

BRICUP Newsletter 79

BRICUP

British Committee for the
Universities of Palestine

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The Tricycle Theatre and funding by the Israeli embassy.

Does a publicly-funded arts institution have the right to refuse foreign embassy funding for an event it's hosting? What if a festival comes with Syrian embassy sponsorship, or North Korean? What if it comes with Israeli embassy funding?

The Tricycle Theatre in north London is a small venue famous for commissioning and producing 'tribunal' plays – Nuremberg, The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry – the Colour of Justice, Justifying War – Scenes from the Hutton Inquiry, and many others. For the past eight years, the Tricycle has been the principal venue for the UK Jewish Film Festival (UKJFF). Last year, several screenings were [picketed](#) by the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network (IJAN), who

protested against Israeli embassy sponsorship of the festival. IJAN said in an open letter to new artistic director Indhu Rubasingham, 'We protest that our Tricycle is associating itself with a government which regularly kills, maims, persecutes, imprisons even little children and regularly humiliates Palestinians of every age'.

In July this year, with Operation Protective Edge blasting the Gaza Strip and its inhabitants to smithereens, the Tricycle board asked the UKJFF to forego Israeli embassy funding. It's not a lot of money -- £1400 – and the board offered to make up the shortfall. The UKJFF refused absolutely, walked away in early August, and immediately announced to the press that the Tricycle was boycotting a Jewish cultural event. Executive director Judy Ironside [said](#), 'The Tricycle theatre have shown themselves unwilling to work with what is clearly an apolitical cultural festival... They have chosen boycott over meaningful engagement'.

The story that a London theatre was boycotting a Jewish festival was wrong, but it's what got the headlines. Tricycle chair Jonathan Levy had issued an extremely careful statement from the board – but the press weren't listening. Levy said, 'Given the present situation in Israel/Palestine, and the unforeseen and unhappy escalation that has occurred over the past three weeks, including a terrible loss of life, the Tricycle cannot be associated with any activity directly funded or supported by any party to the conflict'. Rubasingham [told](#) the Guardian on Wednesday August 6, 'To be clear, at this moment the Tricycle would not accept sponsorship from any government agency involved in the conflict'. Clear and simple – but

clearly not tolerable. Stephen Pollard, editor of the Jewish Chronicle, tweeted, ‘Be clear on this. @tricycletheatre is now officially antisemitic. It is singling out the Jewish state for boycott’. Protesters were soon outside the Tricycle with placards saying ‘Don’t punish London’s Jews’ – meaning, quite rightly, that Jews in the UK ought not to be held responsible for the actions of the Israeli government.

But the relationship with the Israeli government was, people like Ironside were saying, intrinsic and unquestionable; the Tricycle’s stance, she said, was ‘to the great detriment of this celebration of Jewish culture, which is of course intrinsically connected to the state of Israel’. A Guardian [editorial](#) printed August 9, headlined ‘Intolerable intolerance’ in the paper, argued, ‘Most, not all, Jews feel bound up with Israel, even if that relationship is one of doubt and anxiety. To demand that Jews surrender that connection is to tell Jews how they might – and how they might not – live as Jews. Such demands have an ugly history. They are not the proper business of any public institution, least of all a state-subsidised theatre’. The editorial went on to detail instances of fire-bombings of synagogues in Germany and France and protestors in France chanting ‘Death to Jews’. Heavy stuff to bear for a small, publicly-funded theatre, which, as it kept saying, was happy to host a Jewish festival but not one sponsored by the Israeli embassy.

By the afternoon of Monday August 11, one of the few Tory councillors on Brent Council, who provide around a quarter of the Tricycle’s major funding, had [announced](#) he was instigating an investigation of whether or not the theatre had breached the terms of its charitable status. By Tuesday August 12, no less a person than Culture Secretary Sajid Javid – otherwise silent on the apocalypse unfolding in Gaza, except to criticise Baroness Warsi for resigning – allowed his letter to UKJFF chair Stephen Margolis to be [quoted](#) in the Jewish Chronicle; the Tricycle was, said Javid, ‘misguided’. The Tricycle receives three-quarters of its major funding from Arts Council England, which is sponsored by Javid’s department. The message to the board could not have been clearer.

