

Israel's Tenured Extremists

by Steven Plaut

Israel is under assault from within and not just from the usual suspects. Its legitimacy and, in many cases, its very existence are being attacked by a domestic academic fifth column. Hundreds of professors and lecturers, employed by Israel's state-financed universities, are building careers as full-time activists working against the very country in which they live. And the problem is growing. Fortunately, the Israeli public has become aware of the problem and is increasingly demanding that something be done about it. A not inconsiderable part of the credit for this belongs to the *Middle East Quarterly*, probably the first serious journal to discuss the problem a decade ago, sparking a debate that continues to challenge the Israeli academy's offensive against the Jewish state.

"SOCRATES" BLOWS THE WHISTLE

In fall 2001, the *Middle East Quarterly* ran a major exposé of anti-Israel academics based inside Israeli universities. Titled "Israel's Academic Extremists,"¹ it shattered the conspiracy of silence that had long been observed in the Israeli media and on Israeli campuses about scholars working against their own country and in support of its enemies. And it opened a floodgate.

The article was attributed to "Solomon Socrates," described as "the pen name for a watchdog team of researchers keeping an eye on Israel's universities." The very fact that the authors felt they needed the cloak of anonymity to protect themselves from retaliation from their colleagues within higher education may have been the most dramatic illustration of the sorry state of academic freedom and pluralism in Israel's universities.

Noting that hiring and promotion procedures at Israeli universities were commonly politicized, with leftist faculty who had poor academic publi-

cation records getting hired and promoted as acts of political solidarity, the article offered thumbnail characterizations of about two dozen Israeli academic extremists. Today that list seems tame and thin, at least when compared with the dimensions of the problem as it is now understood. A few of the names were of obscure academicians of little interest, evidently spotlighted as a result of some outlandish statements and positions. Two of those named, Benny Morris and Ilan Gur-Ze'ev, would no longer make the list and are generally considered today to be important defenders of Zionism and critics of "post-Zionist" historical revisionism of which they were once key articulators. Morris appears to have jettisoned most of his earlier Israel-bashing and New History revisionism regarding the period of Israel's war of independence, though not everyone is persuaded the rehabilitation is sincere.² As a result he has become the favorite whipping boy for much of the anti-Zionist Left, incensed that he no longer spends his days denouncing Israel as the ulti-

1 Solomon Socrates, "Israel's Academic Extremists," *Middle East Quarterly*, Fall 2001, pp. 5-14.

2 See, for example, Efraim Karsh, "Benny Morris and the Reign of Error, Revisited," *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2005, pp. 31-42; idem, "Israel's Human Chameleon Strikes Again," *The American Thinker*, July 10, 2011.

Steven Plaut teaches at the Graduate School of Business Administration at the University of Haifa.

mate evil in the world. In February 2010, Morris was even denied the right to speak at a Cambridge University student event on the grounds that he was too pro-Israel and thus supposedly anti-Arab.³ In June 2011, he was accosted by anti-Israel activists while on his way to lecture at the London School of Economics.⁴ Gur-Ze'ev, meanwhile, has been speaking out forcefully against the anti-Semitism and totalitarian inclinations of the radical Left, to the chagrin of those who oppose him.⁵

Many of the leaders of the "Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions" movement against Israel are Israeli academics.

From Socrates' 2001 list, Baruch Kimmerling, Dan Bar-On, and Israel Shahak are no longer alive while Ilan Pappé and Gabriel Piterberg have emigrated and built careers elsewhere as full-time Israel bashers. The remaining names have, however, been joined by scores, perhaps hundreds, of home-grown academic

bashers of Israel over the past decade.

THE INTERNAL WAR AGAINST ISRAEL

Most of Israel's anti-Israel academics hold tenured faculty positions at the country's tax-funded public universities. They include people who justify and celebrate Arab terrorism and who help initiate campaigns of boycott and economic divestment directed against their own country in time of war. Today, many of the leaders of the so-called boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel are Israeli academics. The phenomenon is near pandemic at the four main Israeli liberal arts universities: Tel Aviv University (TAU), the Hebrew University, the University of Haifa, and Ben-Gurion University. At

the two scientific-engineering institutions, the Technion and the Weizmann Institute, there are small numbers of faculty involved in such political activity but they are a minor presence, and this is also true of the religious university, Bar-Ilan. Israeli colleges are less generously funded by the government than universities and so are more dependent on competing for student tuition. This may explain why extremist faculty are more unusual there than in universities, though Sapir College in the Negev may be an exception.

