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Editorial Article

Ivory Towers of Critique: The Philosophy and Political Science Departments at Tel Aviv University

By Seth Frantzman
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Philosophy and Political Science: Interpreters of Ideas and the State

Philosophy and Political Science form two of the major academic pillars that affirm the existence of the state and its identity. Unlike law or other disciplines, these two departments help to form the heart and soul of the university's relationship with the institutions, culture and actions of the state within which they are located. This was understood by the earliest philosophers, such as Plato, and by later social theorists, such as Max Weber.

The role of philosophy and political science departments therefore should be analytical and critical of the state. However as Prof. Gad Yair at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem has pointed out, "the state without social sciences is ruthless, social sciences without the state are useless."^[1] Thus the state and the social science and philosophy departments at its universities are in a symbiotic relationship. However, when one attempts to negate the other, either when the state suppresses the University, or when the University opposes the existence of the state and urges its destruction, this relationship, the delicate balance, is strained and destroyed, to the detriment of the students and society as a whole. There is, unfortunately, a strand of belief at Tel Aviv University that promotes staunch opposition not only to the university but to the Israeli state in general. As a result this relationship has become strained, with the contingent risk that the two disciplines at Tel Aviv University are becoming "useless" in their shrill and extremist behavior.

Dr. Anat Matar and Academic Freedom

As a point of departure consider the recent controversy over Dr. Neve Gordon of Ben-Gurion University urging "external pressure on Israel - including sanctions, divestment and an economic, cultural and academic boycott." He was joined in his call by Dr. Anat Matar of Tel Aviv University's department of Philosophy. In a letter to *Haaretz* published on August 27th she argued that "only when the Israeli society's well-heeled strata pay a real price for the continuous occupation, will they finally take genuine steps to put an end to it." She claimed that Israeli society was being torn apart by the "occupation" and that Academics had to "pay a price" to end that occupation; "The academic community has an important role to play in this process. Yet, instead of sounding the alarm, it wakes up only when someone dares approach the international community and desperately call for help."

Matar was helpful enough in her editorial to philosophize about whence academic freedom is derived; "The appeal to academic freedom was born during the Enlightenment, when ruling powers tried to suppress independent minded thinkers. Already then, more than 200 years ago, Immanuel Kant differentiated between academics whose expertise (law, theology, and medicine) served the establishment and those who had neither power nor proximity to power."

Matar went on to ask, "What is that academic freedom that so interests the academic community in Israel? When, for example, has it shown concern for the state of academic freedom in the occupied territories?" Matar claimed that Israeli university faculty members research "what the regime expects them to" and opposed the appointment of former army officers to university positions. She claimed that few people at the university protest the fact that the defense establishment funds programs at those universities and claimed, "only few lecturers speak up decisively against the occupation, its effect and the increasingly bestial nature of the State of Israel." Matar did not explicitly support the boycott of her university, but she insinuated very strongly that she not only supports Gordon's call, but that academic freedom is a myth in Israel, and therefore calls to boycott her own university would not harm that non-existent academic freedom.

On many levels Matar's argument falls flat. She claims that it is university faculty who must "pay the price" for the occupation. But rather than paying the price it seems Dr. Matar not only draws her salary happily every month from the state of Israel but has become a minor celebrity in international circles for her opposition to the policies (and existence) of Israel. Far from paying the price, the occupation is her

grindstone, a source for most of the attention she receives and a central part of her “narrative.” She claims that “few” raise their hands in protest at the university; however, as this study will show, her own department is massively politicized and involved in activism. Dr. Matar’s dislike of the fact that former soldiers might one day obtain positions at her university is part and parcel of a soft-bigotry that could potentially discriminate against, and certainly makes feel uncomfortable, people like Captain Pnina Radai, an Ethiopian Jew who served eight years in the IDF and completed a B.A and M.A through her army service. The likes of Dr. Matar, who speaks about the “well-heeled strata” of which she is a prominent member, would deny Ethiopian, Sephardic and Druze soldiers who served the state the opportunity to lecture at the university. When the established and well-heeled, like Dr. Matar, oppose the acceptance of soldiers who risked their lives for the state and who obeyed the law by going to the army, they engage in the very hypocrisy that they claim to be opposing: they engage in prejudice, suppression of freedom of thought, and they oppose, by extension, the laws of the very state from whose trough they take their living.

