

The Link

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Q: What can happen if I
say something in class
critical of Israel?

A: One of your students
could report you to the
school authorities and
have your name put on an
Internet blacklist.

Q: So what?

A: So you could be denied
tenure, lose your job,
have your computer com-
promised by thousands of
e-mails, even receive
death threats.

Middle East Studies Under Siege

By Joan W. Scott

Joan W. Scott is Harold F. Linder professor of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, N.J. Her most recent book is "Parite': Sexual Equality and the Crisis of French Universalism." She served as the chair of the American Association of University Professors' Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure until June 2005. She remains active on the committee as a consultant.



—Photo by Randy Hagadorn

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About This Issue

The last article we devoted to Middle East studies was back in 1985. The Middle East Studies Association, a national association of academics, had just passed a resolution calling on the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith to disown a list of names that implied that some American academics were pro-Arab propagandists, who used their "anti-Zionism" to mask their "deeply felt anti-Semitism."

Twenty years later, blacklists still exist. Only now they're digitized. Now they come with spam and spoofing, worms and viruses, and all manner of cyber shenanigans.

Monitoring this latest assault on academic freedom was the task of a special committee set up in 2001 by the American Association of University Professors. The chair of that committee, Professor Joan Scott, came to our attention when she spoke this past September at a meeting in New Jersey of the Princeton Middle East Society. We wasted no time in inviting her to write for *The Link*.

Many academicians have written for us over the past 39 years, but few so movingly as James Graff, professor of moral and political philosophy at the University of Toronto's Victoria College. Jim was an international advocate for Palestinian rights, especially the rights of Palestinian children. In 1993 he authored our May-June issue, "An Open Letter To Mrs. Clinton," in which he asked the then-first lady for her help both in ending Israel's practice of shooting, beating, and de-educating an entire generation of youngsters, and in addressing the special needs which these practices generated. Jim died this past October. For much of his later life, he walked with a cane, his sight being very poor. When it came to things that mattered, though, Jim Graff's sight was remarkable.

Our Book & Video selections may be found on pages 13-15.

John F. Mahoney
Executive Director

Shortly after the terrorist attacks on the trade towers in September 2001, the American Association of University Professors (A.A.U.P.) set up a special committee to report on Academic Freedom in a Time of National Emergency. (For the text of this report see www.aaup.org.) I was a member of that committee and, at the time, chair of A.A.U.P.'s committee on academic freedom and tenure.

A year later, on October 4, 2002, *The New York Times* carried a story about the special committee's work and I was quoted in it as stating "There are many more examples of attacks on critics of Israel than on students who are pro-Israel." My comment was based on reported incidences in newspapers and magazines, and on conversations we had had with faculty and students on a large number of campuses.

In response I got several, quite similar e-mails challenging my comment and demanding concrete proof for it. One e-mailer, who identified himself as a writer from the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Missouri, asked to see my "data" for his ongoing research on "the polarization of campuses." I replied that we were in the process of assembling data, that my comment was based on a "rough impression," and that I would be back in touch with him when I had more information.

Shortly after that, a friend forwarded me an e-mail from a right wing pro-Israeli list serve. In it the same man who had asked to see my data boasted that he had trapped me into admitting that I spoke on the basis of a "rough impression" and that he could now publicly denounce me as a bad social scientist since I had no hard data on which to make my claim. But he hesi-

tated to do so—here was the ethical dilemma he was sharing with his allies—because his impersonation of a scholar would then have to be revealed. “I told her I was a researcher,” he said, “but I’m not; I’m an activist devoted to ridding our campuses of the pro-Palestinian presence.”

I tell this story because it was my personal introduction to the well-organized lobby that, on campus and off, has been systematically attacking Middle East studies programs under various guises in order to achieve the end my e-mailer so clearly articulated. In this article I refer to this lobby in several ways, sometimes as the Israeli lobby or the pro-Israel lobby, although it should be noted that it is a lobby that has a particular position on Israeli politics, does not represent all Israelis, and is not the only representative of Israel. Its self-definition as the Israeli or pro-Israel lobby refuses this complexity; it insists that it represents “Israel,” as if current policies were the only ones possible, the only way to defend the right of that state to exist. Because I want to refuse the idea that this right-wing lobby represents “Israel” or is the only way to be “pro-Israel,” I also refer to the lobby as pro-occupation, by which I mean it is in favor of current Israeli policy. That seems to me a more precise description, though it is a more awkward locution.

