

BRICUP Newsletter 124

BRICUP

British Committee for the
Universities of Palestine

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www.bricup.org.uk

bricup@bricup.org.uk

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Chris Burns Cox- An Appreciation

*Derek Summerfield and Monica Wusteman
(BRICUP) with David Halpin FRCS*

Members of BRICUP were very sad to hear of the recent death of one of its most dedicated and longstanding members- Chris Burns Cox.

Chris, a retired physician from Gloucestershire, made crucial contributions to the work of BRICUP over many years, working mainly with Derek Summerfield and Ghada Karmi on exposing the complicity of Israeli doctors in the torture of Palestinian prisoners. With them, he made a number of [contributions](#) on this subject to our newsletter. Below is personal appreciation of Chris from Derek Summerfield and David Halpin, two of his former colleagues from the campaign to expose the complicity of the members of the Israeli medical profession in torture

Chris's lovely smile would disappear in an instant when he learned of yet another atrocity committed against Palestinians by Israelis. His outrage was turned towards visiting sisters and brothers in Palestine, and most often in Gaza. On one such mission, the small team of doctors of which he was part, was held at Rafah for several weeks as Egypt conspired with Israel to inflict on the people of Gaza even greater isolation.

If caring is the greatest human virtue, then Christopher had it in his marrow. He cared so much for so many things. Firstly for justice for the Palestinian people and secondly for the NHS. He also gave assistance with a small group in the plea for an inquest on Dr David Kelly, an inquest which uniquely this unnatural death never had. He served on the committee of what is now 'Doctors for the NHS.' At a local level, he often set up small human associations in his field of diabetes. Once they were afloat, he cast off. Nurses at his funeral who had worked with Chris spoke warmly of this. After he had donated a kidney to a stranger, he took up the cause of altruistic kidney donation.

This gentle man had the courage of his convictions. His unfaltering concern for Palestinian rights goes back at least to the 1990s. More recently he has been a core activist in the campaign, running since 2009, to bring to public attention the substantial and unequivocal evidence of what Amnesty has long called “the institutionalised complicity” of Israeli doctors serving in interrogation centres with the torture of Palestinian adults and children, shielded by the Israeli Medical Association. Central to this have been evidence-based appeals to the World Medical Association and the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture. Chris tried hard to secure the involvement of the BMA, as a WMA member. He was always about practical action. He confronted Sir Michael Marmot who, when WMA President, failed to stand up to Israel despite the evidence, challenging him to explain why he did not do so. We shall miss Chris' example of wholehearted commitment to the struggle.

BDS for Palestine in 2018, demonstrating growing recognition of Israel’s crimes and Palestinian rights across political and educational and cultural life.

Since then, two more artists have recognized the desperate plight of the Palestinian people at the hands of the Israeli state by cancelling appearances in Israel. The American singer-songwriter Lana del Rey had initially refused to change her plans, despite calls to do so from the [Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel](#) (PACBI) and other activists. But , following further calls via a shared petition from [Jewish Voice for Peace](#) and PACBI, which gathered 14,5000 signatures , plus over 5000 tweets, she announced the [cancellation](#) , issuing the following statement on Twitter “*It’s important to me to perform in both Palestine and Israel and treat all my fans equally. ... therefore, I’m postponing my appearance at the Meteor Festival.*”

This announcement was shortly followed by news that the electronic musician Henry Laufer, better known by his stage name Shlohmo, had canceled his performance at another Israeli music festival over ‘human rights atrocities’ . He apologized to fans and festival staff in his announcement, saying that “*supporting the oppressed thru [sic] my absence is more important to me especially after the government’s recent human rights atrocities. I had said no to playing there for years and the only reason I could find to say yes was if I were to donate my fee to Gaza relief, but after much dialogue I found it to be a more important statement to say no all-together [sic] than to donate. I hope you can understand this decision.*” While aware that “*there is a huge population of Israelis who protest the state policies + support Palestinians,*” he found that “*the more I dwell on the issue the more I can’t justify going. I urge others to research the issue.*”

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Acts of Solidarity and BDS for Palestine in 2018.

