

BRICUP Newsletter 38

BRICUP

British Committee for the
Universities of Palestine

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BDS Bites!

There are clear signs that Israel is feeling the effect of the BDS campaign. A Knesset committee has passed a bill to allow boycotters to be fined. If passed into Law, heavy fines will be imposed on Israeli citizens who initiate or incite boycotts against Israeli individuals, companies, factories,

and organizations. We are indebted to JNews for the following detail.

Chairman Zeev Elkin said, "The bill was initiated in response to academic and economic boycotts against Israeli that have recently been encountered in Israel". Under the new law, any group could sue for damages from anyone who launched a boycott against them, or incited in or assisted a boycott, without having to prove that actual damage was caused. An additional sum could then be demanded once damages were proven. The Law would apply to residents in the "area under the control of the state of Israel" which presumably includes the West Bank and Gaza . This law aims to protect the state of Israel in general and its citizens in particular from academic, economic and other boycotts, which are imposed on the state, its citizens and corporations within it, as a result of their ties to the state of Israel. However Ehud Keinan, Legal Adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has said that Israel already has enough tools to fight the boycotts against the country, and that the bill would hurt Israel's ability to fight boycotters outside of the country.

Source: *JNews*

Israeli Academics Call for Poland to Boycott Israel.

While the Knesset was debating the proposed new law against boycotts of Israel, a group of Israeli academics headed by Professor Rachel Giora of Tel Aviv University selected the government of Poland (the incoming president of the European Union) to demand action against the crimes of the occupation perpetrated by Israel.

The group demands that Poland cancel a cooperation agreement with Israel over production of the Spike missile, which they claim Israel directs against civilians. The group also calls on the European Union, to promote an arms embargo on Israel. The Polish government is urged to send independent observers to monitor the human rights violations perpetrated by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Referring to the recent decision by the Knesset to establish a parliamentary inquiry into the funding of left-wing groups, the protest also calls for action against “the wave of racist legislation that was recently adopted by the Knesset”. The group also calls on Poland to disallow the activities of Israeli companies that operate in Judea and Samaria.

In response to this boycott call, MK Othniel Schneller has requested the Attorney General, to investigate the signatories of the letter. He wrote, “as a citizen who sees great importance in the right to free speech, I'm afraid that the legal system sets no clear boundaries which clarify how far one may go before harming the interests of the State of Israel,” The Im Tirtzu movement has also condemned the call for boycott and says that it is planning to request the Attorney General to open a criminal investigation against Professor Rachel Giora. The statement goes on to say: “The call to boycott is a sabotage of the foundations of the State. It is the Attorney General's responsibility to prosecute these criminals. We call on Tel Aviv University to immediately fire Prof. Rachel Giora for calling for an international boycott of Israel.”

So much for academic freedom! But clearly BDS is hitting the target.

Material from IsraelNationalNews.com.

See the link at

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/142360>

The PACBI column

From Palestine with Love: In support of Arab popular revolutions

Palestinians everywhere were jubilant when two of the most tyrannical regimes in the Arab world were overthrown by youth-initiated people's revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt. Palestinian civil society has enthusiastically stood with both revolutions' demands for full freedom, rights, dignity, social justice, sustainable development, and emancipation from Western economic and political hegemony. The BDS National Committee (BNC), the largest coalition of Palestinian civil society networks and

unions, has saluted the Egyptian and Tunisian peoples, calling on them to also work towards severing all links with and intensifying the already widespread popular boycott of Israel, as a state practicing occupation, colonialism and apartheid.

Confronting the US- and EU-backed Israeli agenda is not only a Palestinian responsibility; it is also one of the critical obligations facing the young revolutionary movements sweeping the Arab world today, toppling or seriously challenging despotic, unelected regimes from Morocco to Bahrain. Aside from its decades-old settler-colonial usurpation of the Palestinian people's land and repression of its rights, Israel's oppression has always been one of the leading domestic issues facing every people in the region. Israel, after all, has constantly been the key component in the imperial designs to subjugate the peoples of the Arab region, exploiting their riches and resources, and inhibiting their quest for freedom, true political sovereignty, home-grown democracy, and economic independence.

