

BRICUP Newsletter 136

BRICUP

British Committee for the
Universities of Palestine

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CAMPUS NEWS

Apartheid Off Campus - two major successes for the new student network

The Editor

[Apartheid off Campus](#) (Facebook page [here](#)) is a student-led independent network that advocates for Palestinian human rights and for UK universities to cut ties with Israeli apartheid. Since its launch earlier this year, over 250 individual students have joined, and the AOC campaign now has associations with a large number of campus-based student groups across the UK. ([Mondoweiss](#) have recently reported on AOC's activities)

These include SOAS and the University of West London, where campaigns to bring an end to partnerships with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJ) have just resulted in the termination of their student exchange programmes. The HUJ is located in occupied East Jerusalem, on stolen Palestinian land, and the exchange students therefore stay in halls of residence situated on land illegally occupied by Israeli settlers. Many leading UK academic institutions, including the universities of Oxford, Manchester and Leeds, run these exchange schemes and have been accused by Amnesty International of “*actively linking themselves to a whole system of illegality, discrimination and exploitation*” for doing so. More details can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

The University of Manchester has also just divested more than \$5 million from [Caterpillar](#) and the parent company of travel site [Booking.com](#). Caterpillar [supplies bulldozers](#) to the Israeli army which have been

armed and adapted to demolish Palestinian homes. Booking Holdings Inc. is in the United Nations [database](#) of companies involved in Israel's settlements in the occupied West Bank. More details can be found [here](#).

IN COURT

Baldassi & Others v. France: Article 10 protects the right to call for a boycott of goods from Israel

Robert Wintemute, BRICUP -who gave some advice to the lawyers for the applicants

[Reprinted](#) with permission from the Strasbourg Observers website,

Criticism of the policies of a government, and calls for peaceful action intended to put pressure on it to change its policies, would normally be considered political expression protected by Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. But, since at least 1973, when Israel's Foreign Minister, Abba Eban, wrote that “[a]nti-Zionism is merely [the new anti-Semitism](#)”, attempts have been made to characterise criticism of the Government of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians as “anti-Semitic” (“anti-Jewish”), and therefore as a form of hate speech. [Describing Israel-Palestine as a situation of “apartheid”](#), and calling for a boycott of goods from Israeli settlements (built illegally in occupied Palestinian territory) or from anywhere in 1949-67 Israel, is especially likely to trigger this characterisation. In [Baldassi & Others v. France](#) (11 June 2020), the European Court of Human Rights ruled unanimously (7-0) that Article 10 protects the right to call for a boycott of goods from Israel.

Criminal prosecutions for peaceful political expression

The eleven applicants were supporters of the [Palestinian call for Boycott, Divestments, or Sanctions \(BDS\) against Israel](#) (similar to those applied to Apartheid South Africa prior to 1994), until Israel complies with its obligations under international law, especially in relation to its illegal settlements and the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes. The applicants participated in two demonstrations at the same

supermarket on 26 September 2009 and 22 May 2010, at which they urged consumers not to purchase goods imported from Israel. There was no violence or damage, but they were charged with inciting economic discrimination against producers of goods in Israel. France appears to be the only Council of Europe member state in which criminal prosecutions of this kind have taken place (a 12 February 2010 Ministry of Justice circular encouraged prosecutions).

The trial court, the Tribunal correctionnel de Mulhouse, acquitted the applicants on 15 December 2011, having been convinced of the absence of incitement to racial or anti-Semitic hatred. The court of appeal, the Cour d'appel de Colmar, convicted them on 27 November 2013, imposing suspended fines of 1000 EUR per participant for each demonstration, and ordering the collective payment of 28,000 EUR in compensation to four intervening non-governmental organisations. The supreme civil court, the Cour de Cassation, upheld their convictions on 20 October 2015, concluding (without giving reasons) that the convictions were "necessary in a democratic society" under Article 10(2).