On Thursday 14 August the Jewish Chronicle [reported](#) that several smaller donors had

abandoned the Tricycle – Sir Trevor Chinn, Allan Morgenthau, Jewish Book Week chair Gail Sandler, the Atkin Charitable Foundation – and carried a quote from the Charity Commission that they were indeed ‘assessing...whether there is a regulatory role for us’.

On Friday 15 August, the Tricycle surrendered. The UKJFF will be back there next year, a joint statement said, ‘with no restrictions on funding from the Embassy of Israel in London’. Of course a surrender is never enough. There are calls for Rubasingham (and others) to be [sacked](#); the Twitter account Boycott Tricycle continues to roll along; and actor Maureen Lipman [says](#) the Tricycle’s neighbourhood of Kilburn is now too dangerous for Jews: ‘There is a very large and cogent anti-Israel feeling around that part of the world, and [the Tricycle] will have made it impossible for the festival to go ahead’.

But who was really bullied in this saga? Maureen Lipman, or the Tricycle Theatre? Whose right to remain non-partisan as an arts institution was trampled on? What if that £1400 had come from the Syrian government? On the day the Tricycle caved in to the pressure, more than 500 theatre professionals (including Meera Syal, David Edgar and David Lan) [signed](#) a letter published in the Guardian; ‘Punishing a small theatre for standing up for its principles’, they said, ‘is a big step backwards for anyone concerned with challenging prejudice or promoting freedom of speech’.

Five hundred theatre professionals willing to speak up for the Tricycle in the hysterical atmosphere that had been created is a hopeful sign. Clearly arts institutions that are minded to follow the Tricycle’s lead need to have their defences prepared. Since 2006, the Israeli foreign ministry has spent millions of dollars on a Brand Israel campaign; ‘we need the chance to communicate [Israel’s wonderful brand] on more than just one conflict channel’, [says](#) foreign ministry Brand Israel head Ido Aharoni. ‘It could include organising film festivals, or wine and food festivals...The Jewish community has to be part of it for it to succeed.’ This re-branding exercise is clearly what the Tricycle wanted to distance itself from, while Gaza was being bombed to rubble. But there will be other opportunities to challenge Brand Israel.

Stand up and be counted!

by Haim Bresheeth

It has been a long time since 1967. I know. I was a young conscripted officer in the Israel Defense Force then, as blind as the current generation of IDF officers are, as they kill people in Gaza without any doubts entering their minds, seemingly. Well, not quite that blind, or that stupid, really; and I did not harm anyone, of course. And, gradually and painfully, I turned from a critic of the Israeli system towards an anti-Zionist position, with the help of academic colleagues in Britain, after I left Israel. I never looked back.

But this background opened my mind to the great importance of academic discourse on political topics, and the falseness of the artificial separation between what is academic and what is political. And while in Britain in the 1970s, I could immediately see the injustice involved in South African apartheid, even before I could see the injustices in Palestine. The last 50 days of murder, destruction and mayhem have been, I am sure, most difficult for anyone who cares about human rights, or about human beings, for that matter.

Not for the first time, an Israeli leader set off on a journey of death and destruction, in order to prove a point: Israel is in control of the whole of Palestine, and can do what it likes, kill who it likes, and is immune from international justice and public opinion, as long as it has the support of the most powerful regimes on earth, involved in war crimes themselves. Well, they were wrong. As wrong as the South African whites were when they acted in the same manner, assuming total impunity.

They were wrong, because this brutal, mindless and useless – not to mention illegal – massacre of innocents in Gaza, has touched a raw nerve in us all, whether we are closely related to the conflict or not. Nelson Mandela's statement that we are "not free, as long as Palestine is not free", has gained an immediate hold on millions of people during this attack, more than ever before. The understandable anger over the images we all saw, the feeling of utter helplessness, the seething anger of not being able to intervene and stop this – these emotions must be common to millions now. And that is the new element, which can

change the situation for the better, as it did in South Africa. The South African moment of the Palestine conflict is here, with us.

