

BRICUP Newsletter 70

BRICUP

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Boycott movement under attack in Australia. A report by Jake Lynch

The right of academics in Australia to join the boycott of Israel is under threat from Shurat HaDin, an Israeli law centre that has filed suit against me in the Federal Court, under anti-discrimination laws. The 'Originating application starting a representative proceeding' accuses me of 'acts which involve distinction, exclusion, restriction and preference based on the Israeli national and ethnic origin' and 'based on the Jewish race' of 'goods, services, persons and organisations'.

The court paper is notable, however, for its sparsity in the use of specifics, about what I actually have said and done. I chaired a public meeting at the University of Sydney in 2009, in response to 'Operation Cast Lead', the attack on Gaza months earlier. Julia Gillard, then Australia's Deputy Prime Minister, was standing in for her boss, Kevin Rudd, who was on holiday in the period over Christmas. She characterised the attack as no more than 'Israel exercising its right to defend itself', and weeks later led a high-level political and business deputation to Tel Aviv.

Australian diplomacy was positioning itself on the extreme pro-Israeli fringe of world political opinion. Later that year, by which time Gillard had toppled Rudd and taken his job, Australia was one of just seven countries to oppose a motion at the UN General Assembly, condemning ethnic cleansing in Jerusalem. So, the public meeting at the University was dominated by discussion about what we, the public, could do, to compensate for the dangerous posturing coming out of Canberra.

We agreed to make a start in our own back yard, by opposing the University's own indirect complicity with Israeli militarism and lawlessness, through institutional agreements with Technion University, Haifa, and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Both have extensive connections with the illegal military occupation of Palestinian territory, and both are linked with Sydney through bilateral exchange schemes, which provide funding for academics to come to Australia (and Sydney academics to visit Israel). In furtherance of an informal mandate from the meeting, therefore, I wrote to the Vice Chancellor, Dr Michael Spence, asking him to revoke these arrangements. The letter said:

'The campaign for an academic boycott of Israel is focused on preventing formal contacts and arrangements between institutions, not individuals. For example, as Director of the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, I recently arranged a talk in University premises by Professor Jeff Halper of the Israel Campaign Against House Demolitions, and there is no suggestion that such visits arranged between individual academics should cease.

The meeting noted the arrangement advertised in an email circular from the University's Research Office, as below:

Reminder: Sir Zelman Cowen Universities Fund Fellowships

The University of Sydney and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem have established an agreement to encourage mutual visits by academic staff. For more information about the Fellowships and application details, please contact: Sue Freedman-Levy, Administrative Officer, Sir Zelman Cowen Universities Fund, telephone (02) 9351 6558 or via the email address below. Email: sueflevy@anatomy.usyd.edu.au

Closing date: 10 April 2009.

This does cross the line from individual contacts to an arrangement between institutions, being part of a formal Program of Academic and Student Exchange between the University of Sydney and the Hebrew University, "re-ratified in 2001" according to the Sir Zelman Cowen Fund's web page. We are therefore writing to ask you to cancel this agreement forthwith'.

From the outset, therefore, I have made it clear, in keeping with the original PACBI call for an academic and cultural boycott, that it is institutional links that are being boycotted. The Vice Chancellor wrote back, rejecting my request, which was backed by the governing Council of the University's Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, as well as numerous colleagues who'd attended the meeting. Other sporadic actions followed over subsequent years, including our objection to an 'Israel research day' at the University, which was a clearly fraudulent exercise aimed at sanitising Israel's image abroad.

This campaign attracted relatively little attention in the wider public sphere, however, until I myself received a request, from a Professor Dan Avnon of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, for permission to use my name on his application form for a Sir Zelman Cowen Fellowship to come to Sydney. This, I refused, writing:

'Neither I nor the Centre have anything against you – and your research sounds interesting and worthwhile. However, we are supporters of the campaign of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions, and that includes the call for an academic boycott of Israeli universities...

Our Centre's policy is not the policy of the University... but it does foreclose our entering into any such arrangements as you propose'.

