

Introduction

On 31 March 2005, Columbia University publicly released the report of a faculty Ad Hoc Grievance Committee charged with examining student complaints of intimidation in the classroom by faculty in the department of Middle East and Asian Languages and Cultures (MEALAC). The Ad Hoc Grievance Committee, which was composed of five University faculty members and advised by First Amendment scholar and Columbia Visiting Professor Floyd Abrams, was formed in December 2004 to identify the facts underlying student concerns of intimidation in the classroom. The committee met with 62 individuals, including students, alumni, faculty and administrators. They also considered more than 60 written submissions. The full text of the Ad Hoc Grievance Committee's report is available on Columbia University's Web site at:

http://www.columbia.edu/cu/news/05/03/ad_hoc_grievance_committee_report.html

The following text is the statement made by Columbia professor Joseph Massad to the Committee. This document can be found at:

<http://electronicIntifada.net/downloads/pdf/JosephMassadStatement.pdf>

Statement to the Ad Hoc Committee¹

March 14, 2005

Joseph Massad

I have prepared a statement to read to you. I would be happy to answer your questions afterwards. Before I begin, however, I want to ascertain that as professor Katzneslson has informed me, the only complaints that your committee has heard about me are the two complaints that the press reported from my students, namely the complaint by Noah Liben and the complaint by Deena Shanker. As for the complaint by Tomy Schoenfeld, who was not my student, I presume, his case is irrelevant to this body, as your mandate states that “as a result of the expression of concern by a number of students that they were being intimidated by faculty members and being excluded from participating fully in classroom discussions because of their views,” you are expected “to identify cases where there appear to be violations of the obligation to create a civil and tolerant teaching environment.”² If there are any other complaints against me, unless I am told what they are and who made them, and the date and place where they allegedly took place, I shall not respond to them.

I appear before you today because of a campaign of intimidation to which I have been subjected for over three years. While this campaign was started by certain members of the Columbia faculty, and by outside forces using some of my students as conduits, it soon expanded to include members of the Columbia administration, the rightwing tabloid press, the Israeli press, and more locally the *Columbia Spectator*. Much of this preceded the David Project film "Columbia Unbecoming," and the ensuing controversy. In the following statement, I will provide you with the history of this coordinated campaign, including the facts pertaining to the intimidation to which I am being subjected by the Columbia University administration, most manifestly through the convening of your own committee before which I appear today out of a combined sense of intimidation and obligation and not because I recognize its legitimacy. You need to bear with the details of the following narrative, as the campaign of intimidation against me is most insidious in its details.

I started teaching at Columbia in the Fall of 1999. At the conclusion of my first academic year, during which I taught my class on Palestinian and Israeli Politics and Societies, I received a Certificate of Appreciation for teaching presented by "The Students of Columbia College, Class of 2000," and was nominated and was one of the two finalists for the Van Doren teaching award which went that year to Professor Michael Stanislawski. In my second year, I began to be told of whispers about my class on Palestinian and Israeli politics and Societies. Jewish Students in my class in the Spring 2001 would tell me that I was the main topic of discussion at the Jewish Theological Seminary and at Hillel and that my class is making the Zionists on campus angry. I took such reports lightly, as the class had doubled in size from the first year. I did notice however that the class included some cantankerous students who insisted on scoring political points during the lectures. I would always diffuse the situation by allowing all questions to be asked and by attempting to answer them informatively. I would do so in class and during office hours. I had strong positive evaluations from most of my students with some complaining that the class was biased. Although my course description explained that "The purpose of the course is to provide a thorough yet critical historical overview of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict to familiarize undergraduates with the

background to the current situation,”³ I decided in the following year (Spring 2002) to emphasize that point more clearly. The course description read as follows:

The course examines critically the impact of Zionism on European Jews and on Asian and African Jews on the one hand, and on Palestinian Arabs on the other --in Israel, in the Occupied Territories, and in the Diaspora. The course also examines critically the internal dynamics in Palestinian and Israeli societies, looking at the roles class, gender, and religion play in the politics of Israel and the Palestinian national movement. The purpose of the course is *not* to provide a “balanced” coverage of the views of both sides, but rather to provide a thorough yet critical historical overview of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict to familiarize undergraduates with the background to the current situation from a *critical* perspective.⁴

The point of the class description is to make sure the students understood that no side was being presented, neither the Palestinian nor the Zionist side, but rather that this was a course that was critical of both Zionism and Palestinian nationalism. When I taught the class in 2004, after returning from my sabbatical, I decided to remove the sentence on “balance,” especially after CampusWatch began to attack me for including it, to which I will return below. I removed it.⁵

It was with this as background that I started my Spring 2002 semester. My Palestinian and Israeli course seemed to have a more cantankerous crowd that year than before. Even though this year, the class had two discussion sections to accommodate the number of students, a number of students insisted on having discussions during the lecture. Some would bring with them a pro-Israel lobby propaganda book from which they would insist on reading in class. I would let them.

One student in particular stood out. A smart older student in General Studies, who identified herself as having a South African Jewish background, would insist on asking many questions every lecture, most of which were about scoring political points. The class had over 80 students and therefore it was difficult to accommodate such a large number of questions from students. No matter, I decided to let her ask all her questions in every lecture in order to make her feel comfortable and that she feel that the class is a space where she could express herself freely. She would E-mail me asking for exact sources for information that I would give in class. I would E-mail her back what she needed. For a while, it seemed that I was her research assistant, which I was happy to do, in order to teach her that there are indeed scholarly sources and scholarly answers to her

political queries. I later found out from other students that she was circulating a petition in the class to have me fired from Columbia. I asked her after class one day if that was the case, and told her that if it were so, that she would be free to circulate it outside of class, not inside. She smiled back without comment.

I saw her on college walk one day after Spring break. She came up to me and told me that she had just been to Israel and the Occupied Territories and expressed how bad she felt about the situation there. She apologized about the petition and told me that she had been approached “from the outside” to do it but she had dropped the matter. She spoke of people at the medical school and others from outside the university who were behind the idea, but did not provide details. I did not inquire.

Another student of mine (now at the School of International and Public Affairs), who self-identified as a “Likudnik,” also approached me on campus one day during the Spring 2002 semester, telling me that he and a few other students had been invited to see a female professor at the medical school. He described that the meeting was so “surreptitious” and “conspiratorial,” that it felt that they were planning on having me “murdered.” In fact, the plan was to strategize how to get me fired. The student told me that they discussed the option of meeting with a female administrator who worked at the time at the Middle East Institute, to coordinate the plan with her. He told me that he had informed the students and the medical school professor that even though he disagreed with me, that he thought I had the right to express my views.

The female student who initiated the petition against me was not alone in class who consistently posed hostile questions. Three or four other students would do so intermittently. One of them insisted on reading out loud in class paragraphs from a propaganda book issued by a pro-Israel lobbying organization. The book is “Myths and Facts: A Guide to the Arab-Israeli Conflict” written by one Mitchell Bard and published by the American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, which states on its website that “We are committed to arming students with the information they need to respond to the very difficult issues raised on the campus” through the publication of Bard’s book.⁶ Many students complained that these few students were disruptive of class, especially as there are discussion sections for them to raise their concerns. I allayed their anxiety by explaining that there is something to learn from some of the students’ politically-

motivated questions, namely that all students would learn the political arguments of proponents and opponents of certain scholarly analyses of the conflict, and that students who had political queries would also learn that there are indeed persuasive answers to the queries they raise from a critical and scholarly angle. For me, allowing these students to disrupt my lecture was of pedagogical benefit to them and to the rest of the class.

During the same semester, in April 2002, I was attacked and misquoted by the *Spectator* after attending an on-campus rally in support of Palestinians under Israeli military attack in the West Bank and Gaza, and an op-ed piece and letters were published in the *Spectator* accusing me of “anti-Semitism” for a lecture I had given at the Middle East Institute in February 2002.⁷ The op-ed piece by a junior at Barnard named Daphna Berman, who was not my student, drew parallels between a swastika found in a law school bathroom and my lecture and rebuked the university for allowing me to speak out:

I was struck by the University's willingness to publicly condemn blatant expressions of anti-Semitism [such as the swastika incident] while simultaneously condoning, and even sponsoring, more tacit and subtle forms of that same evil. Massad's talk is lent a certain legitimacy by mere virtue of the fact that his views exist within an academic framework. The rhetoric is polished, the multisyllabic words characteristic of academia are pleasing to the ear, and so Massad's message somehow becomes more acceptable, more palatable. Yet fundamentally, the difference between Massad's message and its more blatant and visually tangible manifestation are only subtle.⁸

As for the political rally, which took place on Wednesday April 17, 2002, I was one of countless speakers. I spoke out and asserted the following: “Like white South Africans who felt threatened under apartheid and who only felt safe when they gave up their commitment to white supremacy, Israeli Jews will continue to feel threatened if they persist in supporting Jewish supremacy. Israeli Jews will only feel safe in a democratic Israeli state where all Jews and Arabs are treated equally. No state has the right to be a racist state.” The *Spectator* misquoted me as saying that Israel is “a Jewish supremacist and racist state,” and that “every racist state should be threatened.”⁹ When I protested the misquotation, the *Spectator* journalist who wrote the story, Xan Nowakowski, apologized and informed me via E-mail that she did not even attend the rally and got the quotes from

another reporter. She assured me that the newspaper would run a correction. After a back and forth for almost a week on E-mail, the *Spectator* ran the correction on April 24, 2002.

