



Academia Against Apartheid

The case for an
academic boycott
of Israel



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Introduction: Why boycott Israeli academia

“If in extreme situations of violations of human rights and moral principles... academia refuses to criticise and take a side, it collaborates with the oppressing system.”

- Tanya Reinhardt, Israeli linguist

This pamphlet explains what the boycott of Israeli universities is and what it is not. In it, we clarify why those supporting justice in Israel/Palestine are increasingly using the boycott tactic in their work. We look briefly at Israel’s treatment of Palestinians and the role of Israeli academia in this, focusing on Israeli attacks on Palestinian academic freedom. After this, we examine the arguments against boycott and conclude by outlining how, in practical terms, the boycott can be implemented by academics in Ireland.

We believe that the academic boycott of Israeli universities is an effective, moral and proportionate way to advance peace and justice in Israel/Palestine. Just as the anti-apartheid movement focused on the sporting boycott as a key element of the overall boycott campaign, a campaign which was central in promoting the peaceful transformation of South Africa into a democratic country, so too does the international Palestine solidarity campaign, including Academics for Palestine (AFP), see the academic and cultural boycott as a key way of pushing Israel to transform itself into a state that will grant Palestinians their civil, human and national rights.

We are aware that the thought of academic boycott touches raw nerves –

teachers and researchers are rightly sensitive about any restrictions on the free flow of ideas. To support an academic boycott of Israeli universities further raises hackles because of the issue of anti-Semitism. We understand that people are genuinely concerned that the boycott of Israeli universities could be seen as another manifestation of that poisonous racism.

The aim of the pamphlet is to open up a discussion. It was prompted by the 2013 Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI) motion in favour of academic boycott and so we open by looking at this.

This motion was followed soon after by the refusal of renowned scientist Stephen Hawking to attend an academic conference in Israel after discussions with Palestinian colleagues. Academic boycott motions have also been passed by the Association for Asian American Studies, the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, and in December 2013 the oldest US academic association, the American Studies Association.

We hope that Irish academics can conduct this discussion in a manner respectful of each other, but also mindful of the hardships that Palestinians – academics, students and the general population – have to undergo every day.

*Academics for Palestine
February 2014*

What is the academic boycott?

In this section we discuss the background to the academic boycott – the Palestinian call to boycott and what it involves for individual academics. We then review the 2013 TUI motion in favour of boycott, itself a product of longstanding Irish trade union solidarity with Palestine.

What is the Palestinian call for an academic boycott of Israel?

The call for an academic and cultural boycott of Israel was issued in 2004 by the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI).¹

The following year, this call was incorporated into the Palestinian Call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions, which is now supported by over 200 Palestinian trade unions, political organisations, civil society and church groups. These include the representative bodies for Palestinian academics and teachers - The Palestinian Federation of Unions of University Professors and Employees, and the General Union of Palestinian Teachers.²

The key part of the Palestinian call for boycott (full text in Appendix I), states:

[We] call upon our colleagues in the international community to comprehensively and consistently boycott all Israeli academic and cultural institutions as a contribution to the struggle to end Israel's occupation, colonization and system of apartheid, by applying the following:

- Refrain from participation in any form of academic and cultural cooperation, collaboration or joint projects with Israeli institutions;

- Advocate a comprehensive boycott of Israeli institutions at the national and international levels, including suspension of all forms of funding and subsidies to these institutions;
- Promote divestment and disinvestment from Israel by international academic institutions;
- Work toward the condemnation of Israeli policies by pressing for resolutions to be adopted by academic, professional and cultural associations and organizations;
- Support Palestinian academic and cultural institutions directly without requiring them to partner with Israeli counterparts as an explicit or implicit condition for such support.

Irish trade unions and boycott

At its Annual Congress on 4 April 2013, the Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) unanimously passed a motion asking "all members to cease all cultural and academic collaboration with Israel, including the exchange of scientists, students and academic personalities, as well as all cooperation in research programmes". It also mandated the union executive committee to conduct an awareness campaign as to what boycott involves (see Appendix II for the full text of the motion).³

This was a highly significant motion. By passing it, the TUI, many of whose members work in third level institutions, became the first academic trade union in Europe to endorse the Palestinian call for an academic boycott. In taking this stand, the TUI is not only following a tradition of

Irish trade union solidarity with those combating apartheid in South Africa, it is also following the lead set by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) on Palestine. Having adopted two motions in 2007 in support of boycott and divestment, in 2008 ICTU released a report written by a senior delegation to Palestine recommending support for the boycott campaign.