Propaganda. Many liberals in the West have perceived Israel as a democracy, some as the 'only democracy in the Middle East' – as claimed by Israeli propaganda. But after five decades of brutal occupation, land theft, illegal settlement building, the construction of the apartheid wall, the multiple destructions of Beirut and Gaza, the daily oppression of all Palestinians still living anywhere in Palestine – it must now be clear even to those who normally support Israel that this occupation, these repetitive crimes, will never be ended by relying on Israeli opposition and the one-time 'peace movement', now not even a shadow of its unjustified past glory. It must also be clear that Israel, the 'Jewish state', set up in the same year – 1948 – as the South African apartheid state, is nothing but what political sociologists have termed a herrenvolkdemocracy – a democracy of a 'master race', as was the South African state. A democracy for Jews only, and a denial of human rights of any kind to four million human beings under its control, for nearly five decades; not just any people, mind, but the former inhabitants of the country which was taken by force and ethnic cleansing, leaving them stateless, status-less refugees in their own land. That this was done with the approval and generous support of the most powerful nations of the Western world, the United Kingdom and United States, makes it worse, not better, to my mind.

Civic action. So what can intellectuals, artists, authors and academics do at a time like this? Well, quite a lot, actually. As much as was done in the past against the inhumanity of South African apartheid. We can, and should, use non-violent, direct means of civic action, which are available to all, and are the most effective form of political action, when our own governments are not just supporting Israel financially, but also supplying the armaments which make the murder in Gaza (and elsewhere) possible. We should build an international anti-apartheid movement against Israel, based on the experience collected in the past, without going into hair-splitting arguments about whether Israeli apartheid is better or worse than South African apartheid was. We should act for justice and equality, and hence help to bring about just peace in Palestine, freeing in the process not just Palestinians but also Israelis from the yolk of criminal apartheid and occupation.

Palestinian civil society called, in July 2004, upon the international community to start a Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions – BDS – campaign against Israel. The [Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel](#) was launched in April that year.

In the UK, this call was heeded almost immediately by many academics who set up the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine, [BRICUP](#), advocating BDS and an academic boycott. Its many actions and successes are well documented. This was followed by similar organisations in many countries, including the US, where [USAPACBI](#) – the US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel – has been very active, as well as the Canadian version, [Faculty for Palestine](#), and similar organisations in most European countries. During the Gaza massacres, 1,700 academics signed an open letter to Israeli academics, asking them to [oppose the Gaza attacks](#). At the forefront of such organisations, Jews such as myself have stood firm, to dispel all false accusations of anti-Semitism. We ask you to join the action, and to galvanise a mass movement, which is the only way to bring lasting, just peace to the Middle East.

Yes, we can, and we will! Stand up and be counted!

Professor Haim Bresheeth
SOAS, University of London.

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The PACBI Column

PACBI Salutes All People of Conscience who have recently adopted BDS: Accelerate the Boycott! End Israeli Colonialism and Genocidal Aggression!

The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) salutes the growing number of academic associations, professional organizations, scholars, artists, political leaders and movements that have joined the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement since Israel's genocidal onslaught against the 1.8 million Palestinians in the occupied and besieged Gaza Strip began on July

8, 2014. The outpouring of principled solidarity has been tremendous. The last few weeks have shown that people of conscience around the world will not stand by idly or remain silent as the Israeli regime of occupation, settler colonialism and apartheid commits massacres and other grave violations of international law. As the ongoing Israeli aggression on Gaza enters its sixth week, at least 2,008 Palestinians have been killed, over 9,000 people have been injured, predominantly civilians. [1] Hospitals, ambulances, rescue workers, mosques, churches and shelters for people with special needs disabilities have not been spared Israel's US-supplied "smart" missiles and artillery shells.