Tel Aviv University: A Case Study

There is no doubt that some departments at Tel Aviv University have a disproportionate number of academics with very harsh and strong words to say about and against Israel. TAU’s faculty excel in signing petitions. One of the more benign was devoted to “Academic Freedom,” where Israel was condemned for its system of “checkpoints, blockades, walls and fences [that] prevent thousands of students and teachers from leading a normal academic life” in the “occupied Palestinian territories.” Three out of the four organizers of the petition were from TAU. Furthermore all three of them were members of the Cohn Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Ideas. This single “institute” has all of 13 faculty and all but two of them signed this petition. Another more radical petition supporting Israelis who dodge military service garnered 9 of 13 of the members’ signature. Diversity of ideology and thought is not something promoted at Tel Aviv University’s Cohn Institute.

Broadening the examination of Tel Aviv University to include the Philosophy Department as a whole, whose radical Israel critique is led by Anat Matar and Anat Biletzky, will be part of this study. In addition attention will be placed on the TAU Political Science Department, whose Yoav Peled is an outspoken critic of Israel and signer of anti-Israel petitions. Peled is worth a special examination. He passes himself off as a mere critic of civil society in Israel but has claimed, “The obvious model for the transformation of the Israeli control system into a secular, democratic state is the transition experienced by South Africa.” The Second Intifada, in which more than 950 Israeli civilians were killed, was an “armed rebellion.” No human rights violations there. He calls Zionism a movement that was “from the 1880s to the birth of the Israeli state in 1948 was a variation of the European colonial movement.” Peled also happens to be a leading member in Israel’s communist party, HADASH. Peled is also a supporter of the ‘One-State Solution,’ in which Israel would cease to exist

Philosophy and Political Science are two disciplines that are intimately linked to the future of the State of Israel, and the ideas that lie at its foundation and its continued success as an intellectual gathering place of the Jewish people. When a University Department comes to the point where its leading members endorse mutiny and law breaking, where they “express our appreciation and support for those of our students and lecturers who refuse to serve as soldiers in the occupied territories,” it is a phenomenon that is worth examining, especially in a state such as Israel, where external arm threats pose an existential threat to the state itself. When the philosophers and the political theorists doubt the very legitimacy of their own country it is important to challenge those assumptions and examine the methods employed and the sources of the critique.

The foremost critic of Israel at Tel Aviv University’s Department of Philosophy is **Anat Matar**. She is not a greatly accomplished or diverse academic researcher. She received all of her degrees from the same institution, Tel Aviv University, where she currently lectures. Her main publications include, “*From Dummett’s Philosophical Perspective*,” “*Analytic Philosophy: rationalism vs. romanticism*.” Both are in an unrefereed volume co-edited with Anat Biletzki, a colleague of Matar at TAU, entitled *The Story of Analytic Philosophy*.^[2] Her last significant publication is “Decontextualizing Context,” in P. Weingartner, et al (eds), *The Role of Pragmatics in Contemporary Philosophy*. All of these publications were published between 1997 and 1998. She appears to have done very little important academic work since. Matar teaches an introduction to philosophy course and lectures on analytic philosophy, among other subjects. Her main areas of interest, along with analytic philosophy, are metaphilosophy and the philosophy of language.

However Matar makes up for her lack of research activity with her great involvement in politics, especially in opposing the actions of Israel. She supported Hampshire College in the U.S. in its decision to divest from Israel. She opposed hiring by TAU of IDF Colonel Pnina Sharvit-Baruch at the university’s Faculty of Law. Sharvit-Baruch, one of the IDF’s few high ranking female officers, had gone through much in her career to break through glass ceilings and advance. She was astonished to discover that she would receive opposition from colleagues at a major Israeli university, a progressive institution, some of whose supposedly “progressive” members attempted to place a new glass ceiling over her head.

