

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH LAWYERS AND JURISTS

U.S. Affiliate of the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists

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May 30, 2023

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Dean Sudha Setty
The City University of New York School of Law
2 Court Square,
Long Island City, NY 11101-435
By Email to: Sudha.Setty@law.cuny.edu

Dear Dean Setty,

The American Association of Jewish Lawyers & Jurists (AAJLJ) is the voluntary bar association of American Jewish lawyers. We are a national nonprofit association that represents the American Jewish legal community on legal issues that affect, and are of importance to, the community, including; freedom of religion, civil rights, human rights, access to justice, social justice, and defense of the rule of law. The Association also advocates upon and defends against matters affecting the global Jewish community such as antisemitism and those which are covers for antisemitic claiming only a desire to undermine the State of Israel such as the BDS movement. We are also privileged to have amongst our members student lawyers.

We were appalled to hear that at City University of New York School of Law, a prominent law school, that hate speech and antisemitic acts are not just tolerated but actively promoted. That a commencement speaker, with documented antisemitic views, should nevertheless be invited on stage to spout, historically inaccurate, bigoted invective, while wearing a symbol of Palestinian revolution, gives a clear message to it Jewish students that they are not welcome. For millennia Jews have lived in the land of Israel and, ever since the first diaspora, Jewish liturgy has called for a return. Yet a clear message has been given to Jewish students, you as a people, a race and a religion hold beliefs that are not welcome at CUNY and certainly are not free to be articulated, as only a skewed narrative is welcomed by the faculty. I will point out that this ceremony occurred during a frightening and escalating rise in antisemitic acts in New York. Not only were graduating students, their guests and the public subjected to Fatima Mousa Mohammed's intellectually bereft bluster that "law is manifestation of white supremacy" but also we heard that CUNY is unwilling to obey the laws of the state of New York such as Executive Order No 157, prohibiting funding to BDS supporters.

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The student lawyers have clearly been taught a skewed perspective of the law, that freedoms only apply to certain groups in society - that if one is given a platform, it can and should be used as an opportunity to divide, demonize and discriminate, against Jews.

Equally, CUNY School of Law, while endorsing BDS, has failed to acknowledge the displacement of 850,000 Jews of Arab Lands and Iran that occurred in the 20th Century: that Jews of Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Sudan, Lebanon, Turkey and Yemen were persecuted, their property and belongings confiscated, and subjected to severe anti-Jewish riots instigated by Arab governments. Instead, CUNY is engineering that its campus will be Judenrein in years to come.

The faculty clearly is bereft of ideas but also knowledge and research in that it is unable or unwilling to apply the law to protect its Jewish students. The Supreme Court was clear in Christian Legal Soc. Chapter of the Univ. of California, Hastings Coll. of the L. v. Martinez, 561 U.S. 661, 130 S. Ct. 2971, 2973, 177 L. Ed. 2d 838 (2010) that a college of law's non-discrimination policy barring discrimination on a number of bases, including religion and sexual orientation. CUNY School of Law has clearly adopted or acquiesced to a host of policies that have led to and contributed to acts of antisemitism on campus.

As we can see in light of the Abraham Accords, with record engagement, investment and dialogue between Muslim lands and the state of Israel, such hate speech would not be given a platform in countries such as the United Arab Emirates.

The AAJLJ would be more than happy to be part of an education effort to expand CUNY's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives so that Jewish students are welcome at CUNY, rather than being harangued at an occasion which should have been remembered with fondness for marking the beginning of their careers in this profession.

However, it goes without saying that until this matter is resolved and we, as an organization, can be assured that CUNY School of Law is educating its lawyers properly, that we would urge members of the AAJLJ to think twice before hiring a CUNY School of Law graduate.

Yours sincerely,



Robert Garson

President