On the eve of the 2003 Iraq war, dozens of Israeli academics warned the world that Israel was planning massive war crimes and genocidal massacres against the Palestinians the moment the first coalition troops were to land in Iraq.⁶ When the actual fighting took place and no such crimes were perpetrated by Israel, not a single signer of the petition issued an apology for the smears against the Jewish state.

In other petitions, Israeli academics routinely denounce Israel for carrying out war crimes and human rights violations. In some, they call for suppressing Israeli sovereignty by imposing certain political solutions on the country that are opposed by the vast majority of Israelis.⁷ Hundreds of Israeli university professors have been involved in organizing mutiny and insurrection among Israeli soldiers, and some have been arrested for violently attacking police and soldiers or for similar forms of law-breaking. For example, Tel Aviv University's Anat Matar,⁸ the Hebrew University's Amiel Vardi, math lecturer Kobi Snitz⁹ (who has taught at several institutions), and others have been arrested for law-breaking and for participating in violent, illegal demonstrations. At least one faculty member at Ben-Gurion University has openly called for murder of those who reject his far-leftist opinions.¹⁰

6 Avraham Oz, "Urgent warning: The Israeli government may be contemplating crimes against humanity," LabourNet.UK, Sept. 24, 2002.

7 "Anti-Israel Petitions Signed by Israeli Academics," IsraCampus (Haifa), accessed May 27, 2011.

8 *Israel Academia Monitor* (Even Yehuda), Sept. 9, 2005.

9 "PSP Supports Kobi Snitz, an Israeli Activist Beginning Short Prison Term for Anti-Occupation Activity," International Campaign of Solidarity with the Palestinian Prisoners, Sept. 21, 2009.

3 *The Jerusalem Post*, Feb. 7, 2010.

4 *Makor Rishon* (Tel Aviv), June 24, 2011.

5 Ilan Gur-Ze'ev, *The Possibility/Impossibility of a New Critical Language in Education* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2010).

The Israeli university authorities wink at such behavior¹¹ and sometimes even collaborate with¹² and promote it.

Scores of Israeli academics openly advocate the so-called Palestinian right of return,¹³ which would effectively end Israel's existence, while others openly call for Israel to be annihilated altogether. Other Israeli academics signed the so-called Olga document demanding that Israel grant the Palestinians an unrestricted "right of return."¹⁴ Such people often claim to favor a "one-state solution,"¹⁵ in which Israel's existence as a sovereign nation would end, to be enfolded within a larger state with an Arab and Muslim government and majority. A few Israeli academics even campaign on behalf of and promote Holocaust deniers. Articles by Ben-Gurion University's Neve Gordon have been published on the web site of Holocaust denier Ernst Zundel¹⁶ and in Iran's state newspaper.¹⁷ Neve has also endorsed Norman Finkelstein,¹⁸ often regarded as a Holocaust denier or at least a Holocaust trivializer while other Israeli academics have praised Holocaust revisionist David Irving.¹⁹

During the Cast Lead military operation against Hamas in Gaza (winter 2008-09), the visibility of this group grew. While polls showed near-unanimous support for the operations among Israeli Jews,²⁰ a high proportion of Israeli academics opposed the operation.²¹

10 YNet News (Tel Aviv), June 6, 2011.

11 Lee Kaplan, "Rivka Carmi, President of Ben Gurion University, hails anti-Israel activity on her campus," *IsraCampus*, accessed May 27, 2011.

12 "President of Ben-Gurion University Collaborating with Communist Ideologue Jacob Katriel," *The Jewish Press Blog*, Sept. 29, 2007.

13 "Jewish Supporters of Refugee Rights Including the Palestinian Right of Return," The Middle East Crisis Committee, Woodbridge, Conn., Nov. 8, 2003.

14 "Anti-Israel Petitions Signed by Israeli Academics," *IsraCampus*, July 12, 2004.

15 See, for example, "Join the One-State Initiative," Palestine Justice Network, Apr. 23, 2011.

16 See, for example, "Where Truth Is Destiny," Zundelsite, Oct. 27, 2000.

17 *The Tehran Times*, Apr. 6, 2009.

18 Neve Gordon, "Cloud after Auschwitz," *The Nation*, Nov. 13, 2000.


19 "Shraga Elam and David Irving," Paul Bogdanor website, Mar. 13, 2003.

20 *The Jerusalem Post*, Dec. 31, 2008.

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Although no longer teaching in Israel, Ilan Pappé, formerly of the University of Haifa, perhaps best exemplifies the internal academic onslaught against the Jewish state. Pappé continues to make a career out of maligning Israel as an "ethnic cleanser" despite all evidence to the contrary.