When PACBI raised the slogan, "Your struggle is ours, as ours is yours; your freedom is ours, as ours is yours," it was not simply engaging in rhetorical posturing or venting some unwarranted zeal. PACBI was in fact acknowledging and reflecting a deeply entrenched sentiment among Palestinians and the absolute majority in the Arab world about the unity of struggle, the unity of history, and, crucially, the "unity of destiny," a slogan keenly raised across the region for many years.

Israel could hardly contain its near hysterical reaction to the demise of its closest allies in the region. Across the Israeli political spectrum, reactions ranged from orientalist flippancy, to contempt for the Arabs as historical subjects perceived as lacking agency, to wilful distortion, and a remarkable Israel-centeredness. Even "leftists" in Israel joined the herd mentality, comforting the Israeli public that "hate for Israel" was not a top agenda item for the young Arab revolutions, as if Arab-Israeli relations were defined by base, irrational hatred, as opposed to principled resistance to colonialism, or as if the question of Palestine was peripheral to the Arab peoples' aspiration for unity, dignity and progress. Leading Israeli political and military figures continued to praise and remind the public of the "unparalleled" services rendered to Israel and the US by Mubarak, even as millions in Tahrir Square, and elsewhere around Egypt, were on the verge of dethroning his authoritarian regime. The fact that Israel continued to provide Ben-Ali's and Mubarak's crumbling and criminally repressive regimes with military and intelligence aid up to the

last minute will undoubtedly confirm to all Arabs everywhere what we already know about Israel's dreadful role and mission in the region.

Amplifying a racist tendency expressed by Israel and its Zionist pressure groups around the world, long-held orientalist views of the Arabs as having been "outside of history" until now were being propagated resiliently by writers in the West. Indeed, they were at a loss to explain the splendid heroism, civility and determination of youth in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and across the embroiled region.

The modern Arab revolution promises to render Arab governments' positions on Palestine more closely reflective of the true convictions and principles of the Arab peoples: no normalization with Israel as long as it persists in violating international law, and no immunity to Israel in international forums.

In this regard, we believe that the popular revolution in Egypt and Tunisia has delivered a decisive blow to pro-normalization institutions and personalities who shamefully abet in whitewashing Israel's violations of Palestinian rights and international law. Such institutions and individuals—in the academy, the arts, and in civil society milieus—will not be able to flourish in a polity that is more democratic and representative of the authentic will of the people.

PACBI looks forward to the resounding and comprehensive triumph of popular revolutions in the entire Arab region, for the sake of the peoples of the region, including the Palestinians, aspiring for justice, peace and genuine freedom.

PACBI Feb 27th 2011

An important new book

[BDS: Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions](#)

The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights

by

Omar Barghouti

International boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) efforts helped topple South Africa's brutal apartheid regime. In this urgent book, Omar Barghouti makes the case for a rights-based BDS campaign to stop Israel's rapacious occupation, colonization, and apartheid against the Palestinian people. This considered, convincing collection contributes to the growing debate on Israel's violations of international law and points the

way forward to a united global civil society movement for freedom, justice, self determination, and equality for all.

Omar Barghouti is an independent Palestinian commentator and human rights activist. He is a founding member of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) and the Palestinian Civil Society Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees in electrical engineering from Columbia University, and a master's degree in philosophy (ethics) from Tel Aviv University.

"This is a book about the political actions necessary to hinder and finally to stop the Israeli state machine which is operating every day to eliminate the Palestinian people. It is like an engineer's report, not a sermon. Read it, decide and then act."

—**John Berger**

"Essential reading for all who care about justice and the plight of an oppressed people."

—**Ken Loach**

"I warmly welcome the publication of Omar Barghouti's book. It is timely and responsibly written by a man who will understand that creative and relentless nonviolence is the only way out of the dire situation in which Palestine, and our entire world for that matter, finds itself."

—**Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, M.M.**, Former president of the UN General Assembly

"No one has done more to build the intellectual, legal and moral case for BDS than Omar Barghouti. The global Palestinian solidarity movement has been transformed and is on the cusp of major new breakthroughs."

—**Naomi Klein**, author of *The Shock Doctrine* and *No Logo*

"I have been to Palestine where I've witnessed the racially segregated housing and the humiliation of Palestinians at military roadblocks. I can't help but remember the conditions we experienced in South Africa under apartheid. We could not have achieved our freedom without the help of people around the world using the nonviolent means of boycotts and divestment to compel governments and institutions to withdraw their support for the apartheid regime. Omar Barghouti's lucid and morally compelling

book is perfectly timed to make a major contribution to this urgently needed global campaign for justice, freedom and peace.”