The findings of the ICTU report were conclusive on the nature of Israel's policies, stating:

The delegation concurs with the assessments of both ex-US President Jimmy Carter, and UN Special Rapporteur John Dugard – a professor of International Law -that the privileging of Israeli settlements, and of settler movement in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, taken in conjunction with the repressive measures used against the indigenous Palestinian population, amounts to a form of Apartheid. As such, this policy must be seriously challenged by world opinion and should be opposed in the same way as Apartheid in South Africa was opposed.⁴

What the boycott involves

It is important to note that the Palestinian call for a boycott is a call to boycott institutions, *not* individuals.

Palestinians do not advocate a boycott of individuals; the boycott applies to academics and scientists only when they are representing their universities.

Boycott actions would entail such activities as:

- not attending conferences co-sponsored by Israeli authorities or academic institutions
- not speaking at Israeli universities
- not collaborating with Israeli research institutions on EU funded projects
- refusing to serve as referees for publications based at Israeli universities

In the final section of this pamphlet we discuss in more detail what actions are needed to ensure that the boycott is fair and effective. However, firstly we lay out the reasons why people increasingly support this call to boycott Israel.



A student beside Israel's illegal wall, near Birzeit University

Why a boycott?

Israeli policies that have provoked the call for a boycott have been extensively documented by international institutions including the UN, Amnesty International and the International Red Cross. In this section we discuss how Israel mistreats Palestinians, and how Israeli academia is complicit in these everyday oppressive practices. Together, these practices form a system of control and exclusion based on race and religion. The section then looks at the specific ways in which Palestinian universities, lecturers and students have suffered under this system of rule.

Apartheid rule in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories

‘Inhumane acts... committed in the context of an institutionalised regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining the regime’ (International Criminal Court definition of Apartheid. 1998)⁵

Reading any listing of Israeli actions against Palestinians makes for a profoundly depressing experience.

Over 6,800 Palestinians, the majority of them civilians and including over 1,500 children, have been killed by Israeli forces in military attacks, assassinations, and shelling of densely populated residential areas since the year 2000. Israeli forces have destroyed or damaged tens of thousands of Palestinian homes, vast areas of cultivated land including olive groves, and much crucial civilian infrastructure, including electricity power plants, roads,



Palestinian schoolgirls in a destroyed classroom, Nov 2012

bridges and water, sewage and telephone networks, schools and universities.

The ongoing Israeli siege of Gaza has made living conditions there almost unbearable. In August 2012 the UN issued a report entitled ‘Gaza in 2020: A liveable place?’ The report forecasts that by 2020 Gaza will be virtually uninhabitable unless immediate action is taken to end the Israeli confinement and isolation of the territory.⁶

Ever-increasing restrictions imposed on the movements of Palestinians and of goods in the West Bank have made any semblance of normal life impossible. Israel is constructing a 720km separation wall - that encloses and imprisons all major Palestinian population centres - declared illegal by the world’s highest court, the International Court of Justice, in 2004. The construction of illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank continues, served by a network of roads for the use of Israeli settlers exclusively. B’Tselem, the Israeli human rights group, describes the system as bearing “clear similarities to the racist apartheid regime that existed in South Africa”.⁷

Equally in 2012, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) criticised Israeli policies in terms of “apartheid”, as part of their published observations.⁹

CERD described “segregation between

Jewish and non-Jewish communities”, a lack of “equal access to land and property”, and “the ongoing policy of home demolitions and forced displacement of the indigenous Bedouin communities” in the Naqab/Negev desert within the Israeli state itself. More recently, developments such as the laws barring Palestinians in Israel from living with their spouses from the Occupied Territories, were part of CERD’s wide-ranging criticisms.