[The BDS Movement](#)

Last month, the BDS Movement published a [short-list of 70 examples](#) of acts of solidarity and

Damage may occur

A report from a BRICUP supporter on his participation in the [Sixth Palestinin Conference on Modern Trends in Mathematics and Physics](#) at the Kadoorie Technical University in the West Bank.

One of the few perks of being a British academic is that every now and then you get invited to an overseas conference. The organisers of the more prestigious events always seem to choose well known tourism destinations for the venue, and even the more routine meetings are enlivened by dinners, side trips and entertainments. But these are not quite the boondoggles they may appear. The formal programme of talks and seminars is like a scaffolding on which these apparently random happenings are draped; they provide a setting in which the real work is done, which involves making friends, forming alliances, renewing acquaintances, making promises of future cooperation and getting up to date with academic gossip. This is a standard and accepted bonding ritual. It is what creates an international community in one's chosen field of study.

Sometimes, however, these engaging arrangements take place under less relaxed circumstances. When I was invited to give a talk to the Sixth Palestinian Conference for Modern Trends in Mathematics and Physics in the West Bank, Tripadvisor was not much help in planning my journey. It seemed that the standard route was to fly to Tel Aviv and take a road trip from there. But consulting the Foreign Office website, which provides useful guidance for the traveller to less well-trodden parts of the world, I found that certain difficulties might be encountered. On landing at Ben Gurion Airport, it warned: "An investigation into the misuse of UK passports in the murder of Mahmud al-Mabhuh in Dubai in January 2010 found circumstantial evidence of Israeli involvement in the fraudulent use of British passports. This has raised the possibility that your passport details could be captured for improper uses while your passport is out of your control. The risk applies in particular to passports without biometric security features. Only hand your passport over to others (including Israeli officials) when absolutely necessary."

With a mental picture of myself engaging in a tug of war with some burly functionary, I then read that: "You should expect lengthy personal questioning and baggage searches by security officials on arrival and departure from Israel.

Electrical items, including laptops, may be taken from departing passengers for security inspection ... damage may occur." It continued: "Israeli security officials have on occasion requested access to travellers' personal e-mail accounts or other social media accounts as a condition of entry."

This was beginning to sound less like a pleasant interlude combining business and pleasure in a friendly country, and more like a clandestine foray into China by a recruiter for Falun Gong. I decided to terminate my Facebook account, that record of every off the cuff remark and unguarded comment that I had committed to the internet over the past ten years; permanently deleting this was something I had intended to do since the Cambridge Analytica scandal but had never quite got around to. I also removed all but two essential contacts from my mobile, and deleted most of my emails (an overdue chore anyway). My mind ringing with stories from well-meaning friends who had worked in the West Bank, of "cavity searches" by Israeli security (which, it turns out, have nothing to do with dentistry), I prepared myself mentally for a bout of ritual humiliation.

Actuality, as so often when one prepares thoroughly for the worst, was an anti-climax. On arrival, I informed a bored-looking immigration official that I was in Israel to attend "a conference on mathematics". Looking if possible even less interested, she asked me how long the conference would last and when I would be flying out. Having noted this information, she provided me with the standard three month permit and I was through.

The conference hosts, Kadoorie Technical University in Tulkarim, had assured me by email that I would be met at the airport and conveyed to the venue, where I would be fed and housed for the duration. These promises were generously fulfilled in every respect. On arrival I was led to a taxi with Israeli plates (though driven by a Palestinian Israeli) which took me along main roads for half an hour or so and then off onto a side road, to a small town somewhere (it was dark and my sense of direction had long since failed to keep track), where I was then transferred to another taxi, this time with Palestinian plates, which completed the journey to Tulkarim. At some point we must have passed through one of the gaps in the separation wall, though I failed to notice it. The only visible indication of any checkpoint, at a place where the road narrowed to a single lane, was deserted.