—**Archbishop Desmond Tutu**, Nobel Peace Laureate

“Once again Omar Barghouti delivers a conceptually lucid argument for the BDS movement that is difficult to refute. He offers a principled position accompanied by nuanced and thorough analyses, and though one may not agree with all of his claims, one is fully persuaded by the passionate clarity of his appeal. Barghouti reminds us what public responsibility entails, and we are lucky to have his relentless and intelligent analysis and argument. There is no more comprehensive and persuasive case than his for boycott, divestment, and sanctions to end the Israeli occupation and establish the ethical claim of Palestinian rights.”

—**Judith Butler**, Co-director of the Program of Critical Theory at the University of California at Berkeley

“The ABC for internationalist support for Palestine is BDS. And the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions campaign against Israeli cruelty and injustice is gaining in significance and scope. Like the anti-apartheid movement against racist South Africa, BDS is helping to make a tremendous difference in what has been a most difficult struggle for human rights and the right of a colonized and dispossessed people to national self-determination. This inspiring book is a weapon in a noble struggle in which all right thinking people can play a part.”

—**Ronne Kasrils**, former South African government minister

Book Release at the London Review Bookshop Monday, March 7 at 7:00 pm, 14 Bury Place, London, WBC1A 2JL. Barghouti is available for interview in London March 4-7, and by phone or email prior. To request, contact: Sarah Macaraeg sarah@haymarketbooks.org

00 1 773 583 7884; Susie Quick, susie@turnaround-uk.com, 208 829 3000

[Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions](#)

The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights

By Omar Barghouti

Releasing Apr. 1, 2011 from Haymarket Books

Distributed in the UK by [Turnaround Publisher Services](#)

ISBN 9781608461141 320 pages

www.haymarketbooks.org

Commemorate Land Day – 30th March 2011

The BDS National Committee (BNC) calls on us all to join a Global BDS Day of Action in solidarity with the Palestinian people's right to self determination on their ancestral land.

The Palestinian Land Day commemorates the day in 1976 when Israeli military forces shot and killed six young Palestinian citizens of Israel. These brave youth were among thousands protesting the Israeli government's expropriation of Palestinian land to build new Jewish-only colonies and expand existing ones. Today, Land Day symbolizes Palestinian resistance to Israel's ongoing land expropriation, colonization, occupation and apartheid. Inspired and buoyed by the popular uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia and their unique manifestation of courage, dignity, civility and determination, we stand resolutely with worldwide struggles for self determination, freedom, democracy, social justice and equality, and we call for intensifying BDS actions globally as the main form of solidarity with Palestinian rights. We salute and stand with the similarly popular and determined Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings, confirming that struggles for freedom, justice and equal rights everywhere are one. To the people of Tunisia and Egypt we say: "Your struggle is ours, as ours is yours. Your freedom is ours, as ours is yours."

At this time, we are also reminded of the 20th anniversary of the failed attempts that started in Madrid in 1991 to make peace without justice and human rights. The recently revealed "Palestine Papers" have confirmed beyond any doubt what has already been known to many: Israel refuses to comply with international law and rejects all forms of just peace, regardless of any steep concessions offered by unelected and unrepresentative Palestinian officials. As in the heroic struggle for freedom and against apartheid in South Africa, it is evident today that only sustained, effective and morally consistent international pressure -- especially in the form of creative, context-sensitive BDS campaigns -- can compel Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and respect Palestinian rights, foremost among which is our right to self determination and freedom.

The BNC calls on people of conscience all over the world to join the global BDS Day of Action through engaging in effective, creative and visible actions.

For information on how to join this global event and how to develop ongoing BDS action in your country, organization and network, please contact the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC) at: bdsdayofaction@bdsmovement.net. For more information see: <http://bdsdayofaction.net>

Academic Freedom in 2011

Part 1: In Israel,

Some readers may recall the story we printed in issue 7 of this Newsletter (August 2007) concerning the refusal of Bar Ilan university to promote the eminent political scientist Menachem Klein, to the rank of professor. Dr. Klein began lecturing in the political studies department in 1993. He wrote numerous books and essays, in both Hebrew and English, which were published in prestigious journals worldwide. His area of expertise includes the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, divided cities, culture and politics in Egypt, and religious and nationalist radicalism in both Judaism and Islam.