However, two major pro-Israeli propagandists, namely Martin Kramer and Daniel Pipes, would insist on reproducing the misquote in articles that they wrote to newspapers and that they posted on their websites. On June 20, 2002, Martin Kramer, an Israeli academic who teaches at Tel Aviv university, posted an article on the Middle East Forum website titled "Arab Panic," in which he attacked a number of Columbia professors, myself included. He argued that "Massad's views are not all that unusual in Middle Eastern studies, and he has every right to express them on Columbia's Low Plaza, in public lectures, and in print. But should someone who is busy propagandizing against the existence of Israel be employed by Columbia to teach the introductory course on the Arab-Israeli conflict?... Suffice it to say that this column has received a surfeit of student complaints about the course, suggesting that there is no difference between what Massad teaches and what he preaches." In his article, Kramer reproduced the misquote from the *Spectator*. Prior to Kramer's column, a website for an organization called "The Columbia Conservative Alumni Association" listed me among the six "worst faculty" at Columbia, a list that also included Edward Said who was identified as a "homosexual" who supports Hamas. Martin Kramer was only too happy to quote from that website in his article, as would other columnists writing for the *New York Sun*.

On June 25 2002, Daniel Pipes and one Jonathan Schanzer published an article in the *New York Post* titled "Extremists on Campus," in which they listed me as one such extremist and complained that I use my class as a "soapbox for anti-Israeli polemics." The *Wall Street Journal* published on September 18, 2002 an article about a pro-Israel website calling itself CampusWatch being launched by Daniel Pipes, stating that the website listed 8 professors (including me) with our own public dossiers as enemies of America and Israel and called on our students to monitor us in class. Following the launch of CampusWatch, my E-mail was spammed for months with over 4000 E-mails daily, which I had to sift through until finally Columbia was able to install an anti-spamming program. Moreover, I was subjected to identity theft when thousands of racist E-mails would be sent in my name to individuals and listservs, including a few to the White House and Congressmen threatening them with terrorist action. Moreover,

thousands of other E-mails would be sent to people with requests of notes of receipt being sent back to my E-mail account which clogged it further with thousands of such E-mail receipts. I also received tens of racist E-mails and phone messages including death threats directed at me. In the meantime, Pipes's website called on our own students to spy on us in the classroom and report to him, and Kramer called for my dismissal from Columbia University.¹⁰ In interviews that I gave to the press, I spoke about the misquotation which Pipes and Kramer continued to propagate, and about my experience in my Spring 2002 class, with regards to the petition to get me fired and the secret meeting at the Medical school which my student had told me about.¹¹

As I was on sabbatical in London that year, I was relatively shielded from the campaign, even though my E-mail account continued to be disrupted. I did come to Columbia to deliver a lecture on Palestinian cinema in January 2003. My lecture, titled "The Weapon of Culture," discussed how Palestinian cinema was a weapon of resistance and an act of culture in reference to Amilcar Cabral's famous essay "the Weapon of Theory." Kramer immediately attacked my paper based on reports in the press.¹²

In late January 2003, I began to write a column to the Egyptian Weekly *Al-Ahram* which deals mostly with Palestinian-Israeli affairs and with the Arab World more generally. Every time I published an article, Kramer and Pipes would write about it, as would new student recruits that they had on campuses. One such ideological recruit was a first year student in General Studies whom I had never met called Ariel Beery. Beery would become one of the main people defending the claims of the David Project in whose film he appeared and called me "one of the most dangerous intellectuals... on campus." Beery has never taken a class with me and never met me. Beery, who claims to have served in the Israeli army in Lebanon, had his own *Spectator* column and a personal blog. Beery arrived on the Columbia campus when I was on sabbatical, yet, surprisingly, he chose to write about me in his column. After criticizing my Palestinian and Israeli Politics and Societies course, which he never took, Beery asserted:

One would think that we need a teacher in the classroom, not a critic... The problem lies not in what Massad believes, but in his openly biased presentation in the classroom. The statements he issues are anywhere from questionable to fundamentally wrong.

Basing his arguments on one of my newspaper columns, Beery added the following:

If anything, Massad's claim [in his column] that there is no anti-Semitism in the Arab world should disqualify him from setting foot in a Columbia University classroom as a professor of Modern Arab Politics. Just as you would not trust a surgeon with shaky knowledge of the human anatomy, Columbia should not trust the minds of its charges to a professor with a limited knowledge of the body politic of the region he supposedly is an expert in. [Massad also] says that the claim that Israel is democratic is no more than a "propagandistic image." ... th[is]...charge on Israel should again disqualify Massad from teaching at Columbia.¹³

In a second column, Beery again railed against me and lamented that

Our educations are bound in intellectual Egypt, enslaved by the post-colonialist slant that has permeated our social sciences, while our institution is trapped by its old-fashioned bylaws into protecting the employment of those who espouse hateful and violent rhetoric... Will President Bollinger and future Provost Alan Brinkley be our gate and our key to a new and better University? Only time will tell. Let's just hope that our time in the wilderness will be short and that next year we will enjoy a rebuilt Columbia.¹⁴

This is in addition to myriad log entries on me on his website.

In April 2003, I decided to respond to Kramer and Pipes in an article titled "Policing the Academy," in which I fleshed out their agenda and their plans. I concluded by stating that

Kramer, Pipes, and co. are angry that the academy still allows democratic procedure in the expression of political views and has an institutionalised meritocratic system of judgment...to evaluate its members. Their goal is to destroy any semblance of either in favour of subjecting democracy and academic life to an incendiary jingoism and to the exigencies of the national security state with the express aim of imploding freedom. Their larger success, however, has been in discrediting themselves and in reminding all of us that we should never take the freedoms that we have for granted, as the likes of Kramer and Pipes are working to take them away.¹⁵

I attach the text of my article at the end of this statement.

Upon returning to Columbia in the Fall of 2003, I was scheduled to give a lecture on the 2nd of October at the Society of Fellows at the Heyman Center. The lecture was attended by a large number of people including many faculty members, Professor

Nicholas Dirks, who had not yet become vice-president, was among them. After the lecture I was asked a number of hostile questions from young students and from one Rabbi Charles Sheer, about whom I had heard the previous year when he railed against MEALAC professors in the context of the pro-Palestinian rally that took place on campus in April 2002. I had never met him before. I answered all the questions put before me. Several professors came to me afterwards, including Brinkley Messick of the Department of Anthropology and my departmental colleague Janaki Bakhle, among others, wondering how I managed to remain calm in the face of rude and hostile questions of the caliber I had been asked. Rabbi Sheer's secretary called me and left a message asking for the text of the lecture. I never responded. The lecture has been published in the scholarly journal *Cultural Critique* and has recently been the topic of a newspaper article in the *New York Sun*, and I believe also in the *Daily News*.¹⁶ On 6 January 2004, Rabbi Sheer posted a letter on the Hillel website addressed to Columbia and Barnard students, in which he discussed my lecture and made a startling announcement. In his letter, Sheer shared an article he had written called "The Treatment of the Middle East Studies at Columbia University."¹⁷ Sheer declared that "the principal anti-Israel voices [on Columbia's campus] are not pro-Palestinian student leaders and groups, but Columbia faculty and academic departments." He added that "On the one hand, there are many fine courses taught by CU faculty on Hebrew language and literature, the history of Israel and Zionism, Arab culture, languages and nationalism, etc. These courses, offered in various departments, are taught with the usual CU standard of careful scholarship and balance... On the other hand, some faculty members whose teaching style is called 'advocacy education' espouse a consistent anti-Israel and pro-Palestinian bias. Their personal politics pervade the classroom and academic forums. The record is public: search under 'Columbia University' at websites such as www.campus-watch.org and www.martinkramer.org. Be prepared; it is not a pleasant read."¹⁸

Sheer proceeded to mention that he had attended my lecture at the Heyman Center and then summarized it by making outrageous claims that were never made in the lecture:

Professor Massad has reversed the roles of all the players and redefined many of the historic events: the Zionists are the new Nazis; the Palestinians are oppressed victims and therefore the new Jews... From a distance, this diatribe may sound ludicrous. However, its impact on

campus is serious. MEALAC should enable our students to explore issues vital to their understanding of the modern Middle East in a balanced way...