Ten days later, this exchange was the subject of a front-page story in Rupert Murdoch's Australian newspaper, by a reporter named Christian Kerr. The paper was by now (December 2012) openly agitating for a change of government, to bring the right-of-centre Liberal/National Coalition to power in the election scheduled for the following year.

The parties contesting office in Australia are divided by very small differences on substantive questions, so they tend to concentrate on 'wedge issues' – to split off segments of their opponents' support. The Coalition had, apparently, identified the very small steps the Labor administration had taken, to edge back towards the mainstream of world opinion on the Israel-Palestine conflict, as one such issue, and set out to complete a wedge manoeuvre by means of another technique familiar from Australian election campaigns, namely 'dog-whistling'. This took the form of a set of signals, sent out in this instance by

shadow Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, clearly audible to one set of voters – Australia’s pro-Israel groups – but of negligible salience, and therefore politically inaudible, to anyone else.

As the Australian continued to pursue the boycott story, Bishop gave Kerr a quote threatening a ‘whole-of-government policy’ to withhold access to public funds for my research (even on unrelated topics), to punish me for my stance. And as the screw was turning in the political arena, it was being given a further twist in the legal domain. In September, Bishop and colleagues were sworn in to their new ministerial roles, having ousted Gillard Labor at the ballot box. And in October, came the Federal Court action by Shurat HaDin.

The Israeli law centre has admitted links with the Israeli National Security Council and the Mossad. In this case, it is acting through a local solicitor, Andrew Hamilton, who told an interviewer from ABC Television that Professor Avnon ‘was boycotted purely because he was Israeli and Jewish’. In fact, under our policy as I have explained it here, it would have made no difference if Professor Avnon had been a Hindu from Halifax. I reserve my right not to participate, on principle, in the funded fellowship schemes that link the University of Sydney with the two Israeli universities, whatever the national origin or religious identity of individual applicants.

The first date in the court case is set for November 27th, and legal representation is being arranged. We have a campaign team in place, who got over 2,000 people to [sign an online petition](#), signalling their willingness to be ‘co-defendants’ with me in the case. And Bishop’s threat to use the coercive power of the state, by withholding research funding, may be about to face its first test. The Australian Research Council is due to release funding decisions in a major grant round shortly: if my proposal is recommended by the ARC’s ‘College of Experts’, it will be up to Education Minister Christopher Pyne to decide whether to sign the cheque.

Some signals have emerged recently that he may be disinclined to block any funds I might otherwise be granted. A colleague of Kerr’s from the Australian, Ean Higgins, who seems more committed to balanced factual reporting, recently filed a front-page story for the paper saying Pyne had ‘backed down on a Coalition promise to cut federal funds to

academics who promote’ the boycott. If he takes an approach more in keeping with intellectual freedom, it will be attributable to his own sense of responsibility, of course, but also to our effective campaign over the court case, which is keeping these issues in the public eye.

We are gearing up for a vigorous contest in court, and of course I am hoping for the best for my ARC application. If I can emerge as a federally funded academic researcher, vindicated by a legal victory, it will present a great opportunity to spread the boycott campaign among Australian academics. My hunch is that there is a large potential constituency, silenced up to now by fear. Our job is to dispel that fear.

Jake Lynch

The author is Associate Professor and Director of the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies of the University of Sydney, and an Executive Council member of the Sydney Peace Foundation. The views expressed are Jake’s own

Confronting Israeli Apartheid: Building the Student Movement for Palestine. Report of a Conference held on October 12-13, University of London Union,

Following successful Israeli Apartheid Week events held across campuses in the UK in February 2013 and because of the continued growth of the UK student movement in support of Palestine, over 20 universities announced in March that they would work together to organise a student Palestine solidarity conference at the start of the 2013-14 academic year. Its aim was to strengthen the student movement in support of the Palestinian struggle through campus BDS campaigns. The conference was held over the weekend of the 12th-13th October and included panel discussions, a range of knowledge and skill sharing workshops and opportunities for student activists to build links and plan joint action between groups across the UK.