We learn now that Klein's colleague Dr. Ariella Azoulay, a philosophy instructor also known for her leftist political views, has also been denied tenure and promotion. As a result she will no longer teach a course on visual culture and contemporary philosophy, which she has taught since 1999. She has written 10 books and authored numerous articles. In addition, she has directed documentaries and written books about Israel's policies in the West Bank

The reason in both cases was that they were 'too leftist'. These events have prompted lecturers, particularly those in the political science department, to complain of a "thuggish atmosphere" that has permeated the university and has politically tilted it so far to the right that intellectual discussion and openness is no longer possible. Speaking to Haaretz, Dr Klein said that "right-wing and conservative forces have taken over key positions in the university. Some of these people believe that it is their duty to cleanse the place of 'subversive' elements, and they are taking all the necessary measures to do just that. Whoever is labelled as a leftist, a liberal, or someone who speaks of 'the

other' in the university, suffers from oppression and muzzling. There is no place for such politically motivated intervention in academia." According to Haaretz, Dr Azoulay has expressed similar sentiments. In a recent email addressed to her students and friends, she wrote: "Given the local and international recognition of my work, my rich history of published works, the number of doctoral theses which I have counselled, some of which earned special citations of excellence, one cannot summon a logical explanation for the university's decision not to grant me tenure and a promotion aside from my well-known political stances."

Part 2: In the UK

Could such a thing happen here? Prof. Stuart Stanton of St George's Hospital Medical School and 'Jewish community leader', chairman of Hadassah UK, has called for the sacking of Tel Aviv University academics supporting the boycott. He has written to TAU rector Prof. Aron Shai and President Prof. Yossi Klafter demanding he sack Anat Matar and Rachel Giora.

Professor Stanton believes academic freedom is the freedom to speak in support of the powerful and silence their outrage at the denial of human rights. This is not a vision of academic freedom that BRICUP recognises and is why we call for an institutional boycott of Israeli Universities not the boycott of individuals.

You can read the call for victimisation in the Jerusalem Post.

Sources: Haaretz and Jerusalem Post

A Cultural Boycott Update

1] **Ian McEwan** went to Jerusalem to receive the Jerusalem Prize and upon his return published a full page article in the Review section of the Saturday Guardian. (26/02/2011) in which he repeated his criticism of both the Palestinian and the Israeli sides as 'nihilistic' and in need of 'creative ideas'. Assuming the dictionary definition (negative doctrines in religion or morals) the accusation betrays a complete misunderstanding of the situation. Each side has strongly positive objectives: the Palestinian aim is to end the Israeli occupation and restore full human rights to all its people; Israel's aim is to secure as much of Palestine as it can for an exclusively Jewish state. The "great and self evident injustice that [McEwan says] hangs in the air" is not only the ongoing demolition of

Palestinian homes by Israel, which he witnessed, but is the sum of all the consequences of the horrific injustices that the Zionist movement inflicted on the Palestinians throughout the 20th century and continues to do. The evidence is clear that the need is for justice not creativity.

On February 25th 36 British, Israeli and Palestinian members of the [Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions](#) movement, published their reaction to McEwan's actions in a letter that was published in the on-line Guardian. As they put it "McEwan has given Mayor Nir Barkat a golden platform for his outrageous views. Jerusalem is not a city where all may 'express themselves in a free way'. Activists are arrested and deported, while racist internal laws allow the municipality to flout the Geneva convention by creating illegal settlements – a policy designed to prevent East Jerusalem from becoming the capital of a Palestinian state. To criticise these settlements while accepting the laurels of those who build them appears rank hypocrisy. Likewise, McEwan declares it is "urgent to keep talking" ([Report](#), February 18), yet after his one official defence of his position ([Letters](#), January 26th), he has ignored all public and private requests to continue this debate. McEwan's condescension reached its nadir, however, in Jerusalem, when he surmised that Palestinian writers – who were not sought out by western media – had refused to meet him because of outside "pressure". By pandering to the state of Israel, Ian McEwan has alienated not only these principled individuals and the signatories of the letter but also the increasing number of other members of the BDS movement.

