



About the Technion

What Is The Technion – Israel Institute of Technology?

The Technion – Israel Institute of Technology was founded in 1912, 36 years before the formation of the state of Israel, with a donation from New York banker, businessman, and philanthropist Jacob Schiff ^[1]. The Technion is located in Haifa in what was then Ottoman Palestine. Classes began in 1924, and from the outset the institute's purpose was to educate the engineers, planners, and weapons manufacturers who would go on to create the Jewish-only state of Israel. The Technion quickly grew into Israel's major weapons lab thanks to the continuation of financial support from the US. According to a recent article on the WNYC News site: “[The Technion's] operating budget comes from the Israeli government, but two-thirds of all private fundraising come from the U.S. – and the biggest donor region is the New York metro area” ^[2].

Education and research at the Technion is focused on the development of hi-tech weaponry, serving as an incubator for the Israeli military-industrial complex, and developing technologies which are detailed below. Most Israeli universities are involved in one way or another in helping the military, but the Technion has all but enlisted itself in the Israeli armed forces.

Despite this history, or perhaps because of it, the mainstream press has supplied little information about The Technion. Events hosted by Cornell University and Mayor Bloomberg's office have also sidelined the issue. The Technion is not contributing financially to this project ^[3], and the principal actors kept its involvement secret until ten days before the City's deadline for proposals ^[4]. Less than two weeks after Cornell announced their receipt of a \$350 million 'gift', later revealed to be from Cornell alumnus and millionaire Charles Feeney ^[5], the



frontrunners in the race, Stanford University, dropped out. Stanford President said that: “the city had changed the terms of the proposed deal”, and Stanford’s general council stated: “I have been a lawyer for over thirty years, and I have never seen negotiations that were handled so poorly by a reputable party” [6]. Following Stanford’s exit, the Cornell-Technion proposal was speedily approved in what Cathy Dove, Vice President of the New Campus, called an “amazing fast tracked progress” [7]. Why all the secrecy?

1. The Technion is complicit in crimes committed by Israel against the Palestinian people

According to Israeli historian Ilan Pappé, The Technion was complicit in ethnic cleansing in the Galilee, a north-central region of Israel largely populated by Palestinians. Leading academics from The Technion prepared a plan, publicized in 2003, which stated that the Jewish ‘takeover’ of the Galilee was a national priority. Their prospectus began by saying: “It is either them or us. The land problems in the Galilee proved that any territory not taken by Zionist elements is going to be coveted by non-Zionists” [8]. A 1993 United Nations Commission defined ethnic cleansing as “the planned deliberate removal from a specific territory, persons of a particular ethnic group, by force or intimidation, in order to render that area ethnically homogenous” [9], and it is considered a crime against humanity under the statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) [10].

2. The Technion is deeply involved in the research and development of weapons and surveillance equipment

The remote-controlled Caterpillar D-9 bulldozer

The armored bulldozer is an essential component of the Israeli occupation. It has enabled the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to demolish approximately 25,000 Palestinian homes since 1967, according to the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions [11]. Bulldozers have occasionally come under attack by Palestinian resistance fighters and stone-throwing children, defending their homes and



property from unwarranted and illegal demolition. In response, The Technion has developed remote-control capabilities for the Caterpillar D-9 bulldozer to facilitate the continued destruction of Palestinian houses, olive groves, and tunnels without any risk to their operators. According to one IDF officer, the IDF doubled its order for D-9s after they “performed remarkably during operation Cast Lead [the invasion of Gaza]” [12]. A UN-appointed fact finding mission later reported strong evidence of war crimes committed during that operation [13].

In 2006, the Church of England divested from Caterpillar, stating that it would not invest in “companies profiting from the illegal occupation [of Palestine]” [14]. In May 2012 the Quaker Friends Fiduciary Corporation voted to divest completely from Caterpillar due to their “zero tolerance for weapons and weapons components...We are uncomfortable defending our position on this stock” [15, 16]. Also, in May 2012, one of the world’s largest pension funds, TIAA-CREF, removed Caterpillar from its Socially Responsible Investment portfolio following the downgrading of Caterpillar by the MCSI ratings agency, which cited “on-going controversy associated with use of the company’s equipment in the occupied Palestinian territories” [17, 18].

