

Dear President Hill,

As an alumna, class of 1965, and a supporter of the college for almost 50 years, I am emailing you to express my shock and dismay over the anti-Semitic rantings posted on the Internet by Vassar College Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP). Their action is truly appalling and something I never thought would emanate from a student group at my college.

Rebecca Lesses, a former Vassar professor and now Associate Professor at Ithaca College has collected Vassar SJP's postings on her blog, *Mystical Politics*. You can access her blog at <http://networkedblogs.com/WNUsd>.

It is critical to realize that this hateful behavior by the Vassar SJP did not just spring up out of the blue. It is the direct result of faculty advocating anti-Israel ideology in the classroom, 39 Vassar faculty supporting the boycott of Israeli academics, the constant anti-Israel propaganda offered through campus events and programs, the tolerance for the anti-Semitic Israel Apartheid Week on campus and the faculty sponsorship of programs like the Abunimah-Blumenthal anti-Semitic hate speech on April 30.

It is important to note that the April 30 Abunimah-Blumenthal event was endorsed by the departments of Political Science, Sociology, English, Geography, Religion and the Jewish Studies and International Studies programs. The two speakers incited students against Israel and against anyone who supports the Jewish state. VCLU, the conservative-libertarian student group, tried to reach out to these same departments and programs to sponsor the Jacobson lecture on May 5 which focused on why academic boycotts are wrong. No departments or academic programs sponsored the May 5 lecture. The imprimatur of so many Vassar academic departments for the April 30 evening of anti-Semitic propaganda speaks volumes about the depth of the problem on our campus.

At the Abunimah-Blumenthal event both men thanked Vassar's academic departments for supporting them and their ideas. They viewed the sponsorship as endorsement of their positions. Students attending this event clapped and snapped fingers in support of the scurrilous lies they were being fed and laughed in agreement with derisive attacks against Israel, Jews and supporters of the Jewish state.

Vassar professor Josh Schreier gave a workshop on the "origins of Zionism" sponsored by SJP. Professor Schreier used selective historiography, half-truths and outright lies, omissions and misplaced emphasis (exaggeration) to weave a narrative that both subtly and overtly delegitimized Zionism, the Jewish people's

connection to the Land of Israel, the concept of Jewish peoplehood and the State of Israel. He manipulated his malleable, uninformed and naive student audience to make his case.

At a March 3rd "open discussion" meeting, which was called to discuss the ethics of travel to Israel, I witnessed the hatred and harassment of anyone who dared to express sympathy with Israel or indicated discomfort with the intimidation on campus. Had such intimidation and anger been expressed against African Americans, gays, feminists etc., I have no doubt that your administration would have acted swiftly and effectively to censure those involved. Unfortunately, that does not seem to be the case when hate and derision are directed at Jewish students and other students holding positive opinions regarding Israel.

Vassar College SJP has clearly violated Vassar's rules against bias and harassment. This group must be suspended from campus indefinitely. Apologies offered days later to stem the bad publicity are insufficient. But, even more important than dealing with SJP, your administration must address the campus environment which nurtured this hatred and gave students the impression that the use of Nazi iconography and white supremacist writings was perfectly acceptable in the furtherance of their "cause."

President Hill, it is time to act. Not only is your legacy at risk, but Vassar's reputation as one of the finest, elite institutions of higher learning is also in danger of being permanently damaged.

Sincerely,