

BRICUP Newsletter 86

BRICUP

British Committee for the
Universities of Palestine

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www.bricup.org.uk

bricup@bricup.org.uk

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Academic Freedom at Southampton University

Readers will now be aware that the conference on *'International Law and the State of Israel: Legitimacy, Responsibility and Exceptionalism'* (see issue 85 of this newsletter, March 2015, page 13), that was planned to take place at

Southampton University on April 17th – 19th, was cancelled by Senior Management at the University on April 1st, 2015

The organisers of the conference include two senior academics at the University -Professors Oren Ben-Dor and Suleiman Sharkh and Professor George Bisharat from the University of California, Hastings College of Law. Professor Sharkh is also a Southampton graduate. All protested strongly but the Vice-Chancellor upheld the University's decision on appeal and refused permission for the conference to go ahead on University property.

Grounds for the Cancellation

The grounds of his refusal were the declared inability of the University to meet its "legal obligation to provide safety and security to participants, students and employees in the conference venue and all over the campus." Thus the University claimed that the health and safety risks it had identified outweigh the University's legal obligations and duty to secure freedom of speech. The greatest risk to health and safety that the University had identified was that arising from peaceful demonstrations against the conference and possible counter demonstrations by pro-Palestinian groups.

The organizers provided evidence from pro-Palestinian groups that they had no intention of holding any demonstrations or counter protests during the conference, and the Police stated that they were able to manage any such demonstrations. The organizers also pointed out that the cancellation of the conference will result in similar or possibly even larger, demonstrations.

However, the University dismissed the police's clear statement that they were able to handle such risks, leaving it until just 16 days before the conference to announce that it was too late to arrange proper protection.

Grounds for the Appeal by the organizers

There can be little doubt that the pressure placed on the University by pro-Israel organizations such as the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Jewish Leadership Council and the UK Zionist Federation was instrumental in persuading the University to block the conference. The organizers therefore argued that the University had failed to appreciate the virtually unconditional nature of freedom of speech and that appropriate security measures should be used to facilitate, not to obstruct it. They were clear that the safety and security argument was being used *"to rationalise the University's surrender to political pressure exerted upon it by the pro-Israeli Lobby."*

They also pointed out that this extremely sad and short-sighted decision will send a shameful message to the University's existing and prospective students: it's message to other academic institutions and to students all over the world will be grave and depressing, tending to make campuses obedient and depoliticised, distant and docile corporate spaces. Unless the decision is overturned, the University will lose its ability to provide a public space in which truth and justice can be sought. *"This decision by the University is wrong in law, wrong in morality and wrong for the University of Southampton in particular and for all academic spaces all over the country and the world generally."*

Reaction

As news of this momentous decision spread, many individuals wrote to the Vice Chancellor, Professor Nutbeam, (emails to Delia.Edwards@southampton.ac.uk) to express their alarm at this unprecedented suppression of free speech. They made many criticisms of which the following were prominent: the conference was organised by University of Southampton academics of standing; it has attracted eminent experts from the UK and elsewhere; although the official University statement cites concerns about public safety it is widely believed that the University had listened to Zionist voices in making its decision; it was noted that the

campaign to stop the conference was supported by MPs and a Cabinet Minister. Many correspondents argued that cancellation will provide a precedent for any organisation with a political agenda, or that plans a peaceful demonstration, to force the cancellation of an event, academic or otherwise, simply because they dislike some of the views that they suppose will be expressed in it - a practice that one critic called *"the heckler's veto"*. If this is not suppression of academic freedom, then what is?

Crucially, it was pointed out that those who were campaigning for cancellation of the conference simply do not understand what an academic conference actually is: disagreement is at the heart of academic debate; an academic conference in which everybody has the same viewpoint is pointless, both intellectually and politically. According to the Middle East Monitor, by April 2nd a petition to the University asking it to allow the conference to proceed had collected over 6,300 signatures and a statement by academics supporting the conference had attracted 900 signatures in the same period.