The Chamber's reasoning under Article 10

Was the clear interference with the applicants' Article 10(1) right to freedom of expression (the imposition of criminal penalties) "necessary in a democratic society" for the protection of the "rights of others" under Article 10(2)? The Court began by observing that a boycott is a means of expressing protesting opinions. A call to boycott, which seeks to communicate these opinions, while calling for specific actions linked to them, therefore enjoys in principle the protection of Article 10 (para. 63).

However, a call to boycott combines the expression of a protesting opinion and incitement to differential treatment, which means that it might constitute a call for discrimination against others. A call for discrimination is a form of call for intolerance which, like a call for violence or a call for hate, is one of the limits not to be crossed in exercising freedom of expression. But inciting to treat differently is not necessarily the same as inciting to discriminate (para. 64).

The applicants were not convicted of having made racist or anti-Semitic statements, or for having incited hatred or violence. They had not been

violent or caused any damage. Instead, they had been convicted of calling for a boycott of Israeli goods (paras. 71-72).

The Court then noted that, as interpreted and applied in this case, French law prohibits any call for a boycott of products because of their geographic origin, whatever the content of the call, its motivation, or the surrounding circumstances (para. 75) (It would appear that consumer boycotts based on geographic origin had been tolerated in France, except in the case of Israel, which might have raised an issue under Article 14 combined with Article 10.) But the French courts did not demonstrate that, in the circumstances, the conviction of the applicants for calling for a boycott of products from Israel was necessary in a democratic society to achieve the legitimate aim of protecting the rights of others (para. 77).

Reasoning taking into account the circumstances was all the more essential in this case, in which Article 10 requires a raised level of protection of the right to freedom of expression. On the one hand, the actions and words for which the applicants were criticised concerned a subject of general interest, respect for public international law by the State of Israel and the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, and was part of a contemporary debate, in France as in the whole international community. On the other hand, these actions and words were a form of political and activist expression. The Court has stressed on numerous occasions that Article 10(2) leaves very little room for restrictions on freedom of expression in the area of political discourse or questions of general interest (para. 78).

As the Court recalled in [Perinçek v. Switzerland](#), by its nature political discourse is a source of polemics and is often virulent. It remains nonetheless of public interest, unless it degenerates into a call for violence, hate, or intolerance. That is the limit not to be crossed. That is also what the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief stressed, in relation to a call to boycott, in his report (para. 79). The Court rejected the French Government's argument that the applicants' actions could be categorised as comments calling for hate, violence, discrimination, or intolerance (para. 52). As compensation for the violation of Article 10, the

Court ordered France to pay each applicant 7380 EUR (paras. 85-86).

Comparative human rights law

Baldassi & Others in 2020 reaches the same conclusion as the Supreme Court of the United States in [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People v. Claiborne Hardware Company](#) in 1982: “a nonviolent, politically motivated boycott ... is constitutionally protected [by the First Amendment]”. The Strasbourg Court could have cited NAACP to support its reasoning, as Judge O’Leary cited an even older (1958) decision of [Germany’s Federal Constitutional Court](#) in her separate opinion (para. 40).

The Strasbourg Court could also have cited [Organisation juive européenne and Vignoble Psagot Ltd v. Ministre de l’Économie et des Finances](#), a 12 November 2019 judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union, which explained why consumers might not wish to purchase goods from illegal Israeli settlements (or from anywhere in 1949-67 Israel), and why the place where the goods were produced must be indicated on the label:

“37.. to prevent consumers being misled as to the fact that the State of Israel is present in those territories [the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights] as an occupying power and not as a sovereign entity ..., it appears necessary to inform them that those foodstuffs do not originate in that State. ...

48.. the settlements ... give concrete expression to a policy of population transfer conducted by that State outside its territory, in violation of the rules of general international humanitarian law, as codified in the sixth paragraph of Article 49 of the Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, signed in Geneva on 12 August 1949 ..., as noted by the International Court of Justice, with respect to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in its Advisory Opinion of 9 July 2004 ... Moreover, that policy has been repeatedly condemned by the United Nations Security Council, ... and by the European Union itself. ...

53.. the provision of information to consumers must enable them to make informed choices, with particular regard to health, economic, environmental, social and ethical considerations.