Although this lobby and its activism antedates September 11, it has become far more visible, efficient, and ruthless since then. It has gained powerful allies in Congress, has been able to take advantage of the provisions of the USA Patriot Act, and has, in collaboration with the tabloid media, succeeded in terrifying some liberal university administrators by charging that bias and anti-Semitism are rampant on their campuses. It’s tempting to draw a picture of a vast interlocking conspiracy—and it probably would not be all that far-fetched. But my commitment to serious social science, though not to quantification,

suggests I take a slightly different tack, identifying the contexts which have enabled my e-mail correspondent and his colleagues to do their work and to find, sometimes unlikely, allies for their campaign.

The assault on Middle East Studies scholars and programs, well underway at the end of the 1990’s (vigilant attention to Edward Said’s every action and word is only one example) was, in a sense, legitimized by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. In the period immediately after the attacks Muslims were quickly identified with terrorism and there was an outpouring of racist antagonism. These were not necessarily organized by pro-occupation groups, but they created a climate in which anti-Palestinian sentiment could be encouraged as part of a general condemnation of Arabs and of Islam.

For example, a week after the attacks, at Orange Coast College, in Costa Mesa, California, Professor Ken Hearlson, a conservative, born-again Christian, was accused of calling his Muslim students Nazis, terrorists and murderers. And there were other incidents of this kind.

In the summer of 2002, when the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill made a book, “Approaching the Qur’an: The Early Revelations” by Haverford College religion professor Michael Sells, mandatory reading for all incoming students, protests ensued. A lawsuit was brought by a Virginia-based, conservative Christian group, Family Policy Network, representing, among others, three incoming freshmen, two Christian and one Jewish. In addition, the lower house of the North Carolina legislature sought to punish the university. The lawsuit demanded that the assignment be dropped in the name of freedom of religion, because it was taken to be advocacy for Islam rather than, as intended by the university, an attempt to educate students about an increasingly important world religion. Although the lawsuit and legislation were dropped (Chancellor Molly Broad stood her ground in a magnificent de-

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fense of academic freedom), the Family Policy Network filed another lawsuit to bar a conference on campus which it claimed endorsed Islam.

Also in the summer of 2002, in Colorado, state legislators and the governor urged the administrations of Colorado College and the University of Colorado at Boulder to withdraw an invitation to Palestinian spokesperson Hanan Ashrawi to speak on their campuses. The administrations held firm and the lectures occurred without incident. These were examples of local, popular reactions to 9/11, but they show clearly the tendency to treat anything Middle Eastern as a threat. In this period, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, already part of an American story, acquired new significance: the defense of Israel became ever more associated with the war against terror.

THE USA PATRIOT ACT

The war against terror was quickly launched in Afghanistan and then in Iraq. Its domestic front has been implemented by the USA Patriot Act, passed hurriedly in October, 2001. Some parts of the Act, such as the broadening of the legal definition of terrorism and the criminalization of certain kinds of association, do not have sunset or expiration provisions. Others parts, which give the government widened powers of surveillance, were set to expire by the end of 2005 unless reauthorized by Congress. But Congress was divided: the House wanted to give the government wider investigative powers, while the Senate wanted to add more safeguards in protecting civil liberties. On December 16, 2005, the U.S. Senate blocked reauthorization, saying the bill did not adequately protect the civil liberties of American citizens. Five days later, with time running out, the Senate agreed to extend the Patriot Act by six months. The House, however, rejected the time period, and Congress ended up extending the Act by five weeks.

Many of the Act's provisions and the Bush administration's determination to maintain and extend them are well known. But it is worth looking at them briefly in order to get an idea of the climate within which the attacks on Middle East studies programs have taken place.

The USA Patriot Act collapses previously separate powers of law enforcement and intelligence. Indeed it reverses the Intelligence Oversight Act of 1980

which, in the wake of various revelations about clandestine C.I.A. activities, aimed at keeping intelligence gathering separate from law enforcement. Certain provisions of the act directly affect universities in the following way:

* The Freedom of Information Act is amended, reversing the Clinton administration's 1993 "presumption of disclosure" and substituting for it Attorney General Ashcroft's ruling that documents will not be released if there is a "sound legal basis" for refusing a request.

* The Family Education and Privacy Act, which among other things protects the confidentiality of student records, is amended. Now the justice department may consult these records without the consent or even the knowledge of students and their parents.

* The Electronic Communications Privacy Act is amended. Instead of wiretap authorization, law enforcement agencies may use simple search warrants to seize any voice mail messages.

