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In January a detailed dossier signed by 71 UK doctors- of which parts are reproduced below, was sent to the new president of the World Medical Association (WMA) Sir Michael Marmot, the official international watchdog on the ethical behaviour of doctors. BRICUP’s Dr Chris Burns Cox was lead signatory and I was convenor. The WMA’s Declaration of Tokyo is the seminal statement on the duties of doctors in relation to torture: not only must they not administer torture directly, but they must also protect the detainee in situations where torture occurs, protest and speak out. Doing nothing is not an ethical option.

Marmot is a UK medical academic with an international reputation. This was a re-launch of the still-running 2009 campaign on the institutionalised complicity with torture of Israeli doctors and notably of the Israeli Medical Association (IMA), a WMA member. We called for a transparent examination of the track record of the IMA regarding torture, and questioned the probity of the then new WMA president, longstanding IMA President Yoram Blachar. The WMA, which appeared neutralised by the IMA, refused to act or even acknowledge our submission, and President Blachar began a libel suit against me (the convenor) in London.

A report in 2007 by the Public Committee against Torture in Israel (PCATI), based on the detailed testimony of nine Palestinian men tortured between 2004 and 2008, gave a graphic demonstration of the extent to which Israeli doctors continued to form an integral and

everyday part of the running of interrogation suites whose output was torture. Doctors, some of whom were actually named, saw the prisoners at various points between episodes of torture (which in one case led to spinal cord damage), did not take a proper history, did not protest on these men's behalf, and typically prescribed simple analgesia before returning to their interrogators. They did not need to ask the prisoners what had happened to them because they knew perfectly well. It was notable that doctors in positions of authority were involved in several of these cases, like the Chief Medical Officers of the Israeli Prison Service and of the Israeli Police. The PCATI report was sent to the IMA, whose Ethics Chair was then Professor Avinoam Reches, and the IMA later conceded to PCATI that they had indeed received this. No action was taken by the IMA, itself was a prima facie violation of the Declaration of Tokyo. This was straightforward collusion by the IMA.

The IMA eventually told PCATI they would investigate and later sent them their report on their travesty of an 'investigation'. Professor Reches stated that they had attempted to contact the doctors in question, that all had denied any past or present connection with the Israeli Prison Service- a denial the IMA accepted at face value. Their conclusion that there was no **"shred of evidence other than the word of the prisoners"**, so no further action could be taken. This says it all: what kind of investigation starts with a blanket dismissal of the testimonies of the victims? Here we see transparently how the IMA maintains its solidarity with the status quo in interrogation centres, and how it fails to provide ethical leadership to Israeli doctors posted to such centres.

Secondly, in the November 2008 annual report to the UN Committee Against Torture, the UAT Coalition, a coalition of 14 Israeli and Palestinian human rights organisations, concluded that **"since the Committee last reviewed Israel, the practice of torture and ill-treatment has continued unabated. The UAT Coalition wishes to inform the Committee that in its opinion the use of torture and ill-treatment by Israeli authorities against Palestinians is both widespread and systematic. The UAT Coalition has recorded evidence of acts, omissions and complicities by agents of the State at all levels.....until this culture of impunity is addressed this situation is unlikely to improve"**.

IMA membership of the WMA appears to have been a figleaf designed to deflect criticism. The IMA pays lip service to medical ethics and to the Declaration of Tokyo but their actual behaviour over many years points the other way. Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (PHRI) describes the IMA as basically playing the role of loyal State actor, upholding a decision on political grounds to turn a blind eye to torture in Israel while it remains intrinsic to State policy- and thus to provide moral cover for the actions of Israeli doctors implicated in this, regardless of the Declaration of Tokyo.

Faced with this naked refusal by the WMA to act as mandated, we felt we had to move on to the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, first Manfred Nowak and latterly Juan Mendez. We conveyed to him our experience of the WMA's refusal to act. A special rapporteur does sometimes investigate individual cases, including within Israel, but we were informed that the investigation of civil society bodies like a national medical association was outside the remit of the Rapporteur. It is however what the WMA are for.