54.. other types of considerations, such as those relating to the observance of international law, may also be relevant in that context.

55.. consumers’ purchasing decisions may be informed by [ethical] considerations relating to the fact that the foodstuffs ... come from settlements established in breach of the rules of international humanitarian law.

58.. foodstuffs originating in a territory occupied by the State of Israel must bear not only the indication of that territory but also where those foodstuffs come from ... an Israeli settlement within that territory, the indication of that provenance.”

If the Strasbourg Court had cited the Luxembourg Court’s judgment, the Strasbourg Court could have explained why the applicants were not inciting illegal discrimination. Anti-discrimination legislation generally does not apply to the right of consumers to decide to buy or not to buy goods from a particular territory. Indeed, European Union law ([Regulation 1169/2011 of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers](#)) requires that labels on goods provide the geographic information that consumers need to make ethical decisions. France criminalised the applicants’ attempt to persuade French consumers to do something that they had a legal right to do.

Questions left open

Baldassi & Others leaves two questions open. First, was [Willem v. France](#) (no violation of Article 10) wrongly decided in 2009? In Willem, the applicant was a mayor who had instructed the catering services of his municipality not to purchase goods from Israel. Did the mayor not have the same freedom of expression as the applicants in Baldassi, and the municipality the same freedom to buy or not to buy goods from Israel as the consumers in Baldassi? It made sense for the applicants in Baldassi to distinguish themselves as private citizens from the mayor in Willem. The Court accepted the distinction (paras. 65-70), which meant that it did not have to consider whether the dissenting opinion of Judge Jungwiert, who found a violation of Article 10 in Willem, was correct. It can be argued that the mayor in Willem should have enjoyed the same protection from French criminal law under Article 10. It seems odd that the Court imposes a duty of “neutrality” on an elected politician with regard to

a political question. Whether the mayor had the power to adopt a policy of not purchasing goods from Israel, without a resolution of the municipal council, or because the policy conflicted with the foreign policy of the French Government, was a question of French administrative law. His decision could have been challenged on that basis, without a criminal prosecution.

Second, in describing the line which boycott activists must not cross, the Court refers (paras. 79 and 21) to the [report of a UN Special Rapporteur](#) (para. 18 of the report), which includes the phrase “expression which ... rejects the right of Israel to exist” in describing boycott activity that “should be condemned”. BDS activists are frequently accused of supporting a one-state solution in Israel-Palestine, and therefore “calling for the destruction of the State of Israel”. In future, BDS activists must stress that all human beings in Israel-Palestine have a right to exist (a right to life) under Article 6 ICCPR (Article 2 EConHR), but may argue that states and governments do not have a ‘right to exist’, especially if they violate international law. Peaceful political pressure may be brought to bear on them so that they change their policies, which might mean a change of government and changes to borders. Does the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have a “right to exist”? Not if majorities in Scotland and Northern Ireland vote to leave the UK.

Future application of Baldassi & Others

Sanctions against boycott-Israeli-apartheid activism in Europe often take the form, not of criminal penalties, but of refusals to provide public services, such as space for meetings, or participation in a festival. The [European Legal Support Centre](#) and other non-governmental organisations that defend the right, under Articles 10 and 11, to defend Palestinian human rights will be able to rely on Baldassi & Others in pending and future cases in all 47 member states of the Council of Europe.

Important Victory for the US Campaign to Boycott Israeli Universities

Announcement from USACBI

The USACBI Organizing Collective is pleased to announce that a spurious lawsuit against the

American Studies Association (ASA) for its vote to boycott Israeli universities has been dismissed by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit.

This lawsuit involved four years of dragging the American Studies Association (ASA) and eight former officers through the court because of the ASA membership’s endorsement of the boycott of Israeli academic institutions. Simon Bronner, Michael Rockland, Michael Barton, and Charles Kupfer, the four professors who sued the ASA with backing from the Brandeis Center, the right-wing pro-Israel lawfare group founded by Kenneth Marcus, were finally handed a definitive judgment of dismissal by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit.