The conference organizers have made it clear that they are now trying hard to find an alternative venue for the conference in or near Southampton in order to avoid the need for any changes in flight times and hotel reservations. It is vital that the conference should take place if not in the University then elsewhere.

Legal Challenge- call for donations

The organisers have decided to mount an immediate legal challenge to urgently overturn the university's decision, to demand that the conference is allowed to go ahead while deploying sufficient security resources, including by the police. They are seeking a Judicial Review to obtain an injunction and compel the University to reinstate the conference. The action was filed on Thursday April 2nd but has yet been heard (I write this on April 10th) The organisers' barristers are from Michael Mansfield QC Chambers. The organizers have invited financial contributions towards legal costs which are estimated to be up to £15,000. See page 10 of this newsletter for details of the bank for receiving donations.

David E. Pegg for BRICUP

Note. Information provided by Oren Ben-Dor, Richard Seaford, Middle East Monitor, Ghada Karmi, Haim Bresheeth.

It is planned that the May edition of the BRICUP Newsletter will include a detailed analysis of Southampton University's decision and further details of the actions being taken to ensure that the conference is held, which we hope will be the case by the time that the next newsletter is issued in mid-May. {Editor}

Boycott for Peace; Divest for Justice; Sanctions for Liberty

BRICUP's response to the Board of Deputies policy statement 'A Better Way than Boycotts'

The Board of Deputies of British Jews (BoD) has performed a valuable service in compiling the common mis-representations of the BDS campaign, along with a few original ones, in [a single glossy 50 page document](#). To respond to all the misrepresentations presented by the BoD would require a document at least as long which would tax the patience of the reader so I will highlight only some of the most egregious arguments here.

This analysis reviews some of the most serious problems with, and inaccuracies in, the report. It concludes with some observations on their mis-characterisation of the academic and cultural boycotts and how the greatest threats to academic freedom come from Israel's most vocal supporters.

The document starts from four axioms which are at best highly questionable and are, in our view demonstrably false.

- Firstly, that although the Israeli Government may have made mistakes, some serious, it has done nothing criminal or beyond the usual failures of democratic states.
- Secondly, all calls for BDS arise from malevolence at best and outright antisemitism at worst.
- Thirdly, there is no fundamental imbalance of power between Israelis and Palestinians and so an open and productive dialogue between equals can be straightforwardly fostered and will be effective.

- Fourthly, that a two state solutions is desired by the Israeli government and is still a feasible outcome.

The document was prepared before the recent Israeli election campaign; it is not clear how discomfited the authors now are by Netanyahu's inflammatory statements; by Lieberman's even more racist than usual rants; or by Bennett's total rejection of any chance of the creation of a Palestinian state. It would be good to know whether they are merely embarrassed or whether they would wish to change these postulates, particularly the last.

The executive summary states, "Such a policy [settlement boycott] incorrectly places settlements as the key stumbling block, overlooking past Israeli territorial concessions for peace, ignoring terrorism and forgetting the obstruction of some Palestinian leaders." (p. 4). It then proceeds to argue that if only Palestinians would engage constructively in talks the settlements could be dismantled. However they produce no evidence that any existing or prospective Israeli leaders have any interest in, or intention of, evicting any illegal settlers. Rather, the population of the settlements has [grown by 50% since 2010](#) and [settlement expansion remains a key Government policy](#).

They claim "Proponents of BDS advocate a tactic which fundamentally divides and discriminates between the two populations" (p. 8); a claim that fundamentally misplaces the locus of responsibility for division and discrimination. It was, rather, the basis of Israeli state policy in division and discrimination that was a principle trigger for the BDS campaign. The Document's claim is the same as the complaint by US Jim Crow officials blaming 'northern liberal troublemakers' for dividing the population of the southern states between Blacks and Whites or South African white leaders claiming that the global anti-Apartheid movement caused discrimination where none existed.

