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Subject: THE JB REPORT: Don't Hire My Anti-Semitic Law Students
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The Report

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Don't Hire My Anti-Semitic Law Students

Would your clients want an attorney who condones hatred and monstrous crimes?

By Steven Davidoff Solomon
Oct. 15, 2023 , WSJ

Columbia students participate in a rally in support of Palestine at the university in New York, Oct. 12. PHOTO: SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

I teach corporate law at the University of California, Berkeley, and I'm an adviser to the Jewish law students association. My students are largely engaged and well-prepared, and I regularly recommend them to legal employers.

But if you don't want to hire people who advocate hate and practice discrimination, don't hire some of my students. Anti-Semitic conduct is nothing new on university campuses, including here at Berkeley.

Last year, Berkeley's Law Students for Justice in Palestine asked other student groups to adopt a bylaw that banned supporters of Israel from speaking at events. It excluded any speaker who "expressed and continued to hold views or host/sponsor/promote events in support of Zionism, the apartheid state of Israel, and the occupation of Palestine." Nine student groups adopted the bylaw. Signers included the Middle Eastern and North African Law Students Association, the Queer Caucus and the Women of Berkeley Law.

The bylaw caused an uproar. It was rightly criticized for creating "Jew-free" zones. Our dean—a diehard liberal—admirably condemned it but said free-speech principles tied his hands. The campus groups had the legal right to pick or exclude speakers based on their views. The bylaw remains, and 11 other groups subsequently adopted it.

You don't need an advanced degree to see why this bylaw is wrong. For millennia,

Jews have prayed, “next year in Jerusalem,” capturing how central the idea of a homeland is to Jewish identity. By excluding Jews from their homeland—after Jews have already endured thousands of years of persecution—these organizations are engaging in anti-Semitism and dehumanizing Jews. They didn’t include Jewish law students in the conversation when circulating the bylaw. They also singled out Jews for wanting what we all should have—a homeland and haven from persecution.

The student conduct at Berkeley is part of the broader attitude against Jews on university campuses that made last week’s massacre possible. It is shameful and has been tolerated for too long.

It’s time for the adults to take over, and that includes law firms looking for graduates to hire. The law firm Winston & Strawn revoked an employment offer for a student at New York University law school who wrote an open letter that pointedly refused to condemn Hamas’s attack. The letter denounced Israel instead and asserted that its “regime of state-sanctioned violence created the conditions that made resistance necessary.” The NYU law school dean had issued a tepid response to the massacres, but after the student’s anti-Israel screed caused an uproar, he made a second, more forceful statement condemning Hamas’s attack.

Legal employers in the recruiting process should do what Winston & Strawn did: treat these law students like the adults they are. If a student endorses hate, dehumanization or anti-Semitism, don’t hire him. When students face consequences for their actions, they straighten up.

If you are a legal employer, when you interview students from Berkeley, Harvard, NYU or any other law school this year, ask them what organizations they belong to. Ask if they support discriminatory bylaws or other acts and resolutions blaming Jews and Israelis for the Hamas massacre. If a student endorses hatred, it isn’t only your right but your duty not to hire him. Do you want your clients represented by someone who condones these monstrous crimes?

Mr. Solomon is a law professor at the University of California, Berkeley.

Pace et Salute...JP

PORKQUOTE: ***Relax...You may only have a few minutes left***