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Comment about 6-3-02

Comment Header: There is no trial of Pappé
Posted By: Kenneth Stow
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Ilan Pappé writes that:

On May 5, 2002, I was summoned to stand trial in my university, University of Haifa, where I am a lecturer at the department of International Relations. The prosecution, represented by the university's Dean of Humanities, demanded my expulsion from the campus. In fact, Pappé was never summoned. One faculty member, Yossi ben Artzi, asked to have a summons initiated. This summons never came about, much less a trial. The head of the university's academic disciplinary court concluded that there were no grounds for a trial--no accusation made that fell within this court's competence. Pappé should be precise. He is not on trial, nor has been, his neat circumlocution notwithstanding.

Ilan Pappé was not charged because of his opinions. Nor was he charged for accepting the arguments of the original Katz's thesis. Nor is there a staunching of opinion in this university.

Yossi ben Artzi himself stood up three months ago and in the presence of a government minister challenged the essence of current governmental policy toward Palestinians--and the exchange was heated.

Ilan Pappé was charged for his wholly uncollegial remarks. Whether such remarks merit severe disciplinary action leading up to expulsion is debatable. So, too, is it debatable whether Pappé should have been charged for going abroad many times last year during the semester without seeking permission, flouting classroom responsibilities, without seeking permission--an elementary obligation that is observed by all, high and low, in this university. If Ilan wants to sign a petition calling for a boycott, probably the most counter-productive move possible, this is his business. Personally, I question his presumption of moral superiority, to pretend to silence others while he claims to be a victim of silencing himself.

That Dr. Ibrahim Girais might consider taking Ilan to a civil court for racist defamation is another matter. About Dr. Girais--there is no doubt here: Ilan admitted to it in the news, and Girais confirmed it to me personally--Ilan said: "He is a fig leaf," with reference to Girais' presence on the Katz review committee. Translate into American terms, Girais is an Uncle Tom. Girais perceives it in terms of his integrity: What, he said to me. Just

because I am an Arab should I be considered a yes man, to Ok whatever the committee said. Girais, whom I have known for 26 years, is a person of integrity. Maybe here, therefore, in Pappé's racism, the truth has outed.

If the academic world wishes to gird its loins and take up the cause of a person capable of statements like this, then this, too, is its business. A very sad business indeed.

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