BDS is based in a tradition of non-violent mass civil society opposition to injustice; a truth explicitly denied at p. 10 of the document - "the BDS campaign is not rooted in liberal values and is counter-productive in the pursuit of peace"

Mis-describing Zionism

The BoD presents Zionism simply as "Jewish self-determination" (p. 9) as though it has no

territorial component and does not involve the displacement of anyone from their land. It bears no relation to the reality of Zionism as practiced by the Israelis and experienced by the Palestinians. Casting Zionism in this abstract form allows the BoD to identify opposition to Zionism with antisemitism – a recurrent theme of the document.

This confusion erupts on page 10 “It is important to emphasise that the Jewish connection to the land does not diminish Palestinian rights to self-determination based upon their own sense of national identity. Most Israeli and British Jews support a two-state solution, and therefore the creation of a Palestinian State, because supporting self-determination and nationhood for two peoples who have suffered statelessness are two sides of the same coin.” Such a formulation resolves the competing claims for the territory within pre 1967 Israel by pretending they do not exist; the land claims to remedy the Nakba are invisible; the refugees have been airbrushed. Nothing justifies the Holocaust but neither does the pain and terror of the Holocaust justify the Nakba as the document implies in statements like “Israel is a country that was born on the ashes of the Holocaust” (p.14).

Palestinian statelessness is the direct result of Zionist settler-colonialism. Jewish statelessness was not caused by the Palestinians. American and European Jews making [Aliyah](#), immigrating to Israel under ‘the Right of Return’, were already Jewish citizens of their home states.

Who is making the sacrifices?

The document claims that “Israel has consistently demonstrated that it is willing and able to make painful sacrifices in the hope of achieving a lasting peace with its neighbours (p.11).” without revealing that every concession has been more than matched by later seizures. The withdrawal from the settlements in Gaza, themselves illegal, has been matched forty times over by the construction of new settlements on illegally confiscated land in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Return of the Sinai to Egypt has been followed by the displacement of the Bedouin communities of the Negev. Oslo concessions, mostly abrogated by Israel, were followed by the construction of the Apartheid Wall along a line that seized much West Bank land and aquifers. The release of 104 prisoners in 2013 was followed by the re-arrest of many of those freed and the arrest and detention, often without trial, of many others.

The partiality of the document is shown in statements like “consistent antisemitic incitement that occurs in Palestinian society notably schools.” (p. 13). The document ignores [a US Government funded](#) study that found no “dramatic differences in how Israeli and Palestinian textbooks portray the other.” Further, Professor Peled-Elhanen of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, author of a comprehensive study of Israeli school books observed, ["Arabs and Palestinians don't do much in Israeli school books except for lurking, attacking in all sorts of ways and multiplying."](#)

Who singles out Israel?

The BoD believes that Israel is singled out by the BDS movement. Many abusing countries are subject to regular criticism by our government and face sanctions when they outrage the British government, media and public opinion. Israel’s crimes go systematically unnoticed; they go unpunished by our Government even when public opinion, roused by such events as assaults on Gaza, forces them into mouthing outrage. The UK government rarely supports motions critical of Israel’s actions at the United Nations. The US Government has gone much further. It has methodically used its [UN Security Council veto to block motions critical of Israel](#), a favour it does not regularly offer other abusing states; vetoes include defending aggression against Gaza and the illegal Apartheid Wall.

Israel, far from the poorest country, is [the second largest recipient of US Government aid](#) (after Afghanistan): now over \$3bn a year and over \$120bn in total. Currently it receives over [\\$400 per head](#) compared with [\\$1.59 for Bangladesh](#).

This is the special treatment that singles out Israel; BDS is a reaction to this privileged status.

