

BRICUP Newsletter 122

BRICUP

British Committee for the
Universities of Palestine

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Antisemitism accusations and the Defence of Jeremy Corbyn

UCU Congress 2018 Fringe Meeting, Manchester
May 30th

Tom Hickey

At lunchtime on Wednesday 30th May, on the first day of the UCU Congress 2018, a successful fringe meeting was held to discuss the recent attacks on Jeremy Corbyn as well as on numbers of activists over alleged antisemitism in the Labour Party. The meeting had been called to explain the background to a motion (Motion 32) related to this topic which was due to be discussed at Congress. UCU is the national trade union for lecturers and academic-related staff in Further and Higher Education.

With standing room only, delegates heard brief speeches from Professor Jonathan Rosenhead (speaking on behalf of Jewish Voice for Labour), the anti-racism activist Marc Wadsworth (speaking on behalf of Grassroots Black Left), and Tom Hickey (speaking on behalf of Bricup). Professor Rosenhead has recently been attacked in the Jewish Chronicle for alleged antisemitism because of his contextualisation of the remarks of Ken Livingstone; and Tom Hickey has long been considered antisemitic by some sections of the Zionist movement because of his advocacy of an academic boycott of Israeli institutions as policy for the UCU. But it is Marc Wadsworth, however, who has been targeted for excommunication. The three speakers exemplified, in different ways, the issue that the meeting addressed.

Expulsion

Wadsworth, an anti-racist campaigner and founder of the Anti-Racist Alliance, has been a prominent figure in a series of campaigns, not least as joint founder of the campaign for justice for the murdered teenager, Stephen Lawrence. Marc was expelled from the Labour Party on 27th April for breaches of Labour Party rule 2.1.8 ('behaviour prejudicial to the Party').

The accusation arose from his public criticism of the MP, Ruth Smeeth, at and after the launch of the Chakrabarti Report. Smeeth had accused Wadsworth of an antisemitic attack on her by what she chose to interpret as an allegation that she was engaged in a conspiracy with the media and against the leadership. Ruth Smeeth was elected to Parliament in 2015, is a member of Labour Friends of Israel, and was Campaigns and

Public Affairs Director of BICOM (the Britain-Israel Communications and Research Centre). She resigned her role as PPS to the Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary in protest at Corbyn's leadership.

Labour Antisemitism Crisis?

In his contribution, Professor Rosenhead argued that there is indeed an antisemitism crisis in the Labour Party but in a different sense than its proponents assert. It is not a crisis of rampant, malignant racism, a hatred of Jews as Jews that repeats the blood libel, international conspiracy theories, and Holocaust denial. It is rather a crisis in which allegations of antisemitism have created a climate in which Labour Party members are uncertain what criticisms of Israel might get them suspended or expelled.

The experience of Labour Party members round the country is that antisemitic sentiments at LP meetings are virtually unknown. Antisemitic comments on social media, some claiming to be from supporters of Jeremy Corbyn, are a reality – but the origin and authorship of this material, much of it anonymous, is inherently uncertain.

What is known, from direct experience as well as from surveys, is that antisemitism is less of a problem today than it was in the 1950s or 1930s or 1890s, and its incidence remains far higher on the Right of politics than on the Left. Even a claim such as this, that antisemitism is not a major problem in the Labour Party, is one that the enemies of Jeremy Corbyn want to make into evidence of antisemitism. Antisemitism denial, it seems, is itself antisemitic. The aggressive attacks on Jewish Voice for Labour by opponents of Corbyn and by friends of Israel, Rosenhead argued, were because this new organisation threatens the narrative that all Jews are united behind the antisemitism moral panic.

Wadsworth Sacrificed

Marc Wadsworth recounted the events that led to his suspension, and ultimately to his expulsion from the Party. He explained what he had seen in the exchanges between the Labour MP and a senior reporter from the Daily Telegraph. He categorically denied that there was anything antisemitic in his accusation of collusion between them in opposing Jeremy Corbyn, and that he had not the faintest idea that Ruth Smeeth was Jewish. He had fought all forms of racism throughout his adult life, including fighting antisemitism. The accusation against him is thus a poisonous libel,

and one that he would continue to fight until it was withdrawn.

Equally, Wadsworth argued, his expulsion from the Labour Party on these grounds is not something that he could possibly accept. Not only is it a calumny, and an assault on his personal and political integrity, it hangs as a threat against every member of the Labour Party who has legitimate criticisms of Israel. His campaign for reinstatement and the clearing of his name and reputation is a political and a legal campaign. He appealed for financial support to keep it going.

Coincidences of interests

Tom Hickey argued that the orchestrated campaign against Jeremy Corbyn and the current Labour Party leadership was not over. It would be kept simmering during the summer, he predicted, and its temperature would be raised again in the autumn.

Hickey argued that there was a coincidence of interests that united the Blairite right-wing of the Labour Party, Tory activists, and the friends of, and apologists for, Israel. For their different reasons, all shared the objective of preventing the current Labour Party winning office, and thus keeping Jeremy Corbyn out of 10 Downing Street. For many of Corbyn's opponents in the Parliamentary Labour Party, it would be better for Labour to lose the next election than to have a socialist who is critical of Israel in the Prime Minister's residence. Electoral defeat would enable them to reclaim the Party from the radicals and from the newly recruited members.

The determination and desperation of the Right in the Party is exemplified by the expulsion of Marc Wadsworth, a man of unimpeachable anti-racist credentials. Yet it also showed a vacillation on the Left, and in the leadership. There had clearly been a mistaken belief that concessions to Zionist critics on the question of antisemitism would appease them, whereas the opposite has proved to be the case, and there would be no compromise from the anti-Corbyn MPs who feared deselection.

Was there antisemitism in the Labour Party that needed to be rooted out? Hickey answered the question by quoting the veteran Israeli socialist, now living in the UK, and who was one of the founder members of the Israeli socialist party, Matzpen. This man had himself been expelled from the Labour Party for antisemitism after the 2017 Party Conference ... before being vindicated and reinstated. When asked by a reporter whether

there were any antisemites in the Labour Party, Moshe Machover replied, "Are there any zebras in Norway?" Thus had he taken the measure of the problem. There are some zoos in Norway, and some will doubtless house some zebras, but this doesn't render Norway's climate as tropical.