At the heart of this fresh appeal is the most recent comprehensive report by PHRI and PCATI- **"Doctoring the Evidence, Abandoning the Victim: the Involvement of Medical Professionals in Torture and Ill-treatment in Israel** (2011). See online at stoptorture.org.il. It is based on testimonies and other evidence from the files of over 100 victims of torture and ill-treatment handled by PCATI/PHRI since 2007. Its summary affirms that "medical professionals abandon their duty by failing to document and report torture; by passing on medical information to interrogators; returning detainees to the custody of their interrogators when in danger of being exposed to further torture or ill-treatment; and in extreme cases, by taking an active part in the interrogation. Because of their unique social status, the presence of medical professionals in facilities where torture or ill-treatment are carried out indicates the boundaries between the permissible and the impermissible: it grants Israeli Security Agency (ISA) interrogators a stamp of approval, whether explicit or tacit, that their conduct is acceptable".

The report also notes that this conduct by doctors "furthermore precludes the victim from presenting evidence which can aid in pursuing justice through various legal and administrative proceedings". The significance of this can be seen in the fact that "over 700 complaints alleging torture/ill-treatment by ISA interrogators have

been filed since 2001 and not one single criminal investigation has been initiated". Complicity by doctors is therefore a significant force in maintaining the impunity of ISA interrogators.

PCATI/PHRI record that "medical staff in prisons, detention centres and hospitals which treat prisoners are part of the broader administrative systems, primarily the medical apparatus of the Prison Service, the Israeli Medical Association and the Ministry of Health". Torture continues to receive the full institutional backing of the state.

From long experience PCATI/PHRI conclude that "there are serious doubts that the IMA is willing to enforce these rules: persistently repeated requests by PCATI/PHRI calling the IMA's attention to cases arousing suspicion of doctors' involvement in torture and cruel or degrading treatment, have not been dealt with substantively." PCATI/PHRI note that the IMA's ethical code contains clauses which do not accord with the fundamental principle of medical ethics, which is that the well-being of the patient should be the doctor's sole concern. IMA codes require the doctor to respect "the good of society as a whole and its right to protect itself", authorising the doctor to assist the security authorities upon their request, even when this may harm the rights of the patient.... "With these clauses, the IMA enables the needs of the security apparatus to be seen as coming before the ethical duties of doctors".

To conclude, PCATI/PHRI devastatingly report that **"except for one case (JM, where even here the doctor reported in only a limited way, insufficient to satisfy the Declaration of Tokyo) our research did not discover a single case where torture and ill-treatment were reported."** **This makes it transparent that the problem is not one of a few rotten apples in the barrel, but of institutionalised**

practice. Individual doctors who transgress in these ways carry individual culpability, but major responsibility must lie with their professional bodies, notably the IMA. If challenged such doctors could realistically claim that the IMA had never meaningfully instructed them to behave differently, had never instigated proper investigations when challenged with specific cases (as in this report) and had in effect an implicit policy to endorse the status quo on torture on political grounds- as the evidence shows overwhelmingly. This is why the focus of our campaign has been the IMA, who could halt the practice of torture in 5 minutes by obliging

doctors to act ethically whenever their findings suggest torture, or indeed by forbidding doctors to work in units where torture is routine.

PCATI/PHRI cites the case of South Africa and in particular the precedent set by Dr Wendy Orr in exposing comparable abuses by the Medical Association of South Africa (MASA) and individual doctors during the apartheid era. This led to the exclusion of the MASA from the WMA for a period.

In early 2013 a well- publicised case further highlighted the intimate involvement of Israeli doctors in these matters. A healthy 30 year old man Arafat Jaradat, arrested on suspicion of throwing stones, died after several days of interrogation by Israeli Shin Bet internal security service on February 23rd, 2013 at Israel's Meggido prison. An autopsy was held next day at Israel's institute of Forensic Medicine in the presence of Dr Saber Aloul, the Palestinians Authority's Chief Pathologist, who assessed that the bruising on the body was evidence of torture. The Israeli authorities denied this, claiming in their defence that Jaradat had been seen by Israeli doctors two days before his death and they had found him in good health. This disclosure begged the medical ethical question: what were these doctors examining him for, if not to assess whether he could withstand torture or further torture? (Analogously, the existence of a "fitness for interrogation" form came to light some years ago in Israel, to be signed by a doctor. Since interrogation routinely meant torture, the doctors were giving the green light to the interrogators and were part of the whole process.)