In 2005 Marinov in [a study of sanctions](#) reported “In the last decade, virtually nowhere could democratic rights and freedoms be suspended, human rights grossly abused, or a civil war break out without causing a group of states to react with economic sanctions”. The abrogation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories has not led to Sanctions. Civil society action for Boycott and Divestment as well as exerting direct pressure on Israel is also action on other Governments to end this anomaly and impose Sanctions on Israel. BDS is not singling out Israel for punitive action is seeking to end the strange, almost unique, protection of a serial offender against human rights and international law.

Most recently pressure from the BoD and others, including cabinet minister Eric Pickles, induced Southampton University to [cancel an academic conference](#) on the legitimacy of the Israeli state which was organised by their law department. The opponents of the conference claimed that discussing the legitimacy of Israel was antisemitic as it singled out Israel for examination in a way no other state is questioned. They ignored that the legitimacy of divided territories is often questioned. They ignored arguments about East Germany, South Vietnam and North Korea, to say nothing of China's constant interrogation of the status of Taiwan. Equally, the legitimacy of unified states is often problematised: the United Kingdom in the face of first Irish and more recently Scottish and Welsh claims; Spain in the light of Catalan and Basque demands; Yugoslavia.

Israel is labelled an apartheid state because it practices apartheid

In attempting to dispute Israel's characterisation as an Apartheid state the document proposes: "Israel is a country that prides itself on its democratic values enshrined for all of its citizens, as outlined in Israel's Declaration of Independence" (p. 17). It does not inform readers either of the differential funding of education, health and other social services of citizens depending upon their 'nationality' within pre 67 Israel. In Israel while all are Israeli citizens, nationality is differentiated; there is no Israeli nationality, citizens are 'Jewish' nationals, 'Arab' nationals, or Druze or Russian or one of many other categories.

[Uzzi Osman has commented](#) "The [Israeli Supreme] court's refusal to recognize the Israeli nation is derived from the correct assertion that a person cannot belong to two nations. Therefore, according to the court's logic, a Jew in Israel cannot be a member of the Israeli nation because they already belong to another nation, the Jewish nation." While this may make some sort of sense in the Israeli context many people worldwide have dual nationality.

This notion of a non-territorially defined Jewish nation, to whom ownership of Israel belongs even if they live in New York or London or Rome, defines Israel as a state that privileges one part of citizenry against others and, in itself, defines Israel as an apartheid state; a state that is, in [Oren Yiftachel's terminology, an ethnocracy](#) with a [galaxy of discriminatory law](#). Israel describes itself as a state 'both Jewish and Democratic', we

do not contest the first apartheid loaded half, but this makes democratic claims at best partial.

The issue is most acute in the Orwellian category of 'present absentee'. Palestinians who were driven out or fled during the Nakba lost all claims to their homes and land even if they managed to return to them shortly after, being described by Israeli law as continuing to be absent even when they are physically present and even if they managed to gain Israeli citizenship. Jews from abroad were allowed to take over the houses and land by virtue of their Jewishness. The success of a small minority of Israeli Palestinians in gaining significant public office does not detract from the systematic exclusion of the vast majority.

Misuse of allegations of antisemitism

Predictably and disappointingly a sparsely illustrated document includes a photo of a Jewish shop in Nazi Germany with 'Jude' and a Magen David painted on the window to falsely equate BDS, a non-violent citizen boycott, with a violent state-mandated one. The document does not include a photo of a Palestinian shop sealed by settlers in Shuhada Street in Hebron also emblazoned with a Magen David nor a nearby one decorated with the slogan "Arabs to the gas chambers".



The Board of Deputies explicitly tries to link the BDS movement to neo-Nazis. It uses the case of one individual with no standing in the movement who quotes a neo-Nazi website. (p. 25). This is a crass attempt to establish guilt by association, especially as many BDS activists are Jews and many are veterans of the Anti-Nazi league and other anti-racist campaigns. The activists of the BDS movement continue to oppose all forms of racism and challenge the rare hints of antisemitism they encounter. They wish the BoD

were as vigilant in challenging the use of their materials in anti-muslim incidents and writings.