Alas, I was not able to participate in the Saturday programme but spent all day at the conference on the Sunday. It was truly impressive. The standard of talk in the plenary sessions was excellent and the workshops that I attended really outstanding. I was needless to say, particularly interested in the workshop run by our own Brenna Bhandar around the theme ‘Building an Academic Boycott’ in which she focussed on implementing a boycott of Israeli universities and academic institutions because of

their deep complicity in apartheid and the Israeli occupation. The room was packed out. Brenna was inspirational without being too emotional. Her analysis was impressive because factual and forensic set within a legal framework. She handled a challenging and interesting question and answer session gently and quietly. Brilliant.

Staying with the Sunday programme for the moment, the morning session kicked off with a short opening plenary talk by Max Ajl from the National Students for Justice in Palestine based in the USA. Talking to him afterwards, I was interested to hear how many students in the NSJP were like him of Jewish background and passionate about a just solution to the conflict. Max put out many suggestions for collaborations between the different national student groups and ideas for joint action. There were two workshops in the morning other than Brenna's session. The first was entitled 'Throwing Corporate Criminals Off Campus' focussing on campaigning to end university contracts with companies such as Veolia, Eden Springs and G4S. The other was 'Divesting From Israeli Apartheid' and how to put pressure on universities to sell shares in companies that are complicit with Israeli violations of international law. The afternoon session comprised a two hour session of concurrent workshops entitled 'Countering Opposition, Repression and Normalisation', 'Working Within Student Unions and the National Union of Students', 'Israeli Apartheid Week', 'Running an Effective Palestine Society' and 'Right to Education Campaign'. The whole conference was completed with a one hour discussion on next steps and joint action.

I can only report on the Saturday session third hand and then only briefly. It opened with an introductory two hour panel/discussion with speakers Rafeef Ziadah, Adam Hanieh, Anan Quzmar and Ben Whyte followed by a long question and answer session. The whole purpose was to introduce participants to BDS and campaigning on campus. Evidently this was very successful. The rest of the day was spent essentially in two workshops, one 'Building Effective Campaigns' and the other 'Explaining Israeli Apartheid'.

In conclusion, I found the whole experience uplifting and encouraging. BRICUP's financial contribution was well spent. I think the students would welcome more input from us. They have followed up with proposals to organise regional meetings during the Right to Education Week running 11th-18th November. Activists including Michael Deas, Juman Abujbara and other colleagues have sent out detailed analyses of the moneys spent

by different universities on such companies as G4S, Veolia and Eden Springs as well as ways to tackle corporate complicity. This movement looks as if it is expanding and none of these people are sitting on their hands doing nothing.

Colin Green

The use of torture by Israel:

An open letter from Derek Summerfield to Richard Falk

I want to express the admiration that so many of us actively involved in human rights questions in the Middle East have felt over time at the way you have fulfilled your mandate as UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in Palestinian territory occupied since 1967. You remind me of Noam Chomsky's challenge that our task is to be moral agents.

I wonder if I could seek your advice on a matter of great importance, indeed a matter that goes to the heart of the moral authority that might attach to my profession, the medical profession, worldwide. I am a medical academic and clinician actively engaged in human rights work, and in particular the issue of torture, in Israel/Palestine for the past twenty years. For a decade of this I was the principal psychiatrist at the Medical Foundation for Victims of Torture, London.

In 2009 I convened a campaign which carried the signatures of no less than 725 medical physicians from 43 countries, a surely unprecedented principled coalition of doctors across the world. Two Israeli nongovernmental organisations, the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel and Physicians for Human Rights-Israel, also submitted material in support of our appeal. Other support from the start included Noam Chomsky and Norman Finkelstein. At issue was the comprehensively documented collusion by Israeli doctors over many years (and, more telling, by the Israeli Medical Association IMA) with torture as state policy in Israel. Our appeal was directed to the World Medical Association (WMA), the official watchdog of medical ethics worldwide, formed after World War 2 as a direct response to egregious behaviour by German and Japanese physicians during that war. The WMA Declaration of Tokyo is the seminal document defining the ethical behaviour of