The Hebrew University professor of linguistic education, Nurit Elhanan-Peled, has devoted much of her career to promoting the political agenda of the very same Palestinian terrorists who murdered her own daughter in a suicide bombing of a civilian Israeli bus.²² Many anti-Israel academics cheered on Hamas as it launched rockets at the civilians in Israel's south.²³ Others publicly endorsed Hezbollah's "legitimate resistance" when northern Israel was showered by Katyusha rock-

21 Seth J. Frantzman, "The Israeli Academy and the Gaza War," *IsraCampus*, Mar. 2009.

22 Gary Katz, "The Case of Nurit Peled-Elhanan," *IsraCampus*, Jan. 6, 2008.

23 Shlomo Sharan, "Our Inner Scourge: The Catastrophe of Israel Academics," The Ariel Center for Policy Research (ACPR, Shaarei Tikva), Sept. 2007; see, also, Arnon Soffer, "Bemalkodet Ha-Radicalizm Ha-Akademi," University of Haifa, 2007.

ets during the summer war of 2006.²⁴ Some are currently among the leaders of marches that call upon the world to prevent Jews from living in neighborhoods of East Jerusalem, where, they believe, Jews just do not belong.

THE DERSHOWITZ COUNTERATTACK

Probably the most dramatic exhibition of the problem came at the national assembly of the governors of Tel Aviv University in the spring of 2010. The keynote speaker invited to the affair was Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz. While left of center, Dershowitz is passionately pro-Israel and, at the same time, vehemently opposed to infringements upon academic freedom.

**Harvard's
Alan Dershowitz
gave a speech
denouncing
the homegrown,
anti-Israel cadre
of university
lecturers.**

Upon receiving an honorary doctoral degree at Tel Aviv University, Dershowitz gave a dramatic speech denouncing the homegrown, anti-Israel cadre of lecturers dominating Israeli universities.²⁵ He defended the rights of these academics to exercise freedom of speech—or, in his words, the “right to be wrong.”

But he also defended the rights of others to denounce and criticize them.

In no time, Dershowitz confronted the all-too-common refrain sounded by these scholars that they are only engaging in legitimate criticism of Israel. To the contrary, Dershowitz contended, these people were actually often engaged in delegitimizing Israel itself, calling for world boycotts against the Jewish state, and at times calling for its annihilation. They go so far, he stated, as to organize boycott campaigns by recruiting and leading teams of anti-Israel radicals.

Dershowitz then named several Tel Aviv University faculty, including some who were in Boston that same week attempting to organize a boycott against the Technion, Israel's main engineering university,²⁶ for supposedly being a cog in the Israeli “war machine.”

Without naming names, Dershowitz heaped scorn on TAU professor Shlomo Sand for his recent book, *The Invention of the Jewish People*,²⁷ which claims that there is actually no such thing as a Jewish people. Dershowitz went on to denounce those who insist that freedom of speech belongs only to people who agree with them and assailed those at Israeli universities who harass students who dare to disagree with forced-fed ideology, comparing this behavior to teachers who sexually harass students. He insisted that students, too, are entitled to academic freedom, which includes the right to disagree with their professors.

While such a peroration would ignite controversy anywhere, it was downright incendiary at Tel Aviv University, arguably home to the greatest concentration of tenured leftists teaching in Israel.²⁸ While the audience repeatedly interrupted him with loud applause, faculty members reportedly squirmed in their seats.²⁹

It did not take long for these academics to open fire in retaliation; within days, a group of TAU professors denounced Dershowitz and challenged his right to criticize them. Signatures for a petition were collected and published on a left-wing website. The petition essentially denied Dershowitz's right to freedom of speech, despite the pretence of some signatories to the contrary, by deriding his charges against specific academics as “bordering on incitement that can pose a clear and present danger to these members of staff.”³⁰

26 Ibid.

27 New York and London: Verso, 2010.

28 Sharan, “Our Inner Scourge: The Catastrophe of Israel Academics.”

29 For a webcast of the lecture, see “Opening Night, May 7,” Tel Aviv University, May 7, 2010.

30 “Mikhtav Havrei Segel Beuniversitat Tel Aviv Beinyan Neum Habela shel Alan D Dershowitz,” *Kibbush Magazine*, May 11, 2010.

24 Ran HaCohen, “A Case for Hizbullah?” Antiwar.com, Palo Alto, Calif., Aug. 13, 2003.

25 “Full Text of Alan Dershowitz's Tel Aviv Speech,” *Ha'aretz* (Tel Aviv), May, 12, 2010.