There is a long section detailing alleged abusive incidents, practically all of which are exaggerated and some of which are completely false. For instance they mention an incident of alleged antisemitism at St Andrew's University; the nature of the flawed investigation and the exaggerated claims made about the incident have been documented in a short film, [*A Tale of Two Sheriffs*](#).

Curiously, they do not list any of the many incidents where peaceful protestors have been abused or even assaulted by pro-Israel thugs or where pro-Palestine events have been aggressively invaded and disrupted. Zionist activists regularly come to pro-Palestine events, they are allowed to attend and ask questions which are answered seriously. Such courtesy is rarely afforded to supporters of Palestine, even Jewish supporters. They are regularly barred from events and should they gain entrance are ejected if they try to ask critical questions in a non-aggressive manner. The stewarding for such meetings, and the evictions, are frequently carried out by the Community Security Trust. CST is a Jewish charity which interprets whether incidents are antisemitic in order to provide data to the Home Office who then present their figures on the prevalence of antisemitism as impartial.

The document mis-represents the importance of Israeli products to Britain. For example, on page 31 it states: "Teva tablets (an Israeli company) is the largest supplier of medicines in the UK. One in six prescription packs in the UK is a Teva product. Moreover, with products varying from painkillers to essential life-saving cancer drugs, Teva is a vital company for the welfare of British patients. To boycott companies like Teva would have a devastating effect on many families across the UK." Teva is simply a producer of generic medicines in a highly competitive market and there are many substitutes for its products and many pharmacies have ceased using their products with no adverse effects on their patients.

Where does the call for BDS come from?

There is a missing section in the document: there is no account of where and when and by whom the BDS call was launched. The implication is that it was concocted in Europe or America. On page 14 it talks about "parties external to the conflict" and "no other country in the world is being singled out for such treatment by the BDS campaign".

The call was launched by Palestinians in the light of the success of the ANC-led boycott campaign in weakening South African apartheid and assisting the internal resistance in bringing about regime change. The first call for a comprehensive economic, cultural and academic boycott of Israel was [issued by Palestinians in August 2002](#), the following year Palestinian academics and intellectuals called for a boycott of Israeli academic institutions and in 2004 the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel ([PACBI](#)) was launched in Ramallah.

The following year the [Palestinian call for general boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel](#) was launched by the Boycott National Committee ([BNC](#)) a coalition of all the main civil society organisations and trade unions in Palestine.

There is no similar call by any other broadly representative constituency facing oppression and occupation; groups in other countries have called for other forms of action and support. There is only one global BDS campaign because no others have been called for.

BDS is legitimate mass non-violent civil society action against a massive injustice; all of the BoD's special pleading cannot obscure that basic fact. We engage in it to lower the risk of the emergence of more violent forms of struggle.

When the BoD talk about "parties external to the conflict" (p.14) they do not seem to notice the activities of Jewish organisations and individuals supporting Israel, curiously they seem to believe themselves to be internal parties. They somehow also fail to notice either the support given by the US and other governments and the EU to Israel; or the support by Christian Zionists; or the investment by foreign companies. It seems that only critics of Israel are external not its cheerleaders and funders. Critics may indeed be 'external' to Israel but they are nationals of countries whose governments and corporations support Israel.

The document mis-describes all aspects of BDS; BRICUP though has a special interest in the Academic and Cultural Boycotts.

The Academic Boycott and academic freedom in the document and in practice

The section on the Academic Boycott starts by stating: "The very notion of discriminating against academics based on their nationality, regardless of their personal beliefs, runs contrary to the ideals and principles of academia; namely freedom of thought and the sharing of ideas."