Words cannot describe this murderous campaign; Israel has annihilated entire families in their homes, as its warplanes have targeted and bombed house after house. [2] Over 16,000 homes have been destroyed or severely damaged in these criminal attacks. [3] Families have been sought out and murdered in the UN schools where they have taken shelter, often after Israel has been repeatedly given the exact coordinates of the schools – revealing a deliberate intent to kill and terrorize civilians. [4] Close to half a million Palestinians have been displaced, [5] as the Israeli regime expands its so-called buffer zone to encompass 45% of Gaza's already small territory, literally "pushing Palestinians into the sea." [6] Israel has been waging this brutal campaign with the support of many western states, and the full backing of the United States, which sent Israel armaments and reinforced its military arsenal, [7] arming what has been described by Save the Children as a "war on children." [8]

As we take stock of these Israeli crimes, we extend our deepest respect to all of the conscientious individuals, organizations and movements who have courageously spoken out against the Israeli massacres in Gaza and in defense of freedom, justice and the sanctity of human life, often at a high personal price. Silence is complicity! "Genocide begins with the silence of the world." [9] PACBI warmly salutes all the organizations and individuals throughout the world that have recently adopted BDS, including the academic and cultural boycott of Israel.

On the academic front a number of leading academic associations and renowned scholars from across the world have come out in support of the academic boycott: over 500 African scholars and individuals have signed the African Solidarity with Palestine's endorsement of the academic boycott [10]; 1,200 Spanish university professors

and researchers have demanded an immediate severance of ties with all Israeli academic institutions; [11] over 400 Middle Eastern Studies scholars and librarians, including some leading names in the field, have declared their support for the academic boycott [12]; the African Literature Association [13] and the Critical Ethnic Studies Association have also endorsed the academic boycott of Israel. [14]

In addition to the academic front, prominent South American politicians, including Bolivian president Evo Morales, and former Cuban president Fidel Castro, along with leading Latin American intellectuals, have signed a statement endorsing BDS, under the banner of the Network in Defense of Humanity. [15]

On the cultural scene, 100 high profile Spanish artists, including Oscar winners Penelope Cruz, Javier Bardem and Pedro Almodovar [16], as well as US writer Naomi Wolf have condemned Israel's genocide in Gaza. [17] The Irish singer Sinead O'Conner and the US rapper Taleb Kweli both canceled scheduled performances in apartheid Israel. [18]

Jewish survivors of the Nazi genocide have also denounced Israel's massacres. [19]

Reflecting global rage over Israel's massacres in Gaza, Nobel laureates, prominent artists and celebrities have issued a call for an arms embargo on Israel that has received over 45,000 signatories. [20] The Cultural Studies Association Executive Committee, and anti-racist women of color feminist scholars have all lent their voices to the growing global demand for economic and military sanctions against Israel. [21] These latest developments are not only taking BDS into the mainstream, but they are making international sanctions against Israel's racist regime a realizable objective.

This massive outburst of international solidarity is inspiring. It is an overwhelming vindication of people's power. As the Israeli onslaught on Gaza continues, we must capitalize on this momentum and take the movement forward. Now is the time to intensify our efforts to boycott Israel, including all its academic and cultural institutions, divest from it, and impose sanctions on it.

The latest Israeli massacres in Gaza has reconfirmed that Israeli academic institutions are deeply involved in planning, implementing and justifying Israel's racist colonial policies against the Palestinian people. As Israeli elected officials have been promoting a dehumanizing racist

frenzy in the lead up to the onslaught on Gaza and urging the state to "concentrate and exterminate" Palestinians [22], Israel's academia has come out in full support of the massacres. [23] On Israeli campuses, a chilling climate of intimidation and suppression of academic freedom has reached new lows. Cheering the massacres, Israeli universities have joined the Israeli intelligence apparatuses in repressing dissent, as Palestinian students in particular have become the targets of a "witch hunt." [24] Israeli academic institutions, which have always been a pillar of Israel's regime of oppression against the Palestinian people, have been further exposed to the world as veritable partners in Israel's current crimes in Gaza. It is Tel Aviv University's Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), after all, which developed the "Dahiya Doctrine" [25], or doctrine of disproportionate force, which was adopted by the Israeli army and calls for "the destruction of the national [civilian] infrastructure, and intense suffering among the [civilian] population," [26] in order to crush an undefeatable resistance movement. This doctrine, which underwrites and informs Israel's war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza, directly implicates Tel Aviv University.