A quick look at the names on the petition illustrates the nature of the problem. Among the signatories claiming that Dershowitz's words criticizing the anti-Israel camp reminded them of "the dark regimes" in human history were:

Chaim Gans of TAU law school, who organized a petition demanding that Col. Pnina Baruch-Sharvit, head of the Israel Defense Forces international law division, be prevented from teaching a course in the school after her retirement from military service because her department (allegedly) legitimized strikes in which civilians were hurt or killed during Operation Cast Lead.³¹

Gadi Algazi, a historian at TAU who, among other activities, led a march of Israeli Arabs supporting Hezbollah terror.³²

Uri Hadar, a psychology professor, who recently organized a conference at TAU to support Hamas and Hezbollah.³³

Daniel Bar-Tal, an educational psychologist, who produces anti-Jewish propaganda for the U.N. and believes Zionism is an obstacle to peace.³⁴

ATTACK AGAINST FREEDOM OF SPEECH

As starkly demonstrated by the anti-Dershowitz petition, Israel's tenured radicals are not only vehemently anti-Israel but also staunchly anti-democratic. For them, academic freedom and freedom of speech means absolute protection of the right to "criticize" Israel but not to defend it.

McCarthyism has become the favorite rhe-

torical bludgeon wielded by Israeli academics to deny their critics the freedom of speech. This McCarthyism, they charge, endangers freedom of speech and democracy. So tenured academics should have the sacrosanct right to denounce and demonize all of Israel and also to smear non-leftist Israelis, including private citizens such as army officers, in the most lurid and vulgar ways. But those who respond by criticizing these critics are endangering democracy. In particular, the radical academics have denounced the watchdog web sites that monitor and cite what they say, as well as the Zionist student organization Im Tirtzu (If you will it) and members of the Israeli Knesset (parliament) who have criticized

the behavior of the radicals. In the strange world of Israeli academic radicals, the worst offense against academic freedom is the verbatim citing of what they actually say or write.

Some professors, most notoriously David Newman, dean of social sciences and humanities at Ben-Gurion University,³⁵ and Daniel Bar-Tal of the School of Education at Tel Aviv University,³⁶ have published calls for the suppression and silencing of critics. The president of TAU censored Mark Tanenbaum, a governor of the university's board, when the latter proposed an investigation into professors who use the school's name and funds when participating in forums of a political nature³⁷—behavior, incidentally, that is barred by the university's own bylaws. The Israeli media have also reported a growing number of demands from academics that the freedom of expression of their critics—and for that matter, of scholars deviating from politi-

**University of Haifa
faculty organized
a petition to
demand that army
officers be barred
from speaking
in schools.**

31 *Ha'aretz*, May 21, 2011.

32 *Ynet News*, Mar. 31, 2010.

33 Ben-Dror Yemini, "Incitement at Tel Aviv University or 'Voices from Gaza'?" *Ma'ariv* (Tel Aviv), Apr. 15, 2010.

34 Alon Ben Shaul, "It's the Zionists, Stupid," *IsraCampus*, accessed May 27, 2011.

35 See, for example, David Newman, "Bashing the Academic Left," *The Jerusalem Post*, Apr. 14, 2011; "Ben-Gurion University—David Newman," *IsraCampus*, Apr. 24, 2009.

36 Gerald Steinberg, "Right of Reply: Israel's Academic Left on the Attack," *The Jerusalem Post*, May 17, 2010.

37 *The Jerusalem Post*, May 12, 2010.

cally correct dogmas—be suppressed.³⁸

Thus, for example, when Yeruham Leavitt was teaching a class in medical ethics at Ben-Gurion University, he questioned the assertion that children raised by homosexual couples experience no adverse effects.

For this he was not only fired for “unacceptable thinking,” but the president of Ben-Gurion University, Rivka Carmi, went out of her way to defend the firing.³⁹ On the other hand, when a professor of sociology at the Hebrew University, Eyal Ben-Ari, was accused by several

Anti-Semitic propaganda is disseminated via a chat list under the auspices of the University of Haifa.

female students of having raped and sexually molested them, the university at first circled the wagons around him and only years later suspended him for two years without pay.⁴⁰

Tel Aviv University faculty members have participated in protests demanding that the campus Center for Iranian Studies be shut down because they feared its work could assist the United States and Israel in confronting Tehran.⁴¹ The radicals also opposed allowing an Israeli ex-general to speak there.⁴² In 2008, the student union at Tel Aviv University wanted to hold an exhibit protesting human rights abuses in China, but university officials ordered it shut down lest it offend Chinese diplomats.⁴³ Meanwhile, TAU has repeatedly hosted events organized by the Israeli Communist Party, held in campus facilities.