The conference itself was an impressive demonstration of Palestinian academic achievement under adverse conditions. To the extent that I was able to understand the topics presented, I had the impression that they had done remarkably good work in areas where theoretical ingenuity rather than abundant physical resources were important. In mathematics excellent progress had been made, and this was also true of research into some of the complex mathematical problems of theoretical physics.

For example, one team working in astrophysics had recently solved certain equations involved in modelling the effect of solar wind on the Earth's magnetosphere, a finding of great significance given the possible damage that a high energy solar event might inflict on the world's satellite network. The lead professor, Imad Barghouthi (a member of the extended Barghouthi clan, well known for its role in the resistance to Israeli occupation) had been in administrative detention during part of the time that he and his PhD student had been working on this problem. He described how his wife had relayed the student's queries and progress reports to him during her jail visits, and had taken his replies back. Seldom can supervisors have had to work under such trying conditions. Barghouthi's case had aroused international attention at the time, and in 2015 led to an article in *Nature* denouncing his imprisonment, and a letter-writing campaign by scientists to the Israeli Prime Minister, which resulted in Barghouthi's release after seven months.

Not many Palestinian academics experience quite this level of persecution, but all of those attending the conference seemed to have stories of difficulty and disruption caused by the occupation, not only in their daily travel round the West Bank (which is common to everyone not classified as a settler or member of the Israeli military) but also in going to, and returning from engagements abroad. Student attendance at classes and examinations is also subject to random interference from Israeli checkpoints. The impression that I received was that Israel's policy was to create an atmosphere of maximum uncertainty and anxiety. But in the absence of any official plan or strategic vision for what Israel intends for the West Bank and its Palestinian inhabitants, this must remain speculation.

The university, true to its word, accommodated the overseas visitors in well-appointed flats or local hotels, and on each of the four days of the conference a bus made the morning round of the

flats and hotels to take us to the university. There we were provided with breakfast, lunch and dinner in the intervals of a full day of talks, the great majority of which were given by academics from West Bank universities, and then we were taken back to our quarters every evening. To say that the hospitality was generous would understate the case. The university made every possible effort to make us feel welcome and honoured guests.

The attendees included about twenty non-Palestinians from Canadian and European universities, several of whom had attended previous conferences in this series (hosted in turn by different Palestinian universities every two years or so), and a similar number of visitors of Palestinian origin now working permanently in universities abroad. We were given a welcoming ceremony attended by the local mayor and the worthies of the University, and a closing ceremony in which we were presented with a basket of local Palestinian produce. It was made clear to us that our hosts regarded our presence as important to them, because we symbolized the fact that the international community, which we represented, had not forgotten their existence, and because on our return we, as distinguished luminaries in our fields, would be able to remind our colleagues of the continuing existence of the Palestinian researchers and their projects. It was a privilege, we were told, for the university to be able to welcome us, and their hospitality was a small return for this.

I have seldom felt such a fraud. The only return I can make for their kindness is to use this opportunity, here and now, to record my admiration for the brave, dedicated and astonishingly productive researchers and thinkers currently working in Palestinian universities. They deserve to be more widely recognised for their attainments under the occupation.

At the conclusion of the conference, the overseas visitors were taken back to Ben Gurion airport in small groups by taxi. I travelled in the small hours of the morning, sharing a car with a Canadian colleague. This time the journey was in a single stage. The taxi, with Israeli plates, took us from Tulkarim by a circuitous route; the driver told us that because the Israelis had imposed a road block the previous day on the direct road, he would be making a diversion. We drove towards Nablus, then turned onto a road signed to Jerusalem. At around 5 a.m. we encountered a permanent security barrier, but it was not manned and we

drove round the concrete blocks and onto the Modi'in road to Ben Gurion.

