



Thursday, November 29, 2018

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JCRC-NY OUTRAGED BY ANTI-SEMITIC GRAFFITI AT COLUMBIA TEACHERS COLLEGE

The Jewish Community Relations Council of New York (JCRC-NY), the representative agency for over 50 major Jewish organizations in the Metropolitan Area, is outraged by the horrifying anti-Semitic graffiti found yesterday in the office of Jewish professor Elizabeth Midlarsky at Columbia Teachers College. Academic freedom grants professors the right to teach and communicate ideas or facts without being targeted for repression. Like all people, they have the right to live without fear for their safety. This incident clearly constitutes a violation of Prof. Midlarsky's rights as an academic and as an American. Anti-Semitism and its repulsive symbols serve only to harass, intimidate, and promote hatred against Jews. It has no place in our society. JCRC-NY is further disturbed that this cowardly offense may have been perpetrated by a member of the Columbia/Barnard community, as all Teachers College academic buildings require school ID for entry.

We commend President Thomas Bailey for his swift and forceful condemnation of the incident and his reaffirmation of the school's commitment to "providing a respectful and welcoming environment for all, and to protecting the safety and dignity of all members of our community." Academic environments must actively promote tolerance, respect, and civility toward all people and ideas. We appreciate that the Columbia University and Barnard College administrations have also publicly condemned the incident and urge them to seriously engage with Jewish students and faculty members to foster an environment free of anti-Semitism.

JCRC-NY is greatly appreciative of the work of our partners in the New York Police Department's Hate Crimes Task Force for launching an investigation into this incident to identify its perpetrator and pursue justice. In the wake of the devastating massacre of Jewish worshippers at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life Synagogue, and as rates of anti-Semitic incidents rise locally and nationally, it is incumbent upon civil society, for the betterment of all, to expose and stamp out all forms of evil and hate. History has shown that leaving anti-Semitism unchecked has terrible consequences for society at large.

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