Academics from all across the country are now calling for a boycott of Ariel University Center in Samaria because it is located across the “Green Line.”⁴⁴ There have been no petitions though

to eliminate politicized programs of ideological indoctrination run by the radical Left inside many university departments. There have been petitions by left-wing faculty members to eliminate university programs for Israeli army officers, intelligence service officers, and police, as well as petitions to bar army officers from holding academic positions.⁴⁵ Similarly, a group of University of Haifa faculty from its school of education organized a petition to demand that army officers be barred from speaking in schools.

All too often, university administrations have colluded with this mindset. When Neve Gordon of Ben-Gurion University filed a harassment “strategic lawsuit against public participation” (SLAPP) against this author for criticizing his public, political activities and writings, Gordon was backed by the highest officials at the university. These evidently see nothing amiss with such attempts at suppressing freedom of speech for other academics who happen to dislike Gordon’s extremist opinions.⁴⁶

HIRING FOR UNIFORMITY IN THOUGHT

The Israeli campus has become thoroughly politicized with faculty hiring and promotion decisions subordinated to political bias. As noted in the 2001 *MEQ* article, scholars with mediocre academic records are often hired and promoted as acts of solidarity with the Left. There have also been allegations of malicious blocking and sabotaging of the academic careers of those with political views on the Right. Israeli academics recruited through this politicized process have misused their podiums to impose courses consisting of anti-Israel libel and venom on students.⁴⁷

38 See Benjamin Pogrund, “The Guardians of Israeli Academia,” *Ha’aretz*, Oct. 23, 2009; Nitza Berkovitch, “McCarthyism in Tel Aviv,” *YNet News*, Aug. 17, 2010.

39 *YNet News*, July 4, 2010.

40 *Ha’aretz*, Aug. 1, Aug. 5, 2008, Feb. 24, 2011.

41 *Israel Academia Monitor*, Apr. 23, 2006.

42 *YNet News*, Nov. 6, 2006; *Israel Academia Monitor*, Apr. 23, 2006.

43 *Epoch Times* (New York), Mar. 8, 2008.

44 *The Jerusalem Post*, Sept. 1, 2011.

45 Seth Frantzman, “Ivory Towers of Critique: The Philosophy and Political Science Departments at Tel Aviv University,” *IsraCampus*, Oct. 15, 2009.

46 Rivka Carmi, “Universities Are in the Footnotes,” *The Jerusalem Post*, May 28, 2011; *Ha’aretz*, Sept. 15, 2010. A SLAPP is a lawsuit that is intended to censor, intimidate, and silence critics by forcing them to bear costs involved in a legal defense.

47 Jacob Benshimon, “In-Classroom Indoctrination at the University of Michigan,” *FrontPage Magazine*, Apr. 29, 2008; *Israel Academia Monitor*, accessed June 7, 2011.

The manner in which this ideological hegemony is maintained over campuses is well known within the Israeli academic institutions even if the corruption has rarely been aired publicly. Consider a typical hiring or promotion procedure for an academic whose publication record consists mainly, or exclusively, of propaganda articles that bash Israel. Evaluation procedures are typically corrupted and politicized: An evaluation committee for the candidate is appointed, consisting entirely of like-minded faculty members who then typically request assessments from eight to ten “referees” from Israel and around the world. But all, or nearly all, of the referee letter-writers will themselves have identical anti-Israel sympathies and can generally be counted upon to write glowing

letters of support out of a sense of political solidarity. Ben-Gurion University seems to be the most accomplished institution in such practices.

Faculty chat lists in which Israeli professors post comments, especially in the social sciences, are invariably dominated by the self-defined “progressives.” The author was personally summoned by a rector of the University of Haifa, Yossi Ben Artzi, and threatened with disciplinary actions for using sarcasm in response to “bash-Israel” postings placed on the local professors’ chat list. The “Israel Social Science” chat list is routinely censored to limit postings critical of the Left while ideological postings by anti-Israel faculty members suffer from no such handicap and dominate the list.⁴⁸ For example, an ideological article by the left-leaning Hebrew University professor Yitzhak Galnoor attacking the exercise of



Not all Israeli students accept the anti-Zionist narratives of their professors. Here members of the student organization Im Tirztu rally in support of the Jewish state. The group is under assault by academics for the crime of cataloguing information about academic political bias, gleaned from course descriptions and syllabi.

academic freedom by critics of leftists in Israeli universities⁴⁹ was posted on the list while list manager David Levi-Faur refused to permit any response to it to appear.