doctors when they encounter torture. Doctors are obliged not just to refrain from direct participation but to take action whenever they encounter torture- to protect the detainee, to protest and to publicise. The documentary record makes the imputation undeniable that the IMA have been committed with eyes open to a policy of support of the Israeli state, whatever, and have consistently sought to block or disable any criticism regarding doctors and torture -whether from within Israel or abroad. This has amounted to offering implicit authorisation to doctors serving in interrogation units to maintain the torture *status quo*. Our campaign arose out of many years of fruitless appeals by many parties, not least Amnesty International, to the IMA and to their longstanding President Yoram Blachar to take a stand on torture and on what Amnesty had called the institutionalised involvement of Israeli doctors- as the IMA were mandated to do as a member of the WMA. Blachar's responses to my evidence-based articles in international medical journals like the British Medical Journal and the Lancet in the 1990s were consistently stonewalling and vituperative (the kind of responses you'd be familiar with), though on one occasion he actually went so far as to justify 'moderate physical pressure' (then the Israeli euphemism for torture, as I'm sure you know) in the Lancet. Grotesque, coming from the leader of the Israeli medical profession. I can send you the pdf of his Lancet letter if you like!

Our campaign was directed to the WMA in early 2009, at a point when Yoram Blachar had become no less than president of the WMA. Without too much exaggeration it was as if Donald Rumsfeld had become President of Amnesty International. We wrote to the WMA Council asking them to examine the ethical track record of the IMA *vis a vis* the Declaration of Tokyo and thus the probity of IMA President Blachar's accession to WMA presidency. The response? The WMA has refused even to acknowledge our appeal up to the present day, much less address it, and we found out that the secretariat/President Blachar had ensured that the WMA Council members around the world were not shown what we had sent, even though addressed to them! At the same time Dr Blachar, while still President of the WMA, vilified us in the Israeli and London Jewish press, pointed contemptuously to the medical signatories with Arab sounding

surnames, and most pointedly of all instructed London libel lawyers to begin a writ of libel against me personally. Yet the WMA would speak out about alleged abuses by physicians in Bahrain and Iran, as indeed they should, but it became clear that they were never going to tackle Israel.

Since the WMA was unfit for purpose, we escalated our case to the UN Special rapporteur on Torture, first Dr Manfred Nowak in 2010 and then Dr Juan Mendez when he took over from Dr Nowak. That was two and a half years ago, during which time we re-submitted the whole dossier several times, but we have had to wait even for a basic acknowledgement.

Yet we have been using the very email address (urgent-action@ohchr.org) that the UN Rapporteur advertises for precisely this purpose!

Finally in March this year the Rapporteur's Office replied to say that the IMA and WMA were civil institutions and therefore not within their mandate, but that they would look at specific cases. I extracted some of these (with names of the Israeli doctors implicated!) from the exemplary and detailed documentation provided in successive reports by Physicians of Human Rights-Israel and the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel. That's where the matter stands so far.

Professor Falk, what I am asking is whether you have any comments on all of this and what we might do now. Also, I have not had an answer from the UN Rapporteur on Torture to my question as to which body might the WMA or indeed a national medical association be accountable to, if not to the UN Rapporteur? We note that you were appointed by the UN Human Rights Council and that the Council can consider submitted complaints, and that one sub-committee of the UN Human Rights Council is the Committee against Torture who can accept submissions about violations of the Convention in a State party. Can we approach these bodies, or directly approach commissioner Pillay? These and any other thoughts you had on all of this would be most gratefully received by the 725 signatories. Our campaign remains very much open.

With very best wishes and in solidarity
Dr Derek Summerfield BSc(Hons) MB.BS
MRCPsych

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The Oxford Magazine discusses the Fraser v UCU case