We will see how the false claim attributed to me by Rabbi Sheer that I said that “the Zionists are the new Nazis,” a claim I never made, would find its way to Ariel Beery who would make the same claim in the video “Columbia Unbecoming,”¹⁹ as would Noah Liben in his description of my course --a false claim that would be repeated ad absurdum in the media. Sheer concluded with two interesting claims, one which effectively called on students not to take my class, and another announcing the filming of Columbia Unbecoming:

Of course, academic freedom is a cornerstone of our University. However, students are understandably reluctant to take courses from faculty who impose their biases in their teaching. A student group is currently working on a video that records how intimidated students feel by advocacy teaching, and how some are discouraged from taking MEALAC courses or majoring in Middle East studies.

Sheer further called on Columbia University to “share my passion for unbiased scholarship and the establishment of a proper learning environment so our students – Jews and non-Jews - can learn about complex issues with honesty and integrity.”²⁰

Suffice it to say that my class had over fifty students for the Spring 2004 and students did not heed the call made by Sheer. The class did however include a number of auditors (I found out they were unregistered during the last week of class) who would consistently harass me with hostile ideological questions that ignored all the readings. Students complained about the disruption this caused the class. I tried to emphasize to the auditors that their questions must be relevant to the subject at hand and that they must do the readings. They never did and I continued to answer their questions until the end of the semester to avoid creating a tense atmosphere in the classroom.

During this period, the *New York Sun* and Kramer and Pipes continued to attack me in their columns and on their websites. In an article on December 30, 2003, the *Sun* had again attacked one of my newspaper columns misquoting me. In my column, I stated that "While Israel has no legitimacy and is not recognized by any international body as a ‘representative’ of the Jewish people worldwide but rather as the state of the Israeli people who are citizens of it...," the *Sun* quoted me as saying that “Israel has no

legitimacy.” I asked for a correction from the reporter Jacob Gershman. He agreed and the newspaper ran it the next day.²¹ This however was just a brief lull. On May 4, 2004, the *Sun* ran another article about me by one Jonathan Calt Harris, identified as an associate of Daniel Pipes at Campus Watch, titled “Tenured Extremism.” After a litany of misquotes, half quotes, and outright fabrications, Calt Harris, who referred to my views as akin to those of “Nazis,” concluded by stating: “Mr. Massad is soon up for tenure review. Should this once distinguished university stoop to provide a permanent forum for his views, it would signify a truly stunning oversight...He knows no distinction between a classroom lecture and advocacy at a public demonstration.”²²

Based on this repeated call to deny me tenure at Columbia, which had already been expressed by Martin Kramer, I set up an appointment with Provost Brinkley and met with him. I sought his help and the help of the university’s legal services to fight this defamation of character. The latest article in the *New York Sun* included such blatant and insidious misrepresentations that I seriously considered suing them for defamation. I provided copies of my written work for the Provost and told him of the campaigns to which I had been subjected in the previous years. While the provost seemed mildly supportive, he did not think that suing would be practical. I asked him if he could arrange for me to meet with legal services to which he reluctantly agreed. I had to remind him by E-mail to set up a meeting for me. After he put me in touch with legal services, my E-mails to them went unanswered. I asked the provost to intervene which he did. His intervention produced a response from their office asking me about my available times to set up an appointment. I sent it to them and never heard back. I dropped the matter after I left in mid summer for vacation abroad.

In the meantime however, I received a letter from Joel J. Levy, director of the New York chapter of the Anti-Defamation League, copies of which had been sent to President Bollinger and Provost Brinkley. The letter was significantly dated on May 6, 2004, two days after Calt Harris published his article in the *Sun*. The letter complained to me that, according to one report it received from one student who attended a lecture that I had given at the University of Pennsylvania on March 24, 2004 (which incidentally was the same lecture I gave at Columbia’s Society of Fellows the previous October), ideas expressed in my lecture are “anti-Semitic.” The letter made false claims about what my

lecture said and asked that I retract them and issue an apology for my allegedly anti-Semitic remarks. I wrote Mr. Levy back and copied President Bollinger and Provost Brinkley. I stated in my letter that:

My principled stance against anti-Semitism and all kinds of racism is a matter of public record and cannot be assailed by defamatory “reports” or by letters from the ADL that consider them credible sources. Indeed I have condemned anti-Semitism in my Arabic and English writings, regardless of whether the person expressing it was pro-Israel or anti-Israel, an Arab, an American Christian, or an Israeli Jew... I therefore expect a prompt correction of the errors contained in your letter and demand an immediate apology, a copy of which should be sent to President Bollinger.²³

I never heard back from the ADL, or from the provost.

It was with this as background that news about the David Project film “Columbia Unbecoming,” surfaced on October 20, 2004 in a *New York Sun* article.²⁴

The Aftermath of *Columbia Unbecoming*

I was horrified by the media campaign against me and the calls for my dismissal from Columbia that were issued by Congressman Weiner and by the editors of the *Daily News* and the *New York Sun*, as well as calls by Jewish members of the New York City Council to investigate the matter. These calls were issued as declarations about the controversy by the national head of the ADL and Mayor Bloomberg were also made to the press and the film was suddenly being shown in Israel before a government minister at an anti-Semitism conference. I had requested a meeting with Provost Brinkley who did not contact me once during the early days of the controversy during which President Bollinger was making all kinds of statements to the press. My request to meet with the Provost was made through the chair of my department, Marc van de Mieroop, who attended our meeting in the Provost’s office on the 27th of October. I inquired of the provost as to why he would sit down secretly to watch a propaganda film produced by a lobbying group and why he would remain silent about it after he had seen it. The provost apologized and admitted that these were mistakes but that now we needed to contain the problem. He assured me that he had received countless letters in my support and few against me. When I spoke with Vice-President Dirks later, he also informed me that he

had received “hundreds” of letters in my support and “three or four” against me. I trust that the President, the Provost, and the Vice-President, have shared with you these letters. While the provost and I corresponded briefly on E-mail, mainly about my concerns regarding statements made by President Bollinger, which the Provost would challenge and represent as the media’s inaccurate rendering, soon there would be no further communication with him. President Bollinger to this day has not contacted me.

The *Columbia Spectator* ran an editorial asking me to respond to the allegations. They wrote me and called me asking that I issue a statement. I agreed with their editorial page editor, Rachael Scarborough King, on the number of words and sent it to them. They refused to publish it unless I cut it to 1600 words, 400 words below what they had agreed to. I cut down my statement and resent it. They still refused to publish it. The editorial page editor, Ms. King sent me an apology about her sense of shame that the editor in chief “overruled” her and refused to run it. I have kept our E-mail correspondence. I opted to post my response to the allegations on my Columbia Webpage on November 3, 2005, against the advice of the Provost, who counseled that my silence was of more benefit to me. The *Spectator* would later publish Charles Jacobs, the director of the David Project’s response to my statement.²⁵

Let me begin by responding to the claims put forward in “Columbia Unbecoming,” both based on press reports and on the recent transcript of the film made available on the web. I still have not seen the film. Let me reiterate what I said in my statement regarding the claims put by the students in the film:

I am now being targeted because of my public writings and statements through the charge that I am allegedly intolerant in the classroom, a charge based on statements made by people who were never my students, except in one case, which I will address momentarily. Let me first state that I have intimidated no one. In fact, Tomy Schoenfeld, the Israeli soldier who appears in the film and is cited by the *New York Sun*, has never been my student and has never taken a class with me, as he himself informed *The Jewish Week*. I have never met him. As for Noah Liben, who appears in the film according to newspaper accounts (I have not seen the film), he was indeed a student in my Palestinian and Israeli Politics and Societies course in the spring of 2001. Noah seems to have forgotten the incident he cites. During a lecture about Israeli state racism against Asian and African Jews, Noah defended these practices on the basis that Asian and African Jews were underdeveloped and lacked Jewish culture, which the Ashkenazi State operatives were teaching them. When I

explained to him that, as the assigned readings clarified, these were racist policies, he insisted that these Jews needed to be modernized and the Ashkenazim were helping them by civilizing them. Many students gasped. He asked me if I understood his point. I informed him that I did not. Noah seems not to have done his reading during the week on gender and Zionism. One of the assigned readings by Israeli scholar and feminist Simona Sharoni spoke of how in Hebrew the word “zayin” means both penis and weapon in a discussion of Israeli militarized masculinity. Noah, seemingly not having read the assigned material, mistook the pronunciation of “zayin” as “Zion,” pronounced in Hebrew “tziyon.” As for his spurious claim that I said that “Jews in Nazi Germany were not physically abused or harassed until Kristallnacht in November 1938,” Noah must not have been listening carefully. During the discussion of Nazi Germany, we addressed the racist ideology of Nazism, the Nuremberg Laws enacted in 1934, and the institutionalized racism and violence against all facets of Jewish life, all of which preceded the extermination of European Jews. This information was also available to Noah in his readings, had he chosen to consult them. Moreover, the lie that the film propagates claiming that I would equate Israel with Nazi Germany is abhorrent. I have never made such a reprehensible equation.