Matar also distributed a photo of an Israeli army officer and accused him publicly of murder. This prompted an investigation of Matar by the Attorney General of Israel. She supported the boycott of her own institution by UNISON when it voted for a total boycott of Israel in 2007.^[3] During the debate over the boycott she signed a letter stating the following: “We are sending you a letter we wrote in support of the proposal. We circulated the letter among our networks and in a few days gathered 86 signatures of Israeli citizens. We decided to stop gathering more signatures and to send you the letter today so that you will have time to circulate the letter among your constituents before your June 19th

meeting. We wish you well in your efforts, and thank you very much for taking action to try to bring the Israeli occupation to an end. We hope to keep in touch and we would be very happy to cooperate further with you on this matter.”

Furthermore the letter she signed claimed, “We Palestinian (sic) and Jewish citizens of Israel strongly support the proposal for UNISON to implement an economic and cultural boycott of Israel. We commend this proposal, especially in the wake of the historic decision by the University and College Union in Britain and similar proposals by the Architects for Peace and Justice in Palestine and the Congress of South African Trade Unions. Actions such as these have an immediate impact within Israel. They receive wide coverage in the mainstream media and provide an extremely effective tool in our joint struggle to bring the occupation to a just end... We are Israeli citizens active against our country’s occupation of Palestine... realize that the occupation will truly end only when its cost becomes higher than its gain for Israeli society. As Israelis, we stress that divestment and boycott actions taken by individuals or organizations against the occupation are neither Anti-Semitic nor Anti-Israel. We also recognize that boycott, divestment and sanctions constitute one of the few effective methods left to civil society in the absence of intervention by governments and official policy makers.”

In fact it seems Matar spent much of the last decade signing petitions against her own country and her own academic institutions. In April of 2003 she had signed a petition titled, “An urgent appeal for international involvement.” It claimed, “The elimination of the Palestinian national presence west of the Jordan River is implicit in the long-term aims of the Israeli right wing. A violent, apocalyptic driving-out of the entire Palestinian population is explicitly advocated by the rightmost political circles.” On January 22, 2008 she signed another letter supporting the Methodist church’s boycott of Israel; “We, as Israelis, express our support of the 2004 resolution adopted by the General Conference of the Methodist Church that states ‘The United Methodist Church opposes continued military occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, the confiscation of Palestinian land and water resources, the destruction of Palestinian homes, the continued building of illegal Jewish settlements and any vision of a Greater Israel that includes the occupied territories and the whole of Jerusalem and its surroundings [Book of Resolutions, 2004, #12].’ Should the Methodist Church in the wake of the above resolution elect to divest from companies that enable the occupation to continue, we the undersigned shall applaud your courageous initiative, and fervently hope that it will set an example for many others to follow.”^[4]

Another ongoing petition she signed states: “We, faculty members from a number of Israeli universities, wish to express our appreciation and support for those of our students and lecturers who refuse to serve as soldiers in the occupied territories. Such service too often involves carrying out orders that have no place in a democratic society founded on the sanctity of human life... We hereby express our readiness to do our best to help students who encounter academic, administrative or economic difficulties as a result of their refusal to serve in the territories. We call on the University community at large to support them.”

In yet another petition she noted, “As academics and citizens of the State of Israel, whatever our political opinions may be, we see ourselves as having a duty to fight for the academic freedom of our Palestinian colleagues.”

Petition signing has not been her only involvement in political activism. She has also put her body where her pen has been by participating in violent protests. In a September 2005 protest at the Arab village of Bil’in she was arrested by the Israeli army for her violent actions.

