge Mariscal praised this 2010 anti-Israel event at UC San Diego, saying, “**I have rarely seen a more sophisticated and tempered demonstration of student activism as the Justice in Palestine calendar of events that took place last week.**” ([http://livetherevival.com/2010/05/19/testimonials-of-msa-ucsd-justice-in-palestine-week-2010/.](http://livetherevival.com/2010/05/19/testimonials-of-msa-ucsd-justice-in-palestine-week-2010/))

Given his deeply troubling and offensive sentiments, Jorge Mariscal is the wrong choice for an Advisory Council that is supposed to fix a hostile anti-Semitic environment for Jewish students on UC campuses. If Jorge Mariscal is also serving on the local climate council for UC San Diego, then he will not be able to address fairly and impartially the anti-Semitism on that particular campus either. Much of the hostility that Jewish students are being subjected to is engendered by Israel-bashing that Jorge Mariscal apparently finds acceptable and indeed commendable.

Imam Jihad Turk is the Wrong Choice for the Advisory Council

We are similarly concerned about another choice for the Advisory Council: Imam Jihad Turk, the Director of Religious Affairs for the Islamic Center of Southern California (ICSC). The ICSC has a long history of promoting hatred and bigotry against Jews and Israel. An ICSC leader should not be given authority to advise the UC system on how to address the problem of anti-Semitism, when the ICSC has played a role in perpetuating that problem.

In 1986, the ICSC hosted a conference at which copies of the anti-Semitic document, *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, were prominently displayed. (See <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/anti-semitism/hoax.html>.)

In May 2008, the ICSC hosted a conference on the “Nakba,” i.e., the so-called “catastrophe” for the Palestinian Arabs when the State of Israel was established. According to an article published in *The Muslim Observer*, speakers at the conference demonized and delegitimized the State of Israel by calling it colonialist and worse than apartheid South Africa; by falsely claiming that when the State was established, Israel engaged in ethnic cleansing; and by stating that Israel does not deserve to exist. (See <http://muslimmedianetwork.com/mmn/?p=2185>.)

Maher Hathout co-founded the ICSC (with his brother) and is currently a spokesperson for the ICSC. Hathout supports the radical and violent form of Islam known as Wahhabism, he supports attacks on Israel by the terrorist group Hezbollah, and he has called Israel a land of “butchers” who have set up a system of “racist apartheid.” (See <http://www.discoverthenetworks.org/individualProfile.asp?indid=1401>)

In January 2009, Hathout gave his Friday sermon at the ICSC on the “Tragedy in Gaza,” and defended Hamas’ rocket attacks on Israel’s civilian communities. (See <http://97.74.65.51/readArticle.aspx?ARTID=33839>.)

The ICSC published a magazine called *Minaret* until 2005, when the magazine ceased to exist. The magazine contained articles and editorials that compared Israel to Nazi Germany and blamed Zionism for conspiring against Islam. (See http://www.adl.org/Israel/anti_israel/KhalilBendib/publications.asp?m_flipmode=4.) *Minaret* articles and editorials frequently compared Israel to apartheid South Africa, falsely claimed that Israel was engaging in genocide, and accused American Jews of trying to undermine Muslim participation in the democratic process in the U.S. (See <http://www.investigativeproject.org/1789/hate-speech-long-an-mpac-specialty>.)

In *Minaret*’s March 2004 issue, suicide bombers were depicted as young men with “legitimate anger towards the oppressors of Muslims all over the world.” The article even tried to justify the conduct of suicide bombers: “Restoration of justice and fair play . . . will largely vaporize the motivation for a suicidal mission.” (See <http://www.investigativeproject.org/1789/hate-speech-long-an-mpac-specialty>.)

Minaret also published anti-Jewish cartoons. (See <http://97.74.65.51/readArticle.aspx?ARTID=18058>.) In 1998, after a French court fined Holocaust-denier Roger Garaudy for denying the Holocaust, a *Minaret* editorial defended Garaudy. (See http://www.zoa.org/sitedocuments/pressrelease_view.asp?pressreleaseID=1307.)

