

BRICUP NEWSLETTER

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www.bricup.org.uk

bricup@bricup.org.uk

The Australian Campaign for the Academic Boycott of Israel

Responding to the **CALL** of Palestinian civil society to join the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel, we are an Australian campaign focused specifically on a boycott of Israeli academic and cultural institutions, as delineated by PACBI (the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel):

In light of Israel's persistent violations of international law, and given that, since 1948, hundreds of UN resolutions have condemned Israel's colonial and discriminatory policies as illegal and called for immediate, adequate and effective remedies, and given that all forms of international intervention and peace-making have until now failed to convince Israel to comply with humanitarian law, to respect fundamental human rights and to end its occupation and oppression of the people of Palestine, and

In view of the fact that people of conscience in the international community have historically shouldered the moral responsibility to fight injustice, as exemplified in the struggle to abolish apartheid in South Africa through diverse forms of boycott, divestment and sanctions:

We scholars, inspired by the wishes of Palestinian civil society, call upon international civil society organizations and people of conscience all over the world to impose broad boycotts and implement divestment initiatives against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era. We appeal to you to pressure your respective states to impose embargoes and sanctions against Israel. We also

invite conscientious Israelis to support this **CALL**, for the sake of justice and genuine peace.

These nonviolent punitive measures should be maintained until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law by:

1. Ending its occupation and colonization of all Palestinian and Arab lands and dismantling the Wall which separates Palestinians from their arable lands;
2. Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality;
3. Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN Resolution 194.

The principles guiding our campaign and the three goals outlined above are also points of unity for the British, Canadian, and US Campaigns for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (USCACBI, this statement is a modified version of theirs). There can be no academic freedom in Israel/Palestine unless all academics are free and all students are free to pursue their academic desires.

If you are committed to these principles of unity, and wish to work on a campaign of boycotting academic and cultural institutions guided by this approach, please join our campaign.

Gaza is but the latest incident in a series of ongoing Israeli massacres, from Deir Yassin (1948) to Kafr Kassim (1956) to Jenin (2002) to

the wars on Lebanon (from 1980s to 2006). All demonstrate a pattern of violence by a state that will not end its violations of international law and war crimes on its own, without international pressure. We must act now. As academics we wish to focus on campaigns in our universities and in institutions of higher education to advocate for compliance with the academic and cultural boycott, a movement that is growing internationally across all segments of global civil society.

This call for an academic and cultural boycott parallels the call in the non-academic world for divestment, boycott and sanctions by trade unions, churches and other civil society organizations in countries such as the United States, Canada, Italy, Ireland, Norway, the United Kingdom, Brazil, South Africa and New Zealand.

Actions Since Israeli academic institutions (mostly state-controlled) and the vast majority of Israeli intellectuals and academics have either contributed directly to maintaining, defending or otherwise justifying the above forms of oppression, or have been complicit in them through their silence, we call upon our colleagues to comprehensively and consistently boycott all Israeli academic and cultural institutions as a contribution to the struggle to end Israel's occupation, colonization and system of apartheid, by applying the following:

1. Refrain from participation in any form of academic and cultural cooperation, collaboration or joint projects with Israeli institutions;
2. Advocate a comprehensive boycott of Israeli institutions at the national and international levels, including suspension of all forms of funding and subsidies to these institutions;
3. Promote divestment and disinvestment from Israel by academic institutions;
4. Work toward the condemnation of Israeli policies by pressing for resolutions to be adopted by academic, professional and cultural associations and organizations;

5. Support Palestinian academic and cultural institutions directly without requiring them to partner with Israeli counterparts as an explicit or implicit condition for such support.

As educators and scholars of conscience in Australia, we fully support this call. We urge our colleagues, nationally, regionally, and internationally, to stand up against Israel's ongoing attacks on the rights of Palestinians to education, land, and human dignity, and to support the nonviolent call for academic boycott, disinvestment, and sanctions.

