



#EASA2018: Motion against apartheid academia in the West Bank

written by Allegra
August, 2018





Matan Kaminer is a PhD candidate at the University of Michigan and a member of the Israeli Anthropological Association and of Academia for Equality, an Israeli group for the democratisation of academic life. His research is about labour migration from Thailand to Israel for agricultural work, at the intersection of settler coloniality and neoliberalism. He explains why the motion that has been submitted to the EASA member forum is an important step of solidarity for Palestinian and Israeli academics



Allegra: Where are these institutions located in the Occupied Palestinian Territories?

Matan: Since a few years, Israel has set up institutions in occupied Palestinian territories in the West bank. The biggest one is Ariel University. These institutions are reserved to Israelis and do not accept Palestinian students. They have been established in violation of international law as well as academic ethics. Ariel is located in the biggest settlement in the West Bank near the town of Salfit, between Ramallah and Nablus. Ariel is a very important part of what anthropologist Jeff Halper calls “the Israeli matrix of control”, established on Palestinian land and blocking Palestinian territorial contiguity.

Allegra: Can you tell us a bit more about the new law that has been voted by the Knesset last February?

Matan: In February this year the Israeli parliament or Knesset legislated to annex these institutions into the Israeli Council for Higher Education. Previously they were under the jurisdiction of the Israeli military government of the West Bank. This is part of a process many people are calling a creeping annexation in which Israeli law is gradually imposed on the occupied territories in a discriminatory way which undermines Palestinian sovereignty and the future possibility of an independent Palestinian state.

Allegra: How did the Israeli Sociological Association and the Israeli



Anthropological Association react to this new legislation?

Matan: In March the co-president of the Israeli sociological association, Yagil Levy and Gili Drori, proclaimed their opposition to this illegal move and committed to non-cooperation of their society with these institutions. Soon after, the President of the Israeli Anthropological Association, Nir Avieli, also proclaimed our association's opposition to the government move. In June, the IAA voted by a large majority of its membership to reiterate our opposition to this annexation and to commit to non cooperation with these institutions in the West Bank.

Allegra: Why is it important to support the motion by voting at the EASA members' Forum tomorrow?

Matan: When we were trying to get the IAA resolution passed, potential supporters voiced two concerns: one, that this was not going to get heard, that colleagues around the world would not be interested in our declarative move and two: that we would be subject to attacks from the government. I should mention that a few years ago a Boycott Law was enacted, which makes it possible for anyone who considers himself or herself affected by a boycott of the settlements to sue for millions of dollars without needing to prove any damage. We do not call our step of non-cooperation a boycott, but people are still worried about this. It would be very heartening for our colleagues in Israel to receive the support of European anthropologists. I cannot speak for colleagues in Palestine, but perhaps for them as well, to hear from European colleagues that they support our step in principle and are willing to offer solidarity and aid in case we get attacked for it.

Read the motion here: <https://easaonline.org/downloads/motions/Motion0818.pdf>

Read the Statement of the Israeli Anthropological Association here: <https://easaonline.org/downloads/motions/Aveliletter0918.pdf>