* The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act is expanded to cover previously excluded categories of information. And the target of surveillance has been expanded as well: the definition of a "person" now includes academic libraries, bookstores and internet providers. The F.B.I. may request records from these institutions and the institutions are barred from revealing that there have been such requests. Since the Patriot Act requires no reporting, it is impossible to track requests for information except through the House Intelligence Committee, whose deliberations on these matters are classified. Various independent surveys have suggested that there have been at least 500 instances of such requests to libraries alone, but the real number is unknown since many librarians fear mentioning that these have occurred. The suit by A.C.L.U. for an unnamed private library in Connecticut is ongoing and has been tangled up in questions about whether the library's name can even be mentioned or even if its staff can talk about the requests they received.

The Patriot Act also affects the way research can be carried on:

* Controls have been tightened, especially for scientists, about what is classified information and what is not.

* The Act expands the use of the category of “sensitive but unclassified” to control and oversee research.

* The Act now takes the country of origin as a ground for excluding scientists rather than their individual histories. Shortly after the Patriot Act was passed the Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control ruled that editing manuscripts from countries on its embargo list (Iran, Iraq, Cuba, Libya, Sudan) could be considered a financial contribution to the author’s country; this effectively ended the possibility of publishing materials by scholars in these countries. After protests the most draconian provisions related to editing were dropped, but publishing the work of a scholar from one of these countries remains an issue. Last year, a noted Iranian dissident’s collection of political writings, unpublishable in his own country, was dropped by an American publisher because Iran was on the embargo list. The punishment for violating the ruling is harsh: up to \$1/2 million in fines and 10 years in prison—so other publishers were reluctant to take up the project.

The Patriot Act also has had a direct effect on exchanges of students and scholars:

* It monitors students through the Student Exchange and Visitor Information System whose elaborate reporting requirements have discouraged many students from attending school in the United States; indeed there has been a significant decline in the number of foreigners applying to graduate schools here.

* Under the Patriot Act foreign scholar exchanges require more elaborate visas than in the past, especially for those coming from designated countries, most in the Middle East. There are now also fingerprinting requirements. And there are arbitrary rulings about who can and cannot be admitted. In December 2004, the state department revoked the visa of Tariq Ramadan, a Muslim scholar and Swiss citi-

zen, who had been appointed to a position at the University of Notre Dame. He had been in the United States on a tourist visa before and had already received a working permit for the faculty appointment. But at the last minute, the visa was revoked because of “reliable evidence” that he was “likely to engage in terrorist activity.” There has been no documentation of this evidence; at best, it seems to be related to the fact that Ramadan’s grandfather was a founder of the Muslim Brotherhood. But many felt the ruling came because of input from Daniel Pipes and his Middle East Scholar Watch, about which more below.

Finally, one of the effects of the Patriot Act has been an increase in surveillance of conferences and activities by individual scholars related to Islam. These range from the benign to the terrifying. In February 2004, Army Intelligence officials arrived at the campus of the University of Texas, Austin, seeking

information about three individuals who had participated in a conference at the law school on “Islam and the Law: the problem of Sexism.” When the University refused to provide information about the individuals and pointed out that this scholarly conference had no relation to terrorism, the Army withdrew the request and apologized. But the arrests of Mohamed Yousri, an adjunct instructor at York College of the City University of N.Y. in 2002, and of Sami al-Arian, at the University of South Florida in 2003 were far more serious occasions.

In the case of Mr. Arian, a Kuwaiti-born Palestinian, it was an interview on Fox News’ “The O’Reilly Factor” that brought attention to this professor of computer sciences who had taught at U.S.F. without incident since 1985. The university suspended him when, flooded with letters from alumni and threats to his life, it decided that he represented a security risk for the campus. When he was arrested in 2003, charged with aiding a foreign terrorist organization (the Islamic Jihad), the university fired

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him. Al-Arian acknowledges involvement in pro-Palestinian organizations, but denies they were fronts for terrorist groups or activities. The indictment against him was based mostly on intercepted mail, faxes, and phone messages, some to journalists. On Dec. 6, 2005, a Florida jury found Mr. Arian not guilty on eight criminal counts and deadlocked on the remaining nine counts against him. Justice Department officials are now debating about a new trial or deportation; Sami al-Arian is not a U.S. citizen.