2] Thomas Quasthof. Readers of the BRICUP Newsletter may recall the three open letters that were addressed to the internationally renowned bass-baritone Thomas Quasthoff (See Newsletter 36, January 2011) urging him to cancel his planned trip to Israel. In the event, Quasthoff did cancel his planned performances in Israel - at short notice. A spokeswoman for the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra in Tel Aviv reported that Quasthoff was unfortunately ill and could not come. "Zubin Mehta and the management of the Philharmonic deeply regret the cancellation" she said.

3] Faithless. Lead singer Maxi Jazz has written to his friends "We've been asked to do some shows this summer in [Israel] and, with the heaviest of hearts, I have regretfully declined the invitation. While human beings are being wilfully denied not just their rights but their needs for their children and grandparents and themselves, I feel deeply that I should not be sending even tacit signals that this is either 'normal' or 'ok'." Guitarist Dave Randall, in

an interview with the Mail & Guardian. Said "Not everyone agreed that it was the right time to boycott Israel. Some of the views expressed were that our fans were from the more progressive part of larger society. But, no matter how progressive your fans are, a concert on that scale goes beyond those people. You are in effect saying it's quite acceptable for business to continue as usual, which it is not. The other key reason for the boycott is that the Palestinian people on the oppressed end have themselves called for a boycott.

Randall said that having a voice for human rights was his responsibility. "Musicians and artists are afforded a platform where we can talk about our views. When we are granted this platform, we have a responsibility to expose what's going on in the world and suggest ways to change it." Randall said that cultural boycotts had their unique advantages. "Economic boycotts can be quite difficult when the government in question is propped up by United States funding to the tune of \$3 billion a year. The advantage with a cultural boycott is that people are really interested in whether or not Faithless went to Israel – and why."

Randall also said that Faithless faced pressure from sectors of the music industry when they took their decision, because "basic capitalist logic is resistant to boycotts". He also said there was reluctance in the mainstream media to be overly critical of Israel, which could be why the band's decision had not been widely reported.

Randall first visited Gaza while gigging in Israel. He has been there twice since then and four times to the West Bank. "The journey made me see that this is not a conflict between two equals," he said. "I saw with my own eyes that Israel is behaving as an apartheid state.

"A question that usually arises is why we aren't boycotting the US or Britain because of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan," he said. "We can't boycott Britain -- we live here -- and in the US the music market is so big that it would go unnoticed. If you're serious about trying to make the world a better place, you have to be strategic."

<http://www.mg.co.za/article/2011-02-03-why-faithless-are-giving-israel-a-miss>

Source: Mail & Guardian Online

4] Pete Seeger. Folk music legend Pete Seeger has declared his support for the growing Palestinian

movement for [Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions](#) (BDS) against Israel.

During November 2010, Seeger participated in an online ‘virtual’ rally called “With Earth and Each Other”, that was sponsored by an Israeli organization, the Arava Institute. The rally was billed as an apolitical effort to bring Israelis and Palestinians together to work for the environment. However, as Adalah-NY noted, “Arava’s online [event obfuscated basic facts](#) about Israel’s occupation and systematic seizure of land and water from Palestinians. Arava’s major partner and funder is [the Jewish National Fund](#) (JNF) the very purpose of which is to secure land in Palestine [for the use of Jews only while dispossessing Palestinians](#). The JNF is notorious for planting forests to hide Palestinian villages demolished by Israel in order to seize land. Arava is closely involved in the Israeli government’s efforts to ‘Rebrand Israel’ through greenwashing and the arts. Currently, the JNF is supporting an Israeli government effort to [demolish the Bedouin village of Al-Araqib](#) in order to plant trees that were paid for by the international evangelical group GOD-TV. Seeger has explained, “I appeared on that virtual rally because for many years I’ve felt that people should talk with people they disagree with”. He felt that he could make a strong statement for peace and justice during the event. “But it ended up looking like I supported the Jewish National Fund. I misunderstood the leaders of the Arava Institute because I didn’t realize to what degree the Jewish National Fund was supporting them. Now that I know more, I support the BDS movement as much as I can.

Material from the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD). The ICAHD websites are at: [www.icahd.org](#); [www.icahtuk.org](#); [www.icahdusa.org](#)

Financial support for BRICUP

BRICUP needs your financial support.

Arranging meetings and lobbying activities are expensive. We need funds to support visiting speakers, book rooms for public meetings, print leaflets and pay the whole range of expenses that a busy campaign demands.

Please do consider making a donation.

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

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More details can be obtained from treasurer@bricup.org.uk

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BRICUP is the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine. 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