This ruling which rebukes the arguments made by Bronner et. al. is a landmark victory against anti-BDS lawfare. As one of the ASA defendants and USACBI Advisory Board member Sunaina Maira notes, *“This major victory in the courts against Zionist lawfare and legal harassment is an affirming milestone for the BDS movement in the US academy and everywhere where anti-Palestinian organizations try to shut down scholars, students, and activists for supporting the Palestinian struggle for human rights. Given the dire situation on the ground in Palestine with Israeli plans for cementing their colonization of Palestinian lands, this is a huge win for the*

Read the full statement [here](#)

Palestinian rights activists celebrate political victory in Germany after Humboldt 3 trial

Editor

Palestinian rights activists are celebrating a “*political and moral victory*” after the acquittal of two of the so-called Humboldt Three, activists who were all charged for protesting against Israeli war crimes at a meeting at Humboldt University in 2017.

Majed Abusalama, a Palestinian journalist from Gaza, Ronnie Barkan, an Israeli-Jewish human rights defender and Stavit Sinai, an Israeli-Jewish anti-colonial scholar and philosophy teacher, were charged with trespassing and assault after they challenged Aliza Lavie, a member of the Yesh

Atid party and leader of the anti-BDS movement in the Knesset, during the event.

They were ejected after Mr Barkan described Ms Lavie as “*a representative of a criminal apartheid state,*” while Ms Sinai highlighted Lavie’s involvement in the Gaza massacre of 2014, shouting “*the blood of Gaza is on this woman’s hands.*” Mr Abusalama also challenged the right-wing Israeli parliamentarian in the Q&A session before leaving on his own accord.

On August 4th, Mr Barkan and Mr Abusalama were cleared of charges but Ms Sinai was found guilty of “attempted assault” despite being punched in the face as she was removed from the lecture hall.

The trio insisted it was their moral duty to protest against Israeli war crimes and that they had merely exercised their right to peaceful protest.

Full details in the Morning Star [here](#)

Don’t mention Palestine: divestment as a legitimacy problem

Les Levidow- BRICUP

The BDS campaign has been demanding that organisations divest from companies complicit in the Israeli occupation and deny contracts to such companies. Given its strong alliance with Israel, the British state has been trying to deter such actions. This pressure is less about the companies than about legitimacy problems of UK support for Israel. Hence the strong pressure on relevant organisations to stay silent about Palestine as a reason for their financial or contractual decisions, this article shows. Let’s look at some examples from different arenas.

Public procurement:

For many years the BDS campaign has sought to dissuade local authorities from signing or renewing contracts with complicit companies, especially [G4S](#) for ‘security’ services and [Veolia](#) for waste management. Some local authorities have acted accordingly. But they have rarely (if ever) mentioned Palestine as the reason, thus avoiding any political dispute or retaliation. In each case the decision had other plausible reasons.

Sports sponsorship:

The global BDS campaign has been targeting [Puma](#) for its role in the Israeli Occupation. In particular Luton Town Football Club has been targeted for its kits sponsored by Puma. Eventually in July 2020 it [substituted](#) a different sponsor, with the following [disclaimer](#): Luton Town FC ‘does not make commercial decisions based upon politics or religious matters’. Rather, the new sponsor has shared values on sustainability and ecological issues. Indeed, don’t mention Palestine.

University examples: Leeds and Manchester

After the Palestine Solidarity Group (PSG) waged a campaign for the University of Leeds to divest from specific complicit companies, the university made a strange [announcement](#) about them:

“The University Council agreed to adopt a climate active strategy on 31 May 2018 and the University has been implementing this over the last four months. Core funds which included indirect investments in Airbus, United Technologies, and Keyence Corporation were sold on the 15 October 2018.”.

When the campus PSG claimed victory, the university [denied](#) that its reason was any Palestine connection of the companies. This denial lacked credibility because a truly ‘climate-active strategy’ would have divested from several other companies too. Nevertheless, the university achieved its apparent aim: to minimise conflict internally and externally. The UK government made no comment. Neither did the local Labour MP comment, though he later [denounced](#) Israel Apartheid Week at the university.