Mohamed Yousri was an approved, U.S. Justice Department translator. At one time the Federal government even offered him \$1.5 million, plus cost-of-living increases, to be an F.B.I. informant, but Yousri turned it down. Later, he was indicted for allegedly aiding and abetting acts of terrorism while providing Arabic language services for Lynne Stewart, a defense lawyer for Abdel Rahman, the "blind sheik" convicted in the alleged plot to bomb the Holland Tunnel. Even before his case had been tried, however, City University of New York's Chancellor Matthew Goldstein, worried about negative public reaction, led the administration there to remove him from the classroom. In February 2005, Yousri and Stewart were convicted of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorism and to defraud the U.S. government. The evidence against Yousri was research found in his home on political Islam, the subject of his doctoral dissertation at N.Y.U. Currently, Stewart and Yousri are free on appeal. For more information on the al-Arian and Yousri cases, see *Academe: Bulletin of the A.A.U.P.*, May-June 2003 (al-Arian) and November-December 2004 (Yousri).

THE IRAQ WAR

The war in Iraq is yet another of the contexts within which we can understand the current situa-

tion of Middle East Studies Programs. In the first days of the war especially, any protests were considered not only unpatriotic, but threats to national security. Those who would offer critical perspectives were, if not silenced, intimidated. Here are a few examples of attempts to suppress criticism in the name of national security:

* Shortly after the war began in March, 2003, an academic vice president at Irvine Valley College in California warned all chairs and deans that faculty members must not discuss the war in Iraq "unless it can be demonstrated, to the satisfaction of this office, that such discussions are directly related to the approved instructional requirements and materials associated with those classes." Faculty protest led to the withdrawal of this warning.

* When the faculty at Muhlenberg College (Pennsylvania) passed a resolution expressing dismay

at the violations of civil liberties associated with the Patriot Act, a justice department spokesman attacked it in the local newspaper, calling it "dangerous, because if people believe this, it may cause them not to cooperate with authorities in a lawful and vital investigation that could lead people to lose lives." In the context of war, the imperative of national security overrode any concern for individual rights in the eyes of this government representative.

* During an anti-war teach-in at Columbia University, Nicolas De Genova, an assistant professor of Anthropology and Latino Studies, said he wished the United States would experience "a thousand Mogadishus." Alumni of Columbia and others off campus, rallied in part by articles in the conservative New York Sun, demanded his immediate dismissal. President Bollinger, invoking the First Amendment right of free expression, refused to fire De Genova.

* The New York Times reporter Chris Hedges was booed by some in the audience at a Rockford College

(Illinois) commencement for a speech that included criticisms of the war in Iraq.

* At Drake University (Iowa), in February 2004, a federal grand jury issued subpoenas to gather information about participants in an anti-war forum sponsored by the university chapter of the National Lawyers Guild. The subpoenas were accompanied by a gag order, making it impossible for those affected to speak publicly about what was happening. After much legal maneuvering and many protests against this intrusion into the life of the university community, the subpoenas were withdrawn.

Although most of these attempts to suppress or denounce criticism of the war were unsuccessful, their very existence points to an atmosphere of increasing pressure on those with dissenting views, many of whom are, not coincidentally, scholars who work on the Middle East and whose perspective is necessarily more complex than the good-versus-evil characterizations offered by the Bush administration to justify its decision to go to war.

THE BALANCE TEST

Another part of the context we need to consider is the attempt to monitor critical teaching in the name of “balance” in the classroom.

This effort has been led by David Horowitz and his army of Young Republicans. Horowitz was a Marxist in the 1960’s American New Left movement, but today is a neo-conservative affiliated with Students for Academic Freedom and Campus Watch. He and his army of Young Republicans have been campaigning to pass what he calls an academic bill of rights for students at state and national levels. Happily, many of his efforts have failed because of intense lobbying by university administrators, by A.A.U.P., and by other national academic organizations. However, a resolution calling for consideration of Horowitz’s Academic Bill of Rights did pass the Pennsylvania House of Representative in July 2005. It created a special committee charged with investigating how faculty members at state colleges are hired and promoted, whether students are fairly evaluated, and whether students can express their views without fear of reprisal. The committee’s report will determine whether or not the House considers passage of an academic bill of rights.

Horowitz’s campaign has created an atmosphere of concern on university campuses, I’d even call it fear, and this has led to a great deal of self-policing by many faculty and administrators. One need only look at the website of Students for Academic Freedom, which lists, professor by professor, course by course, university by university, unverified and uncorroborated complaints by conservative students about the lack of balance in their classrooms. These complaints have been picked up by legislators and sometimes offered as “proof” that indoctrination has replaced instruction in the classrooms of the academy. One of the disturbing aspects of Horowitz’s campaign is the way it justifies and encourages outsiders to the academic establishment, with very little information or insight, to take coercive action and attempt to interfere in its internal workings.