The Fate of Motion 32

With such a successful meeting mobilising and motivating perhaps 20-25% of the delegates, there was every chance that the motion on Jeremy Corbyn, and on allegations of Labour Party antisemitism, would be won in the afternoon debate, and that the wrecking amendment that had been submitted by the majority faction (the Independent Broad Left) on the National Executive Committee would be lost. That was not to be, however.

It was not that the amendment was passed, or that the motion was lost. They were never debated. On the agenda also were two motions critical of the UCU General Secretary for her handling of the USS pensions dispute – one was a censure motion, the other a motion of 'no confidence'. Rather than face that criticism, the General Secretary appealed to her trade union for support, and members UCU's staff who are members of the Unite union walked out, paralysing the Congress, and bringing its business to a halt (including Motion 32). See below for the wording of the motion that was never debated.

It was a hallucinatory experience. Delegates proceeded to vote by a large majority that the Congress should be reconvened as soon as possible, and that all properly submitted motions must be debated in line with the democratic procedures of the UCU. So, the antisemitism motion will return (as will the motions of criticism directed at the General Secretary).

Appendix: text of Motion 32

Antisemitism, Anti-Zionism, and the Defence of Jeremy Corbyn

Conference notes:

scurrilous, orchestrated, continuing attacks on Jeremy Corbyn, and recent expulsion of Marc Wadsworth from the Labour Party;

both are committed, lifelong anti-racists, and opponents of antisemitism;

no form of racism is tolerable in any part of the labour movement, including antisemitic imagery or Holocaust denial;

the ‘anti-Corbyn campaign’ conflates antisemitism with anti-Zionism, and obscures the threat of real antisemitism;

the Tory activist tweet: “It’s an actual stroke of genius we’ve been able to pull this off, perfect timing heading into the elections too”.

Congress believes the campaign:

affects the whole labour movement, including unaffiliated unions;

is designed to prevent an anti-austerity government whose leadership is critical of Israel; is a thinly-veiled attack on Palestine solidarity and BDS.

Congress resolves:

General Secretary will write to Corbyn and Wadsworth expressing solidarity, and issue a press statement;

President will urgently communicate to members policy on anti-Corbyn campaign, Palestine, antisemitism and anti-Zionism.



Academic freedom in the era of Trump

By *Sunaina Maira, Professor of Asian American Studies at the University of California, Davis.*

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This guest post is part of the [ASA blog series](#) published in conjunction with the meeting of the American Studies Association in Chicago, IL Nov. 9-12—and as part of a [blog series](#) of contributions by authors in the new series [American Studies Now](#).

Something unthinkable happened in the United States in the last few years: hundreds of academics, senior scholars, graduate students, and untenured faculty came forth in support of an academic boycott of Israel. Beginning in 2013, the movement to boycott Israeli academic institutions expanded rapidly with one major academic association after another endorsing the boycott and adopting resolutions in solidarity with the Palestinian call for an academic boycott.

But this movement emerged several years after Palestinian academics, intellectuals, and activists called for an academic and cultural boycott of Israel in 2004—and after years of military occupation, failed peace negotiations, ever-

expanding and illegal Jewish settlements on Palestinian land, ongoing home demolitions, the building of the Israeli Wall, repression, and military assaults. All of these events and the military occupation of Palestine itself have been endorsed, defended, and funded by Israel’s major global ally, the United States. The academic boycott and the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement are thus embedded in a significant aspect of the U.S. political and historical relationship to the Middle East, and in a particular, cultural imaginary of Palestine, Palestinians, and Arabs in general, that has become an increasingly central concern of American studies.

I consider this progressive-left academic solidarity to be a potential expression of academic abolitionism. The notion of academic abolitionism is not focused on redeeming the U.S. academy—just as it is ultimately not focused on redemption for the U.S. imperial state—as much as it is ongoing beyond the liberal discourse of academic freedom to highlight other kinds of freedoms, and un-freedoms. The boycott of Israeli academic institutions that are complicit with occupation and apartheid is only one component of a larger politics of refusal grounded in academic abolitionism. An abolitionist view challenges the complicity of the U.S. academy with global militarism, carceral regimes, and settler colonial circuits of power, in which Israel is a key player.

Indeed, the 2016 U.S. presidential election and Trump’s victory spurred more vigorous and vocal progressive mobilization on campuses and in communities, with solidarity campaigns binding together movements against police violence and militarization, and for racial justice, immigrant rights and sanctuary, gender and sexual rights, indigenous sovereignty, environmental justice, and freedom in Palestine. The historic Women’s March in January 2017, which mobilized masses of people to come out in the streets against Trump after his inauguration, was called for by prominent feminist activists such as Angela Davis and Palestinian American Linda Sarsour, who have advocated for BDS as part of a feminist politics. The International Women’s Strike on March 8, 2017, explicitly included a call for “the decolonization of Palestine” in its platform, and for the dismantling of “all walls, from prison walls to border walls, from Mexico to Palestine.” These campaigns build on the solidarities that were created in previous years as the BDS movement made linkages with Black Lives

Matter, the antiwar and prison abolition movement, labor unions, faith-based activists, and feminist and queer groups.

As “White supremacy” became a term permissible in discussions on major cable news networks about Trump and his alt-right followers, there were also growing conversations about Zionism, the ways it can become imbricated with anti-Semitism on the right, and the need to challenge racial supremacy and White privilege. Palestine has become central to all of these major contemporary debates and resistance movements. Omar Barghouti writes about the struggle for liberation, equality, and dignity waged through BDS:

The global BDS movement for Palestinian rights presents a progressive, antiracist, sophisticated, sustainable, moral, and effective form of nonviolent civil resistance. It has become one of the key political catalysts and moral anchors for a strengthened, reinvigorated international social movement capable of ending the law of the jungle and upholding in its stead the rule of law, reaffirming the rights of all humans to freedom, equality, and dignified living. Our South Africa moment has finally arrived!

Sunaina Maira is the author of **Boycott! The Academy and Justice for Palestine** which was published in January by the University of California Press. It is first available as an e-book.. Visit ucpress.edu/go/americanstudiesnow for details.