Three BRICUP members, disturbed by the lack of public comment on the Fraser v UCU Employment Tribunal, decided to publish an account in the Oxford Magazine in an effort to stimulate some discussion (OM: 8th week, Trinity Term, 2013). Readers of this Newsletter will find a full account of this Employment Tribunal in Newsletter number 63 (April 2013). We found it difficult to understand why there had been so little public comment: the claimant had provided 37 witnesses to support him in court but we could not find a single complaint, article, letter or comment in the mainstream media or newspapers by any of Dr Fraser's witnesses although these comprised well known journalists, parliamentarians, academics, lawyers and other normally eloquent supporters of Israel with easy access to the press. The silence was stunning. Having failed ourselves to get letters in any newspaper, we hoped that the OM, published in a centre of such academic distinction, would welcome a debate on the subject. Our purpose then, was to stimulate discussion and in this we succeeded: the magazine published six responses defending Mr. Fraser and just one (in a later edition of the OM) siding with the judges. We felt that the judgement was important; allegations of racism are always important and Mr Fraser had claimed that our union - the University and College Union (UCU) - was antisemitic. After a prolonged hearing the allegations were rejected by the Judges in the strongest possible terms, but only one of the magazine's letter-writers supported the verdict. How strange! In fact, as we pointed out, the UCU has always vigorously opposed racism and has consistently upheld freedom of expression. Mr Fraser [had identified 10 separate complaints but all ten were rejected out of hand.](#)

These judgements were far more damning than the understated and much condensed report we had published in the OM. The Judge asked, "Did the respondent's conduct have the effect of violating the claimant's dignity or creating the necessary adverse

environment for him? Self-evidently it did not." And then, "The narrow interests of the claimant must give way to the wider public interest in ensuring that freedom of expression is safeguarded" The Judge then provided the following devastating statement:

"Lessons should be learned from this sorry saga. We greatly regret that the case was ever brought. At heart it represents an impermissible attempt to achieve a political end by litigious means. It would be very unfortunate if an exercise of this sort were ever repeated"

Clearly, for the judges, the evidence that was presented by the claimant was utterly unconvincing, and so it was for us, yet social media networks were condemning the tribunal as "biased" and "antisemitic". Perhaps the OM correspondents may now be persuaded to write to the open press themselves making whatever arguments they can that the verdict was wrong and tinged by antisemitic bias.

It has to be said that the points made in the letters published by the OM will be very familiar to readers of this Newsletter. First there was the so-called EUMC (European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia) definition of antisemitism, until recently hosted by the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) in Vienna. But this was only a discussion document that has never been adopted by the EU or any country and has now been discarded by the FRA. It is no longer on the FRA website yet it continues to be quoted. It comprises a list of actions that allegedly constitute diagnostic signs of antisemitism. These include claiming that the state of Israel is a racist state. This is another absurdity. The very constitution, governance and legal framework is laced with racism; as just one example, the right of return for Jews of the diaspora while Palestinians are not allowed to return to their own homes is clearly racist. And Israel itself claims to apply higher standards than other countries. The alleged diagnostic signs will lead to many false positive diagnoses and do not begin to prove antisemitism. In our opinion the FRA should now replace the old definition with a straightforward dictionary definition something like 'prejudice against, hostility toward or hatred of Jews simply because they are Jews'. We find such antisemitism as disgusting a form of racism as the overt and institutionalised Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism that we encounter so commonly in our everyday work in Eretz Israel. What we observe there is a descent into extreme nationalism based on religious and pseudo-religious myths not dissimilar from

Europe in the 1930s and perversion to fascism already overtaking Israeli society.

A second prominent accusation is that the academic boycott, which we support, would prevent Israeli academics making contact with colleagues but this is to misunderstand (or to misrepresent) the nature of the boycott. The boycott call by Palestinian society was directed towards Israeli institutions that are complicit in the grave offences perpetrated by the Israeli government. Without exception, all Israeli universities are complicit but individual Israeli academics are as free to visit the UK as anyone else and to speak when they get here.

A third argument is the hoary old accusation of double standards – that critics of Israel apply ethical standards to Israel that are higher than those applied to other countries. This does not wash. Somewhere within that argument is the notion that critics are being unfair to Israel, as if this were a game or a competition. The real question is whether the criticisms of Israeli behaviour are true, not whether there are other offenders elsewhere.

If free expression, argument and discussion are to solve problems then all those involved have to be prepared to face facts and argue openly, clearly and frankly. The UCU won this case and not surprisingly its members are willing to talk about it. But if problems are to be solved by discussion then those who lose must also be prepared to discuss - and to argue using their best powers of reason.