Dedicated to securing “freedom” for all points of view, Horowitz’s Academic Bill of Rights claims to rest upon our most hallowed liberal principles: freedom of expression, freedom from indoctrination, respect for diverse points of view, pluralism. In fact, this is a stealth attack on the very concepts the bill purports to defend: it appeals to liberal ideas to advance a conservative agenda. That agenda is aimed at overturning the supposed leftist bias of universities (as measured by the number of registered Democrats and Republicans on faculties) in several ways, the most dangerous of which is to bring legislative and judicial scrutiny to bear on the hiring and promotion of faculty, the conduct of teachers in their classrooms, and the awarding of grades to students. These activities, now understood to be functions regulated and monitored by disciplinary communities and governance mechanisms internal to university life, would, under the Academic Bill of Rights, be turned over to external political bodies with little or no understanding of how universities work.

Horowitz’s Academic Bill of Rights enjoins colleges and universities to appoint faculty “with a view toward fostering a plurality of methodologies and perspectives.” On the face of it, there’s nothing wrong with this kind of call for diversity, it echoes the call to end discrimination based on race and gender that many of us have long supported. But it is, in fact, the opposite of that demand because it substitutes political criteria (the numbers of conservatives

or liberals measured by Republican or Democratic party affiliation) for social criteria (how many women, African-Americans, etc. are employed) and so changes the terms of what counts as a measure of discrimination.

Moreover, it imposes a rule that supersedes the intellectual criteria established by a faculty or discipline; indeed it employs a political test for faculty appointment. In the idealized version of the liberal university, it is left to the collective judgment of scholarly communities to decide what counts as responsible knowledge; whether, for example, Holocaust deniers should be included in history departments, or creationists in biology departments.

There is plenty of room within these communities for debate and change; critical voices emerge, are listened to, and often accepted in a new consensus. The process takes time; it is in perpetual flux, as it should be, and it is neither smooth nor kind, but it is internal to the academy. Horowitz's Academic Bill of Rights seeks to hijack the process and force acceptance of the views of political conservatives without following the usual course. Instead of allowing the play of critical forces and living with the results (inevitable inclusions and exclusions, an uneven pattern within departments and across the academic spectrum), it would eliminate critical exchange in the name of an imposed balance and a stultifying sameness: all points of view, whatever their merit, equally represented in every classroom.

Pointing to the "uncertainty and unsettled character of all human knowledge" in the humanities and social sciences, Horowitz's Academic Bill of Rights mandates not only that course syllabi provide "dissenting sources and viewpoints where appropriate," but also that "academic institutions and professional societies should maintain a posture of organizational neutrality with respect to the substantive

disagreements that divide researchers on questions within, or outside, their fields of inquiry."

These requirements gesture to the anti-foundationalism of post-structural theory, and distort it at the same time. They refuse to recognize that a certain sense of social and political "responsibility" drove many of the philosophers who articulated it; that judgments of quality and ethics are part of academic discourse; that scholars do their work precisely by making such judgments; and that the pursuit of knowledge advances through these kinds of engagements. Knowledge may be "uncertain and unsettled," but it is also stabilized by agreed-upon procedures and conventions—that is what disciplines are about. All information, whether in science, social science or humanities, is not equally valid.

Conflicts of values and ethics are part of the process of knowledge production; they inform it, trouble it, drive it. The commitments of scholars to ideas of justice, for example, are at the heart of many an important investigation in political theory, philosophy and history; they cannot be dismissed as irrelevant "opinion."

And because such commitments cannot be separated from scholarship, there are mechanisms internal to academic life that monitor abuses, distinguishing between serious, responsible work and polemic, between teaching that aims to unsettle received opinion and teaching that is indoctrination. They are not perfect by any means, but they will not work better if government oversight is substituted for community self-surveillance.

In the name of neutrality, Horowitz's Academic Bill of Rights would prohibit professors from expressing judgments about the material they teach, as well as about matters not directly relevant to course material; they are simply to transmit stores of undisputed information and refrain from expressing their

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points of view.

Aside from the fact that this denies the role judgment must play in scholarly work, it cancels the important critical role that higher education should fulfill. The best teachers, in my experience, are usually those whose commitment and point of view inspire students to think differently about the world; their command of information and knowledge, certified by their degrees, publications, and departmental reviews, calls into question the pieties and certainties students have imbibed elsewhere. It is precisely the experience of education as critique that opens students' minds and engages them in learning, sets them out on paths they never knew they could take—or at least that's the way it used to be. Horowitz's Academic Bill of Rights would shield students from this process, allowing them to reject ideas they don't like as "indoctrination" and leaving them free to listen only to those viewpoints they agree with, thus comfortably confirming what they already believe rather than subjecting it to illuminating doubt.