I was expecting trouble at the airport, but it never came. At the initial security check, I was asked the usual questions about packing my own bag, and was given a security sticker. I had been told by another delegate who had travelled to previous conferences that of the ten digits on the sticker, the first and last digits (which were identical) were the only relevant ones. They indicated the level of security hassle to be accorded to the traveller. The other eight were dummy numbers, included to make it less obvious what was going on, after previous visitors had complained of discrimination on grounds of race. The scale apparently ranges from one (Israeli Jews in good standing) to five (the most suspect). My own, I was relieved to see, was a two. I even received a friendly smile from the security woman. Evidently I am not noted on the Shin Beth records as a supporter of Palestine. I was almost disappointed, but also relieved: the cavity search will have to be an experience to be stored up for the future.

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Leicester City Council complied with its public sector equality duty when it resolved to boycott West Bank settlement produce- a legal commentary

Robert Wintemute, Professor of Human Rights Law at King's College, London .

On the 28th June 2016, The Divisional Court found that Leicester City Council had not breached its public sector equality duty (PSED), under s. 149 of the Equality Act 2010, when it resolved on 13 November 2014 "to boycott any produce originating from illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank". A BRICUP Newsletter report on this judgement can be found [here](#). On 3 July 2018, the England and Wales Court of Appeal (EWCA) dismissed the appeal of the NGO "Jewish Rights Watch Ltd trading as Jewish Human Rights Watch" (JHRW) from the 28 June 2016 judgment. The EWCA's judgment, [2018] EWCA Civ 1551, is available at <http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2018/1551.html>.

Lord Justice Sales Lord Justice Sales (with whom the other two judges agreed) began by noting noting (at [5]) the appellant's director's "particular concern about any local authority

motion concerned with boycotting goods in the context of Israel in relation to the impetus it gives to [the BDS] movement ... He says the BDS movement has been created to maximise political pressure ... upon the state of Israel and ultimately to see it destroyed, which movement he says also increases the level of hatred experienced by Jewish people in the UK and elsewhere."

Sales LJ then cited the witness statement of Leicester City's elected mayor: "[11] ... in Leicester procurement is an executive function for the mayor; the mayor ... is not bound by resolutions passed by councillors. ... [T]he resolution has had no effect on the conduct of the Council in any practical way, and will not do so."

After a detailed summary of the Council's respectful debate about the resolution, Sales LJ turned to compliance with the PSED "in the exercise of [the Council's] functions". He cited s. 1 of the Localism Act 2011 ("A local authority has power to do anything that individuals generally may do."), before concluding that the Council was exercising one of its functions: "[25] ... Since an individual can call for a boycott of goods, so can the Council, acting by its relevant organ, which in this case is agreed to be the assembly of elected councillors." He also stressed (at [33]) that "[t]he application of the PSED to the adoption of the resolution does not infringe upon rights of political free speech ... Individual councillors are not, in their capacity as such, personally subject to the duty. They are free to express whatever political opinions they like. The application of the PSED to the Council does not prevent them from doing that."

Sales LJ concluded that the content of the resolution demonstrated that the Council had complied with its PSED: "[38] ... the preamble emphasised the values of tolerance, diversity, unity and non-discrimination which were important in Leicester as the foundation for different communities to live together. The motion itself recognised the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace ..., and was concerned only to condemn certain actions of the Government of Israel ... in line with a respectable body of opinion, including the UK government, the United Nations General Assembly, the European Union and the International Court of Justice. The criticism made was temperate and legitimate. The proposed boycott had a limited target in line with that criticism. As the CST report correctly points out, there is legitimate scope for criticism of Israel without that implying antisemitic attitudes. There was nothing in the

context set by the proposed resolution and the debate to suggest that the resolution was in fact being proposed as a cover for or incitement to antisemitism. ...”