(p.34). As is clear from all BRICUP and PACBI literature the boycott does not mention of the nationality of academics. That is because the boycott is of Israeli academic *institutions*. Its effects on any Professor working there are at most indirect, and apply equally be they Israeli, British, Romanian; Jewish, Christian, Muslim or Atheist. No Israeli academic working outside Israel is affected by the boycott.

Unsubstantiated claims about infringement of academic freedom are made. An irrelevant reference is made to Israeli Nobel laureates. The boycott would not seek to prevent them presenting their academic research to a conference or publishing their findings. On the contrary it is Israel's defenders, through groups like [Campus Watch](#), who routinely use lobbying and threats: to [prevent pro-Palestinian academics speaking on campus](#) or [bar them from being appointed to posts for which they are well qualified](#); or even to [have them dismissed](#). Pressure is applied to Universities to stop academic events discussing Israel's actions being held and to [deny use of campus facilities to student events](#). It is the actions of Israel's apologists that constitute the real threat to academic freedom. The campaign to have the law conference at Southampton University banned, already mentioned, well illustrates this.

As the document correctly states, "The right to freedom of thought and expression is a crucial facet of democracy" (p. 35). Scholars in Israeli universities who attempt to make the Nakba an issue to be critically investigated have their employment threatened. Well-funded pressure groups such as [Israel Academic Monitor](#) and [Im Tirtzu](#) put extreme [pressure on individuals and departments](#) not to deviate from these pressure groups preferred view of history and politics.

Why boycott cultural events?

The document states: "The justification for a cultural boycott will inevitably be some link with the State of Israel, most likely related to funding. Ultimately, the targeting of artists only serves the purpose of demonising Israelis." (p. 37). If Israeli state support for artists was neutral this might have some foundation, however such support is part of the 'Brand Israel' project. As the [Israeli consulate in Toronto revealed](#) 'the "Brand Israel" program aims to publicize Israeli culture in order to distract public attention from its human rights record.'

Even more bluntly [Paragraph 12 of the standard contract](#) issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Israeli artists performing abroad states:

"The service provider undertakes to act faithfully, responsibly and tirelessly to provide the Ministry with the highest professional services. The service provider is aware that **the purpose of ordering services from him is to promote the policy interests of the State of Israel via culture and art, including contributing to creating a positive image for Israel.**"

Interruptions of performances, a tactic borrowed from [the Zionists who disrupted Soviet concerts in support of Soviet Jewry](#) but without their resort to violence, are interruptions of events that are politically freighted by their funders not cultural vandalism.

Conclusion

That the Board of Deputies have devoted considerable time and resources to issuing a well-produced, if poorly researched and evidenced, report demonstrates again that for all their claims that BDS is having little effect it is the activity that they fear the most. The BDS campaign is the most effective tool for ending the oppression of Palestinians. It is that rather than the hand-waving and endless talking shops suggested by the BoD which is the pre-requisite for peace in the region.

Mike Cushman

The PACBI column

"We are Farid!"

An open letter to French university administrators: Stop silencing advocates for Palestinian Rights!

"I have never thought, for my part, that man's freedom consists in his being able to do whatever he wills, but that he should not, by any human power, be forced to do what is against his will."—*Jean-Jacques Rousseau*

The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) condemns the ongoing censorship and attacks on the academic freedom of supporters of Palestinian human rights by French universities' administrations. The latest episode in this anti-democratic repression was the silencing of the prominent South African anti-apartheid activist and scholar Farid Esack through

cancelling his speaking engagements at several French universities.

Contradicting the letter and spirit of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) which called for “a world in which human beings ... enjoy freedom of speech and belief,” this attempt to silence professor Esack is yet another indicator of the despicable disregard for human rights and freedom of expression that prevail in French universities today when it comes to defending Palestinian rights or criticizing Israel’s regime of occupation, settler-colonialism and apartheid. By conflating criticism of Israel’s systematic oppression of the Palestinian people with anti-Semitism, administrators of some French universities are shamelessly parroting Israeli propaganda, engaging in fear mongering, and ultimately cheapening the very meaning and gravity of anti-Jewish racism. This all too familiar tactic is used by Israel, its lobby groups, and its propaganda mouthpieces around the world to muzzle voices that challenge Israel’s criminal impunity.