Drones as weapons and surveillance devices

The first modern drone was developed in Israel in 1973 [19], and Israel is the single largest exporter of drones in the world [20]. As part of the Technion Autonomous Systems Program (TASP), students at The Technion developed the “Stealth drone,” which can fly up to 1850 miles and carry two 1100-pound “smart bombs.” TASP also developed the “Dragonfly” drone whose 9-inch wing span makes it small enough to “easily enter rooms through small windows and to send back photos from a miniature camera” according to the American Technion Society’s website [21].



For decades, The Technion has been engaged in weapons research and development as part of Israel's longstanding war against Third World liberation struggles. The effect, according to Israeli scholar Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, is that "What Israel has been exporting...is not just a technology of domination, but a worldview that undergirds that technology...the logic of the oppressor, the way of seeing the world that is tied to successful domination...not just technology, armaments, and experience, not just expertise, but a certain frame of mind...that modern Crusaders have a future." [22].

Furthermore, The Technion receives significant funding from Amdocs, a telecommunications company on the BDS boycott list for its declaration of support for Israeli "security" policies against Palestinians, and for its alleged spying on U.S. citizens via digital tracking and recording of telephone conversations [23, 24]. Amdocs awards annual prizes to Technion students and hires many Technion graduates [25]. The Technion's Computer Science Department library is even named Amdocs Computer Science Library [26].

3. The Technion works closely with two of Israel's largest weapons manufacturers

Rafael Advanced Systems is one of Israel's largest government-sponsored weapons manufacturers, famous for the "advanced hybrid armor protection system" used on the IDF's Merkava Mk4 main battle tank. Shots were fired from one such tank in April 2008, killing a 24-year-old Reuters cameraman and eight Palestinian civilians, aged 12-20 [27, 28]. The relationship between The Technion and Rafael reaches back over 10 years. In a 2001 press release, The Technion announced an "MBA program tailored specifically for Rafael managers," [29] further solidifying the relationship this collaboration represents between academia and the military.

Elbit Systems is a major Israeli private weapons research company. It is one of



the two main contractors of the electronic detection fence, ^[30], a key component of Israel's Separation Wall in the West Bank, which the International Court of Justice has deemed a violation of international law ^[31]. Elbit provide surveillance equipment (Lorros surveillance cameras, unmanned ground vehicles, and the TORCH surveillance system) which are used to monitor activity around the wall ^[32] and are now being exported to the United States through its American subsidiary, Kollsman, Inc. ^[33].

Norway's Finance Ministry divested from Elbit in 2009, stating: "We do not wish to fund companies that so directly contribute to violations of international humanitarian law" ^[34]. In 2010 Denmark's largest financial institution, Danske Bank, and Sweden's largest pension funds also divested from Elbit ^[35, 36]. In contrast to these investors, The Technion opened a center for the development of electro-optics in partnership with Elbit in 2008. According to The Technion's Dean of Electrical Engineering, "We view the establishment of the new research center as a major upward step in our long-term partnership with Elbit Systems" ^[37].

4. The Technion gives special treatment to Israeli soldiers while discriminating against Palestinian students and stifling political dissent

The Technion boasts the highest percentage of students serving in the army reserves, many of whom form part of both the academic elite at Technion and the military elite in the IDF ^[38]. Israeli law stipulates that universities give special treatment to student reservists ^[39], and no Israeli university has ever expressed even symbolic opposition to that law. This practice highlights not only the complicity of Israeli academic institutions in the occupation, but also discriminates against Palestinian students, none of whom may serve in the Israeli military. It also discriminates against the small but significant number of Jewish conscientious objectors who refuse to serve in the IDF.