David Horowitz's call for balance aims to bring intellectual life under conservative control. This means not so much imposing an outright orthodoxy—Horowitz's partisans claim that is what they are combating on the left—as it does insisting that there is some objective measure by which the pursuit and teaching of knowledge can be separated from the values and ethical commitments that motivate it. In place of competing ideologies, we are offered a formalist pluralism.

And the ongoing conflicts of ideas and values that some of us think have historically been and ought to continue to be the responsibility of university teachers are ruled out of order in the name of fairness and balance. The very same voices which two decades ago denounced the left for unleashing an amoral relativism, now appeal quite cynically to that same relativism to advance their own ends.

As the conservative revolution sweeps the United States, it seeks to secure its hegemony by disarming critique: silencing critical or even mildly skeptical legislators and journalists by impugning their patriotism, their loyalty, and their objectivity. The university is the last redoubt of critical thinking, the last place whose mission is to offer some resistance to the

ideas and policies that are now being touted as the unilateral "American way." And the academic bill of rights is the strategy for breaching its walls. Needless to say, the critical perspective that Middle East studies scholars bring to questions of war and peace, historical accounts of conflict, and current policies and practices would be seriously constrained, if not entirely outlawed, by the requirements of balance and neutrality that Horowitz's Academic Bill of Rights wants to impose.

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

Within the contexts of September 11, the Patriot Act, the war in Iraq and the campaign for the Academic Bill of Rights, Middle East Studies programs have come under increasing pressure. Significantly, there has been an alliance of off-campus lobbyists with some student groups, sometimes to call for balance, more often simply to attack individual faculty and the programs in which they teach. Often these attacks have deliberately conflated criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism, leading to blanket condemnations of critics of Israel or supporters of Palestine as anti-Semites. This confusion of two distinct positions, one a political critique, the other a racist bias, has gained the pro-occupation activists a wide hearing and has allowed them to cloak their own political advocacy in the garments of high moralism.

A list of incidents compiled by American Association of University Professors since 2001 demonstrates a pattern of coordinated actions, organized through networks that tie to, if not directly emanate from, the pro-Sharon, pro-occupation lobby:

* In the fall of 2001, students at the University of Chicago alleged that faculty members and the administration were responsible for "an atmosphere of intimidation and hate for Jewish students on campus." Remedies urged included "balanced" presentation of Middle East issues in the classroom and in programs for academic conferences.

* In May, 2002, competing rallies by pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian student groups at San Francisco State University degenerated into an ugly clash of words. The administration sent a warning letter to the Jewish student group and cut off funds for one year to the pro-Palestinian organization.

* In the summer of 2002, a pro-Israeli occupation student group at the University of Michigan filed suit in state court to halt a mid-October conference on the Middle East which it claimed to be biased. The lawsuit was unsuccessful and the conference went on as scheduled.

* Also in the summer of 2002, the administration of Central Connecticut State University rejected claims by off-campus groups that the curriculum for a five-day Middle East Studies Summer Institute for high school teachers should be cancelled or revised because it was biased against Israel. Similar pressure in 2005 led New York City schools chancellor Joel Klein to cancel courses on the Middle East for elementary and high school teachers that were to be offered by Columbia University under the direction of Professor Rashid Khalidi.

* In September, 2002, the administration of the State University of N.Y. at New Paltz denied funds for a conference sponsored by the women's studies program on the grounds that it would be "unbalanced" in its discussion of the effects of the Israeli occupation on children. Although one of the panelists was an Israeli child psychiatrist, the outside groups protesting the conference considered her to be too critical of the occupation.

* In December, 2002, tenured faculty members in the department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies at Emory University wrote to the university administration to protest "attacks" by pro-Israeli (pro-occupation) groups on campus. According to the faculty members, the "attacks" included disruption of the talks of invited speakers, threats of physical violence, and attempted boycotts of classes.

* Under pressure from campus Hillel and other off-campus pro-Israeli occupation groups, the administration of Rutgers University withdrew permission for a conference on the "Palestinian Solidarity Movement" because the sponsoring group had not submitted all the required paperwork

Two groups involved in many of these activities are the David Project and Campus Watch.