We also submitted a study published last November (by an Israeli psychologist) which showed that sexual torture too was endemic

In our letter to WMA president Marmot we noted that if the mountain of evidence incriminating the IMA were to be judged insufficient to make the case at the WMA, then no evidence ever would. As noted earlier, the WMA is mandated to ensure that its member associations abide by its statutes. If it will not act now, when would it? The Declaration of Tokyo cannot be a mere paper exercise. We pointed to the precedent of the exclusion of the Medical Association of South Africa from the WMA, and submitted that similar action regarding the IMA was justified by the facts. We also noted that in his inaugural address as WMA President in Moscow on 16 September, Marmot affirmed that "The WMA upholds the highest ethical standards of the practice of medicine", and that "I want the WMA to use the

same moral clarity to be active against the causes of ill-health.” The cause of ill-health were concerned about was of course torture, no less, and the complicity of medical leadership in Israel that with open eyes helped to keep it going.

And the response to date? Marmot sent us an acknowledgement of receipt on 18 January. Within days, alerted by various reports of an IMA victory, we were staggered to see on the website of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre a letter from the WMA President on WMA notepaper, dated 25 January. Written to Dr Shimon Samuels, Director for International Relations at the Centre, Marmot offered instant, unconditional exoneration of the IMA. He wrote that “investigations have revealed no wrong doing by the IMA”. On the contrary: for many years the PHRI have tried to get the IMA to conduct proper investigations but found the IMA consistently unwilling, and not by accident. Marmot added that the IMA “have repeatedly affirmed their commitment to the policies and positions taken by the WMA”. This is to take verbal assurances at face value but the evidential record says otherwise, and consistently so since Amnesty’s 1996 verdict. In the era of evidence-based medicine, why does evidence from authoritative sources not count? Why was the first response by President Marmot towards a non-involved party, the Wiesenthal Centre? The WMA has refused further comment.

Marmot has instantly accorded the IMA the support and approval of the WMA, and of himself as President. There has been no due process and in 7 days no possible examination of the evidence to which we (and PHRI) point. This is good news for the IMA, but bad news for Israeli doctors thrust into ethically compromised roles, and bad news for Palestinian detainees with little to protect them. With this instant whitewash the WMA appears in complicity itself.

We have written back to President Marmot, and to the British Medical Journal, to protest and to repeat our call for a transparent investigation of the evidence by suitable neutral parties. These events are an example of what all of us involved in Palestinian rights are up against, albeit nothing new there!

The Jewish Chronicle and “Seven Jewish Children”

Editor

On February 24th 2016 the Jewish Chronicle (JC) reported that students at the University of York had staged two performances of “Seven Jewish Children – A Play for Palestine”. This play was written in 2009 by Caryl Churchill in response to the Gaza massacres. It was performed on this occasion as part of the ‘Israeli Anti-Apartheid Week’. The JC’s theatre critic described the work as “antisemitic, highlighting a moment when one Jewish character appears to be glorifying in Palestinian suffering.” Pro-Israeli supporters were reported to have distributed flyers and the University Jewish Society had condemned the staging, alleging that the Student Union had shown a lack of concern about antisemitism on the campus. The JC also repeated the false claim, originally made in York Tab (an online student magazine) that Jeremy Corbyn’s son Tommy, a student at York, was the events manager, thereby associating him with anti-semitism.

Below is the response to these accusations that was written by a group of Jewish students at the University of York. It speaks for itself!

Jewish students respond

The following open letter was issued by Jewish members of the Palestinian Solidarity Society at the University of York and supporters.

To whom it may concern.