Grants and academic benefits are commonly awarded based on past, present or future military service. More recently, reservists studying at The Technion who had served in Operation Cast Lead were rewarded with academic benefits in excess of the usual and customary benefits ^[40].

The Technion has a long record of stifling political dissent. In 2009 the Student Union produced a poster supporting the IDF invasion of Gaza, and arranged a counter-demonstration against Palestinian students holding a protest outside The Technion against the IDF atrocities. Despite having received no prior approval, the pro-IDF demonstration was allowed to continue within the grounds of the Technion. In contrast, in 2010 ten Palestinian students were arrested for peacefully protesting the assault on the Gaza-bound Freedom Flotilla, even though they had applied for, and been granted permission to demonstrate ^[41].

Finally, The Technion trains students for specific positions in Israel's military and is a partner in the Brakim academic reservist program which trains students in Mechanical Engineering and, according to the publication *Technion Focus*, allows students to "complete their undergraduate degrees and apply their education during their military service" ^[42, 43].

We Respond To The Palestinian Call for Action

In March 2012, the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) ^[44], a Palestinian civil society organization, sent out an Appeal for Action to End the Cornell Collaboration with Technion. In this they stated: "[W]e call on US civil society to bring the injustices of this venture to light. In the first instance, all New York City residents should, rightfully, be outraged that their tax dollars are being apportioned in the service of such an endeavor, and we appeal to them to pressure the City of New York administration to end this collaboration. Moreover, we ask students, staff, and faculty at institutions around the country, including student groups such as SJP [Students for Justice in



Palestine], as well as workers, labor unions, and other civil society organizations in New York City, to mobilize against the administration of Cornell University to end its partnership with Technion. More importantly, we call on people of conscience to mobilize against the Cornell-Technion partnership, and more broadly, [to boycott Israeli academic institutions] through street protests, educational venues, media presence and other such mobilizations” [45].

NYACT now joins the campaign against The Technion as it attempts to open a campus in New York City. Our demands are:

- That the City of New York Administration ends this collaboration, for which \$100 million of New Yorker’s tax-payer money has been promised
- That the Cornell University Administration ends its partnership with The Technion, in line with the call by the Palestinian Council for Higher Education’s request for “non-cooperation in the scientific and technical fields between Palestinian and Israeli universities” [45]

We ask all people of conscience to join us in our campaign and to make it clear that institutions complicit in ethnic cleansing, house demolitions, illegal separation walls, surveillance and weapons drones, and academic and social discrimination have no place in New York City.



REFERENCES:

- [1] "How One Stone Changed the World", Technion – Israel Institute of Technology website, 1 April 2012: <http://www.technioniit.com/2012/04/how-one-stone-changed-world.html>
- [2] Stan Alcorn, "The MIT of Israel: A Look at Cornell's Partner on the Roosevelt Island Tech Campus", *WNYC News*, 10 May 2012: <http://www.wnyc.org/articles/wnyc-news/2012/may/10/look-cornells-partner-roosevelt-island-tech-campus/>
- [3] "Israel's Technion making its mark in the U.S.", *Jewish Journal*, 28 February 2012: "[A] precondition for participation" was that Israel could not take funds from its own budget for investment in New York."
http://www.jewishjournal.com/nation/article/israels_technion_making_its_mark_in_the_us_20120228/
- [4] Richard Pérez-Peña, "Alliance Formed Secretly to Win Deal for Campus", *New York Times*, 25 December 2011: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/26/education/in-cornell-deal-for-roosevelt-island-campus-an-unlikely-partnership.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all
- [5] Richard Pérez-Peña, "Cornell Alumnus Is Behind \$350 Million Gift to Build Science School in City", *New York Times*, 19 December 2011: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/20/nyregion/cornell-and-technion-israel-chosen-to-build-science-school-in-new-york-city.html>
- [6] Ilya Marritz, "Mayor Bloomberg Answers Stanford U Critics", *WNYC*, 8 May 2012: <http://www.wnyc.org/blogs/empire/2012/may/08/mayor-bloomberg-answers-stanford-u-critics/>
- [7] Roosevelt Island Town Hall Forum, New York City, 8 April 2012
- [8] Ilan Pappé, *The Forgotten Palestinians: A History of the Palestinians in Israel* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 257
- [9] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_cleansing
- [10] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_cleansing_-_Ethnic_cleansing_as_a_crime_under_international_law
- [11] The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions website: http://www.icahd.org/?page_id=76
- [12] Yaakov Katz, "'Black Thunder' Unmanned Dozers to Play Greater Role in IDF", *Jerusalem Post*, 30 March 2009: <http://www.jpost.com/Israel/Article.aspx?id=137546>
- [13] United Nations Human Rights Council Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/specialsession/9/FactFindingMission.htm>
- [14] "Church of England Votes to Divest from Caterpillar" *Electronic Intifada*, 6 February 2006: <http://electronicintifada.net/content/church-england-votes-divest-caterpillar/5867>