Given the ICSC’s anti-Semitic and Israel-bashing history, choosing one of its leaders to participate on an Advisory Council dedicated to eradicating campus anti-

Semitism is totally unacceptable. The presence of Jihad Turk and Jorge Mariscal on the Advisory Council makes fulfilling the mission of the Council almost impossible.

Again, we endorse the goal that the Advisory Council be composed of individuals with diverse points of view. But their views cannot be biased against, or hostile to, any of the groups that have been harassed or intimidated on UC campuses. We strongly urge you to consider replacing Jihad Turk and Jorge Mariscal with individuals who have a track record for fighting anti-Semitism and Israel-bashing. Leila Beckwith, Tammi Rossman-Benjamin and Roberta Seid would all be excellent choices. Each of them has been dedicated to exposing the problem of campus anti-Semitism and Israel-bashing, and fighting for solutions. Someone from the ZOA or the Simon Wiesenthal Center would also be appropriate, and we at the ZOA would be pleased to participate.

Anti-Semitism on UC Campuses is Well-Documented and Should Not be Downplayed

Aside from our concern about two of the appointments to the Advisory Council, we were also troubled and disappointed that you called the joint letter from the ZOA and others “a dishearteningly ill-informed rush to judgment,” and that you challenged the fact that many Jewish students feel harassed and intimidated on UC campuses as lacking “statistical reliability.” For more than six years, since 2004, the ZOA has been working closely with Jewish students and faculty on the UC campuses. We know from their first-hand experiences that anti-Semitism is a serious problem, and that students have been harmed by it. Indeed, we have written repeatedly to you and to some of the UC Chancellors about the problem, documenting it in detail. Students themselves (as well as faculty) have voiced their fears and concerns.

In 2008, almost 20 concerned UC Irvine students issued a public statement about “the ongoing hate-filled programs on campus that demonize Israel and Jews.” These students noted that UC Irvine students “are justifiably afraid for their safety at the university. Students have expressed their fear of wearing any kind of garb that associates them with Israel, or sometimes even with Judaism, because of apprehension of being harassed or intimidated on campus.” Five other Jewish students issued a contemporaneous statement challenging this claim. Yet they acknowledged “[t]he reality . . . that *verbal* anti-Semitism spurred by controversial student groups unfortunately continues to exist on campus” (emphasis in original) – as if verbal anti-Semitism is acceptable. We know of two students who left UC Irvine and went to complete their studies elsewhere because they could no longer endure the anti-Semitic hostility on campus. Just months ago in May, more than 60 faculty members at UC Irvine signed a statement that they “are deeply disturbed about activities on campus that foment hatred against Jews and Israelis. . . .Some community members, students, and faculty indeed feel intimidated, and at times even unsafe.”

In his book, *A History of the Jews*, noted historian Paul Johnson wrote, “One of the principal lessons of Jewish history has been that repeated verbal slanders are sooner or later followed by violent physical deeds.” That has been true at UC Irvine and UC

Berkeley. For example, in 2004, a rock was thrown at a Jewish UC Irvine student wearing a pro-Israel tee shirt; the rock barely missed his head. In 2007, another Jewish student at UC Irvine had a camera shoved in her face.

Physical violence against Jewish students has also been a problem at UC Berkeley, where anti-Semitism was recently described in the Berkeley student paper as the "hidden hatred." (See <http://www.dailycal.org/printable.php?id=109366>.) The paper reported that at a demonstration held in May 2010, after three swastikas were drawn on campus, one professor said, "All anyone has to do is go into one of the bathrooms in Berkeley. There are swastikas everywhere. People don't know about it because, until this demonstration, Jewish students have been reluctant to file complaints and let the administration know what anti-Semitism means for them and how it creates a hostile environment."

