**TAU interview – transcription/translation**

Video C0005

**Interviewer:** Ok. Hi welcome, thank you taking the time to be with us. So, just for identification, please say your name. For the camera.

**Boris:** I’m Boris Mints.

**Interviewer:** So, please tell us about yourself and your connection to Tel Aviv University.

**Boris:** I think it happened by chance to some degree

I was well known as a person who supported various universities

including those in Israel

and I got acquainted with the vice-chancellor of the university

who was in charge of attracting investors

and we had a discussion

he came to me with a proposal

to create a kind of structure

based on the fact that my educational background is in theoretical physics

and he presumed that I might be interested in creating a sub-department

or a structure within the framework of Tel Aviv University that would take on the problems of theoretical physics

but, in reality, by that time, even though I still wished to pursue scientific activity,

at that point, the point where I am today, I was more interested in doing research,

and I myself have been making personal efforts in this direction, to try and analyze

the global challenges that exist in today’s world.

This idea was well received, and so three years ago we created an institute within the framework of Tel Aviv University that tackles the challenges of the contemporary world.

**Interpreter:** Do you want me to translate all speech?

**Interviewer:** You know, the truth is that if it’s too difficult…

**Interpreter:** No no no, it’s not difficult for me but it will take us time.

**Interviewer:** I know, this is why we’ll probably just transcribe it. So don’t worry about it.

**Interpreter:** Yeah, sure. Just for your understanding, to make and ask questions.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Yes, exactly.

**Interpreter:** The idea came quite occasionally, he was well known as someone who supported a lot of institutions and universities all over the world as well as in Israel and once he was reached by one of the top principals of the university who knew that he recently was a specialist and a doctor in theoretical physics, and he reached him asking whether he wants to participate in opening some research institution under the umbrella of TAU.

**Interviewer:** Mmhmm.

Video C0006

**Interviewer:** Excellent. So first of all, if you look at me, that would be better. The other thing, so, tell me… So, you founded this really important institute, which deals really with many of the key issues that are facing the world. Why… please explain why you chose Tel Aviv University specifically and not other universities either in Israel, Russia or elsewhere. And if you could start just the question with a….you know…“I chose Tel Aviv University”, just so it’s better for our editing purposes.

**Boris:** Ok.

For all intents and purposes, in order to create this kind of institution that deals with global challenges

you need the university to be a very unrestricted and independent structure.

In many cases, if you want to create such an institute at a university

the university itself operates under the influence of the government.

It was extremely important to me, in fact it was a categorical principle,

that the institute be free to conduct research without having to consider the positions of governments on this or that issue.

Tel Aviv University, to my great joy, provides this kind of opportunity.

That is why, as I was organizing the set-up of the institute, this became clear to me

and I made the decision to realize this project specifically at Tel Aviv University.

**Interpreter:** The most important thing is, when you’re going to create such an institution is that the university under which, or with whom you are doing it, has to be absolutely independent and open minded. Independent from government influence and open minded and…

Video C0007

**Interviewer:** And…So…Really…You know…Our whole idea of the campaign is “Big Ideas”, right, be part of the next Big Idea. This is a place where really we create big ideas in all the different fields. So, we know, we have an idea of what your big idea is, this institute, you know the… global issues and interdisciplinary work on global issues. So, tell us a little bit more about that and why you think it’s really important to work on those issues specifically in order to improve the world.

**Interpreter:** She wants you to tell her why you think the issues the institute is working on are truly important for the world.

**Boris:** Yes, I understand.

The thing is that my experience working in government institutions and international organizations,

I worked with the European Council for several years,

has shown me that the global issues, the global challenges that exist today,

most of them lie outside of the field of vision of contemporary politicians.

And if we in fact we sit down and analyze year by year the messaging of, for example, the President of the United States, the German Chancellor, the President of France, the British Prime Minister

people at the head of the leading countries in the world, who in many ways determine the policies of how international organizations distribute their funds to this or that project,

we will clearly see, at least it’s clear to me, that those issues which I consider to be the real issues of our time, such as desertification, or clean water shortages, and so on

these problems are not on these people’s radar

which in my view is not just wrong, but can lead to catastrophic consequences for millions, if not billions of people on this planet.

**Interpreter:** It was his experience working…

Video C0008

**Interviewer:** One million dollars and we really see it as a way to not just move us forward in the regular way of advancing, which everyone, we will do, but really to, in an exponential type of way to improve our research and make changes that will really impact Israel and abroad. So, how do you see the campaign changing the University and also Israel, even the world, in the next ten years, and after that?

**Boris**: You know I’m not an expert in these kind of predictions.

To be honest, I would prefer to abstain from answering

Because in reality, the world changes very quickly

and my experience tells me that one has to be very careful in making predictions

and I would prefer to avoid making any kind of claims about

what will become of us, of the University, of Israel, of the world in ten-fifteen years.

**Interpreter:** He says that, according to his experience…

Video C0009

**Man:** His sound is ok, the translations we don’t…

(garbled conversation)

**Interviewer:** … exactly, so I don’t ask him the same things again and again. Umm, ok, so, you know, these videos hopefully, one of our goals is really to reach new supporters and find people who can support us and gain exposure for the university. What would you say to your contemporaries, whether it’s in Russia or around the world, why it’s important specifically to support TAU, why an investment here is worthwhile?

**Interpreter:** They are filming this video campaign in order to raise as much funding as possible and retain support from around the world. What could you say to your contemporaries in Russia or in other countries, why should they invest in the development of the Tel Aviv University?

**Boris:** I am convinced that anyone who has the opportunity to do so should invest in education and

scientific research. As far as I can see, Tel Aviv University,

which uses what’s called an interdisciplinary approach, is in this sense far ahead of other universities

at least ones whose practices I’m familiar with

and I think that its independence, the highly thought out administration system of the university

the minimal amount of bureaucracy involved in taking decisions,

these are all things that give it an advantage as far as donors who wish to work with universities

such as Tel Aviv University are concerned.