A similar story recently arose at the University of Manchester. For several years the Palestine Society had campaigned for divestment from complicit companies such as [Caterpillar](#) and the parent company of travel site [Booking.com](#). After a Freedom of Information request to the university, its 23 July 2020 email message updated the university’s list of investments. The list no longer included those two complicit companies, revealing a low-key divestment decision. When the BDS campaign claimed victory, the university [denied](#) that the divestment had any such connection: ‘*The decisions taken on our specific equity holdings are made by our investment managers with the aim of delivering*

our overall investment goals', said the spokesperson. Indeed, don't mention Palestine.

Methodists' divestment: financial reasons?

Another example comes from the Methodists. For several years UK churches have had activists campaigning internally for a Morally Responsible Investment policy, supported by Sabeel-Kairos. This encompasses activities in [Palestine](#), among other irresponsible investments. The policy was adopted by the [Quakers](#) in 2018. But it proved more difficult to engage other UK denominations.

Prior to the above campaign, and under internal pressure from a different members' campaign, the Methodists agreed a 2010 guidance document on divestment. According to their later confirmation document, the Israeli government 'must understand that failure to respond to international concerns over compliance with international law with respect to the occupied territories will come at a cost'. Pro-Israel forces denounced this decision as '[harmful and divisive](#)', i.e. as dividing Christians from Jews (see below the alleged threat to 'community cohesion').

Despite the Methodists' policy, the leadership retained several complicit investments. For example, [HeidelbergCement](#) had been quarrying land in the Occupied Palestine for Israel's profit, and to provide cement for Israeli settlements in the West Bank. As its rationale for delay, the Methodist leadership was seeking 'constructive engagement' to persuade the company to withdraw from Palestine. To close such gaps, in 2019 the Methodists' pro-divestment network put forward stronger proposals, but the conference agenda committee declined these, stating that the investment policy was working as it should. Hence the conference agenda [excluded](#) Palestine as grounds for divestment.

In 2019 the Methodists finally divested from Heidelberg Cement but stated only financial reasons. Thus it avoided negative publicity for Israel and attacks from the Israel lobby. As this case illustrates, Churches have undergone a conflict between internal ethical pressures versus external attacks implying inter-faith conflict. Churches face a dilemma: how to carry out divestments quietly or by mentioning a reason other than Israel-Palestine. Unless, of course, they denounce the racist agenda of their pro-Israel accusers.

Public-sector pension funds: court dispute

For a long time, the BDS campaign has targeted pension funds for complicit companies. In 2015 [UNISON](#) declared, 'Through our collective strength as UNISON members, we can make sure that our pension funds are exerting pressure through their investments and telling companies to end their involvement with the Occupation.'

In response, in 2016 the government imposed a new rule which prohibited Local Government Pension Funds (LGPS) from 'using pension policies to pursue boycotts, divestment and sanctions [BDS] against foreign nations and UK defence industries ... other than where formal legal sanctions, embargoes and restrictions have been put in place by the Government'. Likewise it prohibited them from 'pursuing policies that are contrary to UK foreign policy or UK defence policy'.

At that time the relevant Minister was Matt Hancock. In 2016 [he declared](#), '*The new guidance on procurement, combined with changes we are making to how pension pots can be invested, will help prevent damaging and counter-productive local foreign policies undermining our national security.*' Although the guidance did not mention any country, the rationale was clearly the UK's support for Israel.

To protect the rights of pension-fund holders, a legal challenge was brought by several organisations including PSC and War on Want. Eventually in April 2020 the Supreme Court invalidated the government guidance on narrow legal grounds (see Rob Wintemute in the [BRICUP Newsletter](#) 135). Nevertheless the government's political intimidation may deter LGPS from publicising divestments or from mentioning Palestine as the reason.

Beyond divestment: legitimacy at stake

Pension funds have an ethical choice: They can act in complicity with human rights violations and the UK's immoral foreign policy. Or else they can act as responsible citizen-investors and so cause political embarrassment for the government.

