

HOW ISRAELI ACADEMIA ENTRENCHES SETTLER COLONIALISM



1

MILITARY TECHNOLOGY

Prominent institutions like the Hebrew University, the Technion, and the Weizmann Institute, were set up during the British Mandate as strategic outposts for the Zionist project, hosting scientists of Zionist militias like the Haganah, Israel's pre-state army. These universities have since continued to host or spearhead military technology research, a crucial element of Israel's military rule over Palestinians.

2

SETTLEMENTS

Israeli universities, settlement expansion, and annexation of Palestinian land are mutually reinforcing. Ben-Gurion University was established as part of Israel's project to dispossess Palestinian Bedouins in the Naqab. Likewise, Ariel University was established in 1982 in an Israeli settlement in the West Bank, built on stolen land of former Palestinian villages.

3

ERASING HISTORY

Israeli academia systematically silences academics, including Israelis, from speaking about or uncovering the wrongdoings of the settler colonial regime. In the early 2000s, Teddy Katz, a student at the University of Haifa was sued for libel over his master's thesis, which exposed massacres by Israeli forces in the Palestinian village of Tantura during the Nakba. Katz was forced to write a false confession and rewrite his thesis.

SILENCING PALESTINIAN VOICES AND ACTIVISM

4

The arbitrary arrest of prominent Palestinian law professor Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian at the Hebrew University for incitement - merely for describing Israel's assault on Gaza as a genocide and calling for the abolishment of Zionism - is a case in point, which sparked widespread outcry.

Before October 2023, Palestinian solidarity movements and student union activities on Israeli university campuses were already regarded with deep suspicion or explicitly labeled as supportive of "terrorism".

Nevertheless, since October 2023, attempts to intimidate and silence Palestinian voices or activism in Israeli academia have reached unprecedented heights. Over 100 Palestinian students in 33 institutions faced disciplinary proceedings or suspensions due to their social media activity in support of Palestine. Some universities even actively reported students to the police, and Palestinian students also faced increasing attacks by Israeli students. Polls show that 87% Palestinian students say their sense of safety has been damaged.

"[While] Israeli universities are often viewed as bastions of pluralism and democracy in the West, they actually serve as a central pillar of Israel's regime of oppression against Palestinians." - Maya Wind, a scholar on Israeli militarism, noted.