

Editor's Note

An aerial view of the field research in Israel reveals two key issues that must make up the academic agenda. The first one has to do with the academic boycott of Israel. As someone who heads the International Freedom of Research Center (IFOR), which is investigating the matter and trying to deal with it, I am surprised time and again by attempts to silence Israeli research. They include such phenomena as refusal to sell academic products to Israeli researchers, refusal to write letters of recommendation for the purposes of promotion or to review articles, and refusal to participate in a panel with a former Israeli scholar because he... served in the army.

Is the academic boycott a legitimate political tool? In my view, it is a blatant violation of the right to freedom of expression. Blocking researchers' access to sources of information and preventing them from expressing intellectual opinions amount to silencing in the darkest sense of the word. Banning scholars on political grounds is also a violation of their freedom of research, because it harms the essential divider that separates academic research from the world of business and politics. I think it is time for us to raise our voices in the interest of leaving the door to international research open to us.

The other issue on the academic agenda, in particular for legal scholars, concerns the report of the Council for Higher Education. In the past year we were the objects of critique by researchers from abroad who reviewed our educational institutions. One of the conclusions reached by the critics was that we need to expand legal research inside Israel. As the poet, Shlonski, said: "a fleeting guest sees all faults." I believe we should regard this as a recommendation to expand research into our own affairs, into the field of domestic law, aimed at improving our local environment.

The articles published in this issue examine critically events in our region. The issue opens with the article of Judge Mordechai Levy, who discusses the important case of false convictions in Israel and suggests ways of avoiding them. The article is followed by the response of the person who placed this topic on the Israeli agenda, Prof. Boaz Sangero. Dr. Inon Hayman also discusses the rules of evidence, and points out in his article the psychological biases built into testifying.

Two of the articles published in this issue are dealing with matters of gender. The article of Dr. Yossi Green discusses gender preference in Jewish law in a medical context, and its application in present-day reality. The article of Dr. Michal Horowitz discusses affirmative action in labor laws in general, and in the context of gender in particular, and stresses the need for implementing affirmative action in cooperation with employers, avoiding as much as possible any methods of coercion.

Modern life has led to the establishment of a new legal research area: computer law. Two articles in the current issue focus on one aspect of this field: online pedophilia. Dr. Haim Wismonskey, Head of the State Attorney's Legislative Office, provides a sympathetic analysis of the two latest legislative actions in this area, and recommends supporting them. By contrast, Dr. Asaf Hardoof criticizes the latest legislative action in this area, raising questions about its constitutionality and doubting the wisdom of placing the emphasis of the struggle against child pornography on cybercrime.

Yours,
Sharona