This choice matters for legitimacy, as can be seen in the government's 2016 argument. It warned that any divestment contradicting UK foreign policy would undermine it. To deter such action, it has promoted a neoliberal model whereby pension-fund contributors can be legitimately

concerned only about funds maximising the financial return. They likewise must accept a version of ‘national security’ which supports Israel’s colonisation project as somehow protecting us.

Matt Hancock’s [2016 speech](#) also invoked the spectre of antisemitism: *‘Town hall boycotts undermine good community relations, poisoning and polarising debate, weakening integration and fuelling anti-Semitism.’* Indeed, for several decades the British state has constructed a racist stereotype of ‘*the Jewish community*’ as a homogeneous group supporting Israel as integral to their religious identity. The British state hides its own racist policy behind this stereotype in the name of protecting Jews. Likewise pro-Israel groups who criticised the Methodists’ divestment policy as [‘harmful and divisive’](#).

Those two official pretexts – national security and social cohesion – have legitimacy stakes beyond divestment issues. The British state encourages Jewish paranoia towards pro-Palestine forces as if they were an existential threat. As a carrot, the Home Office equates ‘community cohesion’ with Muslim groups participating in ‘inter-faith’ events with pro-Israel ones, thus silencing Palestine as an issue. As a stick, the Home Office accuses Muslim groups of antisemitism if they refuse such complicity. Likewise if they reject the so-called IHRA definition of antisemitism, which denies the Palestinians’ national narrative of racist dispossession.

As the Jewish writer [Barnaby Raine](#) has noted:

“A certain projected fantasy, an idea of ‘the Jews’, has come to signify something powerful to the Right and to liberals. Once they saw us as dangerous Semites infesting European society. Now instead we are their favourite pets: heroic colonists in the Middle East and successful citizens in the West.”

Indeed, Jews are stereotyped as citizens who embrace the state’s pro-Israel version of ‘national security’, consequently face antisemitic persecution (especially from Muslims and the BDS campaign), and so need state protection. Through the dominant narrative, the Palestinians’ racist oppression is silenced and displaced onto a domestic antisemitism problem. The BDS campaign should try to delegitimise the British

state for its [doubly racist policy](#). Let’s continue mentioning Palestine as a state racism issue.

TWO URGENT APPEALS

Israeli occupation forces arrest BDS coordinator Mahmoud Nawajaa

the Palestinian BDS Committee

<https://bdsmovement.net/>

On July 30th, around 3:30 am, Israeli occupation soldiers stormed the home near Ramallah of Mahmoud Nawajaa, the General Coordinator of the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC), handcuffing and blindfolding him and taking him away from his wife and three young children.

Mahmoud is a leading Palestinian human rights defender who is highly regarded in Palestine and around the world for his tireless and passionate advocacy of Palestinian rights.

BDS movement co-founder, Omar Barghouti, called for effective international pressure to secure Mahmoud Nawajaa’s immediate release:

See [here](#) and [here](#) for more information

Urgent call from [Scientists for Palestine](#)

Demand an end to the harassment of Palestinian scientists and academics and an immediate release of prof. Imad Barghouthi

On Thursday, July 16th 2020, Professor Barghouthi, an astrophysicist at the university of Al-Quds [1] in East Jerusalem was detained [2] by Israeli military forces at a military checkpoint outside of Anata while he was travelling from the university campus to his home in Ramallah. He is now being kept in an Israeli detention facility, prohibited from contact with his dear wife and children. No charges have been brought against him and he faces the potential threat of administrative detention. Administrative detention [3], is an illegal measure used arbitrarily by the Israeli military forces to detain Palestinians without any charges or trials. If charges were to be placed against him, he would face trial by an Israeli military court, which notoriously has conviction rates of almost 100% [4].

This arrest is not an isolated case. Prof. Barghouthi, one of Palestine's most prominent scientists, was placed under administrative detention for two months [5] in 2014, and was again detained for six months [6] in 2016. Mr. Ubai Aboudi (a US citizen), the director of the Bisan Center for Research and Development, was abducted from his home in November 2019 and placed in administrative detention. He remains in prison to this day. Both Prof. Barghouthi and Mr. Aboudi have worked with S4P on our international meetings and schools in Palestine, and their arrest and detention seriously hinders our work supporting science in Palestine.