Colin Green
David Pegg
Monica Wusteman

The PACBI Column

Texas A&M in Nazareth? Apartheid & More

When far-right Christian Zionists as infamous as John C. Hagee and Rick Perry and Israeli leaders accused of war crimes like Shimon Peres and Benjamin Netanyahu propose a project, any project, it cannot be good for Palestinians or for humankind.

The recently revealed [1] project for establishing an Israeli branch of Texas A&M, the sixth largest university in the US, under the name, Peace University, raises alarm bells among academics, students and human rights activists alike. The attempt to build this campus in Nazareth, in particular, the largest Palestinian city in the Israeli

state, makes this project far more suspicious and may hint at the political agendas behind the idea. Perry, a controversial politician and a fanatic Christian Zionist, is of the view that Texas and Israel share the experience of 'civilized men and women thrown into new and harsh conditions.' [2]

Hagee, an unapologetic extremist who supports Israel's illegal colonies in the occupied territory, among other Israeli crimes and violations of international law, also believes that Hitler was sent by God to force the Jews to move to Palestine. [3] Hagee, who once stated that non-Christians, those who "don't confess [their] sins to God almighty through the authority of Christ" are "going straight to hell with a nonstop ticket," [4] is the one who proposed the idea of this "peace" university to Israeli leaders Netanyahu and Peres, who jumped on it, with Peres shrewdly suggesting to build it in Nazareth.

But the initial idea came from the chancellor of Texas A&M, John Sharp, a fervent supporter of Zionism and Israel who wanted "a presence in Israel" as further proof of his "kinship" with its regime of occupation, settler colonialism and apartheid. This university would indeed provide ample evidence of this "kinship" as Israel's regime has a lot to gain from it on different levels.

(1) Propaganda: While some may argue that opening a branch of a US university in Nazareth may provide Palestinian citizens of Israel with a concrete opportunity to escape the engrained and institutionalized racism of Israel's academic institutions, the fact is this project is explicitly proposed to serve Israel's agenda, not least of which in the propaganda domain where it is suffering considerably, as international public opinion polls reveal [5], despite its massive PR investment. The apartheid dimension of the Israeli regime of oppression against Palestinians, and especially the fact that Israel maintains over fifty racist laws [6] that discriminate against its "non-Jewish" citizens, the indigenous Palestinians, is increasingly being debated among academics and activists alike, raising the specter of comparisons to South African apartheid. Quite typically, Israel's response to its plummeting reputation around the world is to try new media or public relations tricks to divert attention and cover up the state's foundational apartheid. Recruiting help from far-right Christian Zionists from the US to use education as another smokescreen for apartheid must be understood in this context.

Israeli apartheid is arguably most “embarrassing” in the education sector. A 2001 study by Human Rights Watch of racial discrimination in Israel’s educational system concludes:

“The hurdles Palestinian Arab students face from kindergarten to university function like a series of sieves with sequentially finer holes. At each stage, the education system filters out a higher proportion of Palestinian Arab students than Jewish students.”[7]

(2) Undermining Independent Palestinian Education:

Palestinian academics in Israel have worked for many years to establish the first Arab university in the country. But, as the Nazareth-based British journalist Jonathan Cook writes, “Successive [Israeli] governments have turned a deaf ear, fearful that an Arab university teaching in Arabic might make the local ‘minorities’ uppity.”[8] An academic institute established by Palestinian academics a few years ago in Nazareth is effectively boycotted by the Israeli government, which refuses to provide it with any funding. If the Israeli establishment is so concerned about Palestinian education in Israel, as it now claims as justification for this Texas A&M branch, why has it so stubbornly resisted the idea of licensing a *Palestinian* university in Israel?