About the Book. The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement (BDS) has expanded rapidly though controversially in the United States in the last five years. The academic boycott of Israeli academic institutions is a key component of this movement. What is this boycott? Why does it make sense? And why is this an American Studies issue? In this short essential book, Sunaina Maira addresses these key questions. *Boycott!* situates the academic boycott in the broader history of boycotts in the United States as well as in Palestine and shows how it has evolved into a transnational social movement that has spurred profound intellectual and political shifts. It explores the movement’s implications for antiracist, feminist, queer, and academic labor organizing and examines the boycott in the context of debates about Palestine, Zionism, race, rights-based politics, academic freedom, decolonization, and neoliberal capitalism.

See [Boycott! The Academy and Justice for Palestine](#) for reviews by Angela Davis (Distinguished Professor Emerita, University of California), Omar Barghouti (co founder of the PACBI) , Steven Salaita (author of *Uncivil Rites: Palestine and the Limits of Academic Freedom*) and Alex Lubin (author of *Geographies of Liberation: The Making of an Afro-Arab Political Imaginary*).

Wolf prize for science

The list of winners of the 2018 Wolf prize (awarded annually by Israel to living scientists and artists for "*achievements in the interest of mankind and friendly relations among people ... irrespective of nationality, race, colour, religion, sex or political views*") included a Jordanian Palestinian scientist, Profesor Omar Yaghi from the University of California, Berkeley. Below is the letter sent to Professor Yaghi by members of BRICUP

Dear Professor Yaghi

Re: Wolf Prize for Science

We are writing to you with regard to your nomination for the Wolf prize for science, which is to be awarded in Jerusalem at the end of this month. Our understanding is that you have accepted the award and will be going to Israel for the ceremony.

Could we strongly urge you to withdraw your acceptance, even at this late stage? You are a notable scientist who has already won many prestigious awards, and it would be a tragic stain on your reputation if you bestowed your recognition on the State of Israel in this way and particularly at the present time. The killing of over 100 people in Gaza, 62 of them in one day, and the wounding of 10,000 by Israel's army has provoked world-wide condemnation. That is on top of the inhumane and unjustified siege imposed on Gaza in the last 11 years, and Israel's recurrent attacks on the Palestinians of the West Bank and the routine oppression of all who live under its military occupation.

As a Jordanian/Palestinian and a Muslim yourself we have no doubt that you are outraged at the Israeli assaults on Jerusalem's holy places, and Israel's naked attempts at wresting them from Jordan's custodianship. By your acceptance of an

Israeli award you would indicate an acceptance of these practices too.

In an ideal world, politics would be far removed from the world of science and academic research. In such a context you would be acting within your rights. But in the real world states such as Israel use the granting of international awards and prizes to give themselves respectability and to whitewash their crimes.

We are sure you would not wish to associate yourself with such an abysmal enterprise or help to beautify Israel's tarnished image by accepting this award. We earnestly hope you will reject it.

Yours sincerely

Dr Ghada Karmi, University of Exeter

Professor Jonathan Rosenhead (Emeritus),
London School of Economics

Professor Richard Seaford, University of Exeter

Professor Robert Wintermute, Kings College
London

Professor Penny Green, Queen Mary University
London

Dr Tom Hickey, University of Brighton

Dr Derek Summerfield, Kings College London

Dr Susan Blackwell, Vrije Universiteit
Amsterdam

Dr Les Levidow, The Open University, UK

Professor Haim Bresheeth, School of Oriental &
African Studies London

Professor Robert Bruce (Emeritus) London
School of Economics

Professor James Dickins, Leeds University

Professor Caroline Rooney, University of Kent

Professor Glen Bowman (Emeritus), University of
Kent

Professor Patrick Williams, Nottingham Trent
University

Dr Anna Bell, Nottingham Trent University

Dr Nicola Pratt, University of Warwick

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European Court of human rights to review criminal convictions of French activists for urging consumers to boycott products imported from Israel

Robert Wintermute

*Professor of Human Rights Law, King's College
London*

On 7 April 2017, the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg (Alsace) communicated the case of Baldassi & Others v. France to the French Government. It was brought by eleven French activists who were charged with "inciting racial discrimination" after urging consumers, at a supermarket near Mulhouse (Alsace) on 22 May 2010, to boycott "products imported from Israel". They were acquitted by the trial court in 2011, but were convicted by the court of appeal in 2013 (after the prosecution appealed) and fined 1000 EUR each. The Cour de cassation (France's supreme civil court) upheld their convictions in 2015. The Court's summary of the facts (in French) is available here <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-173336>.

The French Government sent its written observations on the activists' applications (complaints) to the Court in October 2017. The activists replied in January 2018. Given that cases usually take at least three years, and that the activists lodged their applications with the Court in March 2016, the Court is unlikely to adopt a judgment before March 2019.

One procedural possibility is that the Chamber of seven judges currently examining the case could decide to relinquish jurisdiction in favour of the Grand Chamber of seventeen judges under Article 30 of the European Convention on Human Rights: "... where the resolution of a question before the Chamber might have a result inconsistent with a judgment previously delivered by the Court, the Chamber may ... relinquish jurisdiction in favour of the Grand Chamber ...". A judgment in favour of the activists under Article 10 of the Convention (freedom of expression), which protects ideas that "offend, shock or disturb the State or any sector of the population" (*Handyside v. United Kingdom*, 7 December 1976, para. 49), might be viewed as inconsistent with the judgment of a Chamber of seven judges in *Willem v. France*, 16 July 2009.

In 2002, Jean-Claude Willem, the mayor of Seclin, a commune (local government) near Lille with a population of around 12,000, instructed his catering staff to boycott Israeli products,

especially fruit juices. He was convicted of “inciting racial discrimination” and fined 1000 EUR. By 6 votes to 1 (a strong dissent by the judge from the Czech Republic), the Court found no violation of Article 10. The judgment (in French) is available here <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng/?i=001-93612>.