Matar has been joined in most of her activism by her fellow philosopher and TAU faculty member **Anat Biletzki**. Whereas Matar is the more extreme of the two, Biletzki is the more senior. She was born in 1952 in Jerusalem. She joined her department in 1979. Unlike Matar she has taught widely abroad, including at Harvard and Cambridge. Her publications include *Paradoxes* (1996), *Talking Wolves: Thomas Hobbes on the Language of Politics and the Politics of Language* (1997), *What Is Logic?* (2002), *(Over)Interpreting Wittgenstein* (2003). Like Matar she takes an interest in analytic philosophy.

Biletzki claims to have been an early peace activist. She was a founder of a peace organization called “The Twenty-First Year” during the First Intifada (apparently referring to 1988, the 21st year after 1967). She was involved in an organization called “Open Doors” which supported Palestinian prisoners. Since 1996 she has “been active” in Ha-Campus lo-Shotek (the campus is not silent), a pro-Palestinian “peace” group, which still works on Israel on campuses but which was more active in the 1990s. According to a biography of her by MIT’s program on Human Rights and Justice, “She is on the board of FFIPP-Faculty for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, was chairperson of the board of BTselem - the Israeli Information center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories (2001-2006). She has often been cited as an important and influential Israeli personality by, among others, *Globes*, an Israeli business journal. According to the MIT biography she “invests most of her efforts in public education for human rights and peace.”^[5]

She supported Hampshire College’s decision to divest from Israel. She led the petition on the “courage to refuse” which Matar signed. She signed the “academic freedom” petition quoted above.

She spoke at MIT on “Human Rights and Politics in Israel-Palestine” in October 2007. According to a report by the Shalem Center, “Biletzki was critical of the idea of a Jewish state which she distinguished from a ‘Jewish homeland.’ As she explained: ‘Israel is not a democracy either within or without the Green Line [i.e., West Bank],’ and is ‘proto-fascist in many ways,’ though it should not be compared to Nazi Germany for ‘pragmatical-rhetorical considerations.’ In other words, it resembles Nazi Germany but it is better not to say so. Biletzki continues: ‘We cop out by talking about 1967 and the ‘occupation,’ because then we don’t have to talk about what has been called ‘Israel’s right to exist.’”^[6] As an expert

in rhetoric, as a philosopher, she should know what “rhetorical considerations” means.

Biletzki and Matar form the two pillars of TAU’s Philosophy Department hostility to Israel. But the department has numerous other voices who have been critical of the state and have been petition signers against it. Foremost among them is **Prof. Ovadia Ezra**, currently chair of the department, who signed both the misnamed “academic freedom” petition for Palestinians and also the “courage to refuse” petition that supported mutinous soldiers who disobeyed the law out of political ideology. **Prof. Zvi Tauber** signed the petition appealing for international involvement and also the “courage to refuse” petition.

Dr. Hagi Kenaan signed the “courage to refuse” petition which, if we recall, claims, “We, faculty members from a number of Israeli universities, wish to express our appreciation and support for those of our students and lecturers who refuse to serve as soldiers in the occupied territories. Such service too often involves carrying out orders that have no place in a democratic society founded.” **Ariel Meirav** also signed the petition. **Prof. Ruth Manor** signed both the “courage to refuse” petition and the “academic freedom” petition.

Prof. Joseph Agassi, Prof. Marcelo Dascal, Prof. Eli Dresner, Prof. Eli Friedlander, Dr. Galia Pat-Shamir and Prof. Ruth Weintraub have signed the “academic freedom” petition on behalf of Palestinian.

In all, Tel Aviv University’s department of Philosophy has two major activists who have signed the most radical petitions and supported the most radical anti-Israel activities, including calling on soldiers to have the “courage to refuse,” and requesting international boycotts of their own university. A further three have supported international involvement against Israel and signed more benign petitions. In total only 15 faculty have not signed any of the petitions while 13 have, meaning the department appears to be about equally balanced, however this ignores the fact that several of the faculty who are not activists are retired or visiting lecturers. Removing them brings down the number of faculty not signing petitions to 10. Thus the youngest faculty, particularly the up-and-comers, as well as the chair of the department, are at the forefront of “activism” in the “peace movement,” which means, many times encouraging soldiers to break the law and refuse orders.

