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# Israel supporters denied entrance to anti-Zionist event at Rutgers

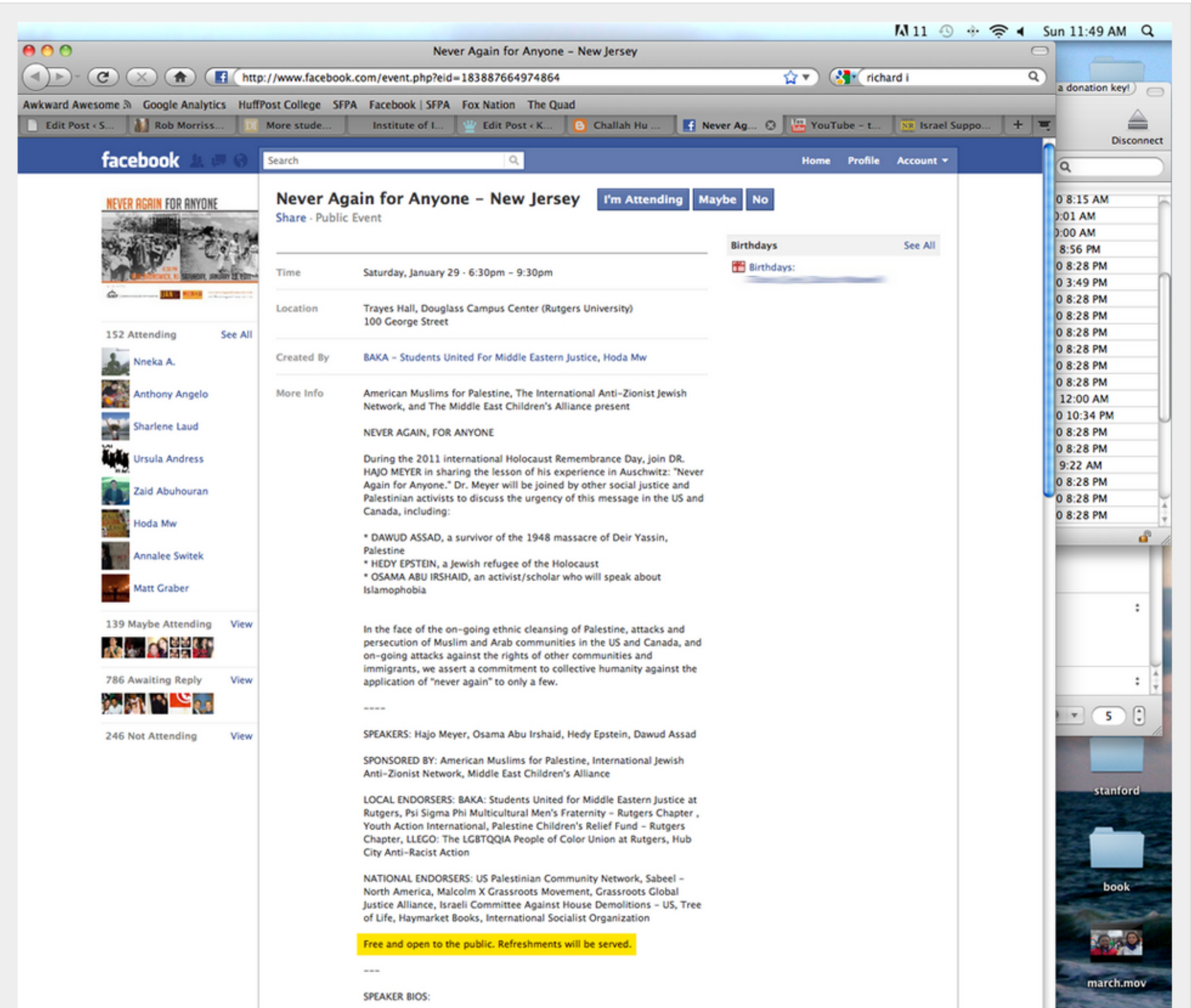
by AARON MARCUS - SFPA CONTRIBUTOR on JANUARY 31, 2011

A mixture of anti-Zionist, socialist and pro-Palestinian groups descended on Rutgers University for the third stop of the “[Never Again for Anyone](#)” tour on Saturday. The month long tour is traveling across the United States with one particular and deplorable message, comparing Israeli acts of self-defense to the systematic murder of over 11 million men, women and children at the hands of the Nazis.

The event hosted on the Douglas campus of Rutgers University intended to coincide with the UN sanctioned International Holocaust Remembrance Day. I found this twisted attempt at “honoring” the victims of the Holocaust nauseating. As a Rutgers student, New Jersey taxpayer and most importantly a Jew, this was the final straw broken by the anti-Israel movement on campus the time had arrived to take a stand.

Mass emails were sent out to Jewish communities across the tri-state area, in an attempt to inform the public about the event and hopefully gain as strong a presence as possible. What followed would become an outright discriminatory practice on the side of BAKA – Students United for Middle Eastern Justice the campus host of the event.

Upon seeing between 200 to 400 pro-Israel supporters waiting to enter the event, the organizers panicked. They tore apart the suggested donation sign, leaving a mandatory fee obligatory for entrance. On the Facebook event page, BAKA claimed that the program would be free and open to the public. The Never Again website posted a suggested donation of \$5-\$20 and had even posted on previous event pages that “no one would be turned away for lack of funds.”



A screenshot of the Facebook event, described as “free and open to the public.” Click to enlarge. Retrieved on Jan. 30, 2011.

No one was turned away. Technically.

The pro-Israel supporters that gathered were instead huddled into separate lines away from the other attendees. The organizers of the event found like-minded individuals wearing anti-Israel apparel, keffiyahs and hijabs, gave them green bracelets and ushered them into the event telling Jews that they were event staff and security. Ironically at an event meant to educate individuals about the horrors of the Holocaust, the organizers suddenly separated those with different political beliefs and religions. An organizer at the event told the crowd that the “entrance fee is \$5 to \$20” (see the video below).

Students were told they could enter free of charge if they became members of BAKA, an idea quickly revoked after hundreds of students tried to join. At one point I entered my information and after reading my name, the woman standing behind the desk quickly erased what I had just wrote and told me I was not welcome. All the protestors wanted to do was hear the speakers and be able to hold them accountable for their words. The organizers of the event banned any use of video or audio recording devices within the auditorium. By concurrently denying entrance to those who disagreed with the message of the program, BAKA and Never Again for Anyone must have assumed that they wouldn’t be held responsible for what was said inside the auditorium.

As the pro-Israel supporters waited for admittance, chants of “The Jewish People Live” echoed throughout the building. Our purpose on Saturday was to make clear that politicizing the Holocaust by defaming Israel would not be tolerated, especially at a public, taxpayer-funded university — but we couldn’t even attend the event. We gathered to exercise our constitutional right to assemble freely and a university group denied us that right based on our religious background and political creed. This would be a slap in the face on any day, but especially one in remembrance of the Holocaust.

Aaron Marcus is a Rutgers University junior and a contributor to the Student Free Press Association. Marcus has written for the Washington Times and is an alumnus of the National Journalism Center.

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