Exposing anachronistic racism, the chairman of the Israeli Council of Higher Education openly considers Palestinians in Israel as prone to violence and counsels improved educational opportunities for them to serve Israel’s overall agenda. He writes: “Anyone who cares about the State of Israel and wants a harmonious [read: submissive] society should care about minorities that represent 20 percent of the population. If [Palestinian citizens of Israel] don’t find their place in society with well-paid jobs, then there is expected to be greater friction.”[9] Yet another agenda motive is exposed in statements made by the deputy director of the Council. She states [10]: “There’s a phenomenon where Arab students go abroad to study in Jordan and other countries in the region. We want to reduce that trend.”[11]

(3) Further Colonization of Nazareth: By building Nazareth-Elit, conceived as a Jewish-only colony overlooking (i.e., suffocating) Nazareth, Israel was continuing with its racial policy that is as old as the state and implementing a foundational tenet of Zionism: maximum land, minimum Arabs. Palestinian citizens of Israel, and those in Nazareth are no exception, have been effectively caged in ever shrinking, disparate spaces surrounded by

Jewish-only colonies intentionally built to prevent their contiguity and potential for demanding autonomy within the state. This Texas A&M satellite will most likely become yet another Israeli settlement, grabbing the precious little open space left in the city of Nazareth, further hindering development and exacerbating the already serious housing crisis.

Needless to say, Israeli leaders, the Council of Higher Education, the Texas A&M management and the Christian Zionist zealots behind this project have failed to consult with Palestinian educators, planners or community leaders to gauge their views on whether such a project would actually serve their true interests. Again, an Israeli-American project is being imposed from above on Palestinians in a patronizing and colonial attitude that is in line with Israel’s decades-old racist treatment of its Palestinian citizens. In light of the above, the A&M in the university’s name may stand for Apartheid & More in Nazareth.

PACBI

Notes:

[1] http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/22/education/texas-am-pursues-a-campus-in-israel.html?_r=1&

[2] <http://www.mintpressnews.com/ahead-of-rumored-presidential-run-rick-perry-heads-to-israel/168909/>

[3] <http://zeek.forward.com/articles/116367/>

[4] <http://web.archive.org/web/20061119030904/http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/dn/latestnews/stories/110606dnTSWperry.351c57c.html>

[5] <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/israel-one-worlds-most-unpopular-countries-and-its-getting-worse-bbc-survey>

[6] <http://adalah.org/eng/Israeli-Discriminatory-Law-Database>

[7] <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/israel2/ISRAEL0901.pdf>

[8] <http://www.jonathan-cook.net/blog/2013-10-23/christian-zionism-foothold-in-nazareth/>

[9] <http://www.jta.org/2013/03/04/news-opinion/israel-middle-east/israeli-economist-peddling-new-plan-to-equalize-arab-university-presence>

[10] Ibid.

[11] <http://electronicintifada.net/content/israels-arab-students-cross-jordan/8178>

EU research funds may continue colluding with the Occupation

For several years the European Union has been financing Israel's Occupation of Palestine in several ways, especially through research grants.¹ Despite new guidelines, EU research grants may still collude with the Occupation, partly because there will be no systematic means for accountability by Israeli grant-holders.

The guidelines had their origins in a decision of December 2012. Then the EU Foreign Affairs Council stated that 'all agreements between the state of Israel and the European Union must unequivocally and explicitly indicate their inapplicability to the territories occupied by Israel in 1967'.² Under the guidelines published in July, a grant-holder may carry out activities there but must not use EU funds for such purposes; nor may the institution be based there.³ According to the Commission, the guidelines were meant to clarify and implement previous policy, as means to maintain Israel's general eligibility for EU grants.

The guidelines implicitly aim to avoid the political embarrassment which arose over an EU grant to Ahava. Although headquartered within the Green Line, the company is owned by settler communities and has used FP7 funds for activities in the Occupied Territories. According to a journalistic report, 'Only one beneficiary of FP7 grants, cosmetics company Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories in Mitzpe Shalem in the West Bank, would have been ineligible had the guidelines been in place for FP7, and currently only about €1.5 million flows into the occupied territories', i.e. to institutions based there.⁴ Without the new guidelines, 'the EU has no way to be sure whether Ahava will conduct its activities under the new project in Israel proper or in Mitzpe Shalem.'⁵

Political controversy also had arisen over grants to companies directly involved in the Occupation. In May 2011, 15 Palestinian, Israeli and European civil society organisations wrote a joint letter to research Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn to request the suspension of Elbit Systems and Israel Aerospace Industries from the FP7 scheme because they had an ongoing role in constructing Israel's illegal Wall.⁶ Even under the July 2013 guidelines, such companies would remain eligible for EU grants, provided that they are not used for settlement activity.