One example of relinquishment because of potential inconsistency concerned refusals by local governments in France to approve openly lesbian and gay individuals as potential adoptive parents of children, because of the individuals’ sexual orientations. After a Chamber of seven judges found no discrimination (by 4 votes to 3) in *Fretté v. France* (26 February 2002), the Chamber in *E.B. v. France* relinquished jurisdiction in favour of the Grand Chamber, which found discrimination violating Articles 14 and 8 of the Convention (by 14 votes to 3 on the principle vs. 10 to 7 on the facts of the case) on 22 January 2008.

The conclusion of the majority in *Willem v. France* contrasts sharply with the judgment of the Supreme Court of the United States in *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People v. Claiborne Hardware Co.* (2 July 1982) <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/458/886>, which the activists have cited to the European Court of Human Rights. NAACP involved a consumer boycott by African-Americans of white-owned businesses, to put pressure on the white community to end racial discrimination against the black community in Claiborne County, Mississippi (just as the French activists advocated a consumer boycott to put pressure on Israel to end its racial discrimination against the Palestinians: see Wintemute, (2017) *King’s Law Journal* <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09615768.2017.1298943>). The US Supreme Court ruled that “a nonviolent, politically motivated boycott ... is constitutionally protected” under the First Amendment (freedom of speech) of the US Constitution.

Robert Wintemute, Professor of Human Rights Law, King’s College London

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News from the UK Palestine Mental Health Network (ukpalmhn)

In our [April newsletter](#), we reported on the opposition of clinicians to the plans for the

International Association for Relational Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy (IARPP) to hold its 2019 conference in Tel Aviv . UKPALMHN has now reported on the significant support for the protest against this decision that has come from members of the Israeli anti occupation mental health group - [Psychoactive](#).

This same group has also issued [a powerful statement on Gaza](#) . It includes the following call

We invite mental health professionals around the world to sign (by filling the form below the following statement) which was initiated by the members of the Israeli group Psychoactive - Mental Health Professionals for Human Rights (for the Hebrew version and the list of the Israeli Mental Health Professionals signed, please follow the link

<https://goo.gl/forms/54uQheglXdE9P67y1>

As members of Psychoactive - Mental Health Professionals for Human Rights, we wish to join our colleagues from the Arab Psychological Association in condemning the Israeli military activity within the Gaza Strip and the massive sniper fire that was directed at unarmed protesters during the Great Return March in Gaza. We express our deep sorrow for the hurt inflicted on Palestinian protesters and are gravely concerned about the disastrous physical and psychological consequences of the massive use of arms against unarmed people.

The events in Gaza have taken place in the context of a continuous siege that has severely limited the residents’ freedom of movement and their political rights, in addition to reducing their access to drinkable water, electricity and medical treatment. On the backdrop of the grave suffering caused by these conditions, and the lack of prospects for a better future, many Gazan Palestinians feel the need to resist even if that means risking their lives. In situations of continuous oppression, witnessing and validation of the traumatic experiences are of great importance. When the suffering is not recognized, the psychological damage is likely to be particularly pervasive. We therefore urge mental health professionals everywhere to inquire into the living conditions in besieged Gaza. Understanding what life is like under siege is indispensable for understanding the Palestinian resistance.

As mental health professionals, we know that ongoing exposure to warfare and extreme stress is

bound to be destructive for the physical and the psychological health of the people of Gaza. In particular, the children of Gaza, whose entire lives have been shaped by repeated traumatisations, deprivation and loss, are bound to grow up feeling deep despair.

We must acknowledge that as – Jewish-Israeli society – we bear a great deal of the responsibility for the suffering of the Palestinians and that our actions as well as our silent complicity have helped deepen and perpetuate their despair. We also need to heavily ponder the way in which our society endangers the mental health of the Israeli young people who, as soldiers, are delegated to carry out the policies of the occupation and siege, including live fire at unarmed protesters who pose no threat to them. We are exposing these young adults to the deleterious psychological effects of being perpetrators of violence, including the likelihood of developing post traumatic stress disorder.

In addition to traumatizing Israeli soldiers, the policies of occupation and siege cause broad harm to the Israeli society, by encouraging dehumanization of others and dissociation from their suffering. We warn against heavy reliance by our society on the psychological mechanisms of splitting and projection, which makes it difficult for us as individuals and the collective to feel compassion or empathy for the Palestinians in Gaza and take responsibility for our actions and inaction. These mechanisms, when extensively used, are dangerous on both the intrapsychic and social levels.

We urge all mental health professionals in Israel and around the world to join us in viewing this situation as one that requires our ethical involvement and to raise their voices in clear opposition to the occupation and siege, decrying their disastrous consequences for both Palestinians and Israelis. We hope that it may be possible to recognize the evil that is within us, instead of projecting it fully onto the other and maintaining security and comfort while only a short distance away from us, nearly two million men, women, children and infants are experiencing unimaginable suffering, both physical and mental.

(PLEASE COPY TO ANY NETWORKS THAT INCLUDE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL CARE).

Further information on these issues can be found on the webpage of the UK-Palestine Mental Health Network <https://ukpalmhn.com/>

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Israel Boycott is not hate crime- the conclusion of a Scottish Government-Commissioned Report

From the [Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee \(BNC\)](#)

June 1st 2018

A [report commissioned by the Scottish government](#) and published today sets an important legal precedent by concluding that “hostility towards a political entity” should not be considered a hate crime.

The report, authored by Lord Bracadale, a senior member of the Scottish judiciary, states: “*The right to engage in legitimate political protest is fundamental in a democratic society.*” As an example, it cites a Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign (SPSC) boycott action against an Israeli music group.

Solidarity activists have celebrated this report as a “rejection” of the so-called International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) “Working Definition on Antisemitism,” which stipulates — in the examples it provides — that certain criticism of Israel’s policies or measures of accountability against it should be treated as a form of antisemitism.

Lord Bracadale was appointed in January 2017 by the Scottish government to undertake a review of hate crime legislation in Scotland. In the same year, the Scottish Government adopted the IHRA definition of antisemitism. One of the questions for Lord Bracadale’s consideration was whether hate crimes should apply to hostile acts motivated by “malice or ill-will towards a political entity”. He concluded:

I consider that such an approach would extend the concept of hate crime too far and dilute its impact. The freedom of speech to engage in political protest is vitally important. For these reasons I do not recommend extending the range of protected characteristics to include political entities. The Faculty of Advocates, the Glasgow Bar Association, Law Society of Scotland, Fife Centre for Equalities, Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights, and the Senators of the College of Justice,

all prominent legal bodies, have also opposed an extension of hate crime legislation to include hostility to a state.