Sales LJ added: “[41] There is nothing to suggest that councillors were on notice of the so-called BDS movement described by [the appellant’s director], such as to require any reference to be made to that in order to disassociate the Council from any such antisemitic movement. Calling for boycotts of goods is a well-known gesture of political solidarity with oppressed groups overseas, as illustrated by calls for boycotts of goods from South Africa during the apartheid era. In any event, the resolution expressly stated that the Council recognised the right of existence of the State of Israel, so clearly was not being adopted as part of a wider antisemitic movement of the kind described by [the appellant’s director].”

The debate about the resolution also demonstrated that the Council had complied with its PSED: “[42] ... The importance of maintaining good community relations in Leicester was a major theme in the debate. Explicit reference was made to the Jewish community, and how they might feel. Clearly, the thrust of the debate was that it was important that they should not feel the resolution was aimed against them, as Jews. ...”

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Birzeit University condemns breach of academic freedom after academics forced to leave Palestine

This statement issued by Birzeit University on July 12th has been endorsed by BRICUP. See page 10 for a supporting statement from The US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel ([USACBI](#)).

Statement

Since the beginning of the current academic year (2017-2018), scores of foreign passport holders, many of Palestinian origin but without residence documents, living and working in the occupied Palestinian territory have been denied entry in the country, or have had their visa renewal applications refused by the Israeli authorities. At Birzeit University alone, we have 15 foreign passport-holding faculty members whose requests for visa renewals have been refused or significantly delayed.

These faculty members have full-time status, work in all the various faculties on our campus, and include senior faculty and department chairpersons. Our faculty who are currently under threat teach in the BA, MA, and Ph.D. programs at Birzeit University, are members of university committees, and serve the larger Palestinian community through public seminars and lectures. Already some professors have been forced to leave the country; including one from the Department of English and Literature, and a professor of European History at the Ibrahim Abu Lughod Institute for International Studies who has devoted his entire academic career to Palestine and the university for the past four decades.

These international professors play a critical role not only in the ongoing provision of quality education at Birzeit University but also in the long-term development of Palestinian higher education. If this policy continues, Palestinian universities, including Birzeit University, will be further isolated from the global academic environment. Our ability to deliver a world-class education will be further compromised if we lose the international perspectives, diverse professional experiences and high-level skills these faculty members crucially bring to Palestinian academic life and the campus environment as a whole. In the global academic environment of the 21st Century, having an internationally diverse faculty has become a fundamental cornerstone of academic excellence at universities worldwide. If Birzeit University and Palestinian higher education as a whole are denied the right to engage international faculty members, what is ultimately being denied is our right to deliver a quality and standard of education that meets the accepted global norm.

The right to education is a fundamental human right as established in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That article simultaneously underlines the critical link between education and the furthering of global perspectives, understanding and connection between diverse peoples and nations:

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

A long line of UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, and rulings of the International Court of Justice affirm Israel's obligation to exercise its responsibility as the occupying power in West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip in accordance with international humanitarian law (including the Hague Convention of 1907 and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949) as well as applicable international human rights law. Israel is obligated by international law to both protect and facilitate the functioning of Palestinian civil institutions, including higher education. All states that are signatories to these resolutions also bear a responsibility to ensure that Israel exercises its obligations towards Palestinian education under international law; including that it exercises its control over the entry and presence of foreign academics in a manner that avoids unnecessary harm to Palestinian higher education and to the occupied population's fundamental right to education.

We call on everyone – including governments, institutions, academics, and associations – to decry these policies, protect our fundamental right of academic freedom at Birzeit University and for all Palestinian higher education. We call upon you and the international community to put the full weight of pressure on the Israeli authorities to put a halt to this extremely destructive policy. We ask that you:

Hold Israel accountable for its violations, and enjoin it to undertake its obligations under international law

Demand a halt to Israel's arbitrary and abusive practice denying access to and presence of international educators and academics contributing to Palestinian's educational development

Make it incumbent on Israel to adopt and implement a clear documented and transparent policy enabling unhindered access and presence to foreign nationals who are coming to educate or promote educational development in the occupied Palestinian territories.

