

The Brandeis Center and Lieb at Law File Federal District Court Complaint Against the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys Union for Undertaking Acts to Expel and Otherwise Discipline Jewish and Non-Jewish Zionist Members in Retaliation for Opposing the Union’s Infamous Anti-Semitic Resolution Attacking Israel

July 9, 2024 (Washington, D.C.) – Today, the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law and Lieb at Law, P.C. filed a federal District Court [complaint](#) against the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys, UAW Local 2325 (“the ALAA”) and individual union officials for undertaking acts to expel and otherwise discipline two Jewish and one Non-Jewish ally from the union in retaliation for their lawsuit opposing the ALAA’s anti-Semitic discriminatory practices manifested in the now infamous ALAA resolution attacking Israel soon after the October 7th terror attacks.

The resolution opposed by the plaintiffs was so vile that several non-profit legal services providers employing ALAA’s members felt compelled to [denounce it as anti-Semitic](#) and unrepresentative of their values, including plaintiffs’ employer, the [Legal Aid Society of Nassau County](#), as well as [The Legal Aid Society](#) (which serves New York City), and the New York Legal Assistance Group (the Bronx Defenders issued a [statement](#) condemning a similarly anti-Semitic statement made by its chapter of the ALAA).

Said the Hon. Kenneth L. Marcus, chairman of the Brandeis Center, “Anti-Semitism in a union isn’t any less objectionable than anti-Semitism on a college campus, in a public school, or at a workplace. The Brandeis Center will hold accountable everyone responsible for trying to expel Jewish and non-Jewish members alike whose Zionism, sense of professional obligation to their clients, and basic decency compelled them to oppose the ALAA’s discriminatory and anti-Semitic practices, especially the ALAA’s profoundly anti-Semitic and destructive anti-Israel resolution that over a third of its members ultimately rejected.”

Said the Hon. Rory Lancman, Director of Corporate Initiatives & Senior Counsel at the Brandeis Center, “Zionism is integral to Jewish identity, but plaintiffs -- proud unionists who have dedicated their professional lives to serving poor and disadvantaged clients -- didn’t need to be Zionists, or in one case, even Jewish, to understand that anti-Semitism is antithetical both to their obligations as lawyers and to the mission of a union responsible for representing the interests of all its members.”

Said Andrew M. Lieb, Managing Partner of Lieb at Law, P.C., “No American should be retaliated against for fighting against what they sincerely believe is anti-Semitism and its



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consequences, which is why federal and local law clearly prohibit unions from conditioning union membership upon acquiescing to discrimination. We fight for all employees, of all religious faiths, who all have a right to be both true to their identity while also benefiting from unionization in leveraging concerted activity in negotiating optimal terms of employment.”

The anti-Semitic hostile environment within the ALAA represented a cornucopia of classic and modern anti-Semitism, including:

- (1) Calling for the end of the Jewish State and the denial of the Jewish People’s right to self-determination, which in the context of the October 7th massacre and the support for Hamas and Hezbollah expressed by other ALAA members plaintiffs understood as a call for further violence against Israel’s Jewish population;
- (2) Ignoring completely the October 7th Hamas Attack, or minimizing or denying its barbarity, in statements on the Israel/Hamas war;
- (3) Accusations that “Jewish donations” caused ALAA Employers to denounce the anti-Semitic statements of their employees;
- (4) Charges that Jewish ALAA members opposing the anti-Semitic rhetoric and resolution have dual loyalty to Israel;
- (5) Attacks on the willingness and ability of those Jewish ALAA Members to represent minority clients;
- (6) Blaming Israel for police misconduct in the United States;
- (7) Orwellian claims that the Jewish state is committing genocide in its campaign against Hamas and that opponents of the resolution support genocide, distorting the term beyond recognition; and,
- (8) Dehumanizing and demonizing the Jewish State of Israel through the constant repetition of outlandish and debunked sensationalized claims that Israel targeted Palestinian Civilians.