Would-be non-leftist faculty can clearly see the political writing on the wall. They must choose either to toe the political line out of career self-interest or to muzzle themselves and maintain a low profile, at least until they reach senior academic ranks and often after that as well.⁵⁰ Thus political uniformity and the campus hegemony are perpetuated.

ABUSES IN THE CLASSROOM

Israeli administrators have long turned a blind eye to anti-Israel courses which are often manda-

48 Steven Plaut, “The Leftwing McCarthyism of Prof. Itzhak Galnoor,” *IsraCampus*, Oct. 13, 2009. Examples of post-Zionist domination of the chat list: “Chaim Gans: Professorim Negeed Chofesh Ha-Bitot,” Aug. 2, 2010; “Dubi Kanengisser: Post-Tzionut ba-Akademia Ha-Yisraelit,” Aug. 17, 2010.

49 Itzhak Galnoor, “Academic Freedom under Political Duress: Israel,” *Social Research*, Summer 2009, pp. 541-60.

50 Carmi, “Universities Are in the Footnotes”; *Ha’aretz*, Sept. 15, 2010.

tory for students.⁵¹ They have ignored growing reports that students are being harassed and penalized by faculty members when they dare to disagree with faculty political opining and indoctrination.⁵² When the Im Tirtzu movement issued reports documenting classroom intimidation and indoctrination of students,⁵³ the group was denounced by scores of faculty members and by the rectors at Ben-Gurion University, University of Haifa, and Tel Aviv University as McCarthyists and fascists.⁵⁴

Administrators have also refused to speak out against anti-Israel rallies, misrepresented as academic conferences, which take place almost

The most dramatic change on campuses has been the emergence of a patriotic, Zionist student movement.

weekly on Israeli campuses. When Islamist cleric Sheikh Ra'ed Salah spoke at the University of Haifa in June 2009, the university heads ordered that Jewish students be physically barred from entering the auditorium in which he spoke.⁵⁵ The cleric then called upon Arab students attending the lecture to become

“martyrs.” The following year the University of Haifa barred the sheikh from speaking, but Tel Aviv University responded by hosting him.⁵⁶

Meanwhile the level of in-classroom anti-Israel indoctrination conducted in Israeli universities has been steadily growing. Crusading against Israel has become the chief scholarly credential of a growing number of tenured Israeli academics.⁵⁷ Rigid, anti-Israel uniformity and monolithic

far-left consensus are to be found in many academic departments in Israeli universities, especially in the humanities, the softer social sciences, law, and education. There are some departments in which no Zionist or non-leftist is, in effect, permitted to teach.

In many university departments in Israel, academic pluralism means that anti-Israel opinion is preached and taught by a diverse set of faculty members—leftist Jews, Arabs, men, and women, all holding the same opinions—but not pluralism of ideas and ideological outlooks. All Israeli universities strive to expand the presence of Arab and female faculty members in the name of diversity, using affirmative action preferences. Yet none of them see anything wrong with the existence of entire departments in which there is not a single religiously observant faculty member or someone with writings from the Right side of the political spectrum.⁵⁸

The anti-Israel political activities of faculty often border on open support for treason. Dozens of tenured extremists⁵⁹ were active in celebrating Tali Fahima, an Israeli woman arrested for collaborating with terrorists and helping to plan terror attacks.⁶⁰ Many openly identified with convicted nuclear spy and traitor Mordechai Vanunu,⁶¹ or with the former Arab Knesset member Azmi Bishara, wanted for espionage and now in hiding outside Israel.⁶²

In a few cases, Israeli faculty members who have defamed army officers and other public figures as war criminals have caused their targets to cancel study and travel plans outside Israel for fear of being prosecuted on the weight of these smears.⁶³ Some of the most openly anti-Semitic propaganda on the planet, including much produced by neo-Nazis as well as open calls for the annihilation of Israel, is currently being dis-

51 Benshimon, “In-Classroom Indoctrination at the University of Michigan”; *Israel Academia Monitor*, accessed June 7, 2011.

52 *Ha'aretz*, Nov. 9, 2009.

53 Dan Illouz, “True Academic Freedom in Israel,” *Arutz Sheva* (Beit El and Petah Tikva), July 23, 2010.

54 *Ha'aretz*, Aug. 19, 2010. For negative responses, see *The New Centrist*, Feb. 7, 2010; “Israel’s Drift toward Fascism—More on Im Tirtzu,” Jews for Justice for Palestinians (London), Sept. 21, 2010; “When Zionism Is Portrayed at Fascism,” Dan Illouz website, Apr. 6, 2010.

