



March 9, 2007

Dear Chancellor Blumenthal,

We are very concerned about a conference entitled "Alternative Histories Within and Beyond Zionism", which is scheduled to take place at UCSC on Tuesday March 15. (See Appendix 1 for an announcement of the event). The conference is being organized by Lisa Rofel, professor of Anthropology, and is co-sponsored by the Institute for Humanities Research, College 9/10, Feminist Studies, Anthropology, CGIRS, Community Studies, Sociology, Politics, and History.

We believe there are several aspects of this conference that warrant your immediate attention:

- 1) All five of the scheduled speakers at this conference on Zionism are self-identified anti-Zionists, and have spoken out publicly against the Jewish State on numerous occasions, either by signing anti-Israel divestment petitions or other public letters calling for the halting of all aid to Israel and the boycotting of Israeli academics, or by organizing anti-Israel events such as "Israeli Apartheid Week". None of the speakers is a recognized scholar of the history of Zionism or Israel.

Although promoted as an academic endeavor, the well-known anti-Israel political stance and advocacy efforts of every one of the conference participants indicate that this conference is entirely politically motivated and directed. In this regard, the organizer and sponsors of the conference have violated the following extant policies of the University of California:

- a) **The Policy on Course Content of The Regents of the University of California, approved June 19, 1970 and amended September 22, 2005:** "They (The Regents) are responsible to ensure that public confidence in the University is justified. And they are responsible to see that the University remain aloof from politics and never function as an instrument for the advance of partisan interest. Misuse of the classroom by, for example, allowing it to be used for political indoctrination... constitutes misuse of the University as an institution."
- b) **Directive issued by Charles J. Hitch, President of the University of California, September 18, 1970, "Restrictions on the Use of University Resources and Facilities for Political Activities" (still in effect):**

1. “The name, insignia, seal, or address of the University or any of its offices or units shall not be used for or in connection with political purposes or activity except as consistent with University regulations.”
2. “In correspondence, statements, or other material relating to political activities or issues, the University title of a faculty or staff member shall be used only for identification: if such identification might reasonably be construed as implying the support, endorsement, or opposition of the University with regard to any political activity or issue, the identification shall be accompanied by an explicit statement that the individual is speaking for himself and not as a representative of the university or any of its offices or units.”
3. “University equipment, supplies, and services---duplicating machines, telephones, mail and messenger services, vehicles, computers, stationery, and other equipment, supplies or services---shall not be used for or in connection with political purposes or activities.”

c) **Academic Personnel Policy (APM) 015 - Faculty Code of Conduct:**

Types of unacceptable conduct: “Unauthorized use of University resources or facilities on a significant scale for personal, commercial, **political**, or religious purposes.”

- 2) Although sponsored by six academic departments and two research units, this conference’s egregious political bias and its lack of diversity of legitimate scholarly perspectives on such a complex and controversial topic constitute a serious breach of academic integrity and a corruption of the ideals of scholarship embodied in the mission of the University of California and articulated in the UC Academic Personnel Policy:
  - a) **Preamble to APM-015:** “The University seeks to provide and sustain an environment conducive to sharing, extending, and critically examining knowledge and values, and to furthering the search for wisdom.”
  - b) **APM-010:** “The University also seeks to foster in its students a mature independence of mind, and this purpose cannot be achieved unless students and faculty are free within the classroom to express the widest range of viewpoints in accord with the standards of scholarly inquiry and professional ethics.”
- 3) While there is clearly a place in legitimate academic discourse for analysis and criticism of policies and practices of the State of Israel, commentary that demonizes or vilifies Israel or its democratically elected leaders is deemed anti-Semitic by the U.S. Department of State in its 2005 Global Anti-Semitism Report.

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has echoed this understanding of anti-Semitism in its 2006 Report on Campus Anti-Semitism, adding: “Anti-Semitic bigotry is no less morally deplorable when camouflaged as anti-Israelism or anti-Zionism”.

- 4) This conference is but one of many events with an unambiguously anti-Israel bias that have been sponsored by numerous departments and research units on this campus in recent years. (See Appendix 2 for a partial listing of events and departmental sponsors). It is important to note that within the last several years, none of these academic units has sponsored events concerning Israel which offer other legitimate scholarly perspectives, even after being invited to do so on several occasions by our faculty organization. We believe this widespread departmentally-supported anti-Israel bias has created an intellectually and emotionally hostile climate, particularly for some Jewish students and faculty at UCSC, and may be linked to a recent increase in anti-Semitic incidents on our campus.

As a recipient of federal funding, UCSC must comply with Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Law, which has been interpreted by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights to include Jewish students, who, on the basis of national origin, must be protected under federal law from actions that could create a hostile, anti-Semitic environment. This understanding is buttressed by the following recent recommendations of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights:

- Colleges and universities should ensure that students are protected from actions that could create a hostile anti-Semitic environment. University leadership should set a moral example and denounce anti-Semitic and other hate speech.
- Colleges and universities should ensure that all academic departments maintain academic standards and respect intellectual diversity. Federal funds should not be used in a way that supports discriminatory conduct.

Thus, the hostile climate created by numerous academic units on our campus is in conflict with federal civil rights guidelines and could have a deleterious effect on the federal funding which UCSC receives.