This declaration is signed by 18 academics from 7 Australian Universities

Recent medical developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

Just as the BRICUP proposals for a UCU vote to debate an academic boycott of specified Israeli institutions in May 2007 proved so effective in drawing attention to the malignant role of many Israeli academics in maintaining the occupation of Palestine and denying Palestinians academic freedom, so the campaign to highlight the overwhelming evidence for violations by the Israelis of the basic human right to proper health provision in the land they occupy has culminated in a massive outburst of indignation in the last couple of months. This campaign has been conducted by: Palestinians (in particular PACBI and Birzeit University stalwarts such as Rita Giacaman and Rana Khatib; Israelis such as Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (Miri Weingarten and Hadas Ziv) and the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (Jeff Halper and Linda Ramsden); British Doctors for Palestine (Derek Summerfield, Ghada Karimi, Iain Chalmers et al.); Medical Aid for Palestinians; the International Medical Education Trust 2000 (patrons Jon Snow and Judge Eugene Cottran); the editorial staff of both Lancet (led by the courageous Richard Horton) and British Medical Journal (Fiona Godlee); and of course BRICUP. It has been a truly collaborative effort

over more than two years. This is but the beginning of a sustained effort to bring Israeli war criminals to book using the basic human rights of health and education inside a legal framework, working alongside the BDS campaigns of PSC and others. The guilt and shame we all feel in allowing the ferocious Lebanon and Gaza onslaughts to happen has added greater urgency to our combined efforts.

Within this two year period one can identify several events which proved synergistic in effect rather than additive. In no particular order of priority or importance, these include for example: the visit of Richard Horton to Palestine; the publication of the 'Ticking Bomb' report revealing the extent and severity of Israeli torture techniques against Palestinians; the lecture tours to the UK by Jeff Halper on behalf of ICAHD drawing attention to the use of innocent civilians as laboratory guinea-pigs in testing of novel weaponry; the lecture tour in April 2008 to the UK of Rushama Marton, Hadas Ziv and Miri Weingarten of Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (PHR-I) revealing the extent of healthcare violations by the Israeli Occupation Forces; several PHR-I reports revealing the prevention of seriously ill patients from leaving Gaza unless they informed on family "terrorists" to the Israeli GSS; the excellent tour of Palestine by 17 UK-based healthcare professionals November 2008 organised by British Doctors for Palestine, PHR-I and ICAHD, conducted by the relentless activist Linda Ramsden; the debate conducted between PHR-I and the Israeli Medical Association (IMA) over the 'Ticking Bomb' report and complicity of Israeli medical staff in torture of political prisoners often as young as 14 years of age; the endless correspondence in the medical press led by Derek Summerfield and drawing attention to the refusal of the IMA (or the Ethics Committee of the World Medical Association (WMA) now presided over by Yoram Blachar) to condemn Israeli use of torture; the Lebanon war and dropping cluster bombs as a farewell war crime when the Israelis withdrew; the Gaza onslaught and massacre using a spectrum of sophisticated weaponry against a besieged and helplessly citizenry; and

now in January, February and March, articles in the British Medical Journal and the launch of a Lancet series launched on March 4th 2009 followed by a conference organized by MAP on the 5th March.

I will not attempt to summarise the articles and correspondence in the British Medical Journal. However, the siege of Gaza and the recent carnage has provoked far more robust editorial critiques of Israel than hitherto and needless to say pro-Israeli apologists complaining bitterly about demonisation and prejudice. The Lancet articles are published On-line March 5th 2009 DOI:b.1016/50140 6736(09)60100-8. In brief, Richard Horton wrote an editorial entitled "The occupied Palestinian territory: peace, justice and health" which is excellent and balanced but pulls no punches. This is followed by a series of five excellent articles highlighting: health status and demographics; maternal and child health; cardiovascular disease, diabetes mellitus and cancer; health as human security; the healthcare system, an assessment and reference guide.

What do we do in future? We must capitalize on the momentum gained on the back of public outrage resulting from the Gaza massacres. We will concentrate our efforts and target healthcare professionals. An open letter signed to date by over 600 professionals is being sent to the World Medical Association to protest at the promotion of the Israeli Yoram Blachar to be their President. A group of us (mostly British Doctors for Palestine) have welcomed Miri Weingarten to the UK on a long-term basis to form a PHR-I support group in the UK and exploit her great oratorical skills to spread the word about health violations in the OPT. In addition in collaboration with MAP, Amnesty International and PHR-I, we are organising a comprehensive analysis of the terrible weapons used in Gaza and the injuries they caused to the civilian population. None of this will be effective in the face of the sophisticated Israeli propaganda machine unless we get our facts meticulously and absolutely accurate and then use them within a human rights legal framework. To that end we are working with a group called Human Rights Legal Aid Trust employing prominent solicitors

(such as Danny Machover) and barristers mostly recruited from the Jewish community and sharing our disgust with Israeli policy. All of this costs money, so many of us are actively fundraising in the UK, South Africa and Europe to put together a package which we hope will end up in an international court. BRICUP's combined campaigning and support for the health 'activists' is much appreciated and ever more needed.