Fanning what a leading Israeli intellectual has depicted as a burgeoning "fascist" environment, [27] prominent Israeli Middle Eastern scholar Mordechai Kedar, of Bar-Ilan University, has recently called for "raping" Palestinian mothers and sisters of militants to deter Palestinian resistance, citing Palestinian "culture" to explain the effectiveness of this "deterrence" strategy. [28] Kedar's comments, which have not warranted any reprimand or disciplinary measures from his university, reflect a deeply disturbing misogynist and racist colonial culture that regards women's bodies as a terrain in which to violate and subjugate Palestinians through the use of sexual violence. His remarks reveal the organic partnership between Israeli academia and the state in developing and promoting Zionism's racist, sexist, settler colonial ideology.

Now more than ever it is clear that Israeli universities are part and parcel of Israel's settler colonial system of oppression. The Palestinian struggle against occupation, apartheid, and colonialism is mainly nourished from within, from the Palestinian collective will to resist against all odds, but we cannot do it alone. People around the world continue to inspire us, to show us we are not alone, and that we are not screaming

in the dark. The academic boycott of Israel is now more urgent than ever.

PACBI,

Occupied Palestine, August 2014

Notes:

- [1] http://www.pchrgaza.org/portal/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10578:going-israeli-offensive-on-gaza6-palestinians-including-4-civilians-killed-and-85-others-including-17-children-and-11-women-wounded-14-houses-and-one-mosque-destroyed&catid=36:pchrpressreleases&Itemid=194
- [2] http://www.pchrgaza.org/portal/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10561:on-the-27th-day-of-the-israeli-offensiverafah-under-israeli-fire-war-crimes-committed-against-palestinian-civilians-complete-families-annihilated&catid=36:pchrpressreleases&Itemid=194
- [3] http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_sitrepre_11_08_2014.pdf
- [4] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AdcYZw-KsSg&feature=share>
- [5] http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_sitrepre_04_08_2014.pdf
- [6] <http://thefunambulist.net/2014/08/04/palestine-legal-fictions-and-forced-displacement-pushing-hundreds-of-thousands-to-the-sea/#more-15493>
- [7] <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/30/us-firm-condemnation-shelling-un-school-gaza>
- [8] <http://opt.savethechildren.net/news/international-community-has-stop-war-children>
- [9] <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=2541>
- [10] <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/794/369/516/african-solidarity-for-palestine/#sign>
- [11] <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=2542>
- [12] <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/18811/over-100-middle-east-scholars-and-librarians-call->
- [13] <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=2500>
- [14] <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=2473>
- [15] <http://alainet.org/active/75950>
- [16] <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/penelope-cruz-javier-bardem-denounce-721894>
- [17] <http://mondoweiss.net/2014/07/synagogue-nothing-massacre.html>

- [18] <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=2494>; <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=2471>
- [19] <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=2541>
- [20] <http://www.bdsmovement.net/2014/gaza-sanctions-and-boycott-action-12410>
- [21] <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=2535>; <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=2543>
- [22] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/29/niftali-bennett-kill-arabs_n_3670767.html; <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/concentrate-and-exterminate-israel-parliament-deputy-speakers-gaza-genocide-plan>
- [23] <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/israeli-universities-lend-support-gaza-massacre>
- [24] <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/.premium-1.607888>; <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/israeli-universities-lend-support-gaza-massacre>
- [25] <http://imeu.org/article/the-dahiya-doctrine-and-israels-use-of-disproportionate-force>
- [26] <http://pacbi.org/pics/file/SOAS-Palestine-Society-Paper-TAU-Military-Complicity-Feb-2009.pdf>
- [27] <http://www.haaretz.com/news/features/.premium-1.610368>
- [28] <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/.premium-1.606542>