As chief campus officer and executive head of all activities at UCSC, it is within your administrative authority, and, we believe, incumbent upon you to immediately address the serious concerns we have raised about the upcoming conference. As we are sure you will appreciate, our concerns are shared by a significant number of parents, taxpayers and donors, who view such a conference as an egregious violation of public trust and look to your leadership to regain their confidence in UCSC.

We look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Ilan Benjamin  
Professor of Chemistry, UCSC  
Head of UCSC Scholars for Peace in the Middle East

Tammi Rossman-Benjamin  
Lecturer in Hebrew, UCSC  
Member of UCSC Scholars for Peace in the Middle East

cc: David Kliger, Executive Vice Chancellor  
Georges Van Den Abbeele, Dean of Humanities  
Sheldon Kamieniecki, Dean of Social Sciences  
Prof. Ronnie D. Lipschutz, Co-director CGIRS  
Prof. Nirvikhar Singh, Co-director CGIRS  
Prof. Gail Hershatter, Director Institute for Humanities Research  
Prof. Karen Barad, Chair Feminist Studies  
Prof. Judith A. Habicht-Mauche, Chair Anthropology  
Prof. Mary Beth Pudup, Chair Community Studies  
Prof. Herman S. Gray, Chair Sociology  
Prof. Daniel J. Wirls, Chair Politics  
Prof. Marilyn Westerkamp, Chair History  
Prof. Lisa Rofel, Anthropology

## Appendix 1: Conference Announcement

"Alternative Histories Within and Beyond Zionism."

Thursday, March 15

Namaste Lounge, College 9/10

4-7:30pm

Judith Butler: "Hidden Histories of Post-Zionism

David Goldberg: "On Racial Palestinianization"

Hilton Obezinger: "Jewish Opposition to the Occupation Since 1967, A Personal and Public Journey"

Terri Ginsberg: "Holocaust Film and Zionism: Exposing a Collaboration."

Ryvka Bar Zohar: "A History of Zionism and the Politics of Divestment"

This conference will take an historical perspective on the history of Zionism in order to remind ourselves that Zionism was never a unified phenomenon. This history has been nearly forgotten within current debates about the situation of Israel and Palestine. The conference will examine debates in the early history of Zionism, roads not taken within Zionism, and early paths of Zionism that were later deflected. It will examine how the various positions were grounded in claims to Jewish history, traditions, values, ethics and spiritual practice. It will ask how Zionism has defined Jewish political participation, ethical and religious practice, and intellectual thought.

Co-sponsored by: Institute for Humanities Research, College 9/10, Feminist Studies, Anthropology, CGIRS, Community Studies, Sociology, Politics, History

For more information, contact: [LROFEL@ucsc.edu](mailto:LROFEL@ucsc.edu)

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**Appendix 2:**  
**Partial list of anti-Israel biased events sponsored by several UCSC departments**  
**Fall 2001 – Fall 2006**

- 5/12/01** - Video: *“Two Palestinian Women Political Prisoners” (1999)*  
Photo Exhibit: *Palestinian Women Refugees in Lebanon and Palestine*
- From the *“Women of Color Film & Video Festival”*, sponsored by: Art History; Center for Cultural Studies; Center for Global, International, and Regional Studies; Center for Justice, Tolerance and Community; Chicano/Latino Research Center; Community Studies; Film and DigitalMedia History of Consciousness; Institute of Humanities Research; Latin American and Latino Studies; Literature; Politics and Legal Studies; Sociology; Women's Studies.
- 1/28/02** – *“Israel and Palestine: The Search for Justice and Security”*, a talk by Joel Beinin
- Sponsored by: Cultural Studies
- 5/24/02** - *“Exposing the Conflict: On the Road to Peace, A Panel Discussion on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict”*
- Sponsored by: Center for Justice, Tolerance and Community, Center for Global, International and Regional Studies, Sociology
- 1/30/03** – *Israeli Palestinian Conflict Video and Dialogue Night: “Crossing the Lines”*
- Sponsored by the Center for Global, International and Regional Studies
- 3/4/03** – *“No Pride in Occupation”* -- Talk & video clips, Dalit Baum
- Sponsored by Community Studies, GLBT Resource Center, Center for Justice Tolerance & Community & Women's Studies.
- 5/22/03** – *“Palestine and Iraq: A New Century of Imperialism in the Middle East”*, a talk by Richard Falk
- Sponsored by the Center for Global, International and Regional Studies, Center for Justice, Tolerance and Community, Politics, Sociology, Community Studies
- 2/5/04** - *“Holy Land: Common Ground”*, Alicia Dwyer Filmmaker and Documentarian
- Sponsored by the Center for Global, International and Regional Studies

**10/21/04** - A Talk on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict by Hedy Epstein, member of the International Solidarity Movement

Sponsored by Women's Studies

**4/27/05** - Feminisms and Global War Seminar: "*Up against the Wall - Making the Concrete Bloom in Israel/ Palestine*", Dalit Baum

Sponsored by Feminist Studies

**5/25/05** - Bereaved Families

Sponsored by Center for Global, International and Regional Studies,  
Center for Justice, Tolerance and Community

**10/9/06** – "*Space, Time, and Violence in the Palestinian Occupied Territories*", Adi Ophir

Sponsored by: Cultural Studies

**10/25/06** - "*Breaking the Silence: ex-Israeli soldiers expose their crimes against Palestinians in the Occupied Territories*"

Sponsored by Cultural Studies, Center for Global, International and Regional Studies and the Politics department