Furthermore; In May 2012, the World United Methodist Church's General Conference resolved to urge "the U.S. government to end all military aid to the region" to call on "all nations to prohibit...any financial support by individuals or organizations for the construction and maintenance of settlements," and to call on "all nations to prohibit... the import of products made by companies in Israeli settlements on Palestinian land." See: "World United Methodist Church



Recommends Boycotts & Sanctions; Rejects Divestment” *U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation*, 4 May 2012: <http://endtheoccupation.org/article.php?id=3205>

[15] Kirsten Moller, “United Methodist Church Votes on Boycott; Quakers Divest from Caterpillar” *Global Exchange*, 17 May 2012: <http://www.globalexchange.org/blogs/peopletopeople/2012/05/17/united-methodist-church-votes-on-bds>

[16] “Quakers Divest from Caterpillar!”, US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, May 2012: <http://www.endtheoccupation.org/article.php?id=3210>

[17] Naomi Zeveloff, “Israel Was ‘Key’ Issue in Caterpillar Dump” *The Jewish Daily Forward*, 25 June 2012: <http://forward.com/articles/158433/israel-was-key-issue-in-caterpillar-dump/>

[18] “Caterpillar Removed from TIAA-CREF’s Social Choice Funds” WeDivest.org, 21 June 2012: <http://wedivest.org/2012/06/catremovedpressrelease/>

[19] Israeli Air Force website, “The First UAV Squadron”: <http://www.iaf.org.il/4968-33518-en/IAF.aspx>

[20] Jefferson Morley, “Israel’s Drone Dominance”, *Salon*, 15 May 2012: http://www.salon.com/2012/05/15/israels_drone_dominance/singleton/ And figures based on data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) arms transfers database at: <http://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers>

[21] Kevin Hattori, “Stealth UAV, Lunar Elevator Among Student-Developed Projects”, *American Technion Society*, 24 February 2010: http://www.ats.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=6455&security=1&news_iv_ctrl=1522

[22] Hallahmi, Benjamin, *The Israeli Connection: Who Israel Arms and Why* (New York: Pantheon) 1987, p. 248

[23] “BNC to Telkom South Africa: “Don’t enter into a deal with AMDOCS””, *BDS Movement*, 12 September 2008: <http://www.bdsmovement.net/2008/bnc-to-telkom-south-africa-don-t-enter-into-a-deal-with-amdocs-202>

[24] “Make Eircom Say No to Israeli Company Amdocs – Hanging-In of Petition”, *The Irish Anti-War Movement*, 23 June 2008: <http://irishantiwar.org/node/516>

[25] “2012 Amdocs Best Project Contest”, Technion – Israel Institute of Technology Computer Science Department website, 9 May 2012: <http://www.cs.technion.ac.il/news/2012/522/>

[26] Technion – Israel Institute of Technology Computer Science Department website: <https://www.cs.technion.ac.il/library/>