This statement, contact Ghassan Khatib gkhatib@birzeit.edu (see full list of endorsing organizations [here](#))

Further Reading:

[**The Empty Chair: an act of solidarity with Palestinian colleagues**](#) - by John Chalcraft (BRICUP)

[**Empty Chairs: Combating Israel's assault on Palestinian academia**](#)- by Nada Elia (USACBI)

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The ethics of study abroad in Israel – news from the US- Stand with Professor Cheney Lippold

Editor

You can add your name to the Jewish Voice for Peace's statement of support for Professor Cheney- Lippold [here](#).

John Cheney-Lippold, an associate professor of American Culture at the University of Michigan—Ann Arbor, has suffered a recent barrage of criticism, including accusations of anti-semitism, for politely declining to write a letter of recommendation for a student seeking to study in Israel. This [article](#) by David Lloyd in the Middle East Monitor on the 20th September analyses the background to Professor Cheney-Lippold's decision, the reactions it has induced and their underlying causes.

The US campaign for the academic and cultural boycott of Israel (USACBI) has issued a [statement of support](#) for Professor Cheney-Lippold. Many US campuses offer students access to, or help in enrolling in, programs at Israeli universities that welcome international students. See [here](#) for details of USACBI's campaign for a boycott of studying abroad in Israel until the Palestinians can return.

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A book on Israel's deliberate maiming of Palestinians wins top academic prize

Rutgers University [Professor Jasbir Puar](#) has been awarded the prestigious National Women's Studies Association's Alison Piepmeier Book Prize for "*The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability*" which argues that Israel intentionally maims Palestinians under its control.

The Department of Women's and Gender Studies at Rutgers [congratulated](#) Professor Puar on the prize, and quoted the award committee's praise for the book as "*a major milestone...across multiple disciplines, with much to teach us about contemporary disability politics*". Duke University press, the book's publisher, says that Professor Puar presents "*an interrogation of*

Israel's policies toward Palestine, in which she outlines how Israel brings Palestinians into biopolitical being by designating them available for injury". Supplementing its right to kill with what she calls the right to maim, the Israeli state relies on liberal frameworks of disability to obscure and enable the mass debilitation of Palestinian bodies."

See [here](#) for more information.

Open letter from trade unionists on the adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism and examples

This open letter (see below) is the beginning of a campaign in the labour movement to resist the IHRA definition and the victimisations that will inevitably follow its adoption. This will be of particular importance for those in the academy, where there will be a renewed attempt to get it adopted by institutions. It will then be used to target staff and students for racism and for bringing their institutions into disrepute for public statements, lectures or comments in seminars or tutorials that declare or imply that Israel is a racist state, or for criticising Zionism as a racist doctrine. It will also have its effect on those in the public sector (particularly local authorities, where it will become increasingly hard for Palestine solidarity meetings to book venues, or for unions to declare in favour of BDS), and even in the private sector where any boycotting activity or declarations will be targeted.

Please read the letter, copied below, and sign it yourselves. Even more importantly, send it to those lists of yours that are relevant, and to individuals whom you think will sign it.

There will be a major test of this campaign at the UCU's recall Congress in October, where we will again have to mount an effective operation.

Text of the Open Letter

We are deeply concerned by the accelerating pressure on the labour movement to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism and the associated examples and urge our fellow trade unionists to stand firm in opposition to this divisive move.

Trade unions and the Labour Party must be at the heart of building a movement against racism and fascism, and there is no place for antisemitism, Islamophobia or any other kind of racism in our ranks. In an era when the far-right is growing in confidence it is more important than ever to stand

against Holocaust denial, anti-Jewish conspiracy theories and any other forms of antisemitic prejudice and hatred.