55 *Canada Free Press*, June 19, 2009.

56 *YNet News*, June 24, 2009; *ibid.*, May 24, 2011.

57 Benshimon, “In-Classroom Indoctrination at the University of Michigan.”

58 *Ha'aretz*, Aug. 19, 2010.

59 Free Tali Fahima petition, Oct. 4, 2004.

60 *YNet News*, June 8, 2010.

61 Mordechai Vanunu petition, accessed June 8, 2011.

62 “Neither Dictates nor War,” petition supporting Bishara signed by Israeli academics with the list of signers; *Arab News* (Jeddah), May 3, 2007.

63 *The Guardian* (London), Oct. 27, 2009; *Arutz Sheva*, June 27, 2011; *YNet News*, Sept. 11, 2005, Feb. 27, 2006.

seminated via the ALEF List, an anti-Israel chat list operating under the auspices of the University of Haifa. Many of the worst anti-Semitic pronouncements disseminated by that list are posted on the “ALEF Watch” web site, run by IsraCampus.⁶⁴ These include endorsements of terrorism, calls for Israel to be exterminated, and Holocaust denial.

This anti-Israel bias and the accompanying suppression of dissident, pro-Israel opinion has been the focus of several recent studies receiving wide attention in the media. These include a survey of syllabi in political science courses, collected by the Im Tirtzu student organization,⁶⁵ and a similar report on sociology departments prepared by the Institute for Zionist Strategies.⁶⁶ Both studies claim to detect extreme bias and one-sided indoctrination in departmental courses, including mandatory courses.

CHANGE IN THE AIR?

The biggest change that has occurred since the 2001 Socrates article is that the Israeli public now is aware of tenured extremism. Public figures, members of the parliament, journalists, students, alumni, donors, and other academics are speaking up courageously, criticizing anti-Israel academics, and challenging the hegemony of the far Left over Israel’s four main liberal arts universities. There have been proposals in Israel’s parliament to require disclosure of sources of funding for radical, anti-Israel nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).⁶⁷ Israeli radical academics are active in all such groups. There have also been proposals for a law that would deny citizenship to those refusing to declare loyalty to Israel or who engage in extremist, anti-Israel activities.⁶⁸ A number of Knesset members and other political

leaders in Israel have repeatedly spoken out against the political activities of radical academics, including in NGOs, among them Danny Danon, Gideon Sa’ar (the Israeli minister of education), Alex Miller, and Michael Ben-Ari.⁶⁹ Sa’ar held special Knesset committee hearings on the seditious activities of faculty and political biases in Israeli universities.⁷⁰

The Knesset has considered bills directed against Israeli academics who issue calls for anti-Israel boycotts⁷¹ and probing human rights NGOs involved in anti-Israel propaganda activities.⁷² Other public figures, such as the mayor of the town of Omer in which many faculty members of Ben-Gurion University reside, have called for sanctions against universities that refuse to act against tenured radicals.⁷³

One sign of how far things have been transformed is the widespread willingness today to criticize Israel’s tenured foes by name in all of the Israeli mainstream media, with the daily *Ma’ariv* the most aggressive. The most consistent and effective critics of the anti-Israel radicals have been Ben-Dror Yemini⁷⁴ and Kalman Liebskind,⁷⁵ both at *Ma’ariv*. Watchdog web sites have arisen that monitor and document the anti-Israel activities of Israeli faculty members. The main such group is IsraCampus, operating as a sort of Israeli cousin to the Middle East Forum’s Campus Watch. Other groups and websites also follow the anti-Israel political activities of academics, including NGO

The Israeli public is losing patience with anti-Israel academics and demanding accountability from the universities.

64 ALEF Watch, IsraCampus, accessed June 8, 2011.

65 *Ha’aretz*, Aug. 17, 2010.

66 “Post-Zionism in the Academy,” Institute for Zionist Strategies, Jerusalem, accessed June 1, 2011.

67 Alana Goodman, “Is Israel’s Controversial NGO Law Simply a Foreign Agent Registration Act?” *Commentary*, Jan. 6, 2011.

68 Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Oct. 12, 2010; *YNet News*, Feb. 14, 2011.

69 *YNet News*, Jan. 5, 2011.

70 *Ibid.*, Nov. 2, 2010.

71 *The Guardian*, Jan. 5, 2011; Joseph Dana, “Will It Soon Be Illegal for Israelis to Support BDS?” +972 website, Feb. 15, 2011.