The David Project

The David Project is an off-campus, pro-occupation activist group founded in 2002 to educate

and train students and the Jewish community at large about Israel. In 2004 it released a film "Columbia Unbecoming," which charged that certain professors of Middle East Studies at Columbia University discriminated against students because of their support of current Israeli policy and because, perhaps, the students were Jewish. The film (at least six versions of it exist, not one of which has been publicly screened) led to a full-fledged campaign to impugn the scholarship and teaching of professors considered to be pro-Palestinian. The New York Sun, which supports Israel's occupation policies, played a big role, with incendiary stories day after day. Local politicians also chimed in, as did alumni and various Jewish religious leaders.

One professor featured in the film is assistant professor Joseph Massad, a Palestinian-American born in Kuwait. His case is instructive. He is charged with being anti-Semitic because of his classroom references to Israel as a racist state and because of his alleged mistreatment of students.

Massad maintains he is not anti-Semitic, although he acknowledges he considers Israel a racist state, not because of its Jewish nationalism, but because of its legally institutionalized racism, whereby only Jews, to the exclusion of non-Jewish Israeli citizens, have rights and privileges based on their national belonging. As for the mistreatment charge, one student in the film alleges that Massad told her "If you're going to deny the atrocities committed against Palestinians, then you can get out of my classroom." The charge was corroborated by two students, one a registered student and one a day auditor; three other students, however, two graduate teaching assistants and an undergraduate, say they have no recollection of the incident, nor is it mentioned in any of Massad's teaching evaluations.

In October 2004, over 600 former colleagues of Massad from his PhD program at Columbia, along with several Columbia professors, signed an online petition in support of the non-tenured professor, calling him a courageous intellectual who has not been afraid to speak his mind after 9/11.

In March 2005, Columbia University released the report of a faculty Ad hoc Grievance Committee in which it found: a) no reason to believe that Professor

Massad intended to expel the student who, in fact, remained in his classroom; and b) no evidence of any statement made by Professor Massad—or any other Columbia faculty member—that could reasonably be construed as anti-Semitic. Indeed, the report goes on to say that Professor Massad “has been categorical in his classes concerning the unacceptability of anti-Semitic views.”

That Columbia’s administration was frightened by the outcry over the film and sought to contain it is clear. They handled the matter clumsily, abandoning a principled defense of academic freedom until faculty pressure at Columbia and around the country reminded them of what was at stake. Matters are still unsettled at Columbia, although the hysteria of last spring seems to have abated.

Fall-out from this incident occurred at Princeton University when pro-Israeli occupation groups began to lobby against the appointment of Rashid Khalidi, professor of Middle Eastern Studies at Columbia, on the grounds that he was anti-Semitic. The campaign was stopped by the intervention of several professors who firmly insisted, in the best traditions of academic freedom, that this appointment was a scholarly matter, not a political one.

Campus Watch

The Campus Watch Web site is another example of outside interference in the workings of the academy, an attempt to bring extraordinary political pressure to bear in order to silence critics of Israeli policy. Founded by columnist Daniel Pipes, its purpose is to expose college professors whom he judges to be “apologists for suicide bombings and militant Islam.” Pipes’s own position was set forth in a May 2005 talk he gave in Washington, DC, to the Interfaith Zionist Leadership Summit Conference. In it he insisted that the path to Middle East peace will come through a total Israeli military victory over the Palestinians, adding: “The Palestinians need to be defeated even more than Israel needs to defeat them.”

Initially, the Web site listed individual scholars whose major crime was to deviate from the “one true” line on Israel that Pipes wants to promote. These scholars, once their names were posted, received torrents of hate mail. This included so much spam that it rendered e-mail accounts almost useless.

It also included “spoofing,” in which identities of targeted professors were stolen, and thousands of offensive e-mail messages were sent out in their names. Some of the academics posted on Pipes’s Web site, such as Professor Juan Cole of the University of Michigan, received telephone death threats. In response to an outpouring of criticism, Pipes dropped the individual listings and now surveys institutions and programs on these matters.

It is hard to underestimate the extent of Pipes’s influence on the media, the public at large, as well as state and federal legislators. Here are excerpts from a letter sent by a reader of Campus Watch to Jeb Bush, the governor of Florida, in February, 2004.

Dear Governor Bush,

....[W]e have a visiting Palestinian professor, Mustafa Abu Sway, teaching at Florida Atlantic University apparently not on the payroll but financed by a Fulbright fellowship (courtesy of federal taxpayers, including many in Florida). Daniel Pipes points him out as a “HAMAS activist.” (HAMAS is on the federal government’s terrorism list; you might want to pass on word to President Bush that screening such matters is not working very well at the federal level.) In short, as Pipes stated in the New York Sun of Jan. 27, “Should the American taxpayer honor someone credibly accused of supporting a terrorist organization with a Fulbright fellowship?....”