We are Jews and Israelis who work and study in York. Some of us were in the audience for the recent performance of Caryl Churchill’s ten minute play Seven Jewish Children at the University of York; others were involved in its production and acted in it. All of us are committed to seeing a just peace in Israel and Palestine.

Some of us have only attended Palestinian Solidarity Society events, others are ordinary members and committee members of this university society. It is clear to us that the society is committed to fighting racism and prejudice in all its guises, in particular intolerance of Palestinians in Israel, as well as Palestinian prejudice against Jews. One audience member,

Dr. Lisa Peschel, a lecturer in York's theatre department who conducts research on Jewish ghetto theatre, said, "This play does not claim to be a balanced and objective look at the entire range of Israeli political opinions, but it accurately represents certain voices in Israeli politics while acknowledging Jewish suffering as well. It addresses a humanitarian crisis that urgently needs to be discussed."

As Israelis and Jews, some of us have personal experiences of being labelled anti-Semitic because we have expressed criticism of the abusive and intolerant attitudes of many Israelis, or of Israeli policies, towards the Palestinian people. Our support of an occupied, oppressed people is often mistakenly perceived, particularly by those Jews who identify as Zionist, as anti-Semitic sentiment.

To equate criticism of Zionism with anti-Semitism is not only dishonest, it also has an adverse effect for those Jews who do suffer actual intolerant, anti-Semitic abuse which should be taken seriously. Moreover, this misplaced accusation calls into question our own Jewishness, which we find an offensive gesture.

Finally, we would like to make it clear that Tommy Corbyn, son of the leader of the Labour Party, had nothing to do with organising, producing or even promoting the play.

Sincerely,

Maddie Boden, Eran Cohen, Edmund Dable-Heath, Hagar Geula, Juliana Morrison, Adrian Tellwright

The Right to Education (R2E) Campaign at Birzeit University aims to document, archive, and take action against the unacceptable realities of an education under occupation. Here is another student's view

Recent Violations of Education at BZU

Hasheemah Afaneh

"What does education mean to you?" Sama, a fourth year engineering student at Birzeit

University, smiled broadly as she contemplated the question. "It is *important*," she began. "It should have no cost and should be accessible to all, especially primary and secondary education."

The [International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights](#) describes education as "both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights." Thus, with the Israeli occupation obstructing Palestinians' education, it also obstructs other fundamental human rights. The plight of Palestinian students in the primary, secondary, and even in the higher education sectors, becomes clear when you consider how the occupation has oppressed the Palestinian people for over six decades. Whether by means of the inhumane checkpoints; the expansion of settlements; banning of equipment; imprisonment; random clashes; the occupation is a major factor in opposition to teachers, students, and teaching facilities - all of which demand much time and effort on a daily basis.

Birzeit University is one of the Palestinian universities in the West Bank territory that has experienced increasing violations against its students, faculty members, and facilities, and these violations have been increasing since 2014. Close to eighty Birzeit University students, along with two faculty members, have been arrested, with twenty-five arrests occurring since October 2015, according to a press release from the university. It is to be noted that many, if not all, are arrested without charge or with false accusations. [The statement was released](#) later on the same day that Israeli forces raided the campus at close to three o'clock in the morning. The incursion invaded the Student Council building as well as the Science faculty, and confiscated equipment and computers.

The imprisonments and raids on the "micro" level, so to speak, have been ongoing on the "macro" level for years. Many students, like Sama, have to cross through a bigger cage, the Qalandia checkpoint, twice a day: this is one of the largest, and most longstanding checkpoints in the West Bank,. "Sometimes, it takes an hour or an hour and a half...two hours at most, to cross, but I'm lucky. I'm in my own car. People that have to travel by bus and taxi have it worse," she said. Even so, students have to face the unpredictable happenings at the checkpoint:

random closings, random interrogations and random searches.

With all these offensive Israeli actions there can be no doubt as to why protests have occurred all around the West Bank: one of the most renowned among the Palestinian locals is near to the Bet El settlement north of Al-Bireh. Since the beginning of October 2015, hundreds of students from Birzeit university leave campus, hop on buses, and form demonstrations renouncing Israel's continuous violations.