I remember having a friendly rapport with Noah (as I do with all my students). He would drop off newspaper articles in my mailbox, come to my office hours, and greet me on the street often. He never informed me or acted in a way that showed intimidation. Indeed, he would write me E-mails, even after he stopped being my student, to argue with me about Israel. I have kept our correspondence. On March 10, 2002, a year after he took a class with me, Noah wrote me an E-mail chastising me for having invited an Israeli speaker to class the year before when he was in attendance. It turned out that Noah’s memory failed him again, as he mistook the speaker I had invited for another Israeli scholar. After a long diatribe, Noah excoriated me: “How can you bring such a phony to speak to your class??” I am not sure if his misplaced reproach was indicative of an intimidated student or one who felt comfortable enough to rebuke his professor!²⁶

As for the claim made by Ariel Beery, whom I have never met and who has never been my student, that my “favorite description is the Palestinian as the new Jew and the Jew as the new Nazi.” Such a statement is an outright lie. Beery gets this quote not from anything I said or wrote, but from the fabrication made up by Rabbi Sheer on his Hillel web posting of January 4th 2004. As for the claims made by Deena Shanker, whose story suddenly appeared in a report in the *New York Sun* after my posted statement dismantled the false claims made by Liben and Schoenfeld, her claims are also outright lies.²⁷ In her *New York Sun* account, Ms. Shanker stated that she asked me

“if it is true that Israel gives prior warning before launching strikes in Palestinian Arab territories”... That provoked him to start screaming, “If you're going to deny the atrocities being committed against the Palestinians then you could leave the class,” Ms. Shanker said... She said she was “shocked” by his reaction, and that Mr. Massad “usually answered civilly along the lines of, “No, you're wrong.” She said Mr. Massad compared Israelis to Nazis during lectures in class.

Shanker later told the *New York Times* a different story: “She said that Professor Massad sometimes ridiculed her questions and during one class exchange yelled at her to get out. (She stayed.) ‘People in the class were like blown away,’ she said.”²⁸ Her account to the *Jerusalem Post* was also inconsistent with the other two accounts:

‘If you're going to deny the atrocities being committed against the Palestinian people then you can get out of my classroom!’ Massad shouted, according to Shanker's account... Shanker was shocked... ‘Sometimes teachers and professors yell at students - it happens - but this was not like anything I've ever experienced. He was not treating me like a student,’ she said... Shanker said she had grown accustomed to Massad's antagonism toward Israel, but the professor's rage at her for speaking up was frightening... ‘I felt - I wouldn't say 'intimidated' was the right word - I would say: humiliated, violated, scared. This was very overt and explicit.’²⁹

Deena Shanker is lying in all three versions of her story. I have never asked her or any student to leave my class no matter what question they asked. In fact, I never asked any of my students to leave class for any reason. I have no visual memory of Deena Shanker who never came to office hours or spoke with me after class. The incident she describes has never taken place.

In the aftermath of the film, I have received, and still receive, a barrage of hate mail and racist E-Emails and voicemail messages. The first such E-mail message was from a medical school professor called Moshe Rubin. Professor Rubin wrote me on October 20th, the same day as the first report was published in the *Sun*. Under the subject heading “Anti-Semite” he wrote:

Go back to Arab land where Jew hating is condoned
get the hell out of America
you are a disgrace
and a pathetic typical arab liar
Moshe Rubin

Many more such E-mails would follow. The campaign would quickly expand and include medical school professor Judith Jacobson. Such threatening E-mails have also targeted others in my department. A recent E-mail was sent last week to all the Jewish students and faculty at MEALAC from an Israeli group calling itself “United Trial Group -- Peoples Rights International,” informing them that:

We advise you to immediately dismiss/kick ass of Joseph Goebbels, aka Joseph Massed based on the President Bush Bill against anti-Semitism and according with the US anti-terrorism law, proscribing Nazi propaganda and incitement to terror. If you and the administration won't immediately dismiss that fascist bastard, you and the administration will be personally liable and accountable for aiding, abetting and harboring this Muslim criminal, and subject to criminal prosecution and multimillion compensations in damages... You have 30 days to comply and inform us.

I should state that I have received immense support from across the world, through countless letters and thousands of signatures on an online petition. These include hundreds of individual letters from academics, students, and supporters, and tens of letters from my own students, especially my Jewish students. All these letters were sent to President Bollinger, Provost Brinkley, and Vice-President Dirks. Copies of many of these letters were sent to me. In addition, a colleague at the University of Texas at Austin, Professor Neville Hoad, circulated a letter within a few days of the controversy and obtained 828 signatures of major scholars and academics around the United States and the world, which he also submitted to the President, the Provost, and the Vice-President. Another academic colleague at the State University of California, As'ad AbuKhalil, set up an on-line petition, which obtained upwards of 3000 signatures, a copy of which was also sent to Bollinger. Hooligans attempted to undermine the petition by signing names like “Adolf Hitler” and “Osama Ben Laden,” but they were not able to shut the petition down. In addition, two letters were sent to the President, the Provost, and the Vice-President, one by 24 graduate students at MEALAC, and another by 52 graduate students from other departments at Columbia. The Middle East Studies Association's Academic Freedom Committee also issued a letter defending my academic freedom, as

did the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the New York chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. Thirty professors from the American University in Cairo also sent a letter defending me. President Bollinger has as of yet not responded to any of these individuals or organizations with the notable exception of the ACLU. A response was also sent by the Provost to the AAUP. In the meantime, my own senior colleague Dan Miron had joined the fray with claims to the *New York Sun* that students in the department had been complaining to him of class humiliation by professors every week for years.³⁰

President Bollinger's Failure to Defend the Faculty

The response of the Columbia University administration to the David Project was swift. As I will show below, in statement and action, Columbia's President Bollinger has prejudged the accused faculty, and failed to defend us or the MEALAC department, and he refused to defend Columbia's own record of pluralism and tolerance, the variety of courses the university offers on the Middle East, or Columbia's established commitment to promote Jewish and Israel Studies. Instead President Bollinger and his administration, as the evidence I will present will show, gave legitimacy to the film "Columbia Unbecoming," referred to its claims as facts, and promised an "investigation." His subsequent statements and actions have emboldened those engaged in the campaign to intimidate me and would confirm to the public that the allegations against me are in fact true, at least, as far as he was concerned. Let me illustrate how this transpired.