We stand in full solidarity with Professor Farid Esack against this repression, and we remind French universities of their obligation to uphold and protect freedom of expression and academic freedom, which includes ensuring a “fair discussion of contrary views.” The BDS movement, in which Farid Esack is a prominent figure in South Africa and beyond, is modeled after the South African anti-apartheid struggle, and the movement of boycott, divestment and sanctions which successfully contributed to ending the apartheid regime at the time. Endorsed by an overwhelming majority of Palestinian civil society organizations, the BDS movement similarly calls for isolating Israel academically, culturally, economically and militarily, until it fulfills its obligations under international law and respects Palestinian rights. Based on principles of human rights and international law, BDS is categorically opposed to all forms of racism and racial discrimination, including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

As Professor Esack has said, “I must emphasise ... that all of these messages of support go beyond me; they are ultimately about rejecting attempts to silence the growing BDS campaign and to support academic freedom as well as freedom and justice for the Palestinian people.”

“We are Charlie”, as French students supporting Palestinian rights have indicated, can still be read on the walls of the same universities whose

administrations regularly suppress free speech of Israel critics without any sense of irony. We join those conscientious French students, scholars and activists in asking whether this freedom should selectively apply only to speech that authorities deem “acceptable”. Today, in the face of this French repression of Farid Esack’s freedom of speech, we say, “We are all Farid!”

PACBI

Occupied Palestine,

Representation of Arab Citizens in the Institutions of Higher Education In Israel

We are grateful to SIKKUY and AURDIP for permission to reprint this interesting paper in BRICUP’s Newsletter. Sikkuy is a joint organization of Jewish and Arab citizens, working to implement full equality on all levels between the Arab Palestinian and Jewish citizens of Israel. Founded in 1991, visit Sikkuy’s website to consult “Representation of Arab Citizens in the Institutions of Higher Education In Israel” Edited by Dr. Nohad Ali.

For years Sikkuy has been paying special attention to equality in access and participation in the higher education system in Israel both in terms of monitoring and research. In 2008 we conducted a study on fair representation of Arab citizens in the higher education system and since then we have written a number of articles, policy papers and action programs designed to suggest ways of integrating Arab society into the system.

Hence, this study is only part of a larger plan designed to cover the subject of equal access to higher education in the public discourse. The main innovation in the present study is the introduction of an examination of Arab representation not only as consumers of higher education but as part of the decision-making system in the institutions of higher learning.

In order to develop the discourse about access and participation of Arab society in the decision-making system, we investigated several variables, including the numbers of students, academics serving as lecturers (with tenure), administrative employees in various departments and members of the governing bodies of the universities we studied. This study provides an overview of Arab

representation in the organizational and academic systems of the universities we investigated.

In this report we used qualitative and quantitative research methodologies ; qualitative tools included in-depth interviews and text analysis, and quantitative tools including questionnaires. The combination of the two methodologies enabled the study to maximize the advantages of both methods and to greatly minimize their weaknesses.

After the questionnaire was approved by members of the steering committee and successfully passed a pilot test, it was sent to the target population, which included the heads of the universities (seven universities and the Open University) and the heads of two colleges, The Western Galilee College and Kaye College, while the colleges serve as control groups regarding the representation and under-representation of all the research topics. The questionnaire was composed of 32 closed questions, and based on the pilot, it should take 60-70 minutes to complete, if the information is accessible.

While waiting for the completed questionnaires we conducted most of the in-depth interviews with the relevant people, and held informal conversations with key figures. After the data from the quantitative study was gathered, the statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS software, and the interviews were analyzed with the interpretive method.