One representative email cited in the federal District Court complaint reads:

“You keep talking about ‘Jewish babies being murdered,’ and women being raped, you’re simply spreading lies and misinformation. There is no proof or substantiation. There are no pictures. Even soldiers on the ground HAVE NOT confirmed this. LA Times retracted what they said. Biden’s team had to retract what he said.”

The resolution which the plaintiffs initially successfully blocked amounted to a 1,147-word diatribe against the existence of the Jewish State, wherein the Hamas Massacre, a pogrom



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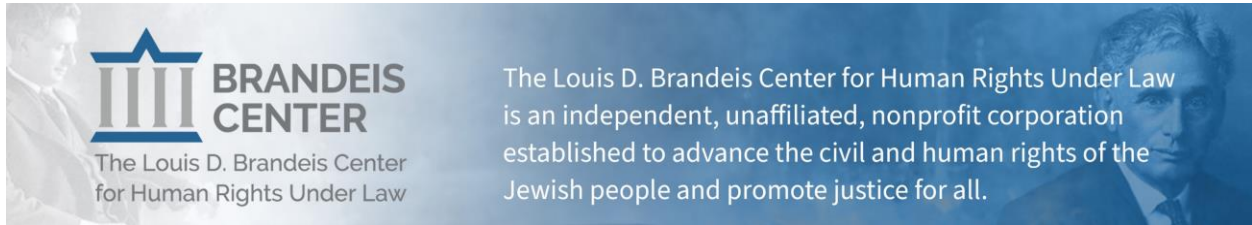
unrivaled since the Holocaust, merited only seven words of passing mention as "the violent tragedy on October 7, 2023."

As the resolution was rushed to a vote of the ALAA's membership, the three plaintiffs (two are Jewish, one is not) and a fourth ALAA member obtained a temporary restraining order ("TRO") in state Supreme Court in Nassau County blocking the vote on the grounds that, among other things, the ALAA violated its duty of fair representation and would unethically undermine clients' trust in their lawyers ability to represent them regardless of their Jewish Identity or views on Israel. As cited in this federal District Court complaint, the state court legal proceedings revealed numerous examples of the anti-Semitic environment at the ALAA. The TRO was extended once by the state Supreme Court and remained in place when the ALAA removed the case to federal District Court until, ultimately, it was dissolved and the vote proceeded, with over a third of the ALAA's membership voting "no." With the resolution passed, plaintiffs voluntarily withdrew their lawsuit as being moot.

Immediately and in express retaliation against plaintiffs for filing the state Supreme Court lawsuit opposing the ALAA's discriminatory and anti-Semitic resolution, four ALAA members identified as defendants in this lawsuit filed union charges against plaintiffs as an act towards causing their expulsion and other discipline from the union, a brazenly illegal act under both federal labor law and federal, New York, and New York City anti-discrimination laws.

Incredibly, the ALAA approved the charges as valid and set a trial process in motion. The remaining individual defendants are ALAA officials who aided and abetted and/or voted to approve the charges against plaintiffs for trial. Plaintiffs have patiently waited for months for the United Auto Workers International Executive Board to decide an appeal of the charges filed by plaintiffs, leaving plaintiffs in an intolerable state of limbo. The pending expulsion proceeding hanging over plaintiffs' heads has had the intended effect of chilling their engagement in protected activity within the union and their willingness to oppose the ALAA's continued discriminatory anti-Semitic acts.

This federal District Court Complaint includes seven counts alleging violations of federal labor law and New York State and New York City anti-discrimination laws. Plaintiffs seek declaratory and injunctive relief nullifying the expulsion proceedings against them and prohibiting the defendants from otherwise disciplining or retaliating against plaintiffs for having opposed the ALAA's discriminatory practices, as well as seeking compensatory and punitive damages and attorneys' fees. (Plaintiffs have also filed a charge of discrimination with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.)



The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law is an independent, unaffiliated, nonprofit corporation established to advance the civil and human rights of the Jewish people and promote justice for all. LDB engages in research, education, and legal advocacy to combat the resurgence of anti-Semitism on college and university campuses, in the workplace, and elsewhere. It empowers students by training them to understand their legal rights and educates administrators and employers on best practices to combat racism and anti-Semitism. More at www.brandeiscenter.com