Lord Bracadale refers to a case involving five SPSC members to further explain:

In one case, members of the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign shouted slogans during a concert at which the Jerusalem string quartet was performing. These included “they are Israeli army musicians” ... “boycott Israel”. The accused were members of a political organisation which campaigns against Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories and advocates boycott. The content of their remarks was political in nature, including a call for a boycott. The evidence did not permit the inference that their comments were made because they presumed the musicians to be Israeli or Jewish.

Lord Bracadale also added:

A further argument was based on freedom of speech. Freedom to hold differing political views, and to debate those views, was fundamental to a democratic society and should be protected. This included freedom to subject political entities and foreign states to legitimate criticism. A new aggravation of this type could, therefore, have unintended consequences regarding the curtailment of freedom of expression and freedom of political debate.

The Palestinian BDS National Committee, the largest coalition in Palestinian society that leads the global BDS movement for Palestinian rights, welcomed this legal precedent saying:

This is a legal victory over repressive attempts by Israel and its lobby groups in Europe and elsewhere to stifle free speech and advocacy of Palestinian rights under international law.

Israel’s fraudulent drive to sweep criticism of its policies and its regime of occupation, settler-colonialism and apartheid, as well as nonviolent BDS measures of accountability against it under the rubric of antisemitism are increasingly being exposed for what they are, crude attempts to silence dissent and voices in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for freedom, justice and equality.

The BNC joins SPSC in calling on the Scottish Government to drop the flawed IHRA “definition of antisemitism”. We also call on all institutions, political parties and governments that have adopted the IHRA definition to drop it, and to follow the conclusion of the renowned judge Lord Bracadale.

The fight against Israeli apartheid and the fight against antisemitism are part of the same fight against racism and oppression in all their manifestations. [Racism and racial discrimination are the antithesis of justice, freedom and equality.](#)

Displaying pro-Palestine posters at Leeds Trinity University – an update

James Dickins

In last month’s newsletter, we reported that a member of staff at Leeds Trinity University had been instructed by the university’s Facilities Management to remove posters commemorating the Nakba that she had distributed around the campus. The reason given was that nothing political could be posted unless both sides of the argument were represented. We reported the contrary legal opinion by a leading academic lawyer.

We can now report that the university’s decision was vigorously challenged and a fulsome apology has been received by the member of staff concerned from the Head of Student Support, This apology was accompanied by an acknowledgement that the content of the posters was completely in keeping with the university’s mission statement, which focuses on ideas relating to compassion and social justice, and a recognition that the incident highlighted the need for training, particularly in the area of freedom of speech.

BDS NEWS

Tiago Rodrigues joins the Cultural Boycott of Israel

Tiago Rodrigues , the artistic director of Portugal’s national Theatre, has officially joined the cultural boycott of Israel and cancelled his participation in the [2018 Israel Festival](#) which is scheduled to begin in Jerusalem at the end of the month.

Here is his statement in full.

I cancelled my participation at the Israel Festival and joined the cultural boycott of Israel

Although I am strongly against the oppression of the Palestinian People by the Israeli government, I accepted an invitation to present my performance By Heart in the 2018 edition of the Israel Festival, in Jerusalem, promoted by a non-profit organisation that presents itself as an artistic project that promotes a diverse and peaceful society. I accepted this invitation because I believe that the People of a country and its political administration are not the same thing. When I perform in the USA, for instance, I am performing for Americans but I in doing so I do not condone the Trump administration. If anything, I perform against it. I also believe that artists can, while working in other countries, support the people there that stand for justice, freedom and equality, many times against their own governments.

However, after giving a series of interviews to Israeli media about my visit to the country, it was brought to my attention that the official communications by the Israel Festival announce that this year's edition "marks the State of Israel's 70th year of independence". The mention of this celebration by the festival is not accompanied by a single word of criticism to the State of Israel for its conduct towards Palestinians during the last 70 years. This is a statement of political significance of which I was not informed when I was invited to perform in the festival. I do not accept the use of my artistic work for political purposes without my agreement.

I have also noticed that the festival organization widely announces the support of various branches of the Israeli government, but is silent about the unacceptable acts of violence ordered by this same government against Palestinians.

Considering the rise of the number of victims in the last months, as well as the massacre of dozens of civilians by gunfire of the Israeli armed forces (that injured more than two thousand people and hundreds of Palestinian children among them) during the recent protests against the opening of the USA Embassy in Jerusalem, such omission is deeply troubling and I cannot stand by it.

I have decided not to perform in the Israel Festival in June because I believe that it is the only guarantee that my artistic work will not be used to condone and promote a government that deliberately violates human rights and is currently violently attacking the Palestinian people. I understand that professionals, both in Portugal as in Israel, have already worked to make these presentations happen. I understand that, because I am the artistic director of one of Portugal's national theatres, this decision might

originate diplomatic discomfort. I have pondered this decision and I must be true, above all, to my conscience. I have been advised by trusted friends and colleagues and I have also read statements by many artists and intellectuals, several of them Israeli. I also witness the terrible violent actions the Israeli government is currently perpetrating. I understand now that a clear position is absolutely necessary. That's why I am not only cancelling my participation in the Israel Festival but I have also decided to join the cultural boycott of Israel, convinced that global and collective pressure might produce similar results to the boycott of South Africa during apartheid.

Tiago Rodrigues, May 17th 2018

Gilberto Gil cancels his planned performance in Tel Aviv following Israel's Massacre in Gaza

Statement from Palestine Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI)

Palestinians warmly welcome news that Gilberto Gil, a legendary Brazilian musician and cultural hero, has cancelled his July 4 performance in Tel Aviv. His cancellation appears to be in response to Israel's slaughter of over 100 civilians in Gaza over the past few weeks.

Palestinians have warmly received the news of Brazilian legend Gilberto Gil's cancellation of his performance in Tel Aviv, scheduled for July 4, in response to what Palestinians and some international observers have termed as Israel's "[massacre](#)" of over 100 civilians in Gaza over the past few weeks. Gil, who has won multiple Grammy and Latin Grammy Awards and has served as minister of culture in Brazil, is widely regarded as among Latin America's most prominent musicians.