But at the same time, the young are trying to send a message to the global community that stands on the sidelines. We want to convey our dissatisfaction with the international power-holders when it comes to getting rid of the heinous occupation and finding a way to resolve the conflict. Amidst the chants and teargas, the youth don't want to keep on fighting for the rest of their lives but want a better *today*. Education is constantly taught to be the key to success, and for Palestinians, the right to education is one of the many rights that are violated. Education is taught as one of the most crucial means to obtain success, but how can the Palestinian youth achieve success if Israel, not only fails to stop attacking the right to education but actually increases our difficulties?

When asked what they would say to future generations in Palestine regarding their pursuit of education in the midst of a cruel occupation, a student from Jalazon refugee camp quoted Francis Bacon: "Knowledge is power." Birzeit University students know this all too well and it is this very idea that motivates imprisoned students to continue to pursue their degrees after they are released, as with Lina Khattab, and keeps students crossing checkpoints like Qalandia from the wee hours of the morning and until the sun sets.

An open letter to the Society for Psychotherapy Research

UK-Palestine Mental Health Network

Published in letters to The Independent, March 02, 2016

We, psychotherapists, researchers and other mental health professionals, write to express our dismay at the decision of the Society for Psychotherapy Research (SPR) to hold its next international conference in Jerusalem. Israel's policies in the Occupied Territories, including house demolitions, movement restrictions and imprisonment without trial, cause insecurity, despair, helplessness and humiliation.

They create family tension, disrupted child attachment and widespread traumatisation. The calamitous impact of Israel's Occupation on the psychological health of the Palestinians is well-documented.

This conference would be taking place a short walking distance from neighbourhoods where Palestinians are currently being dispossessed of their homes to make way for Israeli settlements, one among many strategies that pose a threat to their very survival in Jerusalem. SPR's collective denial - or indifference - is evident in the conference publicity published on its website. Jerusalem is here pictured as 'a city suspended between heaven and earth, East and West, past and present – parallel universes of flowing caftans and trendy coffee shops'.

We are shocked that, replying to concerns already raised, the organisers consider it adequate to promise to assist Palestinian psychotherapy researchers to attend the Conference. This may ease SPR consciences but it is as nothing weighed against the political message they will be sending by meeting in this beleaguered city.

SPR's name ought to be synonymous with intellectual honesty, independence, and a courageous resolve to deal with the truth. Hence we call for the conference to be moved to another venue, following the lead given by the World Association of Infant Mental Health in similar circumstances.

Signed

Andrew Samuels, Professor of analytical psychology, University of Essex; former chair, UK Council for Psychotherapy

Rita Giacaman, *Professor of public health, Birzeit University, West Bank, Occupied Palestine*
Samah Jabr, *Psychiatrist, psychotherapist, Jerusalem*
Yasser Abu Jamei, *Psychiatrist, director-general, Gaza Community Mental Health Programme*
Martin Kemp, *Psychoanalyst, UK-Palestine Mental Health Network, UK*
Ruchama Marton, *Psychiatrist, founder Physicians for Human Rights-Israel*
Susie Orbach, *Psychoanalyst, UK*
And 300 others

This initiative was coordinated by the UK-Palestine Mental Health Network together with colleagues from the United States. In the interests of open discussion and informed decision-making, the UK-Palestine Mental Health Network has asked the President of the SPR to circulate the Open Letter to the SPR membership. See the following links:-

Letter in the Independent: <http://tinyurl.com/jauajyk>

Correspondence between jfffp and SPR: <http://jfffp.com/?p=80962>

Correspondence between Drs Jabr and Berger, and the SPR: <http://tinyurl.com/zhcxhsh>

Big strides for academic and cultural boycott in 2015 – but still a way to go

Jonathan Rosenhead and Naomi Wimborne-Idrissi

Last year saw an explosion of interest in the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign, with both academic and cultural boycott making waves in mainstream British media.