Colin Green

The Right to a Peaceful Protest

A memorial written on the occasion of BRICUP's protest at the Science Museum.

The right to peaceful protest has been gradually eroded in Britain. The attack on the right was most blatant in the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act. This Act criminalises protesting without a licence within one kilometre of Parliament (whether it is in session or not) under the sections which aimed, fortunately unsuccessfully, at removing Brian Haw from Parliament Square. Freedom of assembly and association is guaranteed under article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights and written into UK law by the 1988 Human Rights Act, however I have become aware of a subtle and pervasive encroachment on our rights.

I joined the protest outside the Science Museum against the Zionist Federation sponsored Festival of Israeli Science being held there; while not everyone agrees with BRICUP on the substance of our protest I hope everyone will see that the policing we encountered raises concerns for us all, regardless of views on Palestine and Israel.

As the Science Museum is comfortably more than one kilometre from Westminster I had assumed we would be relatively free to mount our protest – which consisted of a few dozen of us wishing to display our banners and hand out leaflets to people entering the museum and to other passers-by. What we discovered was a bevy of police with a script for controlling the demonstration drawn up in great detail by senior

officers in Scotland Yard. This detailed operational plan specified where pens of steel barriers were to be erected and how many people were to be allowed to hand out leaflets and where. This meant that at the back entrance, where school students attending the day of science went into the museum, a pen was created that put protesters too far from people entering to be able to hand them leaflets. A request that some of the spare barriers be used to create a pen on the side of the entrance the visitors were approaching from was met by a brusque answer from the police, "It says here where the barriers are to be put and we cannot deviate from this carefully worked out plan. If you don't like it you can always write to Scotland Yard".

When I walked up the road with the intent, as the Police Sergeant discerned, of distributing leaflets away from the entrance he pursued me up the road. He told me that he was giving me a formal and final warning that if I handed out a leaflet he would arrest me under s14 of one of the many public order acts passed by the Labour Government. I am not sure which one but it sounded like the 'We are the Police and You Will Do What We Tell You and Like It Act' of two thousand and something. He tried to be conciliatory and pointed out that this would ruin both my day and his.

The police in charge were very edgy, this was in part because they were attempting to exercise control not by responding to what was happening on the ground but by following orders constructed remotely. It was clear to them that we were intent on doing none of the actions they were most concerned to prevent; neither intimidating people attending the events; nor being rowdy; nor obstructing the passage of passers by. Indeed they shared with us the perception that the pens they created were a far greater obstruction than we could possibly have caused.

Why did this occur? It is a result of the misuse of the idea of evidence-based policy. The idea that you can pre-specify a series of steps that available research tells you will lead to the desired outcome. This approach de-skills the professional on the spot, depriving them of the

freedom to interpret the world in front of them and apply their knowledge and experience to an evolving situation. They are in the same situation as teachers enjoined to follow the national curriculum irrespective of the needs and interests of their students in the classroom on that day. Similarly, professionals in the construction industry have struggled to free themselves from the tyranny of methods specification and be commissioned through performance specifications so they can use their hard won knowledge.

It is not that evidence is not important; its use in medicine has driven out useless or even harmful courses of treatment. Doctors however try to use evidence in the light of the history of the individual patient, not as an infallible instruction manual. The success of evidence based medicine has led to a simple-minded extension to supporting an increasingly authoritarian and managerialist conception of public service delivery.

At the Science Museum I saw how the lack of freedom for the police can, while attempting to constrain pre-PACE style arbitrary policing, lead to a reduction of freedom for the rest of us. Professionalism for the police and other occupations comes not from following more and more highly specified instruction to be followed but from a culture of responsibility, responsiveness and learning that centralised direction undermines.