More fundamentally, Israeli institutions have been involved in turning societal conflicts into 'security' issues. They have helped to elaborate this securitisation agenda within EU research programmes. In this way, the EU subsidises paradigms and instruments of global counter-insurgency.⁷

New guidelines in dispute

In that broader context, the Commission's July guidelines would impose modest restrictions. By requiring Israel to sign the commitment excluding settlement activity, however, the guidelines provoked a hostile response. According to the Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs, the guidelines were unjustly 'directed against Israel's settlements in Judea and Samaria to press the Israeli government into making territorial and political concessions'.⁸ On 14 August Israeli officials announced their refusal to sign the guidelines, partly on grounds that the EU was attempting to push Israel to waive its claims of sovereignty over the territories. The Israeli government had at least two motives for its refusal:

- for ideological reasons – denying that Israel has formal boundaries that stop at the Green Line (according to the Commission's text); and
- for practical reasons – because the Commission's criteria (inapplicability to the Occupied Territories) may jeopardise funds for significant activities, depending on the Commission's interpretation and monitoring.

The guidelines gained wide support for divergent motives. The Commission hoped that the guidelines would marginalise attacks on Israeli academia around the settlement issue and so help continue Israel's eligibility for EU research funds. Likewise an Israeli academics' petition sought to protect Israel's role in the EU research system: 'We regard this EU announcement as an act of friendship and support to the state of Israel in its recognized borders.... We call upon the government of Israel to avoid any activities and reactions that might harm our relations with Europe...'⁹

A different petition asked the Commission not to back down in the face of Israeli rejection.¹⁰ This was signed in three days by 500 academics from around Europe, rising to 800 within a week. This support was broader and stronger than that gained by many issues, indicating the potentially toxic effects of the settlement issue. The European Coordinating Committee for Palestine asked people to send their MEP a message to support the guidelines.¹¹

Commission surrender?

According to journalistic reports, the Commission and Israel have been discussing a 'compromise' which would change the implementation of the Guidelines in two ways: (i) Israeli institutions need not declare that they are not operating in the Occupied Territories, as required under the July rules; instead the EU will monitor the situation and carry the burden of proof that Israel institutions are indeed operating illegally there.

(ii) If their postal address is inside the Green Line, Israeli institutions will be eligible to receive EU funds even if their operations lie mainly in the Occupied Territories.¹²

The first point above would surrender to Israel by protecting nearly any activity that might seek EU funding, perhaps even Ahava. When its EU-funded activities in the Occupied Territories became controversial a few years ago, Commission officials replied that they lacked the capacity to monitor the site of research activities. Regardless of whether this is true, it provides a convenient excuse not to know.

Everyone should ask their MEP to demand that the European Commission maintain the original guidelines. These would put the burden of evidence upon Israeli institutions to demonstrate that EU funds are not used for activities beyond the Green Line.

Les Levidow

Notes

¹ David Cronin, *Europe's Alliance With Israel: Aiding the Occupation* (Pluto Books, 2010).

² http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/israel/press_corner/all_news/news/2013/20131607_02_en.htm

³ Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards, <http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2013:205:0009:0011:EN:PDF>

⁴ Israel in deadlock on Horizon 2020, *Nature*, 19.09.13

⁵ <http://euobserver.com/opinion/121415>

⁶ <http://www.eccpalestine.org/eu-research-funding-and-israeli-violations-of-international-law/>

⁷ *NeoConOpticon: The EU Security-Industrial Complex*,

<http://www.statewatch.org/analyses/neoconopticon-report.pdf>

⁸ <http://jcpa.org/article/the-european-union-hypocrisy-hostility-and-blatant-prejudice/>

⁹ <http://www.eccpalestine.org/israeli-petition-supporting-eu-guidelines-on-funding-of-israeli-entities>

¹⁰ <http://www.bdsmovement.net/2013/500-academics-eu-letter-11329>

¹¹ <http://www.eccpalestine.org/tell-your-meps-to-support-new-rules-on-israels-participation-in-eurograms/>

¹² <http://972mag.com/report-eu-to-bypass-its-own-anti-settlements-guidelines/80521>

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