The Cohn Institute of History and Philosophy: Groupthink and critique

The activism of TAU’s philosophy department might be seen to be relatively within the bounds of what an average department might produce, a few radicals and numerous other academics, were it not for another related philosophy department known as **The Cohn Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Ideas**. It is this institute that might be considered TAU’s school of radicalism, where its most extreme voices have gathered and where almost every single faculty member has been active in radical Israel-critical petitions.

The institute doesn’t seem to be a school of activism on the face of it. Founded in 1983 by Professor Yehuda Elkana and Professor Amos Funkenstein it was supposed to be a research and graduate teaching institute “within the framework of the School of History.”^[7] It only became the Cohn institute in 1989 when it received a sizable endowment. Today it has 11 permanent staff and 4-5 temporary and junior scholars. It calls itself the “largest and most dynamic center for the History of Science and the Social Studies of Knowledge in the country” and “one of the five to six most active in the world.” The former statement stems from the fact that it appears to be the only institute of its kind and the latter statement is certainly true if the word “active” means active in politics and in opposing the state in which it resides.

The institute claims to focus on a wide variety of things such as “History of Science and Intellectual History of the Western World; Philosophy of Science, with emphasis on the periods following the Scientific Revolution; The Anthropology of Knowledge; History and Philosophy of Biology; History of Technology; History and Philosophy of Ancient and of Modern Mathematics and Cultural studies.” But in fact it seems that its secondary research interest is what it engages in primarily, namely “Cultural Studies, with emphasis on Critical Aspects of Modern Western Culture and in the Israeli context, a critical study of Science and Judaism.”

In December of 2008 the Cohn institute also began to play host to a “Minerva Center.” The press release noted that “Professor Rivka Feldhay from the Cohn Institute at Tel Aviv University, together with her colleagues Professor Adi Ophir from the Cohn Institute and Dr. Raef Zreik from the Faculty of Law, Haifa University, have won the competition for a new Minerva Center for the Humanities. With an endowment of 4 Million Euro from the Minerva Foundation to be matched by an equivalent sum from Tel Aviv University, the new center will be a basis for three ambitious research programs in the humanities.”

The Minerva Center, like the institute in general, claimed in its initial press release to be primarily interested in the humanities, and reviving them, a worthy goal; “The decline in status and public support of the humanities is not unique to Israel, but in this country where higher education has always relied on public funding, the humanities have been particularly damaged by the recent withdrawal of the state from its traditional role as the main source of funding for academic institutions.” However the press statement went on to note the six core areas that the center would be devoted to. The fifth principal is “encouraging the use of Arabic as a language of research, discussion and publication.” So why is “encouraging the use of Arabic” essential to what Cohn is doing, would that not usually be something associated with a major Arab University, such as Al-Azhar or Bir Zeit?

The interest in Arabic is part and parcel of what the Minerva center actually is. The Minerva Center at

TAU takes its name from **The Minerva Center for Human Rights** at Hebrew University which was originally founded in 1993 by members of Hebrew University's faculty of law and the Truman Center for the Advancement of Peace as the "Center for Human Rights." At that time it was funded principally by the Ford Foundation[8], a foundation named after Henry Ford, the carmaker and viciously anti-Semitic author of 'The International Jew.' In 1997 with the support of the German Ministry of Education, it became renamed the Minerva Center for Human Rights. It claims its goal is to "promote awareness and to enhance research and academic interest in human rights." [9] It allots research grants and fellowships, hosts conferences and discussions, and runs "public education" programs. It is located within the Hebrew University's faculty of law.

