“The AAUP, Left Critiques of U.S. Higher Education, and the Campaign for the Academic & Cultural Boycott of Israel”

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The call for an academic boycott of Israeli universities, as a means of delegitimizing the occupation of Palestine, has been met with resistance in the U.S. not only from the Right but also from the AAUP on grounds of academic freedom. On the other hand, Left critics of higher education (Christopher Newfield, Derek Bok, Marc Bousquet, Sheila Slaughter, Jennifer Washburn), while dismissive of liberal notions of academic freedom, envision the U.S. university in purely national terms through analyses of corporatization. In this paper I will examine the limits of both the AAUP’s and Left ideas of the U.S. university and contrast them with Said’s valorization of the U.S. university as a site for the decolonization of knowledge. I will then suggest how the scholasticide and human rights violations of Palestinians can be seen as central to the U.S. university and how the academic boycott is consistent with an egalitarian vision of the university.