The anti-Semitic hostility has escalated into violence at UC Berkeley, most recently in March 2010, when a Jewish female student was physically assaulted. The assault was unprovoked: The student was holding a sign that read "Israel Wants Peace" when she was rammed from behind with a full shopping cart. She suffered injuries to her back and ankle, and understandably fears for her future safety on campus. This student is still trying to find out from the university whether her assailant has been disciplined for assaulting her, in accordance with university policies.

Obviously we cannot speak for every Jewish student on every UC campus, and we would never try to do so. But one should not dismiss student responses to an on-line questionnaire, or ignore the fact that more than 700 students signed an on-line petition protesting the many forms of anti-Semitism exhibited on the UC campuses and demanding that the problem be addressed. Seven hundred students say that they have been negatively affected by anti-Semitic speakers, film and exhibits, and by anti-Israel boycott and divestment campaigns on the UC campuses. The number is significant and shouldn't be downplayed or dismissed.

We are Committed to Eradicating Anti-Semitism on the UC Campuses

We, together with three UC faculty members and 11 other groups, reached out to you in our joint letter because we are genuinely concerned about the problems that Jewish students have been facing for years on the UC campuses. We have legitimate and well-founded concerns about whether the new initiatives will be able to rectify these particular problems. We were taken aback by your response; it was, quite frankly, dismissive and insulting in tone. Had groups dedicated to ending bigotry and intolerance against African Americans, Hispanics, gays or women, written to you about their concerns, we do not believe that you would have responded in the same way.


Our goal is to work together with you to eradicate the "cancer" of anti-Semitism, as you've described it. It is, as you say, a cancer that "runs deep and long through human history." We thus hope that you consider the concerns we've raised and modify the new

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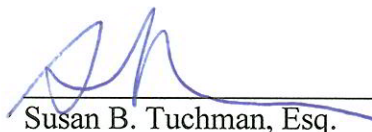
initiatives as necessary – particularly, the composition of the Advisory Council – to ensure that they can be as effective and successful as possible. We are here to help in any way possible.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,



Morton A. Klein
National President



Susan B. Tuchman, Esq.
Director, Center for Law and Justice

cc: The Regents of the University of California
Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
U.S. Senator Arlen Specter
U.S. Representative Brad Sherman
U.S. Representative Ron Klein
U.S. Representative Mike Pence
U.S. Representative Eliot Engel
U.S. Representative Chris Smith
U.S. Representative Carolyn Maloney
U.S. Representative Shelley Berkley
U.S. Representative Gary Ackerman
U.S. Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz
U.S. Representative Ted Deutch
U.S. Representative Keith Ellison
U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky
U.S. Representative Alcee L. Hastings
U.S. Representative Kendrick Meek
U.S. Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
U.S. Representative Allyson Schwartz
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U.S. Representative Rush Holt
U.S. Representative Jackie Speier
U.S. Representative Steve Israel
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U.S. Representative Adam Schiff
U.S. Representative Howard L. Berman
U.S. Representative John Campbell
California Assemblyman Chuck DeVore
Leila Beckwith, Professor Emeritus, UCLA
Tammi Rossman-Benjamin, Lecturer, UC Santa Cruz
Roberta Seid, Lecturer, UC Irvine
American Freedom Alliance – Avi Davis, Executive Director,
CAMERA – Andrea Levin, Executive Director
Children of Jewish Holocaust Survivors – Doris Montrose, President
The David Project
Israel Peace Initiative – Ealon Joelson, President
Orange County Independent Task Force on Anti-Semitism – Ted Bleiweis, Executive
Director
The Orthodox Union – Stephen J. Savitsky, President; Rabbi Steven Weil, National
Executive Vice President; Rabbi Steven Burg, International Director of National
Conference of Synagogue Youth and Managing Director of the OU; Rabbi Alan
Kalinsky, West Coast Director of the OU
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Simon Wiesenthal Center – Rabbi Aron Hier, Director of Campus Outreach; Rabbi
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StandWithUs – Roz Rothstein, Executive Director
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism – Rabbi Steven Wernick, Executive Vice
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