Currently it receives funding from the Minerva Foundation in Germany, the Ford Foundation, the New Israel Fund (NIF), the Konrad Adenauer foundation, the United States Institute for Peace, the European Commission and the Faculty of law and the Truman Center at Hebrew University. It partners with the NIF's Shatil 'training program' for NGOs, which principally 'trains' NGOs that denounce Israel, and Bimkom, an organization that primarily supports only Palestinians and Arabs.[10] Through its partnerships it provides 'human rights' training for Palestinian teachers, mostly teaching them how to oppose Israel. It is currently involved with Bimkom in a research project whose goal is to study the Palestinian Arab village of Isawiyeh in East Jerusalem and help it prepare a land use plan for "development." [11] The Minerva Center, it should be pointed out, has never advised a Jewish municipality, even the most poverty-stricken ones like Kiryat Malachi, on planning and land use. Minerva claims that it is involved with "diverse disciplines" and "different sectors." The problem is that they are all far-leftist ones. The Minerva center at Hebrew University is home to numerous radical Israel-critics such as **Prof. Mordechai Kremnitzer, Dr. Yuval Shany, Dr. Daphna Golan, Prof. Eyal Benvenisti, Professor David Kretzmer**, all major activists in Israel's legal-academic faculty (Pro-Bono for Palestine Scholarship, law, lawyers, European government funding and the internal legal campaign against Israel).

The advent of a Minerva Center at TAU's Cohn institute may shed some light on what is actually going on at the Institute. It is worthwhile to give a survey of the faculty currently at the center.

It currently has 13 faculty (although its "about" page claims it only has 11 permanent ones, it is not clear why there is a disparity). Two of the faculty are prominent researchers connected with German Departments, **Moshe Zuckerman** and **Jose Brunner** (see A Strange Trauma: Israeli scholars of German, the Nazis, and the "Nakba": The German departments at the Israeli universities[12]). One time director of the TAU Minerva center, Jose Brunner, signed a 2003 petition calling for European intervention in Israel to prevent the destruction of the Palestinian people. In August of 2008 he participated in a one-sided workshop entitled 'Creating Change Advocates: Palestinian & Israeli Professionals in Dialogue and Action' at Neve Shalom. The workshop was "made possible with the generous support of USAID and the American people in cooperation with the School for Peace at NSWAS and Hewar." Moshe Zuckermann, born in 1949 in Tel Aviv, author of eight books, who headed the center from 2000-2005. In his 'Building a Wall,' which originally appeared as 'Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte,' in the weekly newspaper, *Das Parlament*, he discussed Israel's separation fence in the September 2, 2002 issue. He noted that Arafat had called the wall a "policy of Apartheid" and that "the wall is devised above all to constrict entire Palestinian villages in which viable Palestinian agricultural land has been seized." He spoke of a lack of peace "driving Israelis to regression and numerous Palestinians in desperate acts of violence." For him every political party outside of Meretz was 'the other,' and he stated about the Israeli Right: "They also want the brutal recapture of Palestinian cities in the West Bank under the pretext of 'shattering terror,' which has almost completely *de facto* eliminated, or at least debilitated, the power apparatus of the Palestinian authorities and consequently Arafat's ability to act." He praised the bi-national state idea, in which Israel would cease to exist as a Jewish state.

Moving beyond Zuckerman and Brunner one finds that the current director of the Cohn Institute, **Leo Corry** supported the "courage to refuse" petition as well as the "academic freedom" and "call for international involvement" petitions. A seemingly mild mannered figure whose research includes the modern history of Algebra and the philosophy of math, he added his name to a petition that claimed "Israeli society pays a high price for the attempts of its politicians to extend the Israeli domination, and for their addiction to territorial expansion." [13] It claimed the Ariel Sharon had a "life long vision" of "greater Israel," a claim contradicted by recent revelations by Dov Weissglas, his advisor, and by the disengagement from Gaza.[14] In fact six additional faculty at the institute supported these same three petitions. These include, **Prof Rivka Feldhay, Prof. Giedon Freudenthal, Dr. Iris Fry, Dr. Snait Gisses, Prof. Eva Jablonka and Prof. Adi Ophir.** **Dr. Menachem Fisch** also signed the "courage to refuse" petition. The only non-signers of petitions were **Dr. Yitzhak Ben-Israel** and **Dr. Ido Yavetz.** Feldhay participated in a 2003 "discourse on current affairs" at PASSIA, a pro-Palestinian organization. At the round table the participants discussed "de-colonization" in Iraq, "Christian Zionism" and they agreed that "Sharon's policies, they said, have succeeded in legitimizing further oppression and killing." In addition the looked with "favor" on the rise of the Islamic movement, which is to say Hamas. They spoke of the Palestinians "dreams" but they could only admit that an "Israeli identity" exists.[15]