[27] Robert Mahoney, “Israeli Army Decision Endangers Journalists in Gaza”, *Committee to Protect Journalists*, 14 August 2008: <http://cpj.org/blog/2008/08/-in-the-gaza-strip.php>

[28] Nidal al-Mughrabi, “Reuters Cameraman Killed in Gaza”, *Reuters*, 16 April 2008: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2008/04/16/us-palestinians-israel-gaza-reuters-idUSL1632826120080416>



- [29] Technion Press Release, “Technion MBA Program Delivered In-House to 40 Rafael Managers”, 7 January 2001: pard.technion.ac.il/archives/PressEng.NotActive/Pdf/MBA-eng.pdf
- [30] Who Profits – The Israeli Occupation Industry: <http://www.whoprofits.org/company/elbit-systems>
- [31] International Court of Justice Press Release, “Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory”, 9 July 2004:
<http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/index.php?pr=71&code=mwp&p1=3&p2=4&p3=6&ca>
- [32] Border Security, Elbit Systems website: <http://www.elbitsystems.com/elbitmain/area-in2.asp?parent=8&num=67&num2=67>
- [33] Elbit. We Divest.org website: <http://wedivest.org/learn-more/elbit/>
- [34] Elizabeth Adams, “Norway’s Pension Fund Drops Israel’s Elbit”, *The Wall Street Journal online*, 3 September 2009: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125197496278482849.html>
- [35] “Danske Bank Divests from Elbit and Africa-Israel”, *BDS Movement News*, 26 January 2010: <http://www.bdsmovement.net/2010/danske-bank-divests-from-elbit-and-africa-israel-632>
- [36] Benjamin Joffe-Walt, “Swedish Pension Giant Divests from Elbit”, *The Jerusalem Post*, 31 March 2010: <http://www.jpost.com/Israel/Article.aspx?id=172146>
- [37] “Out of Sight”, *Technion Focus*, November 2008:
<http://www.focus.technion.ac.il/Nov08/technologyTransferStory3.htm>
- [38] The Scope, Newsletter of the Canadian Technion Society, Summer 2006
<http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CFAQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdntech.org%2Fpdf%2F07-2006.pdf&ei=3kfvT4P0JMi06wG6n7H8BQ&usq=AFQjCNGtbVnNnITBZOETZwvtmR3vt0w0hw&sig2=m8yYtUvfn6nTv6XgBR9a3Q>
- [39] Anhel Pfeffer, “New ‘bill of rights’ for student reservists”, *Haaretz*, 24 December 2003:
<http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/new-bill-of-rights-for-student-reservists-1.109580>
- [40] Uri Dekel (Technion Student Association Chairman, 2009), “Update for Reservists – Suite Of Solutions Following Operation Cast Lead”, *Technion Student Union*, 21 January 2009:
<http://forums.asat.org.il/viewtopic.php?f=4&t=191840>
- [41] “Arrest of 8 demonstrators at the entrance of ‘Technion’ Haifa”, *Panet*, 2 June 2010:
<http://www.panet.co.il/online/articles/1/2/S-300987,1,2.html>
- [42] Ruth Ebenstein, “Lightning Strikes”, *Technion Focus*, 2009:
http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CFEQFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fmeeng.technion.ac.il%2F~meeng%2Fadb_admin%2Fuploads%2F%2FStudies%2FUndergraduate%2FBrakim%2Fbrakim-media.pdf&ei=r1PvT5HVD-e36wGyxsSRBg&usq=AFQjCNFmnKhZdq4ntimYAbrePMiJWI6Bg&sig2=wrgudIToVAOX-XhM10jySw
- [43] ““Brakim” Excellence Program”, website of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Technion – Israel Institute of Technology: <http://meeng.technion.ac.il/Brakim/>



[44] PACBI was launched in Ramallah in 2004 by a group of Palestinian academics and intellectuals. For more information see: <http://pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=868>

[45] "An Appeal for Action: End Cornell University Collaboration with Technion", *PACBI website*, 4 March 2012: <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1829>