

Did You Sign This, Professor?



Professor Oded Goldreich in Tel Aviv last month. Credit: Moti Milrod

[Haaretz Editorial](#)

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Education Minister Yoav Gallant can be pleased. Not for his personal conduct or for the way his ministry functioned during the coronavirus crisis, but for an invention he may wish to patent: the establishment of a tribunal for the examination of political opinions, particularly ones that right-wing governments wish to keep hidden.

That is the real significance of Weizmann Institute Prof. Oded Goldreich's invitation to a hearing concerning [his opinions and political activity](#) over the last 16 years. This is part of an "examination process now being conducted regarding your candidacy for receiving the [Israel Prize](#)," as the official letter drily notes.

There can be no going along with the whitewashing of these words: This is an investigation meant to intimidate, to mark internal enemies and continue the delegitimization of left-wing opinion – on the way to denying Prof. Goldreich the Israel Prize for mathematics and computer sciences. The message is clear: This is the fate of anyone reminding people, here or overseas, of the sin of the occupation.

Gallant is the one directly responsible for setting up this McCarthyite tribunal, but sharing his disgrace are the attorney general, Avichai Mendelblit, and a panel of [Supreme Court](#) justices. Last month they approved – out of cowardice, short-sightedness or possibly acquiescence – the education minister’s request to examine whether calling on the European Union to stop cooperating with Ariel University in the West Bank is sufficient pretext to deny Goldreich the prize.

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- **Scientists call on education minister to give Israel Prize to left-wing professor**
- **A dark Independence Day for Israel, denying leftist mathematician top honor**

The invitation to the hearing clarifies the “clauses of indictment” Gallant plans on invoking. Among them are a 2005 letter written in response to a column in the Guardian, and a 2011 petition against the “boycott law” that was signed by hundreds of people. Yet again, a need has materialized to sort out the “basic stance” of the Weizmann Institute scientist towards the BDS movement, alongside the hint that criticism of cooperation between Israeli academia and the defense establishment is forbidden (Or Kashti, Haaretz, May 6).

At first, Prof. Goldreich was asked to present himself in front of his “judges” at the Education Ministry. At that point, even the attorney general realized that Gallant was out of control, and the planned hearing was replaced with a request for the professor’s written response. This cannot be countenanced, either. Goldreich did well to make it clear that he does not intend to cooperate with this investigation. The issue will soon be back at the High Court of Justice. The judges must make it clear that political persecution will not be permitted in Israel.

The above article is Haaretz’s lead editorial, as published in the Hebrew and English newspapers in Israel.