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Student anti-Zionists bar Jews, pro-Israel advocates from "free and open" event

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Protesters at Rutgers University were barred from entering a campus event comparing Israeli actions to those of the Nazis, even though the event was advertised as free and open to the public. BAKA - Students United for Middle Eastern Justice, a pro-Palestinian group that claims that Israel has committed atrocities against the Palestinians, prohibited free access to a crowd of people who arrived at the New Jersey stop of the group's Never Again for Anyone tour. A video shows the contentious exchange of angry critics trying to gain entry, and event staff clearly misrepresenting the facts.

In fact, one organizer introduced as "Sara from IJAN" (Sara Kershner, founder of the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network) addressed the crowd, saying that an entrance fee of five dollars was required to attend, and that any claims that the advertising said otherwise were false. (The websites did, in fact, state that the event would be free and open to the public, and that there was a suggested donation.)

Even more strange was the organizers' decision to *actually segregate* Jewish pro-Israel would-be attendees, according to Aaron Marcus at NewsRealBlog:

Upon circulating information pertaining to this event around the tri-state area, the Jewish community along with those who seek to preserve the righteous memory of those murdered at the hands of the Nazis sought to audit the event. BAKA – Students United for Middle Eastern Justice, the host of the event, printed on the event page on Facebook that the event was free and open to the public. In addition, the group Never Again for Anyone, which is the host of the abhorrent tour, printed on the website for the event that a suggested donation of \$5-\$20 would be asked for at the door. Only after 200-400 pro-Israel supporters showed up did the event—held in a state school, paid for by both tax dollars and student fees—begin to discriminate who could enter the event free-of-cost.

First, the organizers of the event asked all of those who gathered together in opposition to the event to stand in a separate line and wait for seating to take place. Meanwhile, those in anti-Israel apparel, keffiyahs and hijabs were taken aside, given green wristbands, labeled as event “staff” and given free entrance. At one point, the hosts of the event, which ranged from groups like the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network to the International Socialist Organization, tore apart a suggested donation sign leaving only the admission fee visible. The group then said students could attend free-of-charge if they became members of BAKA. However, this policy once again did not apply for the Jewish students hoping to attend. In fact, at one point, I signed my name and the woman behind the desk read it and furiously crossed out the information I had just posted.

The Examiner contacted Kershner for comment, but still hasn't received a reply.

The tour's purpose is described on the website as "... to honor those who perished in the Holocaust by advocating for the human rights inherent to all people – and particularly for Palestinians living under Israel's occupation." Such a description suggests that a parallel exists between Nazis and Zionists, or those who believe in Israel's right to statehood, and that Palestinian suffering is directly inflicted by Israel's very existence.

It is not clear how Rutgers could permit a public event to selectively discriminate among its audience, and *The Examiner* is still awaiting comment.

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