Columbia's first response to the allegations contained in the film, "Columbia Unbecoming," was a statement released by the President himself. This statement was released after Congressman Anthony Wiener called on Columbia to fire me in a letter to Bollinger, and after two newspapers (the *New York Sun* and the *Daily News*) added their voices to Wiener's and asked that I be fired, and after a medical school faculty member, Moshe Rubin, sent me a racist E-mail which I had immediately forwarded to Provost Brinkley. In his statement, Bollinger referred to the "disturbing and offensive nature of incidents described in the film" without using the word "alleged" before incidents. This was certainly not an oversight, especially coming from a lawyer. He further added that

academic freedom “does not, for example, extend to protecting behavior in the classroom that threatens or intimidates students who express their viewpoints.” Bollinger failed to make any reference as to whether academic freedom extends to protecting students engaged in intimidating professors by raising a media campaign against them. Nor did the statement address whether the intimidation of the faculty and the Columbia administration by outside pressure groups, the press, and government officials would be tolerated.³¹ In his statement, instead, Bollinger announced that he had asked the Provost to “look into” the students’ claims, which in subsequent press reports quoting him, he referred to as an “investigation.”³²

The next day, on October 28, Bollinger met with national director of the Anti-Defamation League, Abraham Foxman, an organization that had targeted me since May 6, 2004, when it sent a letter to me copied to Bollinger accusing me of anti-Semitism. According to press accounts, Bollinger sought to meet with Foxman and other leaders of Jewish organizations. On November 11, after delivering a lecture at the University Club on Fifth Avenue, Mr. Bollinger was asked about the student accusations against Columbia faculty members, “according to an audience member who did not wish to disclose his identity... Mr. Bollinger... said he was committed to academic freedom but wouldn't condone "stupid" behavior by faculty members.”³³ Such a biased and disrespectful choice of words would continue in Bollinger’s press declarations. In response to allegations by students repeated to him by a reporter from *New York Magazine* that “On day one, students say, [Massad] tells his class they shouldn't expect "balance." There's even a disclaimer in his syllabus.” Bollinger responded:

I believe a disclaimer before starting your course is insufficient...It doesn't inoculate you from criticism for being one-sided or intolerant in the classroom...That's not to prejudge any claims here. But if you're asking, in the abstract, ‘Can a faculty member satisfy the ideal of good teaching by simply saying at the beginning, *I'm going to teach one side of a controversy and I don't want to hear any other side and if you don't like this, please don't take my course,*’ my view is, that's irresponsible teaching.³⁴

Bollinger never contacted me to check whether this is true and has not seen copies of my syllabi. While he claimed that he was answering a hypothetical question to *New York Magazine*, he would soon be so emboldened by the very repetition of the claims against

me that he would abandon the necessity he initially saw for the hypothetical caveat. This is how the reporter of the *Jewish Week* put it:

Bollinger is careful not to name names, but he makes clear he is at odds with some professors in the [MEALAC] department, whether or not they are guilty of the allegations against them... "Just as I can't go in to my First Amendment class and say you know, I happen to think that censorship is a very good idea, and if you want to take a course on freedom of speech that emphasizes, you know, against censorship, God bless you, and go do that," he said.³⁵

Indeed, Bollinger now speaks of these allegations as outright facts. Witness what he told students over dinner a few days ago as reported by the *Columbia Spectator*: "'I'm not going to talk about whether the accusations are true or not. Let's just assume they're true,' Bollinger said."³⁶ The *Spectator* reporter adds the following:

The second claim made by the film, according to Bollinger, was that some professors did not permit students to voice their own opinions about matters of discussion in the classroom. He identified this action as a clear violation of academic freedom... The third claim was that some MEALAC courses are blatantly biased, presenting only one side of the spectrum of opinions on contentious subjects. Bollinger said that the warnings professors gave ahead of time about the one-sidedness of their courses were 'unacceptable.'³⁷

Note that the situation was no longer hypothetical. I should emphasize here that not only did Bollinger or Provost Brinkley never contact me about my course, neither of them responded to my announcement that I had cancelled it, which I made in my publicized statement in response to the intimidation to which I was being subjected. I had indeed sent a copy of my statement to Provost Brinkley before posting it. He wrote me back counseling me not to release it. However neither he nor Bollinger, nor even Vice President Dirks, expressed any discomfort that I, a Columbia faculty member, was canceling one of my courses because of intimidation. None of them informed me that I would be protected by the university were I to teach it again and that the university would ensure my rights and protect me against intimidation. Indeed, what I was subjected to is not more protection by my own university but more intimidation. The most concrete manifestation of which was the formation of your committee.

On the issue of the formation of your ad-hoc committee, the first point I want to

refer to is the establishment of the committee and then move to its mandate. The step taken by the administration to establish a committee to investigate professors based on student grievances that were not lodged with any university body but rather aired through an off-campus lobbying group sets a dangerous precedent of violating the academic freedom of professors. The establishment of the committee coupled with the statements by Bollinger to the press have given the clear impression that the David Project had legitimate issues to raise with Columbia, and that even though Bollinger himself had assured everyone that there were no registered complaints against any of the accused professors through any Columbia channel, and that he had already convened a secret committee to investigate similar allegations the previous semester, the so-called Blasi committee, which found no evidence of bias, he still saw a need for a second special committee to become the address of such complaints.

The matter of the committee charge is of grave importance. I requested and had a meeting with Vice President Dirks in his office on December 9 to discuss this particular matter. I told him then that I would not consider the ad-hoc committee a legitimate body unless it included in its charge the investigation of claims of intimidation of faculty by students, by administrators, and by off campus pressure groups. He responded positively to my concerns by asking me for my telephone number in Amman, Jordan, as I was traveling the next day on December 10th. He said that I needed to be next to a phone and fax in the next day or two so that he could call me and fax me a draft of the charge to approve so that he could release it then to the public. I was satisfied with this arrangement. Vice President Dirks however never contacted me. I E-mailed him on December 14 to inquire about the charge. He wrote back on December 19th informing me that he had not “yet been able to come up with a statement about the committee. I'll send you something as soon as it is ready.” I never heard back from him. Upon returning to Columbia in mid-January, my students forwarded to me a mass E-mail that Vice-President Dirks had sent out inviting students to appear before the committee. I was taken aback by such a step, as I still did not know what the committee's charge was. I wrote to the vice-president to inquire on January 20 as to what had transpired. He wrote me back clarifying that he had not promised to share with me the circular he had sent out to the students. As for the charge, he explained that he still had not finalized it and would do so

in a couple of days. I heard again from him a week later asking me to pick up a copy of the charge from his office. I did and was shocked to find that it did not include the investigation of faculty intimidation by students and administrators. I never heard back from Vice-President Dirks who never offered an explanation or an apology for his disrespectful conduct, having failed to inform me of the change of plans and then offering me the charge as a fait accompli.

I am very concerned about the choice of Floyd Abrams as your advisor, a position whose mandate has not been made public. Mr. Abrams is publicly identified with pro-Israeli politics and activism. He has spoken at fund raisers for causes in Israel,³⁸ has worked and consulted with the Anti-Defamation League, one of the parties campaigning against me, and received a major award from it in 2003, the Hubert H. Humphrey Award, and has endorsed the book *The Case for Israel* by Alan Dershowitz who has been speaking publicly in lectures and to the media against me, in the context of the ongoing witch-hunt, alleging that I support terrorism. In his blurb endorsing Dershowitz's book, Abrams states:

In a world in which Israel seems always to be the accused, regardless of the facts, Alan Dershowitz's defense offers an oasis of sanity and straight talk. It may be too much to hope that Israel's accusers will read this powerful and persuasive response to their charges. It is not at all too much to ask that fair--minded observers do so.³⁹

Given these statements by Abrams, the decision to appoint him as advisor to this committee conveys at the least the appearance of partiality.

On the question of my scholarship and my integrity as a teacher, Bollinger's statements sadly suggest that he has taken sides against the faculty and the university in this controversy. Compare his recent declarations with those of Martin Kramer, one of the main people behind this witch-hunt. Kramer wrote on November 5, 2002 in a web posting:

The other issue of overriding concern here is the apparent absence of any effort by the Columbia administration to promote diversity. Here I don't mean the false diversity of academic mafias. They think it's crucial to assemble people of different ethnic, national, religious, racial, gender, and disciplinary backgrounds—provided they say the same thing. I'm talking about intellectual diversity, which used to be a value at Columbia. The only historian of the modern Middle East at Columbia [besides the

possible employment of Rashid Khalidi] is another Palestinian, Joseph Massad, who is a militant follower of Edward Said. (He's now up for tenure.) Imagine that Khalidi were added, and Massad were tenured, both to teach history. They work in the same area, and their politics, while not identical, are very similar. The whole thing begins to look like a cozy club of like-minded pals, who peer at the Middle East through exactly the same telescope, from exactly the same vantage point.⁴⁰

Compare Kramer's statement with Bollinger's. After reviewing Kramer's views and those of others on the alleged lack of intellectual diversity at Columbia and in Middle East Studies more generally, and after citing Bollinger's own record on "racial diversity" at the University of Michigan, *New York Magazine's* reports that: "today, [Bollinger] says he's equally committed to intellectual diversity."⁴¹ This led the reporter to conclude that this "may not augur well for professor Massad's longevity at Columbia, no matter how favorably disposed the provost's committee may be to him."⁴² Bollinger would elaborate on that point later to the *Jewish Week*, where according to the newspaper, "Bollinger acknowledged, albeit elliptically, that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not being taught in a balanced way that reflects the complexity of the region. He believes that 'the historic, horrific treatment of Jews, especially in the 20th century, is not something to be taken as a matter of the past, and while I may not share all the policy judgments of the Israeli government, I believe the conflict cannot in any way be fairly regarded as lying at the feet of choices that Israel has made.'" ⁴³ Instead Bollinger recommends that MEALAC be "expanded" and that it continue to teach the Palestinian Israeli conflict but not as it has done so far:

I happen to think that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is of central importance in the modern world," he said, "and we want to be able to think about that in its full complexities. That's going to mean that there will be thoughts some people will find difficult, or even offensive, and yet we must be able to explore given our belief in academic freedom. However, it is our obligation to do that with full respect to the complexity, and if we don't do that, we have failed ourselves, we have failed our own principles.⁴⁴

The implication being that those of us, and the reference is clearly to me, who teach the Palestinian Israeli conflict at MEALAC do not teach it with its "full complexity" or that I do not "respect" such complexity. Perhaps I need to state to the committee that I derive

my authority as a scholar of the Middle East from my doctoral training here at Columbia's Political Science Department which granted me my PhD with distinction, a rare honor that was further certified by the Middle East Studies Association which granted me its most prestigious award for a social science dissertation for 1998, the Malcolm Kerr Award. My book, which was based on my dissertation, was published by Columbia University Press, and has been endorsed and reviewed favorably by the most prominent Middle East scholars in the academy. The only unfavorable review, out of seventeen favorable reviews, it received was in Martin Kramer's unscholarly magazine, *Middle East Quarterly*. My book and my articles on the Palestinian Israeli conflict are used as standard texts for courses on nationalism and on Palestine and Israel across the United States and Europe. My recent work on sexuality and queer theory is also taught across the country, and a book length study on the subject is forthcoming from Harvard University Press. I currently have two standing offers from prestigious presses for a book based on my published essays on Zionism and Palestinian nationalism. An attack on my scholarship therefore is not only an attack on me and on MEALAC but on Columbia's political science department, on prestigious academic presses, including Columbia University Press, and on the Middle East Studies Association (MESA), an opinion expressed by Martin Kramer who also condemns Middle East Studies at Columbia and MESA itself. I should affirm here that President Bollinger is under the impression that he can set the research agenda for Middle East scholarship at Columbia much better than Columbia's Middle East faculty. He told the *Jewish Week* that "we need to integrate better than we have other fields that have knowledge relevant to the work being done in MEALAC. What is the relationship, for example, between the environmental facts of life in the Middle East and Asia, or its diseases, and the culture there?"⁴⁵ This retreat to 19th century climatology and medical anthropology is disturbing. Would President Bollinger also think that there is a relationship between "environmental facts, its diseases and the culture" of African Americans or of American Jews?

I am concerned that Bollinger may well be making an academic judgment about me that is based not on my scholarship or pedagogy but on my politics and even my nationality. A case in point is Bollinger's recent response to a letter sent by one James Schreiber, a member of Columbia Law School's board of visitors and former federal

prosecutor, who says that a lecture that I gave and which he attended at Columbia's Middle East Institute three years ago was comparable to a speech at a "neo-Nazi rally." Bollinger met with Schreiber privately at his home and reportedly told him that he found his letter to be "powerful" and that he seeks to "upgrade" the faculty in the Middle East studies department.⁴⁶ In addition, when a number of faculty members and I signed a petition in 2002 calling on Columbia to divest from companies that sell weapons to Israel, a country guilty of human rights abuses, Bollinger's response betrayed a strong emotional reaction and a stronger political bias:

The petition alleges human rights abuses and compares Israel to South Africa at the time of apartheid, an analogy I believe is both grotesque and offensive.⁴⁷

While the campaigners against me off this campus do not have the direct power to influence my future employment at Columbia, Bollinger clearly does, and therefore his failure to defend academic freedom is detrimental to my career and my job. I am further chilled in this regard by reports that at the recent general meeting of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Bollinger sought to change the fifty-year tradition regarding how tenure cases are decided at Columbia when he stated that he and the trustees, in accordance with the statutes but in contravention of a fifty-year tradition, would want to have the final say in tenure cases in the future.⁴⁸

In conclusion, the foregoing has given you the minimum of details and historical narrative regarding this coordinated campaign from inside and outside the university targeting me, my job, and my chances for tenure, based on my political views, my political writings, and my nationality. That the Columbia University administration acted as a collaborator with the witch-hunters instead of defending me and offering itself as a refuge from rightwing McCarthyism has been a cause of grave personal and professional disappointment to me. I am utterly disillusioned with a university administration that treats its faculty with such contempt and am hoping against hope that the faculty will rise to the task before them and force President Bollinger to reverse this perilous course on which he has taken Columbia's faculty and students. The major goal of the witch-hunters is to destroy the institution of the university in general. I am merely the entry point for their political project. As the university is the last bastion of free-thinking that has not yet

fallen under the authority of extreme rightwing forces, it has become their main target. The challenge before us is therefore to be steadfast in fighting for academic freedom.

Appendix

Policing the Academy

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Joseph Massad* on the McCarthyism stalking American campuses

As I was reading one of the latest death threats I received via e-mail, I remembered the defamatory campaigns to which Edward Said has been subjected since the 1970s and which included the firebombing of his office in the 1980s. Since last summer, apologists for Israel's "right" to be a racist state (and to use whatever violence it can muster in defence of that "right") have begun a campaign of defamation against anyone in the US academy who dares to question any Israeli action or practice. This campaign is part of a larger effort to discredit US universities as arenas for independent scholarship and thought. It also aims to delegitimise universities who refuse to serve the interests of either the national security state or the Israeli government. The fact that those spearheading this campaign are almost exclusively part of a large conglomerate known as the pro-Israel lobby in the US is hardly surprising. Since 11 September, the campaign has expanded to include any academic who believes that Islam is not a terroristic evil religion bent on murdering the "civilised", and that Muslims and Arabs are humans who are entitled to civil, political, and human rights in their own countries as well as in the United States.

While academics live in a world where intellectual disagreements are registered through scholarly debates and discussions, and where methodological disputes are negotiated on the pages of academic journals and books and in the context of conferences, the new self-designated academic policemen refuse to acknowledge such modes of argumentation and fora as appropriate. In their fantasy world, the offending academics must be silenced, dismissed from their jobs, and their offending publications heaped and burned in an auto-da-fé. The strategy of the thought policemen consists of a refusal to address any of the offending contentions made by scholars and instead relies on the use of policing methods of discrediting, intimidation, and character assassination often used in societies run by the secret police. The overall purpose of this policing agenda is the destruction of academic freedom and the subversion of democratic procedure.

Take the examples of two of the better known academic policemen in recent years, the American Daniel Pipes and the Israeli Martin Kramer, neither of whom teaches in the US academy; as a result, some might say that they have an ax to grind with a system that

refuses to recognise their talents, especially in the field of policing and propaganda. Pipes and Kramer are two of the most outspoken defenders of Israel's "right" to be a racist state. They are also keen to defend Israel's prerogative to kill and bomb anyone who stands in its way of protecting its right to discriminate on racial grounds. Their role in the debate is to extend Israeli violence to the US academic arena by bombarding all enemies of Israel with defamatory accusations. It is not Merkava tanks, Uzi submachine guns, or Apache helicopters that are used in this bombardment, but rather newspaper gossip columns and secret police-style dossiers to name the preferred methods; as for the e-mail spamming, identity theft, and the death threats to which the unrepentant have been subjected, one can be sure that Kramer and Pipes are unconnected to either of them. Admittedly, their campaigns, unlike the Israeli government's campaigns, have not yet eliminated anyone physically (although the death threats sent by others to many of us continue), but the main point is to eliminate us professionally, and, failing that, to terrorise us into silence. Like the Israeli strategy of indiscriminate violence and terror, these campaigns have failed to achieve their purpose, whether to stop the Palestinians from resisting Israel's illegal occupation and violence in the case of Israel, or to stop Israel's academic critics in the case of the academic policemen.

This campaign of intimidation against academics has been well planned and conceived with one major goal in mind: defamation. This is undertaken by following a number of steps involving refusal to engage any of the ideas or propositions put forth by the targeted professors, much less to refute them, consistent use of innuendo, fabrication of claims based on half-quotes pulled out of context, recruitment of young and impressionable defenders of Israel's aforementioned "rights" on college campuses, use of the right-wing press to whip up hysteria about anti-Israel sentiment being allegedly rampant on US campuses, and calls for outright dismissal of professors found guilty of not upholding Israel's "right" to be a racist state. The less the US public believes in defending Israel's crimes, the more intense the campaign becomes.