The harassment of Palestinian Scientists is a direct violation of human rights (Universal Declaration of Human Rights [7], article 27, as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights [8], article 15), as well as an attack on scholars everywhere.

As concerned members of the international academic community, S4P calls for all scholars to join our plea and demand the immediate release of Prof. Barghouthi and a stop to the imprisonment of Palestinian scientists!

Yesterday we launched a petition for the liberation of professor Barghouthi. We would strongly appreciate if you could sign it [here](#)

In solidarity,
Scientists for Palestine

COVID 19 in PALESTINE

Timeline on the spread of Covid 19 in Israel/Palestine.

Jewish Voice for Peace Health Advisory Council

As of July 25, the numbers of Coronavirus cases in the region are:

Israel 60,496, West Bank 12,337 (includes 2,319 in East Jerusalem), Gaza 75

See [here](#) for further details

This resource will be updated regularly to provide a full picture of the unfolding pandemic and the medical, political and economic ramifications in real time. Please note that Coronavirus cases are

an underestimate given the lack of testing and asymptomatic carriers.

NEWS FROM OTHER CAMPAIGNS

An update from the UK Palestine Mental Health Network (UKPMHN)

‘Café Palestine’ and ‘Settler Colonialism: the Palestine/Israel case’

Martin Kemp

Like others, during the lockdown the UKPMHN stumbled quite by chance on the potential of the internet to bring people together. The outcome is *Café Palestine*, a fortnightly Zoom meeting which began with an update on the impact of the coronavirus on East Jerusalem under occupation and which since then has covered issues such as violence against Palestinians, the study of acute and chronic uncertainty in the Palestinian context, reflections on trauma and its diagnosis. We have looked at the individual and collective impact of incarceration and torture, and our next will be on the Israeli practice of refusing to return the bodies of Palestinians they have killed to their families. Recordings of all events are placed here:

<https://ukpalmhn.com/cafe-palestine/>. [an article](#)

‘Café Palestine’ is a platform for Palestinian speakers – established and less well known, from all parts of the dismembered homeland and the diaspora, to speak to a mixed Palestinian-international audience. Each Café event begins with fifteen minutes of live music, provided by performers from the Edward Said National Music Conservatory – recently raided along with other cultural institutions in occupied Jerusalem.

I am also proud to announce the publication of a special issue of the International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies whose title underlines its starting point: that we are discussing a contemporary example of settler colonialism. It includes articles that investigate the socio-psychological impacts on Palestinian society, but – for BRICUP purposes, perhaps more importantly – it includes two articles that focus on the suppression of Palestinian activism within and by Western mental health organisations. My contributions, the editor's introduction and [an article](#) ‘*The Psychoanalytic*

Engagement with Settler Colonialism in Palestine/Israel, attempts to provide a rationale for their engagement in international solidarity actions. I and the other authors would welcome feedback...

For at least the next month, all the articles in the special issue are on free access, and can be found at this link:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/15569187/2020/17/2>

The European Co-Ordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine (ECCP)

Sue Blackwell, BRICUP delegate to ECCP

BRICUP is one of about forty organisations affiliated to ECCP, which was founded in 1986. ECCP campaigns for:

- The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination as enshrined in international law and relevant UN resolutions;
- An end to the 1967 occupation of all Arab lands, particularly the occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza, and its associated regime;
- The right of Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality;
- Respect, protection and promotion of the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes as stipulated in UN Resolution 194;
- The unconditional release of all Palestinian prisoners.

ECCP thus adopts a "rights-based" approach and broadly follows the aims and tactics of the Palestinian BDS campaign. Any organisation which endorses these aims is welcome to apply for affiliation; once accepted as a member, it can send delegates to the meetings, which are normally held in Brussels every few months but are currently taking place online.

Although many of ECCP's activities consist of lobbying EU Commissioners and members of the EU Parliament, not all of the organisations are based in EU member states, so BRICUP and the other UK affiliates are not about to be booted out.