Mike Cushman

The PACBI column.

PACBI salutes the British campus occupation movement and calls for intensification of BDS

The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) salutes the students, faculty members and groups that organized and supported the spectacular campus “occupations” across the United Kingdom in solidarity with Palestine, during Israel’s criminal aggression on Gaza earlier this year. The message to university administrations and

academics was unequivocal; there is no room for business-as-usual with Israel, and British universities must take a stand, including divesting from companies implicated in Israel’s occupation and atrocities. It is inspiring that, already, Cardiff University, for example, has decided to end its investment in companies supplying Israel with weapons, following the lead of Hampshire College in the US, which opted in February to divest from six companies profiting from the Israeli occupation. The focus on divestment from companies supporting the Israeli occupation and oppression is of particular significance as it transcends the traditional solidarity forms of mere demonstrations and denunciations to far more effective and sustainable measures of boycott, divestment and sanctions, BDS.

Indeed, BDS is *the* main form of solidarity that Palestinian civil society in its absolute majority is calling upon all people of conscience around the world to adopt in support of our people’s struggle against Israeli colonialism and apartheid. We sincerely hope that the growing student movement in solidarity with Palestine in the UK will develop BDS strategies aimed at comprehensive divestment from companies implicated in Israel’s crimes and boycott of Israeli academic institutions, all of which are complicit in Israel’s colonial and apartheid policies, which persistently violate international law and deny the Palestinians their fundamental human rights.

PACBI has adopted institutional academic boycott as a civil mode of resistance given the Israeli academy’s complicity and direct involvement in Israel’s colonial and apartheid practices. Israeli academic research centers and units have been an organic and indispensable partner of the Israeli military-security complex, offering expert analysis and furnishing the tools and know-how necessary for the machinery of domination and occupation. Furthermore, the Israeli academy has consistently played a central role in whitewashing Israeli colonial and racist policies internationally and has never taken a stand against their government’s vicious atrocities and ethnic cleansing policies over the

past sixty years. Most recently, and only as an example, a Tel Aviv University publication announced with pride that the Research & Development Directorate of the Israeli Ministry of Defense is currently funding 55 projects at the university; it went on to quote the head of the Security Studies Program at the University that “military R&D in Israel would not exist without the universities. They carry out all the basic scientific investigation, which is then developed either by the defence industries or the army.” [1] It should be noted that this is the same Ministry of Defense that executed a relentless and bloody war against the Palestinians in Gaza last December and January, murdering over 1400 Palestinians, more than 300 of whom were children, and wounding over 5000 people. [2] Many neighborhoods were reduced to rubble, and educational institutions, such as schools and whole buildings of the Islamic University campus, were destroyed. In general, the Israeli academy, with rare individual exceptions, stood behind the massacre, justifying it as a form of “self defense.”

Historically, one of the key achievements of academic boycott has been the adoption, by British academic unions, of motions that directly or indirectly endorse, from 2005 to the present, the institutional academic boycott called for by PACBI. This was mainly realized through the heroic efforts of PACBI’s main partner in the UK, The British Committee for the Universities of Palestine, BRICUP [3], and with indispensable, principled support from the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC).

Academic and cultural boycott have been steadily gaining momentum around the world. One of the most outstanding initiatives was the launching of the US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel. [4] Most recently, the Fédération autonome du collégial (FAC), Quebec College Federation, has also joined the BDS campaign. [5]

In conclusion, there is a surge of effective and institutionally sustainable solidarity with the Palestinians focusing on BDS. We are heartened by the increasing awareness of the student

movement in Britain to the fact that a just peace in Palestine and the region can only be realized through isolating Israel and holding it accountable to international law and universal principles of human rights. This is the main lesson we have learned from South Africa. We hence call upon you to intensify your efforts in promoting boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel in support of our struggle for freedom and justice.

[1] Tel Aviv University Review, “In Defense of the Nation,” Winter 2008-2009. Tel Aviv University: Marketing and Donor Relations Department, 2009.

[2] Palestinian Center for Human Rights. <http://www.pchrgaza.org/files/PressR/English/2008/36-2009.html>

[3] www.bricup.org.uk

[4] <http://usacbi.wordpress.com>

[5] <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=971>

PACBI

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