The Campus Watch Web site also has a “Keep Us Informed” section that urges students to inform on their professors who “reject the views of most Americans and the enduring policies of the U.S. government about the Middle East.” Pipes has also attacked the Middle East Studies Association as a left-leaning mafia that has become “the preserve of Middle Eastern Arabs, who have brought their views with them.” More recently, he has founded the Anti-Islamist Institute to target the legal activities of Islamic families.

In 2003, President Bush nominated the hawkish Pipes to the board of the U.S. Institute of Peace, a congressionally-sponsored think tank dedicated to the peaceful resolution of international conflicts. Several Democratic senators expressed opposition to the nomination and a committee vote on the nomination was delayed, following which President Bush bypassed the senate and proceeded with a recess appointment. In his second term President Bush did not renew Pipes’s appointment.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

Some signs are not encouraging. Pressure from conservative groups, including pro-occupation activists, led the House Committee on Education and the Workforce to introduce measures in the reauthorization of the higher education act that would require Title VI programs (international studies programs) to have politically appointed monitoring boards to supervise their activities. Conservatives on the committee argued that many Title VI programs (Middle East studies programs were the case in point) reflect an anti-American bias and discourage students from working for the U.S. government. The new boards would monitor the content of programs – the first step in recent memory by the federal government to exercise such control (states have done this, but not the federal government). During House debate on this bill, Rep. Norwood (R-GA) moved to eliminate any Title VI programs that present an “anti-American point of view.” The committee defeated that motion. But the Senate version of the bill, while it does not include the external advisory board, does require that Title VI programs “reflect diverse and balanced perspectives.” These provisions are still under discussion.

A November 25, 2005 report on a hearing of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights adds interest to this story. The Commission “rejected calls from Jewish organizations for federal oversight of government-funded Middle Eastern studies programs...” The calls came at a hearing devoted to the issue of anti-Semitism on campuses. The representatives of the Jewish groups “argued that many Middle Eastern studies programs are biased against Israel.” (Note the conflation of anti-Semitism—the topic of the hearing—with criticism of Israel.) They urged support for advisory boards to monitor Middle Eastern studies programs for “balance.” In the name of academic freedom, the members of the Civil Rights Commission refused to endorse either the oversight boards or the call for balance.

Moving from the federal arena to the foundation world, extraordinary pressure from some of the same groups who appeared before the civil rights commission led the Ford Foundation to advise its grantees of the following policy: “By countersigning this grant letter, you agree that your organization

will not promote or engage in violence, terrorism, bigotry or the destruction of any state, nor will it make sub-grants to any entity that engages in these activities.” Although the language is general, it is clear that the state in question is Israel. Indeed, the Anti-Defamation League had cited an instance of a Ford Foundation-sponsored conference at which an Arab speaker, himself not a Ford grantee, made comments considered by some to be anti-Semitic. The prohibition applies to all of the organization’s funds, not just the Ford grant. The Rockefeller Foundation quickly followed suit, and no amount of argument from A.A.U.P., A.C.L.U., and other organizations has convinced the foundations to alter their language.

I wish I could end this article on more of an upbeat note, but I’m afraid I cannot. Although there are examples of brave university administrators who, understanding the importance of protecting academic freedom from the kinds of attacks it has been under, resist the extraordinary pressures that have been brought to bear, there are many other examples of administrators capitulating to the pressures, sometimes, ironically, in the name of academic freedom!

Even more difficult to track, and thus more insidious, is, as I’ve mentioned, the climate of fear that has been created, a climate that leads to caution, self-policing, and a careful avoidance of controversy. Until recently, there has not been enough high-powered reaction to this climate, but—and maybe there is an optimistic note on which to end after all—recently there have been signs of resistance. Jonathan Cole, the former provost at Columbia, has written a brilliant defense of academic freedom which appeared in *Daedalus* (Spring 2005). In the wake of his paper, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences has created a committee to talk about how to respond to the attack on higher education I’ve just described. Other voices are being raised by various associations of higher education administrators, civil liberties groups, professional associations and the like. But there is a lot more to be done if we are to protect universities from what Richard Hofstadter many years ago, in the era of McCarthyism, described as a deeply rooted strain of “anti-intellectualism” in American life. This is a tendency that is easily mobilized against the values and ideals that it is the job of the university to embody and defend. ■

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