The value of ECCP membership lies mainly in the ability to exchange news about victories and challenges for the BDS movement across Europe. If a Norwegian pension fund has divested from an Israeli bank, or German activists have won a court case against a local council which banned them from holding a BDS meeting, the rest of the members get to hear about it quickly via the e-mail list. Key documents and texts of letters and petitions get posted in one language and are then quickly translated into several others, so that closely similar initiatives - whether about Israeli killer drones, settlement goods or EU research funding - can be taken in multiple countries without reinventing the wheel. One key theme over the last couple of years has been the so-called IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism and its use by national and local authorities to try to "shrink the space" available for BDS activities and discussions. The pro-Israel organisations promoting these attacks are co-ordinated at an international level: we need to beat them at that game.

ECCP has legal status as a non-profit organization under Belgian law. It has an office in Brussels and employs a part-time administrator. This all costs money, and ECCP relies on donations to sustain its work in addition to the regular subs from its affiliates. ***ECCP is currently appealing for funds.*** If you would like to know more, or would like to contribute to ECCP's work, contact eccp.brussels@gmail.com. The website is www.eccpalestine.org

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

See their latest newsletter [here](#)

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

See their latest newsletter [here](#)

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

See their latest newsletter [here](#)

Books/Articles

[Enforcing the Silence](#)

Academic Freedom, Palestine and the Criticism of Israel

edited by David Landy, Ronit Lentin, and Conor McCarthy

288 pp. Zed Books.

Academic freedom is under siege, as our universities become the sites of increasingly fraught battles over freedom of speech. While much of the public debate has focussed on 'no platforming' by students, this overlooks the far graver threat posed by concerted efforts to silence the critical voices of both academics and students, through the use of bureaucracy, legal threats and online harassment. Such tactics have conspicuously been used, with particularly virulent effect, in an attempt to silence academic criticism of Israel.

This collection uses the controversies surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a means of exploring the limits placed on academic freedom in a variety of different national contexts. It looks at how the increased neo-liberalisation of higher education has shaped the current climate, and considers how academics and their universities should respond to these new threats. Bringing together new and established scholars from Palestine and the wider Middle East as well as the US and Europe, *Enforcing Silence* shows us how we can and must defend our universities as places for critical thinking and free expression.

See the Foreword to the book by Dr. Rabab Adulhadi [here](#)

[The Conflict over the Conflict: The Israel/Palestine Debate](#)

By Kenneth S. Stern, foreword by Nadine Strossen

296pages, University of Toronto Press.

The Conflict over the Conflict chronicles one of the most divisive and toxic issues on today's college and university campuses: Israel/Palestine.

Some pro-Palestinian students call supporters of Israel's right to exist racist, and disrupt their events. Some pro-Israel students label pro-

Palestinian students terrorists, and the Jews among them traitors. Lawsuits are filed. Legislation is proposed. Faculty members are blacklisted and receive death threats. Academic freedom is compromised and the entire academic enterprise is threatened. How did we get here and what can be done?

In this passionate book, Kenneth S. Stern examines attempts from each side to censor the other at a time when some say students, rather than being challenged to wrestle with difficult issues and ideas, are being quarantined from them. He uniquely frames the examination: our ability to think rationally is inhibited when our identity is fiercely connected to an issue of perceived social justice or injustice, and our proclivity to see in-groups and out-groups – us versus them – is obvious. According to Stern, the campus is the best place to mine this conflict and our intense views about it to help future generations do what they are supposed to do: think. *The Conflict over the Conflict* shows how this is possible.

We hope to have reviews of these books in the next issue of the Newsletter

Forging Greater Israel: Annexation by Any Other name

Jennifer Lowenstein

[An essay in Counterpunch](#) . Jennifer Loewenstein is a freelance journalist, independent researcher, founder of the [Madison-Rafah Sister City Project](#) and supporter of BRICUP.

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 [here](#) 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>

If you use the direct funds transfer mechanism, please confirm the transaction by sending an explanatory email

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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