72 Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Jan. 12, 2011.

73 NRG website (*Ma’ariv*), June 2, 2011.

74 Ben-Dror Yemini, “Academic Brainwashing,” *Ma’ariv*, IsraCampus trans., Aug. 20, 2010.

75 *Arutz Sheva*, Jan. 11, 2011.

Monitor, headed by Gerald M. Steinberg of Bar-Ilan University.

But perhaps the most dramatic change on Israeli campuses has been the emergence over the past few years of a patriotic, Zionist student movement. Until three or four years ago, it was unusual to see Israeli university students take to the barricades except over the price of tuition or cafeteria food. The Arab student unions would regularly hold small anti-Israel protests and political activities, but Jewish students were rarely involved in campus political expression. Thanks to the Im Tirtzu movement, all that has changed. Largely the initiative of two eloquent and prolific Hebrew University students, Ronen Shoval and Erez Tadmor, Im Tirtzu is the dominant student ideological movement today on most Israeli campuses.⁷⁶

The term Im Tirtzu, means, "If you will it," and it is part of a longer mantra originally coined by Theodor Herzl as part of his proposal for creation of a Jewish state. The Im Tirtzu student movement has emerged as the most effective and vocal force drawing public attention to the abuses stemming from campus politicization.⁷⁷ Im Tirtzu leaders have testified in the Knesset and write frequently in the media; the movement regularly organizes counter-protests with Israeli flags and patriotic slogans in response to every anti-Israel demonstration organized by Arab and Jewish leftist students. Its members wear T-shirts to class with images of Herzl and Jabotinsky. It has called for pressure on Israeli universities, especially Ben-Gurion University,⁷⁸ to force campus officials to act against classroom politicization, and it has threatened to file Supreme Court petitions to achieve this.

Left-wing academics increasingly complain about Im Tirtzu students cataloguing information about political bias, gleaned from course descriptions and syllabi. The group's leaders have highlighted the fact that students from the center and right of the Israeli spectrum experience harassment from left-wing faculty.⁷⁹ In one infa-

mous incident, a student at Ben-Gurion University, Rachel Avraham, was threatened with penalties and a lowered grade by the anti-Zionist geography professor Oren Yiftachel if she refused to toe his ideological line.⁸⁰ Other harassment of student Zionists is even worse. In another incident, leftist students at Ben-Gurion University were photographed giving Heil Hitler Nazi salutes to pro-Zionist students at a campus rally following the Turkish flotilla raid⁸¹ while Hebrew University students used the Nazi salute during student council electioneering.⁸²

The Israeli public is losing patience with radical anti-Israel academics and demanding accountability from the universities regarding the use and misuse of taxpayer funds. Indeed, the awakening of public awareness in Israel (and outside it) over the past decade has been breathtaking. Internet web searches about the subject yield thousands of articles on numerous websites, both inside and outside of Israel, leading many leftist professors increasingly to complain about being "spied upon."⁸³ Other radicals may be exercising greater caution and circumspection as a result. While difficult to prove numerically, far-leftist academics now seem increasingly to perceive and complain about a drop in the willingness on the part of their fellow travelers in the anti-Israel camp to go public these days with anti-Israel statements and actions, to engage in open incitement against Israel, or to sign their names to openly anti-Israel and anti-Semitic petitions.

Still, the battle rages on. Depoliticizing the Israeli campus is yet a far-off dream. But as anger grows against Israel's tenured extremists, change is in the air.



76 Ibid., June 17, 2009.

77 *The Jerusalem Post*, Aug. 18, 2010.

78 *Ha'aretz*, Aug. 18, 2010.

79 Martin Sherman, "Channel 10 'Hamakor' on Im Tirtzu's efforts in combating post/anti-Zionist perspectives in Israeli academe," *Israel Academia Monitor*, Feb. 9, 2011.

80 Illouz, "True Academic Freedom in Israel"; Rachel Avraham, "Studying under Dr. Oren Yiftachel," *Israel Academia Monitor*, accessed June 8, 2011.

81 Haim Misgav, "Freedom to Give Nazi Salute," *YNet News*, Aug. 19, 2010.

82 *Arutz Sheva*, June 9, 2009.

83 Lincoln Z. Shlensky, "Neve Gordon: Assault on Academic Freedom," *Jewish Peace News*, Sept. 1, 2010; Neve Gordon, "Struggling over the Right to Struggle—An Assault on Israeli Academic Freedom and Liberal Values," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Aug. 26, 2010, and *Occupation Magazine*, Aug. 30, 2010.