The study demonstrated that the trend of an increasing number of Arab students in the higher education system, which began in the mid-1970s and has continued since then is still very far from closing the gaps. In the 2012-2013 academic year Arabs constituted 10% of undergraduate students, 7.3% of graduate students, and only about 4% of doctoral students. Arabs represent 1.75% of the faculty at the universities and no more than 0.9% of the administrators. Only 1.9% of those serving on the board of trustees or the board of directors are Arabs.

The findings explicitly indicate an unacceptably low representation of the Arab population in the higher education system on all the levels examined. It bears mention is that the higher the degree the smaller the percentage of Arabs.

Sikkuy calls on the government to act immediately and vigorously to address this gloomy situation. First and foremost we call on the government to include Arab society, with its representative organizations, in a multi-stage program to increase the percentage of Arabs in higher education. The government must cooperate with the dozens of Arab and Jewish organizations and institutions working to promote higher education, in addition to the organizations working to include Arab academics.

Our recommendations are as follows: The government must increase access to higher education among young Arabs, and among women in particular. Sikkuy has recommended many programs to encourage the inclusion of Arab students in higher education, and we will continue to do so. We believe that the first step for including students, academics, administrators, and members of the board of directors in higher education in Israel lies in establishing institutions of higher education in Arab cities and communities, which will serve the entire Israeli population. This issue has been discussed extensively among the Israeli public and in Arab society, and progress on this issue will only benefit everyone involved.

Above all, we think that absorbing more Arab academics is easier than increasing the percentage of Arab students in higher education. The process of including Arabs begins with fair representation on the governing bodies of the universities ; when Arab academics become part of the policy- and decision-making system we will be able to see genuine progress on this issue. Arab academics will naturally be able to suggest solutions for adding Arabs to the administrative staff, increasing the number of students and addressing the problem of unemployed Arab academics, a painful issue that in recent years has begun to receive greater media attention.

In Israel there are tens of thousands of Arab college graduates who do not have work commensurate with their abilities. Thousands more are added each year, without a solution being offered by the authorities. These college graduates could be the difference between a progressive, enlightened and prosperous society and a backward and unequal one. We therefore welcome the decision to employ 500 female Arab teachers in Jewish schools beginning in the current academic year. We are awaiting additional initiatives of this kind in other areas where there

is a large number of Arabs who are unemployed or have jobs that do not suit their abilities.

Sikkuy will continue to monitor, write and promote suggestions to solve this issue, both on the professional and the governmental levels. This study is not our first on the subject, but part of a long process that began many years earlier.

We understand that the process is a long one, and we are pleased to see progress on several planes, we believe wholeheartedly that the issue of fair representation of Arab society in the higher education system is one of the cornerstones of Jewish-Arab relations in this country for the coming decades.

Sikkuy

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

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

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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.

Financial support for the Southampton Conference .

We are seeking donations to cover legal costs, which are estimated to be up to £15,000. While lawyers have generously offered to take on the case representation *pro bono*, the conference organisers have had to consult other solicitors and barristers who need to be paid and there are considerable court fees. If the case is lost they will have to pay the costs for the other party. Additionally, the court will only hear the case if the organisers can demonstrate they have sufficient funds to cover the costs. If the court case is lost the cost of a new venue would need to be met and so we are also calling for donations to support the costs of alternative arrangements in order to hold the conference as planned. If you donate towards venue costs and the court case is won and Southampton University is compelled to host the conference then donations can be refunded if so requested: if you wish for a refund in these circumstances please send a message to j1sforp@gmail.com informing us of your wish at the same time as you send your donation.

These are the bank details:

Account name: Students for Palestine
Southampton

[SfPS has agreed to let the conference organisers use their bank account for the purpose of collecting donations.]

Account number: 26617360

Sort Code: 30-90-34

Please send an email with your name, amount and method of donation to j1sforp@gmail.com when you transfer the funds.