While the pro-Israel lobby's campaigns to discredit people who criticise Israel had decreased in relative terms after Oslo, they were revived after the failure of the Camp David talks and the eruption of the second Intifada. The lobby and its individual manifestations have become rabid in their campaigns of discrediting offenders to the point that they have become embarrassing to many Americans who support Israel.

The campaign against university professors and instructors began in earnest in the Spring of 2002 and has not abated since. Columbia University, where I teach, is a major focus of the campaign, as it is seen by Kramer and Pipes as a major battleground for their cause. In addition to the unceasing campaigns against Edward Said, the campaign is now focussing on new professors, namely University of Chicago Professor Rashid Khalidi who will be joining Columbia University next fall, Professor Hamid Dabashi, the chairperson of the Department of Middle East and Asian Languages and Cultures at Columbia, and myself. Other professors and academics targeted on other campuses include John Esposito, Juan Cole, Ali Mazrui, M Shahid Alam, and Snehal Shingavi, among others.

The effort was inaugurated by a newspaper article published by Pipes (who has no academic post whatsoever) under the title "*Extremists on Campus*", and a book published by Kramer who is "senior researcher" at Tel Aviv University's aptly named "Moshe Dayan Centre". Kramer, the cleverer of the two, assailed American Middle East academics for their "failure" to explain the Middle East to the US public. What Kramer means is that unlike many of their Israeli Jewish counterparts, American academics have failed to explain to Americans that Muslims and Arabs are violent uncivilised creatures and that Israel has a right to be a racist state (although in fact many of them do exactly that). As Kramer works at the Moshe Dayan Centre, named after that luminary of Israeli military conquerors, one hopes in vain that some of Dayan's wisdom would have rubbed off on Kramer. Alas, if Dayan acknowledged in reference to Israel that "there is no single place in this country that did not have a former Arab population", Kramer in turn chases down any academic who would remind the world of such forgotten facts and demands that such an academic repent his sins. Dayan, ever the pragmatist, was never upset with legitimate Palestinian rage at Israel which he was determined to crush. He insisted to the likes of Kramer: "Let us not today fling accusations at the [Palestinian] murderers [of Jewish colonial settlers]. Who are we that we should argue against their hatred? For eight years now they sit in their refugee camps in Gaza, and before their very eyes, we turn into our homestead the land and the villages in which they and their forefathers have lived."

Pipes, on his part, set up McCarthyist public dossiers on the eight professors of choice on a Web site and called on our students to spy on us and report any anti-Israel statements that we might make in class. Tens of professors (among tens of thousands who work at US universities and colleges) rushed to defend the blacklisted professors by demanding that their names also be added to the blacklist. For Pipes and Kramer, this was indication enough of how anti-Israel US academic culture had become, never mind the tens of thousands of professors who fell silent and did not defend academic freedom or us. This skewed view is all the more telling in the case of the ebullient Kramer who dubbed Columbia University "Bir Zeit on the Hudson".

Now, in the tradition of Zionist lobbyists, the issue is not to have an Israeli view balanced with a Palestinian view about the subject, but rather, failing the suppression of Palestinian views altogether, to insist on a second, a third, and a fourth Israeli view to "balance" the one Palestinian view. Take the campaign against a course that I teach at Columbia titled "Palestinian and Israeli Politics and Societies" as an example. This course has enraged Kramer and his ilk and is used as evidence that Columbia University is an anti-Israel university. The fact that there are many other courses at Columbia (in existence for years, long before my course was even conceived) covering topics on contemporary Israeli society and politics, on Zionism, on conflict resolution in the Middle East, on Israeli literature, as well as on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict itself, all taught from an Israel-friendly angle (and not always by full-time professors) is immaterial; it is this orphan course taught with a critical view of Israel (and of Palestinian nationalism) that is the problem and which must be balanced. The fact that Columbia University features an important centre for Israel and Jewish studies but no centre on Palestine and Arab studies let alone a centre on Arab studies more generally, is not taken to mean that Columbia is a place friendly to Israel, rather the opposite: the existence of

one course that criticises Israel is sufficient to conclude that rampant anti-Israelism (often dubbed "anti-Semitism") has taken over the university.

If this was not enough, Columbia's Bir Zeit status is augmented by the divestment campaign started last year by the Faculty Committee on Palestine (of which I am a member), which indicates further to Kramer that US academics are not upholding Israel's right to be a racist state. The fact that Columbia has a counter-divestment petition whose signatures outnumber the pro-divestment petition by a factor of 33 to one (among faculty the rate is four to one against divestment) does not allay his fears or those of his followers, nor the fact that Columbia University's new president has publicly denounced the divestment campaign as "grotesque". Any questioning of the policemen's cause unto itself is seen as a thought crime, even a mortal sin against the sacrosanct cause of Israel. If anyone were to use these facts to label Columbia "Hebrew University on the Hudson", this would be seen legitimately as anti-Semitic. However, Kramer and his followers are never brought to task for their virulent anti- Arab racism.

What Kramer, Pipes, and their ilk want to achieve is a subversion of the democratic process as well as of the academic process. Their intent is to subvert the academy by deriding its independence and by attempting to make it subject to the national security state and the thought police. As far as the democratic process is concerned, their goals are to suppress dissenting views by defaming them and calling for people to be dismissed from their jobs if they expressed them. Kramer has called for the dismissal of Dabashi, myself, and others and began an unsuccessful campaign to pressure Columbia University to withdraw its offer to Khalidi. Notice that the academic qualifications of the targeted professors based on our recognised publications and academic records are negated a priori by Kramer who questions the very legitimacy of the institutions that have granted them to us, whether Middle East Studies as a field, the Middle East Studies Association, the university presses that publish us, or the universities that employ us (he lamentingly calls me "the flower of Columbia University"). In Kramer's and Pipes' fantasy world, the only recognition that academics should seek in order to qualify to teach and publish on the Middle East is that of Israel's academic police in the United States. As a gesture of good will, such academics should perhaps attempt to publish in Kramer's and Pipes' journal *Middle East Quarterly*, which is indeed impressive for the absence of scholarship in it. Maybe one day Kramer and Pipes would demand of the academy that publishing in *Middle East Quarterly* become a condition for any academic to obtain tenure or promotion!

Kramer and his young dupes have huffed and puffed lately about my recent article in *Al-Ahram Weekly* on "The Legacy of Jean-Paul Sartre", claiming that "The Jews, not being a nation by (Massad's) definition, cannot have nationalism. They have only racism..." I of course have not made such a claim. Israel is a racist state not because of Jewish nationalism but because of its legally institutionalised racism where only Jews (not Israelis) have rights and privileges based on their national belonging. I oppose any state that discriminates against its own citizens based on ethnic, religious, racial, national (or any other) grounds, and this especially includes those states that have discriminatory laws as Israel does. It is this and similar questions that Kramer and his followers do not want

to draw attention to, as they have no convincing answers to offer. The question is: do Kramer and Pipes actually believe that these methods will work in suppressing our views and freedom of thought and force us to worship at the altar of their favourite settler-colony?

Kramer, Pipes, and co are angry that the academy still allows democratic procedure in the expression of political views and has an institutionalised meritocratic system of judgment (admittedly with its own faults) to evaluate its members. Their goal is to destroy any semblance of either in favour of subjecting democracy and academic life to an incendiary jingoism and to the exigencies of the national security state with the express aim of imploding freedom. Their larger success, however, has been in discrediting themselves and in reminding all of us that we should never take the freedoms that we have for granted, as the likes of Kramer and Pipes are working to take them away.

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Footnotes

¹ The only change I have made in this version of the statement is to remove the names of students, professors, and administrators that I had included in the original statement but who have not sought publicity on this issue. I did so to protect their privacy. I have kept the names of students who have spoken publicly.

² Charge to Ad Hoc Committee from the Vice President for Arts and Sciences.

³ This is the full course description for Spring 2001:

“This course covers the history of Zionism in the wake of the Haskala in mid nineteenth century Europe and its development at the turn of the century through the current “peace process” between the state of Israel and the Palestinian national movement. The course examines the impact of Zionism on European Jews and on Asian and African Jews on the one hand, and on Palestinian Arabs on the other --in Israel, in the Occupied Territories, and in the Diaspora. The course also examines the internal dynamics in Palestinian and Israeli societies, looking at the roles class, gender and religion play in the politics of Israel and the Palestinian national movement. The purpose of the course is to provide a thorough yet critical historical overview of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict to familiarize undergraduates with the background to the current situation.”

