

Rutgers Student Threatened After He Criticized Anti-Zionist Event

Feb 02 2011 Published by benjaminklein under 2010 Elections

This Monday, RIGHT TO EXIST contributor Aaron Marcus published a column in his student newspaper describing his experience as a protester at Never Again for Anyone, a speaking engagement at Rutgers University that compared modern Israel to the Nazi regime. Sometime afterward, a fellow Rutgers student posted the following (unedited) message on Facebook (pictured above, which has not been altered-the word "PEDO" appears on the page): "As I was reading the Aaron Marcus column this morning I realized how Im a pretty angry person. Id be happy to see him beat with a crowbar. Violence doesnt solve problems but it shuts up people who shouldnt speak" The writer, Joseph Tamimi, was not alone in his sentiments: at least seven of his Facebook friends clicked "like" on the message, indicated their approval, including one, Aaron Gevers, who responded: "Or makes them martyrs, furthering the strength behind their beliefs. And skinning them alive so they see the afterlife." Aaron has sought police protection and legal recourse, but a third remedy is necessary: public condemnation of these hateful remarks. Perhaps the students who clicked the "like" on the remark didn't think that thousands would later read about it on a blog and hold them accountable. Maybe they didn't think anyone would take it seriously. Maybe they thought that expressing hate and death wishes was morally acceptable as long as they didn't get caught. But by clicking "like," they co-opted Joseph Tamimi's message. They have endorsed a grotesque and threatening response to Aaron's column, which itself did not in any form advocate violence against those he criticized, but simply offered a cogent and tightly-reasoned argument against their public claims. When these Rutgers students clicked "like" on a message wishing Aaron's death, they accepted the message as their own, as if they had said it themselves. They too should be held responsible, and suffer the consequence of public condemnation. Joseph Tamimi acted independently of any student group, and of Never Again for Anyone. But it is timely to note that hate begets hate; that rhetoric that dehumanizes one's opponents in debate tacitly invites violence and suppression; and that the controversy that sparked this incident involved an event that drew a direct line of metaphor from Israel supporters to the most prolific, gruesome human-butchers of known history. It is no coincidence that at least one of the people who clicked "like" is a member of the student group that hosted Never Again for Anyone. The names of the students who endorsed Joseph Tamimi's message of hate are below: Lap Nguyen, Bilal A Canada, who publically supports on his profile the ACLU New Jersey; Red Card Homophobia, a group against homophobia in soccer; and 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence. He clearly did not see the irony in endorsing political and anti-Semitic violence. Kevin Song, Frank Snead, Katherine Yabut, who supports Diversity Spectrum, a multimedia company for "diversity professionals," apparently doesn't tolerate political diversity; by clicking "like," she indicated she believes that supporters of Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East that recognizes the rights of women and homosexuals, should "shut up" even if it takes a beating to silence them. Alexandra Q, Stuart Carroll. These students will, in a few years if they work hard, graduate from Rutgers and become full adults in society, seeking jobs or further education. Perhaps by that time they will regret mindlessly clicking "like" on a hateful Facebook status that they might have only found mildly amusing. But will they do it again after they realize they can't promote hate, then hide?