

To the Vassar College Jewish Studies Program:

I am writing to express my disgust with Jewish Studies' sponsorship of tonight's lecture, "Inhumanist Biopolitics: How Palestine Matters," by Jasbir Puar. My major at Vassar was Religion with a concentration in Jewish Studies, as there was no Jewish Studies Program then. I earned the majority of my Jewish Studies credits during my junior year abroad in Israel at The Hebrew University in Jerusalem. During that year, 19__ -19__, I learned a great deal beyond my rich academic experience, starting with the wail of the air raid sirens on Yom Kippur afternoon and continuing through a long winter disrupted by the aftermath of a war of intended extinction that Israel narrowly survived.

I have since spent a considerable amount of time in Israel, studying, working and visiting. I am very familiar with the challenges Israel faces and with the exemplary moral code of ethics under which the Israel Defense Forces operate, often to their extreme detriment. So for the Jewish Studies Program to co-sponsor a speaker who seems to specialize in the demonization and defamation of Israel, who continually and viciously slanders the brave men and women of the IDF, and who appears to base most of her arguments not on scholarly research but rather on anecdotal or fabricated evidence, is to me a total perversion of everything that I thought Vassar College stood for.

I have to wonder how many of you have actually read Dr. Puar's statements or listened to tapes of her lectures in other venues. I have spent the past several days doing so and have been appalled at what I've seen and heard. This sort of hate speech, directed against any other religious, ethnic or cultural group, would never have been tolerated, let alone supported, by any academic department or program at the Vassar College I was privileged to attend.

How is it that Jewish Studies finds it appropriate to co-sponsor such anti-Israel and antisemitic hate speech as the lectures by Ali Abunimah and Max Blumenthal in April, 2014, by Sa'ed Atshan in March, 2015, and now this lecture by Dr. Puar, and yet has not sponsored or co-sponsored a single positively pro-Israel event in the past four years at Vassar? With all the programming on campus that rightly focuses on beleaguered populations from the LBGTQ community to the Syrian refugees, why is that neither Jewish Studies nor any other department or program has seen fit to address the alarming rise in antisemitism that is sending Jews fleeing from Europe?

More fundamentally, how is it that an institution supposedly dedicated to liberal and open inquiry and dialogue in pursuit of knowledge and understanding has

become so one-sided, biased, bigoted and illiberal in its approach? I sincerely hope that you and your colleagues will give serious consideration to the disservice this does to your students, the integrity of your valuable multidisciplinary program and Vassar's reputation for academic excellence.

Sincerely,

[Name of Vassar alumna and class year]