⁴ This is the full course description for Spring 2002:

“This course covers the history of Zionism in the wake of the Haskala in mid nineteenth century Europe and its development at the turn of the century through the current “peace process” between the state of Israel and the Palestinian national movement. The course examines critically the impact of Zionism on European Jews and on Asian and African Jews on the one hand, and on Palestinian Arabs on the other --in Israel, in the Occupied Territories, and in the Diaspora. The course also examines critically the internal dynamics in Palestinian and Israeli societies, looking at the roles class, gender and religion play in the politics of Israel and the Palestinian national movement. The purpose of the course is *not* to provide a “balanced” coverage of the views of both sides, but rather to provide a thorough yet critical historical

overview of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict to familiarize undergraduates with the background to the current situation from a *critical* perspective.”

⁵ This is the course description for Spring 2004:

“This course covers the history of Zionism in the wake of the Haskala in mid nineteenth century Europe and its development at the turn of the century through the current “peace process” between the state of Israel and the Palestinian national movement. The course examines critically the impact of Zionism on European Jews and on Asian and African Jews on the one hand, and on Palestinian Arabs on the other --in Israel, in the Occupied Territories, and in the Diaspora. The course also examines critically the internal dynamics in Palestinian and Israeli societies, looking at the roles class, gender and religion play in the politics of Israel and the Palestinian national movement. The purpose of the course is to provide a thorough yet critical historical overview of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict to familiarize undergraduates with the background to the current situation.”

⁶ <http://israeloncampuscoalition.org/aboutus/members/aice.htm>

⁷ See Daphna Berman, “Masks of Tolerance,” February 26, 2002.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Xan Nowakowski, Students Organize Sit-In To Support Palestinians,” *Columbia Spectator*, 18 April 2002.

¹⁰ In a column that he posted on his website titled “Bir Zeit-on-Hudson,” on 5 February 2003, Kramer wrote this threatening statement: [Massad has] also failed to learn from Said that you lie low until you have tenure, but that’s another matter.” On February 20, 2004, he wrote an entry about me stating Massad “wants tenure at Columbia, and will seek it with a new book entitled *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question*. Will Columbia scrape bottom?” In an entry on June 14, 2004, Kramer wrote “Here’s my idea: Massad should be de-Columbia-nized when he comes up for tenure.” On October 22, after the David Project film was revealed to the public, Kramer wrote “I sincerely hope that Columbia will have the good sense not to tenure Massad, who is a pseudo-scholar...” and followed that on November 6 with the question: “So is Columbia prepared to tenure a professor who teaches that Christian (and Jewish) supporters of Israel in America are the world’s most powerful anti-Semites? That’s the crux of the Massad question.” All the above quotes can be found on <http://www.martinkramer.org/pages/899529/> On December 10, 2004, he wrote “If Columbia has any sense at all, he’ll eventually have to struggle with the meaning of this word: unemployed.” Posted on <http://www.martinkramer.org/pages/899529/>

¹¹ See for example my interview with Nigel Parry of *Electronic Intifada*, posted on <http://electronicintifada.net/cgi-bin/artman/exec/view.cgi/4/732>

¹² See Kramer’s “Bir Zeit-on-Hudson,” posted on 5 February 2003, <http://www.martinkramer.org/pages/899529/>

¹³ Ariel Beery, “Middle East Certitude,” *Columbia Spectator*, 10 March 2003.

¹⁴ Ariel Beery, “Between the Narrow Points,” *Columbia Spectator*, 14 April 2003. See also his article “The Burning Flames,” *Columbia Spectator*, 24 April 2003.

¹⁵ Joseph Massad, “Policing the Academy,” *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 10-16 April 2003.

¹⁶ Jacob Gershman, “Massad’s Theory: The Zionists are the Anti-Semites,” *New York Sun*, 22 February 2005.

¹⁷ Rabbi Charles Sheer, “The Treatment of the Middle East Studies at Columbia University,” 6 January 2004, posted on the Hillel website: <http://akko.hillel.columbia.edu/announcementDetail.hillel?id=91>

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ See the transcript of “Columbia Unbecoming,” 10.

²⁰ I Rabbi Charles Sheer, “The Treatment of the Middle East Studies at Columbia University,” op.cit.

²¹ Jacob Gershman, “Israel Is Accused of Anti-Semitism,” *New York Sun*, 30 December 2003. They ran the correction on December 31.

²² Jonathan Calt Harris, “Tenured Extremism,” *New York Sun*, 4 May 2004.

²³ This is the full text of my letter:

May 16, 2004

Mr. Joel J. Levy, Director
Anti-Defamation League

823 United Nations Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10017

Dear Director Levy,

I was deeply disturbed by the accusations that your letter of May 6, 2004 leveled against me. The “reports” that you have received from “ a student who attended the lecture” are utterly inaccurate and bear little relationship to the text of my lecture. My principled stance against anti-Semitism and all kinds of racism is a matter of public record and cannot be assailed by defamatory “reports” or by letters from the ADL that consider them credible sources. Indeed I have condemned anti-Semitism in my Arabic and English writings, regardless of whether the person expressing it was pro-Israel or anti-Israel, an Arab, an American Christian, or an Israeli Jew (you may consult with my review of Israel Shahak’s and Norton Mezvinsky’s book *Jewish Fundamentalism* published by the *Electronic Journal of Middle East Studies* and available at http://web.mit.edu/cis/www/mitejmes/issues/200105/br_massad.htm where I condemn the anti-Semitic approach used by anti-Zionist Israeli Jewish scholars to analyze Judaism and Jewish fundamentalism).

I therefore expect a prompt correction of the errors contained in your letter and demand an immediate apology, a copy of which should be sent to President Bollinger.

Sincerely,

Joseph Massad
Assistant Professor

Cc: President Lee C. Bollinger
Provost Alan Brinkley

²⁴ Jacob Gershman, “Columbia Abuzz Over Underground Film,” *New York Sun*, 20 October 2004.

²⁵ Charles Jacobs and Avi Goldwasser, “In Defense of the David Project,” *Columbia Spectator*, 16 November 2004.

²⁶ See my “Response to the Intimidation of Columbia University,” posted on my Columbia webpage on 3 November 2004: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/mealac/faculty/massad/>

²⁷ Shanker’s claim was first reported by Jacob Gershman, “Columbia Prepared to Protect Students from anti-Israel bias,” *New York Sun*, 17 November 2004.

²⁸ N.R. Kleinfield, “Mideast Tensions Are Getting Personal on Campus at Columbia,” *New York Times*, 14 January 2005.

²⁹ Uriel Heilman, “Non-Academic Debate,” *Jerusalem Post*, 23 December 2004.

³⁰ Jacob Gershman, “Bias Festerd ‘For Years,’ Professor Says,” *New York Sun*, 29 October 2004.

³¹ Statement from Lee C. Bollinger on the David Project Film, October 27, 2004.

³² See for example Sam Dillon, “Columbia to Check Reports of Anti-Jewish Harassment,” *New York Times*, 29 October 2004.

³³ Jacob Gershman, “Columbia Probe Eyed By Council,” *New York Sun*, November 12, 2004.

³⁴ Jennifer Senior, “Columbia’s Own Middle East War,” *New York Magazine*, January 10, 2005.

³⁵ Liel Leibovitz, “The Winter of His Content,” *Jewish Week*, 4 March 2005.

³⁶ Lisa Hirshmann, “Over Dinner, Bollinger On Academic Freedom,” *Columbia Spectator*, 10 March 2005

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ See “Israel Cancer research fund, Women of Achievement Lunch to Fight Cancer,” in *15 Minutes*, about his emceeding such an event.

³⁹ The quote is posted on the book publisher’s website: <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-102314.html>

⁴⁰ Martin Kramer, “The Columbia Club of Middle Eastern Studies,” 5 November 2002, weblog can be found on: www.martinkramer.org

⁴¹ Jennifer Senior, “Columbia’s Own Middle East War,” *New York Magazine*, January 10, 2005.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Liel Leibowitz, “The Winter Of His Content,” *Jewish Week*, 4 March 2005.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Liel Leibowitz, 'Winter of his Content,' op.cit.

⁴⁶ Jacob Gershman, "Ex-Prosecutor Likens Massad Speech to a 'Neo-Nazi Rally,'" *New York Sun*, 25 February 25.

⁴⁷ "President Lee Bollinger's Statement on the Divestment Campaign" 7 November 2002

⁴⁸ Minutes of the General Meeting of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, 16 February 2005.