How to boycott Israel: updated guidelines for academics

The [Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel](#) (PACBI) recently updated its [guidelines](#) on how to apply the international academic boycott of Israel. This comes at a crucial moment – in the wake of Israel’s latest spasm of horrifying destruction and mass killing in Gaza, and after a period of unprecedented growth in support for [boycott, divestment and sanctions](#) (BDS). Calls for [academic boycott](#) will resonate more than ever particularly in light of Israel’s recent [bomb attacks on university facilities in Gaza](#), its [violent raids](#) on universities in the West Bank and the [financial and political support](#) Israeli universities have themselves given to the carnage.

Right now, hundreds of thousands of Palestinian children in Gaza are not going back to school on time as a direct consequence of the Israeli devastation, while in the West Bank young children face such violence as [tear gas fired at them on their way to class](#). The school year in Gaza was scheduled to begin on 23 August but has been postponed; Israeli attacks since 7 July killed more than 500 children and injured thousands. In total [220 schools were damaged](#), 22 of which were completely destroyed.

Children will not be able to go back to class until “war-damaged schools” are repaired and “unexploded ordnance” removed, the UN [says](#). When children do go back to class, learning will certainly be an even bigger challenge due to the fact that virtually the entire child population in Gaza [is in need of psychosocial support](#) due to the trauma of Israel’s 51-day bombardment.

Practical guidance: The updated PACBI guidelines are important for two reasons: they provide a practical reference that can be used to decide if a specific activity is boycottable and they can be used to debunk false claims made by opponents of the boycott, for example that the boycott stifles “academic freedom.” A common false claim is that PACBI has called for a blanket boycott of Israeli individuals or even of Jewish individuals. But, PACBI states: “Anchored in precepts of international law and universal human rights, the BDS movement, including PACBI, rejects on principle boycotts of individuals based on their identity (such as citizenship, race, gender, or religion) or opinion.” A person’s activities are boycottable, however, when “an individual is representing the state of Israel or a complicit Israeli institution (such as a dean, rector, or president), or is commissioned/recruited to participate in Israel’s efforts to ‘rebrand’ itself.”

There are other circumstances as well, as the guidelines detail. The PACBI guidelines “are mainly intended to assist conscientious academics and academic bodies around the world to be in harmony with the Palestinian call for boycott, as a contribution towards upholding international law and furthering the struggle for freedom, justice and equality.”

PACBI urges academics, academic associations/unions, and academic – as well as other – institutions around the world, where possible and as relevant, to boycott and/or work towards the cancellation or annulment of events, activities, agreements, or projects involving Israeli academic institutions or that otherwise

promote the normalization of Israel in the global academy, whitewash Israel’s violations of international law and Palestinian rights, or violate the BDS guidelines.

Normalization and “fig-leafing”: Many Palestinians reject initiatives that they say constitute “[normalization](#).” But what does this mean? Here is the definition provided by PACBI: “Academic activities and projects involving Palestinians and/or other Arabs on one side and Israelis on the other (whether bi- or multilateral) that are based on the false premise of symmetry/parity between the oppressors and the oppressed or that claim that both colonizers and colonized are equally responsible for the “conflict” are intellectually dishonest and [morally reprehensible forms of normalization that ought to be boycotted](#).” Far from challenging the unjust status quo, such projects contribute to its endurance. Examples include events, projects, or publications that are designed explicitly to bring together Palestinians Arabs and Israelis so they can present their respective narratives or perspectives, or to work toward reconciliation without addressing the root causes of injustice and the requirements of justice. The guidelines gives examples of forms of joint activity that are and are not normalization and also warn against “fig-leafing”:

International academics who insist on crossing the BDS “picket line” by pursuing activities with boycottable Israeli institutions and then visiting Palestinian institutions or groups for “balance,” violate the boycott guidelines and contribute to the false perception of symmetry between the colonial oppressor and the colonized. The BNC (including PACBI) rejects this attempt at “[fig-leafing](#)” and does not welcome such visits to Palestinian institutions.

