

Daniel M. Shlufman

Letter from Jewish Federation President to Cornell University

Dear Dr. Kotlikoff:

I am writing to you as both the father of a freshman at Cornell as well as the President of the Jewish Federation of Northern New Jersey, which is one of the largest Jewish organizations in the Northeast involved in fighting antisemitism. I attended the meeting this morning at Hillel where you addressed several hundred parents of Jewish students. I commend you for attending, speaking and listening, and for handling questions and comments from a group of scared and angry parents.

However, I also must also strongly condemn your lack of leadership and that of the entire administration as it relates to the safety and security of the Jewish students on campus. You have tried to remain neutral to a situation where 1400 civilians were brutally butchered, beheaded, raped and burned by an organization that is considered a terrorist group by the United States. You have failed to understand the nuance between condemning Hamas (which is an undeniable evil every bit as brutal, just not as powerful as the Nazis) and supporting rights for the Palestinians people. The Administration has allowed actions to occur on campus which support Hamas that have come very close to and may have in some cases even rose to the level of the Federal crime of assisting the work of a terrorist group. And even with that, Cornell has avoided commenting and acting to prevent harassment and intimidation on campus detailed below by falsely claiming that Cornell is not a political institution when you have commented and shown leadership when hate crimes were directed at other groups.

In your remarks, you falsely tried to equivocate the minimal (though still inappropriate) hate directed against Muslim students with the torrent of constant and vicious hate directed at Jewish students. The cowardice on the part of the Administration to the ever-increasing antisemitism on campus has not quelled the discord as you had hoped but, instead due to the vacuum of moral clarity has empowered those who no longer feared the consequences which has caused it to expand and worsen. After your meeting today, the vicious, threatening antisemitic posts, exploded on the Cornell section of the Greek online community with calls for "Jewish people to be killed;" "bombing of Jewish home;" calls to "gang rape" Zionist females; and "shoot up 104 West" (the kosher dining hall).

Some of these Administration actions include (i) failing to act to and staying silent when faced with criminal action to school property aimed at silencing and terrorism against Jewish students; (ii) allowing harassments on the campus by other groups who are failing to act civilly in their own protests (iii) hiding behind the false narrative of equivocation by not stopping the intimidation of Jewish students walking on campus and also when trying to exercise their right to free speech; (iv) falsely claiming the words or lack of words by professors against the recent genocide to Israeli civilians is a case of academic freedom and (v) permitting outright antagonism to Israel specifically and Jewish students generally in Cornell's sanctioned groups, on campus related social media (including accounts by many professors whose job it is to educate not to advocate and most certainly not to post false information which they are doing); and

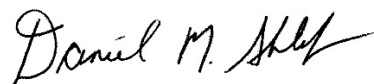
refusing to do what is necessary to support the students and address the issues raised to keep them safe, both physically and emotionally.

As a result of the Administration's failure and lack of leadership, students are afraid to leave their dorms at times; have removed Mezuzahs from their doors; are not comfortable wearing kippot around campus; are afraid to attend Jewish events; have changed their names on social media and apps; and are generally suffering from fear and anxiety that is detracting from their academic pursuits.

I am letting you know that the Jewish parents at Cornell and the Jewish people all around are not going to be placated by lack of moral clarity and let this continue. The mantra of "Never Again" is real and is going to guide us. As such, we will now be taking this beyond the Cornell campus to the NYS Governor, Senate and Assembly who have jurisdiction over the State Schools; the NY Attorney General to investigate the criminal activity going on and being allowed at Cornell; the local Representatives and NY Senators who oversee federal educational funding as well as terrorist activities in the US; the courts to adjudicate violations of rights of Jewish students; Jewish organizations to alert their donors and stakeholders; to social media and the press to publicize what is being allowed to go on at Cornell; and the major funders (Jewish and otherwise) so that they can make decisions on their valuable philanthropic dollars based on the values they want to support.

I urge you and the Administration to reverse course immediately and be guided by the principles of Ezra Cornell and which you claim to espouse. Having a zero-tolerance policy for hate includes Jewish students as well. And, when they are treated differently, and not protected as others, that is clearly evidence of the inability to recognize and prevent antisemitism. Enforcing appropriate modes of behavior, and respect for all views, is not a political position or taking sides. It is the right thing and moral thing to do. And, before things get worse as they will if students don't face consequences for their behavior, I strongly advise the Administration to show leadership and recalibrate the moral compass and campus at Cornell.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel M. Shlufman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Daniel M. Shlufman
President