While the institute spoke of "diverse" academic backgrounds and broadening "intellectual horizons" it appears there is an extraordinarily large amount of group-think taking place at the institute. It appears as if the institute walks in lockstep to a similar political tune.

In Contrast to the Philosophy Department and the Cohn Institute, the Political Science Department at TAU's faculty are relatively tempered in their criticism of the state which supports their research. Only three signed the "academic freedom" petition and only one has shown a consistent pro-Palestinian agenda.

Yoav Peled is an accomplished academic who researches Israeli politics, nationalism and ethnicity. He has written two books, *Class and Ethnicity in the Pale: The Political Economy of Jewish Workers' Nationalism in Late Imperial Russia* and *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* with Gershon Shafir. He has edited three other books and written a variety of articles. He writes often on issues related to the Palestinians, such as an article in *Theoretical Inquiries in Law* entitled 'Justice and the Right of Return of the Palestinian Refugees'. He has also authored 'The End of Palestine ? Debating Middle East Solutions' in *The New Left Review* and 'Ethnic Democracy and the Legal Construction of Citizenship: Arab Citizens of the Jewish State' in *The American Political Science Review*.

Yoav's interest and sympathy for the Palestinians has led him to write about what they "really" believe. In one article he notes that "despite its rhetoric, the two-state solution had been its [the PLO] real aim at least since 1974."^[16]

He speak so the Second Intifada, in which some 1,000 Israelis were killed, most of them civilians, as Palestinians encountering "a deliberately violent over-reaction by the Israeli military and turned into an armed rebellion." Thus suicide bombing, which he speaks of being merely part of Israeli "popular consciousness" (i.e memory), as if it were not indeed a main part of the terrorist war against Israeli civilians, was merely a reaction, the Palestinian bares no responsibility. Peled tells readers that "the prospects for a viable, sovereign Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza are practically non-existent (if they ever existed at all)." Therefore, because of Israeli actions once again, "As a result, the old PLO programme, of establishing one secular, democratic state in the entire territory of Mandatory Palestine has been revived, primarily among Palestinian intellectuals inside and outside the region." The Peled narrative places all the onus on Israel whereas he sees the Palestinians somehow secretly embracing a separate state in the 1970s and only later deciding the really wanted a state in all of the territory, including Israel. In embracing the one-state solution, in which Israel becomes a Palestinian State with a Muslim majority, he supports the "merit" of extreme anti-Israel author Virginia Tilley. Peled even accepts her description of an "ethnic-cleansing" of the Palestinians. In his writing he openly identifies with these one-state solution advocates and puts himself outside Israel, noting "[Mona] Younis's [a Palestinian historian] clear-headed analysis is based on the realistic premise that the one-state solution contradicts the most essential aims of Zionism and would have to be imposed on the Zionists in order to be implemented." He speaks of "Zionist colonial settlers" and "the obvious model for the transformation of the Israeli control system into a secular, democratic state is the transition experienced by South Africa."^[17] For Peled the "ethno-nationalist" state of Israel seemingly must be dismantled.^[18] It is no surprise that Prof. Peled has been an avid petition signer, calling for international intervention and supporting soldiers who refuse to serve in the territories.

