



Written by [James Murphy](#) on October 27, 2023

Jewish Students Locked in Library by Pro-Palestinian Mob in New York City

On Wednesday, approximately 50 Jewish students at a New York City college were barricaded inside of a library on the campus of The Cooper Union, while pro-Palestinian student protesters chanted anti-Israel slogans outside and banged on the doors. Although campus officials and police say there was no danger, one report claims that librarians bolted the doors and told Jewish students that they could hide in the attic if they felt the need.

Representatives for the Jewish students have demanded that university president Laura Sparks be fired for failing to protect them, after the pro-Hamas group banged on library doors and windows.



AzmanL/iStock/Getty Images Plus

“She failed in her duty,” said Gerard Filitti, an attorney defending the Jewish students said,

“All of these schools have a duty to keep students safe — and these students are not safe,” Filitti went on. “They do not feel safe coming back to campus. They are not here today. They are afraid to be here today because of what happened yesterday.”

“We don’t want a replay of Columbine,” the attorney said. “We want police officers, in uniform, to help these people.”

While she didn’t address Filitti’s charges, Sparks did comment on the situation in a Thursday [message](#) to the college: “There is room for productive debate and dissent here, but there is no tolerance for hate or threatening conduct. We condemn discrimination of any kind, including antisemitism and Islamophobia. We condemn hateful and threatening acts of any kind — written, spoken, visual, or physical.”

An unidentified student described the situation to *The Post Millennial*. “Me and a couple of students had a Zoom class, and went to the library to take the class. Some other Jewish students also went to the library to do work and talk about school. Then we heard this banging on the doors and we could see they were trying to get in, and they had these sticks that they were using to pound on the doors.”

A couple of key highlights from my interview with a major eyewitness/student at this incident:

- 1) Cooper U. dean said before the protest that he could not stop it because it was not slated to enter school property (which it obviously did)
 - 2) NYPD was called as soon as the... <https://t.co/RX2JTJyvSm>
- Jake Novak (@jakejakeny) [October 26, 2023](#)



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Asked why the pro-Hamas crowd was targeting them, the student answered, "I would say because we're basically Jewish students. That's the only thing that makes sense. After they couldn't get into the doors, they started coming around to the windows where we were, looking at the tables and making faces through the windows at us."

Video from the [@cooperunion](#) library now: pic.twitter.com/skOM1vWsv0

— Jake Novak (@jakejakeny) [October 25, 2023](#)

There was some controversy about the police presence (or lack thereof) at the scene. Several students insisted that they and the families of students called the police asking for some kind of intervention in the stand-off, which never came.

The NYPD had a different story. Chief of Patrol John Chell claimed that police were there "from start to finish" during the incident.

"There were no direct threats," Chell said. "There was no damage, and there was no danger to any students in that school... Students were not barricaded."

Filitti answered, "Obviously, there's a disconnect between what the NYPD's saying and what students actually experienced."

After about 20 minutes, the students in the library were escorted out by campus security guards.

Jewish New York City Councilwoman Inna Vernikov blamed the university's president Sparks for much of the mayhem.

"We brought a letter of resignation and a box for the stuff of President of @cooperunion, Laura Sparks. If you cannot do your duty and keep Jewish students safe on your campus, while you escape through the back door with campus security, RESIGN!" Vernikov posted on X.

Vernikov led a small rally outside the library on Thursday, during which demanded Spark's resignation.

"The president... if she can not handle this job she needs to resign," Vernikov said.

—[@InnaVernikov](#) demanding the president of [@cooperunion](#) to step down for not keeping the Jewish students at Cooper Union safe! pic.twitter.com/XV3iDdNvlo

— Melanie Notkin (@SavvyAuntie) [October 26, 2023](#)

The riotous behavior took place on the heels of a city-wide pro-Palestinian walkout of students from universities all over New York City. The walkout was scheduled from 1:00-2:00 p.m. but the unrest at the library occurred later in the day.



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