However, the examples which accompany the IHRA definition systematically conflate opposition to Israel with antisemitism, threatening to undermine many years of practical solidarity with the Palestinian people in the face of decades of dispossession and occupation. We believe it is vitally important that trade unionists can speak out to challenge Israel's history of racism towards the Palestinians without being labelled as antisemitic.

The IHRA definition and its examples also pose a serious threat to academic freedom. Specifically, there is a wide body of scholarly research and teaching that locates the origins of the state of Israel within the framework of a European colonial settler project. This draws on historical evidence of widely-held racist ideas about the 'indigenous population' among Israel's founders and acts of ethnic cleansing and exclusion in building the new state. Historical interpretations are of course subject to challenge, but the very principles of scholarly research will be under threat if legitimate interpretations of Israel's founding as "a racist endeavour" are falsely conflated with antisemitism.

We note that the general secretaries of several major trade unions urged Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party to adopt the IHRA definition in full. We do not share their view that compromising over this issue is necessary in order to boost Labour's chances at the polls.

We pledge to continue the campaign against the adoption of the IHRA definition and examples within our own trade unions, and urge others to do the same in their institutions. What we need is to build unity across the labour movement in the face of the growing threat from the far-right, while remaining uncompromising in our opposition to all forms of racism, and steadfast in our solidarity with the Palestinian people.

Go to this [link](#) to sign and see full list of signatories



Speakers withdraw from an academic workshop at Ariel University

Editor

On August 2nd, the invited speakers to an academic [workshop](#) titled “Inflation, Alternatives and Gravitational Waves” received a strongly worded [letter](#) from the Palestinian Federation of Unions of University Professors and Employees (PFUUPE*) and Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) urging them not to attend because it is being held at Ariel University- the university built on occupied Palestinian land in the illegal Israeli settlement of Ariel. By August 20th, over half (six out of the 11) speakers had withdrawn from the Workshop.

The US campaign for the academic and cultural boycott of Israel ([USACBI](#)) has also written on behalf of its supporters to urge the participants to withdraw. See [here](#) for the text of the letter and list of signatories.

Opposition to the presence of Ariel university in the Occupied Territories extends into Israeli academia. [Professor Ofer Aharoney](#) from the Weizmann Institute for example is leading the efforts to boycott the workshop <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/251519>) and has joined with 14 other eminent physicists in [a letter to the Guardian](#) on the 31st August, which includes the statement..

‘We, the undersigned, believe that participating in any activities held in a settlement amounts to accepting the Israeli government’s policy of gradually annexing the occupied territories to Israel. We call upon our colleagues and the wider scientific community to consider these facts before engaging in any activities related to Ariel, and not to take part in any attempts to use science to normalise the occupation of the [Palestinian territories](#)’

The signatories include the Nobel Laureate, David Gross, and the Field’s medalist winner, Edward Witten. At the time of writing the list of participants is absent from the workshop’s website.

. *The Palestinian Federation of Unions of University Professors and Employees represents more than 6,000 Palestinian university staff at 13 institutions of higher education in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Canary Mission – “If you are racist then the world should know”

Editor

[Canary Mission](#) is a secretive cyberbullying organisation which has been operating in the US since 2015 . It is aimed at intimidating staff and students involved in Palestine solidarity activism and destroying their reputations. Their activities have been [widely reported](#) at [UC Davis](#). At [Georgetown](#) university and elsewhere.

Canary Mission’s methods involve the collection of public information about individuals involved in pro-Palestine causes - LinkedIn profiles, Facebook pictures, old tweets, quotes in newspapers, YouTube videos etc - plus details of the pro-Palestinian causes each supports and names other students and organizations with whom the given individual may be affiliated. The Israel lobby financier, [Adam Milstein](#), has been identified as the funder of Canary Mission

Canary Mission’s objective is to equate supporting for BDS with antisemitism. Much of the rhetoric employed is hateful and sometimes islamophobic and racist. Indeed, so extreme are their tactics of intimidation that they have generated protests from [Jewish students who oppose BDS](#) who see them as antithetical to democratic and Jewish values.