Conclusion: The role of TAU's Philosophy and Political Science Departments in opposing the State which protects them

The importance of Philosophy and Political Science to the continuing functioning of the state is apparent. The two disciplines help provide needed analysis, critique and ideas for the development of politics and political theory. Many of the ideas central to the Western World and its embrace of citizenship and democracy have originated in these disciplines. However at Tel Aviv University an increasing number of academics no longer embrace these ideas. In their political activism on behalf of the Palestinians they have come to support a radical Islamist regime where citizenship, democracy and an open society are non-existent. In their support for such radical concepts as a "one state solution" and their call for divestment and boycott of their own institutions they help to oppose the very democratic civil society which they claim to be supporting. This is an unfortunate and irresponsible development. In a society where few people enroll in the army and where peace reigns there are few ramifications when leading academics expound on the "courage to refuse" orders. But a country continually threatened by terrorism and whose existence is called into question by foreign leaders the "courage" to refuse orders reeks less of "courage." That a leading academic institution is so politicized against the very state that guarantees its security and so many of its most active academics have lost faith in their state to the degree that they demand international intervention speaks to a very real breakdown in the understanding of the academic's relationship to the state and the academic's responsibility. It is worthwhile to return to the statement 'social sciences without the state are useless'. Some scholars at TAU see only the first portion that 'the state without social sciences is ruthless', except in this case there is an ample dose of social sciences and yet these scholars still believe their state to be ruthless. In negating the first principle they logically have decided that perhaps social sciences can exist without the state and this has led to the radical support for the dismantling of the state, foreign colonial intervention and calling on soldiers to refuse orders. This is an unfortunate and irresponsible conclusion and one that has a continuing worrisome impact on the state of Israel and the training of its up and coming minds.

Notes

[1] Commencement ceremony speech, June 2006.

[2] See her biography at <http://www.tau.ac.il/humanities/philosophy/segel/Matar.html>

[3] See the UNISON boycott at <http://www.labournet.net/world/0706/israelet1.html>.

[4] See the boycott support letter at <http://unitedmethodistdivestment.com/LetterSupportIsraelis.htm>

[5] See her biography at <http://web.mit.edu/phrj/fellows.html>

- [6] See a description at <http://www.shalemcenter.com/print-article.php?aid=356>.
- [7] See biography at <http://www.tau.ac.il/~cohn/>
- [8] Minerva Center for Human Rights, <http://law.mscc.huji.ac.il/law1/minerva/english/background.htm>.
- [9] <http://law.mscc.huji.ac.il/law1/minerva/english/background.htm>
- [10] <http://isracampus.org.il/third%20level%20pages/editorial%20-%20Seth%20Frantzman%20-%20inside%20Bimkom.pdf>
- [11] Minerva website, <http://law.mscc.huji.ac.il/law1/minerva/english/background.htm> and links.
- [12] See a Essay at IsraCampus:
[http://www.isracampus.org.il/ExtraFiles/Seth Franzman - A strange trauma - German at Israeli U.pdf](http://www.isracampus.org.il/ExtraFiles/Seth%20Frantzman%20-%20A%20strange%20trauma%20-%20German%20at%20Israeli%20U.pdf)
- [13] For Leo Corry's research interests see his online biography, <http://www.tau.ac.il/~corry/>.
- [14] For the text of the petition see <http://www.jerusalemmites.org/appeal/7.htm>. Also for Weissglass' comments see Amiran Cohen, 'Weissglas, Decision to mark settlement produce followed M&S massive return', Haaretz, September 6, 2009. "Now that we've left the Gaza Strip, we will give back the rest of the territories sooner or later, and every single settler will have to leave," he said.
- [15] For the full text of the notes on the discussion see 'Discourse on Current Affairs', <http://www.passia.org/meetings/2003/May1-2003-Text.htm>.
- [16] See Peled, 'Zionist Realities' in New Left Review, 38, March-April 2006. <http://www.newleftreview.org/?view=2606>
- [17] Ibid, <http://www.newleftreview.org/?view=2606>
- [18] Review of Shafir and Peled's Being Israeli, <http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/cjscopy/reviews/israeli.html>

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