PACBI also publishes [guidelines for cultural boycott](#), which were updated in 2009. The full [academic boycott guidelines are here](#).
Tags: [PACBI](#) [BDS](#) [academic boycott](#) [academic boycott guidelines](#) [normalization](#) [cultural boycott](#)

Ali Abunimah

The Electronic Intifada

Victory for Jake Lynch

Jake Lynch writes, “My lawyer and the lawyer for Shurat HaDin have agreed that the proceeding by Shurat HaDin be dismissed for lack of standing. And they have agreed for the court to make orders that Shurat HaDin pay my costs of the application for dismissal of the case, and my costs of the proceedings that are not otherwise subject to earlier cost orders.

Judge Alan Robertson will make the orders in the Federal Court in Sydney, on Wednesday July 16th at 9.30am. This comprehensive legal victory represents complete vindication for the principled stance I have taken in fighting off a despicable attack on political freedom in Australia. It gives the green light for many more Australians to take their own action in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for rights and freedoms we are lucky enough to be able to take for granted.

Shurat HaDin is a foreign agency, with admitted past links with the Israeli state, which wanted to use the Australian courts to stifle the growing movement of worldwide political activism for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions. The case began with the smear that BDS advocates are motivated by racism. That was accepted by many of Australia’s leading politicians, to their discredit, when they signed up to the so-called ‘London Declaration on Anti-Semitism’ But the attempt to make it stick in court proved a bridge too far. Legal process requires evidence, and logical argument. Once exposed to that test, a claim that passed muster in the corridors of Canberra immediately began to crumble.

I have faced claims that I should be held responsible for decisions by performing artists, such as Elvis Costello and Snoop Dogg, not to tour Israel. There was never a shred of proof to back up any of these allegations. On the narrower issue of the request I received from Professor Dan Avnon, to endorse his application for a Sir Zelman Cowen fellowship, Shurat HaDin managed to persuade neither Avnon himself, nor any other academic, to join their ill-conceived action.

The renewed wave of indiscriminate Israeli violence against Palestinian civilians shows the urgency of taking political action to promote peace with justice. Israel will not change its routine recourse to militarism and lawlessness without coming under pressure. The disavowal by the Australian government of the international

legal consensus on the occupation of Palestinian territory shows this pressure must come from civil society. That is the rationale for BDS, as a symbolic gesture of solidarity.

This legal victory for me, and thousands of supporters who have stood by me and contributed to my cause, represents both an opportunity and a challenge. Someone has to make a change. If not us, who? If not now, when? The case has given rise to the creation of two important groups to take up this cause: Australians for BDS: <http://australiansforbds.wordpress.com/> and within the University of Sydney, Sydney Staff for BDS: <http://sydneystaff4bds.org/> Thanks. I would like to thank my lawyer, Yves Hazan of Hazan Hollander, for the brilliance with which he conceptualised, developed and argued my case – and also for his patience and consideration in explaining legal principles in our discussions of the issues. Thanks also to His Honour, Judge Alan Robertson, for the fairness and rigour with which he conducted these proceedings. The Australian public can be proud of its Federal Court”.

Jake Lynch

Notices

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

Letters to the Editor

Please note that we do have a “Letters to the Editor” facility. We urge you to use it. It provides an opportunity for valuable input from our supporters and gives you the opportunity to contribute to the debate and development of the campaign. Please send letters to arrive on or before the first day of each month for consideration for that month’s newsletter. Aim not to exceed 250 words if possible. Letters and comments should also be sent to newsletter@bricup.org.uk

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 by making a bank transfer to BRICUP at Sort Code 08-92-99

Account Number 65156591

IBAN = GB20 CPBK 0892 9965 1565 91

BIC = CPBK GB22

If you use the direct funds transfer mechanism please confirm the transaction by sending an explanatory email to treasurer@bricup.org.uk

More details can be obtained at the same address. Like all organisations, while we welcome one-off donations, we can plan our work much better if people pledge regular payments by standing order.

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