Most recently, at the end of October, a full page advertisement appeared in the Guardian bearing the names of 343 courageous professors, researchers, lecturers and other academics employed at UK universities stating that they will not collaborate in any way with Israeli academic institutions until Palestinian rights are respected.

Publicity resulting from the news pushed to 700 the number of academics signing the commitment. We hope hundreds more will add their names online:

<http://www.commitment4p.com/>

The commitment indicates growing support for BDS on British campuses, but there is still huge resistance to the academic boycott, not least because it is deliberately misrepresented by the pro-Israel lobby. Campaigners frequently face the

question – why are you attacking Israeli academics when they are often critical of their government and friendly towards Palestinians? How can you justify denying them academic freedom?

Let's be clear: Even though there are tragically few Israeli academics who actively support the campaign for Palestinian freedom, we don't boycott, or advocate boycott, of Israeli university teachers and researchers. This is in accordance with guidelines from PACBI (the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel) which explain how BDS distinguishes between individuals and institutions.

See <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1108>

In essence it leaves interactions with individual Israeli academics unaffected, while targeting state institutions and those that take government money specifically to sell Brand Israel round the world.

We advocate and practice the boycott of Israeli universities because they are part and parcel of the system of oppression which has kept Palestine in thrall for decades. And we try to persuade UK academics not to accept invitations to visit Israel in their professional capacities, unless it is to work with those who are actively opposing Israel's policies.

The necessity for boycott was underlined when a European delegation led by BRICUP (British Committee for the Universities of Palestine) undertook a fact finding visit last April, introducing academics from France, Iceland, Norway, the UK and Sweden, to presidents, senior staff, trade unionists and students at six West Bank universities (Gaza proved inaccessible). As well as seeing bullet holes and debris left behind by Israel's armed incursions onto Palestinian campuses, they heard consistent testimony about the petty-minded, arbitrary, and all-embracing way in which Israel attempts to make normal Palestinian academic life impossible. As just one example, a senior staff member responsible for running a major unit at Al Quds University, reported spending over 30 percent of his time trying to negotiate entry for teaching staff, exit permits for staff to attend international conferences, and trying to arrange the continuing education of students in Israeli jails. The report can be read at <http://www.bricup.org.uk/2015DelegationReport.pdf>.

The cultural boycott also hit the headlines last February as more than 600 artists, including well-

known actors, authors, dramatists, film directors, poets, comedians, performance artists and musicians, announced that they had signed the UK Artists' Pledge for Palestine, stating:

We support the Palestinian struggle for freedom, justice and equality. In response to the call from Palestinian artists and cultural workers for a cultural boycott of Israel, we pledge to accept neither professional invitations to Israel, nor funding, from any institutions linked to its government until it complies with international law and universal principles of human rights.

The list, which has now grown to more than 1000 names, can be seen online at www.artistsforpalestine.org.uk.

The pledge was launched by a new organisation - Artists for Palestine UK (APUK) – which went on to publish *The Case for a Cultural Boycott of Israel*, the definitive booklet explaining why BDS in the arts is a valid and necessary part of the struggle for Palestinian freedom.

As in academia, cultural boycott supporters are constantly vilified by opponents alleging denial of free speech and insinuating antisemitic motives. One attempt to spread disinformation of this kind appeared in October when some famous UK figures – among them JK Rowling, Hilary Mantel and historian Simon Schama - joined well-known pro-Israel lobbyists in defending Israel against boycott.

The attempt could be said to have backfired as artists queued up to defend the boycott tactic after Rowling and co urged cultural 'coexistence' and 'dialogue about Israel and the Palestinians' and called the Palestinian boycott campaign "divisive and discriminatory".

"It is Israeli policies towards Palestinians which are divisive and discriminatory," said actress and Pledge signatory Miriam Margolyes. "Artists used the tactic of boycott against apartheid in South Africa and we are doing it again in support of Palestine– because no one else is holding Israel to account," she said.

Support the academic and cultural boycott of Israel. Find out more at www.bricup.org.uk , www.artistsforpalestine.org.uk and www.pacbi.org.

This article first appeared in Palestine News

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

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