In its attempt to suppress the [overwhelmingly peaceful](#) "Great Return March" by tens of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza, Israel has implemented what Amnesty International describes as a [shoot-to-kill-or-maim policy](#). As a result, more than 100 Palestinian civilians have been killed since March 30 and more than 10,000 injured, many by live ammunition. Among those killed were at least [12 Palestinian children who have been slaughtered](#), including [8-month-old Laila Ghandour](#), who was asphyxiated by Israeli tear gas dropped on her family more than 1 kilometer away from the fence where Israeli snipers were positioned.

The march, launched on March 30, demands the right of return for Palestinian refugees, who make up the absolute majority in Gaza, and an end to Israel's 11-year-old [illegal blockade](#).

While [Amnesty International](#) has called for a "military embargo" against Israel, the UN [has called](#) for an independent investigation into Israel's "[unlawful, calculated killings](#)" in Gaza. Gilberto Gil was twice a Goodwill Ambassador for the UN.

In 2015, Gil, accompanied by another Brazilian music legend, Caetano Veloso, defied Palestinian and international [appeals](#) to refrain from performing in Tel Aviv. A few months later, Veloso [announced](#) that he would "never go back" to play Israel.

Hind Awwad for the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI), a key member of the Palestinian BDS National Committee, commented:

We warmly welcome Gilberto Gil's cancellation of his concert in Tel Aviv, the center of Israel's regime of occupation and apartheid. We thank Gil's fans in Brazil and across Latin America whose outrage over Israel's latest massacre in Gaza and support for Palestinian human rights seem to have played a decisive role in his decision.

We consider Gil's cancellation as a belated gesture of solidarity, almost 3 years after crossing our nonviolent picket line. We want Gil to know that we never held any grudge. And as our daily resistance shows, our hope never dies.

Our Nakba, or catastrophe, began 70 years ago, and is ongoing. International artists should not wait for another Israeli massacre to realize the importance of not lending their names and art to a regime that is targeting our rights and our very existence every day. By cancelling this show, Gil is in the good company of many [world-renowned artists](#) who have refused to art-wash Israel's regime of oppression, including Lorde, Lauryn Hill, Elvis Costello, Brian Eno, the late Gil Scott-Heron, Faithless, Roger Waters, among many others.

We sincerely hope that Gil will never perform in Israel until Palestinians enjoy freedom, justice, and equality.

Visit PACBI at <https://bdsmovement.net/pacbi> and follow us on Twitter [@PACBI](#)

Shakira cancels her concert in Israel following pressure from the BDS Movement

[From the Middle East Monitor](#)

The much heralded first appearance in Israel of Columbian singing star, Shakira, will now no longer take place following international pressure from Palestinians and BDS activists. Israeli media reports had trumpeted a Tel Aviv concert - her first appearance in Israel. But after a massive global outcry, the event was cancelled.

The exact sequence of events leading to the cancellation is not clear. Shakira's promoter tweeted: "*the media has incorrectly reported that Shakira will be performing in Tel Aviv this summer.*" It is clear however that Shakira, a global superstar who champions children, now has no plans to, perform in Israel.

PACBI responded with a statement yesterday that it "*welcomes the announcement that Shakira will not be performing in Tel Aviv anytime soon, dashing Israel's hopes to use her name to art-wash its latest massacre in Gaza. Hundreds of Palestinian municipalities and cultural organisations, as well as thousands of fans and boycott activists, from Gaza and Lebanon to Colombia and the US, appealed to Shakira to cancel,*"

Argentina's World Cup warm-up match with Israel is expected to be cancelled

The Israeli newspaper, [Haaretz](#), [has reported](#) a major victory for the BDS movement in the expected cancellation of this friendly game, which was scheduled to take place in Jerusalem on June 9th.

Israelis, supported by the government, paid \$3 million to the Argentinian Football Association for the honour, but massive BDS protests in both Argentina and Barcelona where the team trains have led to the cancelation of the game. The fact that the game was scheduled to be played in Jerusalem fuelled more opposition, as did a scandal about the availability of tickets, most of which had been acquired by The Culture Ministry for Likud supporters rather than being made available to the general public.

This latest attempt by Israel and its wealthy supporters to counter BDS by promoting celebrity events in culture and sport has therefore been

foiled. It is the first time a major sports event has been cancelled because of opposition to Israel's apartheid and repression, leading to hopes of a more widespread sports boycott – such as the one which was so successful in isolating apartheid South Africa.

The Editor

NEWS FROM OTHER CAMPAIGNS

Call from the US campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel

<http://usacbi.org/boycott-study-abroad-in-israel/#pledge>

We will not Study in Israel Until Palestinians Can Return: Boycott Study Abroad in Israel!

The US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (USACBI) calls on all US faculty, administrators, students and staff to uphold the academic boycott of Israel by refusing participation in Study Abroad programs in Israel. The academic boycott of Israel has been called for by Palestinian scholars and students living under military occupation, siege, and in an apartheid state and whose rights to education are violated on a daily basis. To enroll, or participate in any way, in a Study Abroad program at an Israeli institution means ignoring if not perpetuating the ongoing violation of the academic—and, indeed, human—freedoms of Palestinians. So we call on all students, faculty, and staff of conscience to refuse participation in such programs and reject complicity with occupation, colonization, and apartheid.

Study Abroad programs in Israel also potentially violate the rights of US faculty and students and our campus non-discrimination and equal opportunity policies. Some US students, faculty, and staff traveling to Israel for such programs risk discrimination and harassment based on protected categories such as religion and national origin. It is well-known that Israel routinely denies entry to persons of Arab, Middle Eastern, or Muslim origin and subjects them to detention and harassment at borders, engaging unashamedly in racial profiling and effectively declaring such travelers suspect in advance. This has been confirmed by numerous individual travelers as well as the U.S. State Department, which openly observes that “U.S. citizens whom Israeli authorities suspect of being of Arab, Middle

Eastern, or Muslim origin... may face additional, often time-consuming, and probing questioning by immigration and border authorities, or may even be denied entry into Israel, the West Bank, or Gaza.” Moreover, a recent Israeli law (approved in March 2017) prohibits entry into Israel for anyone who has publicly supported the BDS movement.

