

Appendix 40: email from Dewitt to Monahan about consulting unnamed external academics for plenary session, May 13, 2009



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05/13/2009 10:02 AM

To lawdean@osgoode.yorku.ca
cc "Stan Shapson" <sshapson@yorku.ca>
bcc
Subject commentary on the conference

This just in from a very distinguished Israel scholar whom I have known for 20 years, a former head of a research centre and dean, and a distinguished visiting scholar at some of the leading US and UK universities:

The problem is not with any single one of the scholars. I would share the podium with any one of them. But I would not agree to be the fig leaf to give this circus cover and I don't think Deans or Presidents should either. The problem is that I or people like me were never even asked to share the podium. For what qualifies as scholarship these days one could hardly fault any one of them for not being a real scholar (interestingly S. 21 (1)). I am not familiar with all the names but I do know most of them. The problem is the insufferable one-sidedness of the conference. There is not one really mainstream Israeli in the entire list. It could very well be that it is so obviously lopsided that more centrist folk refused to participate. I know of at least one I think a Canadian called S. 21 (1) whose brilliant letter of decline I saw. Bottom line, the problem is not with the qualifications of any one of the speakers, but the congregation of an almost entirely one sided crowd to engage in what is obviously going to be an Israel bashing festival with no real scholarly debate. David Kretzmer and Sammy Smoocha would be amused to find that they are probably the most right wing persons there. The organizers are motivated by their own war against Israel and that is what this is really about. All the rest is camouflage. This in essence is not a scholarly exercise but political advocacy under the guise of scholarship – the high jacking of academe to promote the undoing of Israel. The world abounds today with evidence that flies in the face of the one state idea (Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Sri Lanka) yet none of these are even discussed. There is exactly one paper out of about 30 that deals with India and Pakistan and takes us beyond the Israel/South Africa paradigm

Whoever wants to give this a hand should know what he/she is really doing.

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