Canary Mission has also been roundly condemned by [Jewish Voice for Peace](#), and the [Modern Languages Association](#) has collected over 1000 signatures to a [petition](#) against Canary Mission’s attempts to shut down civic engagement and prevent freedom of speech.

[Against Canary Mission](#) is a not for profit volunteer site dedicated to Palestinian activism , to combating all forms of discrimination ,bigotry, anti-semitism. It provides valuable up to date information about Canary Mission and its activities and profiles prominent supporters of Palestinian rights in the US who have been the target of false and defamatory accusations.

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News from other campaigns

Association of Academics for the Respect of International Law in Palestine ([AURDIP](#)),

Belgian Campaign for the Academic Boycott of Israel ([BACBI](#))

See their September newsletter [here](#).

US Campaign for the academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel ([USACBI](#))

Both BACBI and USACBI focus on the denial of the entry policies being applied to foreign national who teach at Palestinian institutions, and the damaging effects this has had at Birzeit University. (see page 6)

Statement from USACBI

The US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel ([USACBI](#)) condemns in the strongest terms Israel's latest breaches of academic freedom in Palestine and stands in solidarity with the Palestinian students and faculty affected by them the most.

While an immense effort is being made by supporters of Israel to promote the ostensible opening of its borders and academic institutions to international Study Abroad programs, Israel continues to exercise pernicious denial-of-entry policies at the borders of the Palestinian territory under its control.

Birzeit University (BZU) and all other Palestinian universities, schools and educational organizations continue to [experience the effects](#) of Israel's denial-of-entry permits to persons who intend to study, teach or lecture at Palestinian institutions and who hold international passports, especially when they are of Palestinian background or publicly critical of Israel.

We stand in solidarity with The Palestinian Campaign for the Right to Enter the Occupied Palestinian Territory ([RTE](#)), established by volunteers in Ramallah in the wake of Israel's intensification of this unconscionable policy of entry denial in the West Bank in retaliation to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) elections win of Hamas in 2006. The mission of this campaign is "to defend the rights of access, movement and residency in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territory".

Nada Elia, member of the Organizing Collective of (USACBI), [has made](#) a parallel between Israel's denial of house permits and its denial of entry permits. She points out how Israel's

egregious policy of denying entry permits to the occupied West Bank affects academic institutions as well as the lives of those denied renewal of their entry permits, making them "effectively under house arrest within a very restricted area around campus, to avoid any of the hundreds of checkpoints in the West Bank, where they can be arrested and deported for working without a permit."

Those most severely affected by such policies are Palestinians who only possess Palestinian IDs. Some international faculty who have taught at BZU, for example, have long been able to travel in and out without a problem until this recent crisis, a privilege that many who hold only a Palestinian ID do not have.

Palestinians with Arab or non-Western international passports – for instance carriers of Jordanian passports – often find it impossible to obtain an entry permit to the West Bank to visit, let alone to study or teach there. Israel's policies of entry denial and [restriction of movement](#) plague the lives, not only of academics, but also of many Palestinians who hold international passports and who wish to reside close to relatives in Palestine or contribute to its development.

Additionally, [according to](#) the UN Refugee Agency UNHCR, "There are more than four million Palestinians who are stateless: some hold temporary Jordanian passports; some hold Palestinian Authority (PA) passports; and some hold Refugee Travel Documents (RTD) from other Middle Eastern countries (Refugee Studies Centre Aug. 2006b)." These people experience travel problems everywhere.

The denial of freedom of movement to Palestinian academics at large (faculty, students and administrators) is ongoing as are other issues that interfere with the right to education, such as the routine [kidnapping and detention](#) of Palestinian student leaders by the Israeli occupation authorities.

USACBI therefore urges all US academics to join its campaign and take the [pledge](#): 'We Will not Study in Israel Until Palestinians Can Return: Boycott Study Abroad in Israel!'

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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 Israeli 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>

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

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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

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