Israel’s racial profiling thus has a real and discriminatory impact on students participating in educational programs, while its recent anti-BDS law means that US students could be prohibited entry into the country for an act of political expression that is fully protected under the US Constitution (*NAACP v. Claiborne Hardware Co.*, 1982). Israel has issued a [blacklist](#) of organizations and its members who will be denied entry at its borders in an act of blatant political repression. That list that includes [Students for Justice in Palestine](#) and [Jewish Voice for Peace](#), two organizations of which students seeking to travel to the region may very well be members.

We issue this call to suspend participation in Israeli Study Abroad programs this year to mark and protest 70 years of the colonization of Palestine. In 1948, the year Israel was founded, 750,000 Palestinians were expelled in an intentional, programmatic act of ethnic cleansing referred to by Palestinians as the Nakba, or catastrophe. The Nakba continues to this very day, where Israel’s majority Jewish population has been maintained by the denial of the right of these refugees to return to their homes in historic Palestine, in contravention of international law. It has been sustained by racist laws like the Law of Return, which gives any Jewish person anywhere in the world the right to Israeli citizenship, and the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law, which prohibits Palestinians outside Israel from gaining citizenship (or permanent or even temporary residence) if they marry an Israeli citizen.

Israeli universities are complicit with and perpetuate this ongoing Nakba. They have constructed and expanded their campuses on stolen Palestinian land. They maintain programs that systematically discriminate against Palestinian and advantage Jewish students; conduct demographic and resource research that guides land and resource expropriation; and contribute to the design of weaponry and information technology that maintain not only the occupation but also the system of discrimination against the Palestinian population. No Israeli university has ever publicly opposed the Israeli state’s illegal military occupation and racial

discrimination against Palestinians. Indeed, commemoration of the Nakba is prohibited in Israeli universities as part of their erasure of Palestinian history and denial of Israel's settler colonial character.

Israel nevertheless makes considerable public relations capital out of touting higher education opportunities and research collaborations as part of its Brand Israel campaign. Publicity for its Study Abroad programs represents Israel as a modern democracy with exciting intellectual opportunities for all. Yet beneath that facade is a racist and colonial state that segregates both its citizens and its subject populations on the basis of national, ethnic, and religious origin. While some claim these programs are an opportunity for "dialogue," or even for "fact finding" about the conditions in Israel-Palestine, true dialogue and education cannot take place in a reality from which Palestinians are denied their rightful presence and in conditions in which they are racially subjugated and violently displaced.

U.S. faculty, students, and staff will no longer countenance participation in study abroad programs that serve as whitewashing propaganda for a fundamentally colonial and racist state and that also systematically discriminates against them. At a time of increasing protest and pushback against Muslim and refugee bans and encroaching neo-Nazi assaults on academic freedom in the US, we cannot ignore Israel's own Arab and Muslim bans and its ongoing denial of academic freedom to Palestinians. One of the first campus campaign to boycott a Study Abroad program is already underway at NYU and the [resolution](#) passed by the NYU student Senate is the first step on the way to a fuller challenge.

We call on all students, faculty, administrators, and staff to stand with Palestinians, acknowledge this historical injustice, and oppose the continuing Nakba by pledging not to participate in Study Abroad in Israel programs until Israel complies with the three demands of the international boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement:

end its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall;

recognize the full equality of Palestinian citizens of Israel; and

respect and uphold the right of return of Palestinian refugees to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.

Please [pledge to boycott all such programs](#) here.

We also urge you, if you have not done so already, to endorse the academic and cultural boycott of Israel (www.usacbi.org) and join our movement!

Endorsed by:

Arab Resource & Organizing Center
Al-Awda Palestine Right to Return Coalition
British Committee for the Universities of Palestine
Committee for Open Discussion of Zionism (CODZ)
Decolonize this Place
International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network (IJAN)
Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP)
Jews for Palestinian Right of Return
Jews Say No!
Labor for Palestine
Palestinian Youth Movement – USA
Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network
Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign
SJP-West (Students for Justice in Palestine – West)
US Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR)
US Palestinian Community Network (USPCN)
Voices of the Sacred

From the Association of Academics for the Respect of International Law in Palestine (AURDIP) <http://www.aurdip.org>

The guilty indulgence of the Collège de France with regard to Israel

The Collège de France is an affiliate of the PSL Research University in PARIS and one of the most prestigious research establishments in France. On June 7th, it held a day long workshop in collaboration with Tel Aviv university. Below is a statement from AURDIP

<http://www.aurdip.org/the-guilty-indulgence-of-the.html>

The Collège de France intends to hold a *day-long workshop* in collaboration with Tel Aviv University on June 7. The day should conclude with the signing of a cooperation agreement and would be part of the *Franco-Israeli exchange season*. To honor in this way a state that confines a population of 2 million inhabitants in a ghetto, and that fires into a crowd when it attempts to free itself, is unacceptable.

When we contacted the initiator of the day's activities, he replied that it had been planned for a long time and is in no way meant to honor a state, but is rather just one among many of the ordinary scientific exchanges that the Collège de France maintains with research and educational establishments around the world. "Business as usual," in other words. Thus more than 120 dead and more than 13,000 wounded by the Israeli army don't suffice to make the Collège de France reevaluate the appropriateness of holding this workshop, of signing this cooperation agreement, or of participating in this shameful Franco-Israeli exchange season. The murder by snipers *of civilians, of children, of journalists, and of medical personnel* doesn't justify the slightest reaction in the eyes of the Collège de France ?

The signing of a cooperation agreement with Tel Aviv University is the more scandalous for having as an affiliate the *Institute for National Security Studies (INSS)*, where General Gadi Eizenkot created the *Dahiya doctrine* of disproportionate force. In the *words of Gadi Siboni*, and INSS analyst : "The IDF will need to act immediately, decisively, and with force that is disproportionate to the enemy's actions and the threat it poses. Such a response aims at inflicting damage and meting out punishment to an extent that will demand long and expensive reconstruction processes." This doctrine was applied in the past by Israel during the *bombings of Lebanon and Gaza*.

