

Dear Committee,

I am a Jewish student at Monash university studying arts.

I walked into my first ever uni class at the start of this year and was immediately confronted with a drawing of the Palestinian flag on the whiteboard, surrounded by "Free Palestine" written all around it. The drawing had been left prior to my class.

My tutor for that class pronounced - and I quote - "I'm going to leave this Free Palestine sign up. If anyone disagrees with it, they can register their dissent".

I surreptitiously tucked away my Star of David necklace. I was 19 years old and have never ever had a reason to feel unsafe in Melbourne before. Throughout that first class, my feelings of alienation worsened. The tutor kept bringing up Israel's "killing of children" even when the conflict was completely unrelated to the topic of the tutorial.

I came to expect, and dread, the casual derogation of Israel in that class. Things naturally got worse after the Monash encampment was established. My tutor highlighted and frequently commented on the protestors. On a few occasions, he asked about my ethnicity, features, or the origins of my last name. Not once did I hear him ask any other student in the class similar questions. I also never heard him question anyone else on their ethnicity. I always felt that he was attempting to find out whether or not I was Jewish.

I never - and have still not - made a formal complaint to the university. I was afraid of any potential retribution. After all, my tutor was primarily in charge of marking my work. And I knew that any complaint, however "anonymous" I tried to make it, would lead back to me.

I was brought up to always speak my mind and be proud of who I am. I have participated in and won several public speaking and debating competitions. However, this semester was the first time in my life that I felt I couldn't speak up because I was afraid.

More needs to be done to protect students on campus. And Parliament, as our elected representative body, must lead the charge in doing so.