Finally, the first round table planned for the workshop at the Collège de France was given the title "Biblical Archeology," without the slightest consideration for the sensitivity of *Palestinian archeologists*, who have for years complained that they have been *refused access* to the excavations being carried out by Israeli archeologists in the Occupied Territories, in disregard of international law, and that they have been dispossessed of the objects discovered there. Moreover, some of these excavations, notably those *directed by Tel Aviv University* in the *City of David in East Jerusalem*, have endangered Palestinian homes, and are financed by Elad, a far-right settler association, that is motivated by the wish to confirm Biblical claims about ancient Jewish civilization, and whose goal is to substitute a Jewish population for the Palestinian residents of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Israel funnels millions to erase Palestinian history- [a report from the Alternative Information Centre](#).

May 3st, 2018

This month, the Israeli minister of culture Miri Regev (MK Jewish Home) announced plans to funnel \$17 million toward archaeological excavations in East Jerusalem.

Regev announced the project to commemorate the 1967 Israeli occupation of the holy city. Israel's 1967 occupation and subsequent annexation of Jerusalem stands in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and UN Security Council resolutions 194, 181, 252, 476 and 478.

The goal of the excavations, according to a culture ministry statement [quoted](#) in Israeli media, is to "*expose Jerusalem's antiquities and...express the history of the Jewish people 3,000 years ago.*" *The grant also aims to "empower" Jerusalem as an "international center of religion, heritage, culture and tourism*

The bulk of the funds will fuel excavations at the settlement archeology site known as the City of David, which is located in the Palestinian neighborhood of Silwan, south of Al-Aqsa Mosque. The center sits on a confiscated Palestinian home and orchard. Excavations in and around the site have [severely damaged](#) nearby Palestinian residences. Israeli police and private security guards permanently monitor the site, leading to [increased harassment and arrests of Palestinians](#). Speaking to the Times of Israel, vice president of the City of David Foundation said: "[Regev's] decision will enable the City of David National Park to double the number of those seeking to connect with the history of Jerusalem with their own eyes, to over one million annually."

Although the City of David is part of the Israel Nature and Parks Authority, it is administered by the settler organization Elad, which seizes Palestinian property in Silwan to establish new settlements. The group [effectively functions as an arm of the Israeli government](#), and the government [permits](#) Elad to conceal the names of its major donors. Israeli settlement watch group Peace Now reports that in the last two years, Elad has stolen ten Palestinian properties in Silwan, including [three apartments in April 2018](#).

Regev's pledge to expand the City of David's activities supports government plans to destroy

evidence of Palestinian history in the Old City, Silwan, Sheikh Jarrah, the Mount of Olives, Ras al-Amud, Musrara and Mamilla and build tourist sites that peddle messianic justifications for Israeli colonization. This year, the government [escalated its confiscation of Bab al-Rahmah Cemetery](#), a centuries-old Muslim cemetery outside of the Old City, in the name of incorporating it into the Jerusalem Walls National Park. In 2017, the Jerusalem municipality [published a plan](#) to confiscate 1,300 square meters of land next to a mosque in Ras al-Amud to build a visitor center for the Mount of Olives Jewish Cemetery. Perhaps the most well known example of Israeli destruction for the purposes of tourism is the building of Independence Park and the Museum of Tolerance in Mamilla. Both are located on what was once the Mamilla Cemetery, which, historian Rashid Khalidi has [written](#) “is reputed to have become the burial place of several of the Prophet Muhammad’s Companions who died during or after the nascent Muslim state’s military campaigns in the region.”

Israeli efforts to erase Palestinian landownership and history however are not limited to the aforementioned neighborhoods in Jerusalem. For years, the Israeli government has been confiscating lands in the Cremisan Valley to create the Emek Refaim Park, an Israeli National Park on the outskirts of Jerusalem that [celebrates](#) “historic agrarian landscapes” and “traditional culture.” Wallaja, a village adjacent to the Cremisan Valley has been hit particularly hard by these confiscations and accompanying restrictions to Palestinian movement. Most recently, Israeli authorities [built a new checkpoint](#) to bar residents from accessing Wallaja’s historic spring so that Israelis can enjoy it as part of Emek Refaim Park.

Corey Sherman is a teacher in Washington D.C. and a contributing editor to [aicnews.org](#).

***The Alternative Information Center (AIC)** is a member of **Alternatives** (<https://www.alternatives.ca/en/content/page/alterinter>) an internationally oriented and progressive joint Palestinian-Israeli activist organization which engages in information dissemination, political advocacy, grassroots activism and critical analysis on the Palestinian and Israeli societies as well as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The AIC is a progressive organization that successfully fosters the collaboration of Israeli

and Palestinian journalists and promotes individual and collective liberties.

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Sign the commitment by UK Scholars to human rights in Palestine

This commitment, which has been signed by over 700 academics across UK’s higher education system, is not to accept invitations for academic visits to Israel, not to act as referees in activities related to Israel academic institutions, or cooperate in any other way with Israeli universities.

It is a response to the appeal for such action by Palestinian academics and civil society due to the deep complicity of Israeli academic institutions in Israeli violations of international law. Signatories have pledged to continue their commitment until Israel complies with international law, and respects Palestinian human rights.

For more information, and to sign, go to <http://www.commitment4p.com>

Notices

Speakers: We are always willing to help provide speakers for meetings. All such requests and any comments or suggestions concerning this Newsletter are welcome.

Email them to: newsletter@bricup.org.uk

Register as a supporter of BRICUP

You can register as a supporter of BRICUP and of the academic and cultural boycott of Israel [by completing this form](#).

We recognise that many individuals may wish to support our aims by private actions without wishing to be publicly identified. Supporters receive our regular newsletter by email and receive occasional emails giving details of urgent developments and of ways to support our activities. We do not disclose the names of our supporters to anyone outside BRICUP or share them with any other organisation.

Financial support for BRICUP

We welcome one-off donations, but we can plan our work much better if people pledge regular payments by standing order.

You can [download a standing order form](#) here.

One-off donations may be made by sending a cheque to the Treasurer, at BRICUP, BM BRICUP, London, WC1N 3XX, UK or by making a bank transfer to BRICUP at

Sort Code 08-92-99

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