When reporting on the Occupied Territories, CERD expressed extreme concern about the legal system of segregation and described a system tantamount to apartheid:

The Committee is extremely concerned at the consequences of policies and practices which amount to de facto segregation, such as the implementation by the State party in the Occupied Palestinian Territory of two entirely separate legal systems and sets of institutions for Jewish communities grouped in illegal settlements on the one hand and Palestinian populations living in Palestinian towns and villages on the other hand. The Committee is particularly appalled at the hermetic character of the separation of two groups, who live on the same territory but do not enjoy either equal use of roads and infrastructure or equal access to basic services and water resources. Such separation is concretized by the implementation of a complex combination of movement restrictions consisting of the Wall, roadblocks, the obligation to use separate roads and a permit regime that only impacts the Palestinian population.⁹



A punitive Israeli army night raid in the Palestinian village of Nabi Saleh. Such raids are common and are the cause of psychological trauma in young children and teenagers

Many veterans of the South African struggle against apartheid have also drawn parallels between Israel and their country under apartheid. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu said in 2012:

Black South Africans and others around the world have seen the 2010 Human Rights Watch report which "describes the two-tier system of laws, rules, and services that Israel operates for the two populations in areas in the West Bank under its exclusive control, which provide preferential services, development, and benefits for Jewish settlers while imposing harsh conditions on Palestinians." This, in my book, is apartheid.¹⁰

Systematic discrimination within Israel

While people may be aware of what is happening in the Occupied Territories, Palestinian citizens of Israel (a fifth of the population) also face systematic discrimination.

Although Palestinian citizens of Israel have the right to vote and run for office, they face *de jure* and *de facto* discrimination in many areas of life. Their schools and municipalities are

underfunded, many of their communities do not receive electricity or other basic services, they are barred from many jobs, they are not allowed to live in many municipalities, and universities discriminate against them.

These laws and practices include:

- The Law of Return which grants automatic citizenship rights to Jews from anywhere in the world upon request, while denying that same right to Palestinians.
- The Nationality and Entry into Israel Law prevents Palestinians from the Occupied Territories who are married to Palestinian citizens of Israel from gaining residency or citizenship status. The law forces thousands of Palestinian citizens of Israel to either leave Israel or live separately from their spouses and children.
- The Basic Law of Human Dignity and Liberty which defines Israel as a Jewish state rather than a state for all its citizens.
- 93% of the land in Israel is owned either by the state or by quasi-governmental agencies, such as the Jewish National Fund that discriminate against non-Jews. Palestinian citizens of Israel face significant legal obstacles in gaining access to this land.

• In October 2010, a new law allowed smaller Israeli towns to reject residents who do not suit "the community's fundamental outlook", based on sex, religion, and socioeconomic status. This has

In the rough and tumble reality of the Middle East, Tel Aviv University is at the front line of the critical work to maintain Israel's military and technological edge" (Tel Aviv University Review, Winter 2008-9)

allowed 'Jewish towns' to keep non-Jews out.

- More than seventy Palestinian communities in Israel are unrecognized by the government, receive no water or electricity, and are not even listed on official maps. Many other towns with a majority Palestinian population lack basic services and receive significantly less funding than majority-Jewish towns.
- The Israeli government operates two separate school systems, one for Jewish children and one for Palestinian Arab children. Discrimination against Palestinian Arab children colors every aspect of the two systems. According to Human Right Watch, these schools are "often overcrowded and understaffed, poorly built, badly maintained, or simply unavailable", with "fewer facilities and educational opportunities" than those available to Jewish-Israeli children.

Altogether, Palestinian citizens of the state face over fifty laws that target and discriminate against them.¹¹

Israeli academic institutions: Their complicity with the Occupation

Palestinians have repeatedly pointed out that Israeli academia is complicit in their oppression. The Israeli army and security industries employ thousands of scientists in all parts of their operations, with the Israeli army being the largest investor in R&D in Israel's academia. A large proportion of Israeli academics in the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) are

employed by the Ministry of Defence in security related projects.

It is not only the sciences - Israeli architects design the architecture of occupation, its doctors are engaged in ‘enhanced interrogation’ techniques, its social scientists research means of controlling the population in the Occupied Territories. In a technologically advanced society, academia plays an important part in regimes of control – nowhere is this truer than in Israel/Palestine.

A 2009 report by the Alternative Information Centre, based in Israel, outlines in detail how Israeli universities uphold the occupation and discriminate against Palestinians. Below are selected examples of this complicity.¹²

- Israeli universities are physically part of the occupation. The Hebrew University has student accommodation and part of its campus in the Occupied Territories. The recently opened Ariel University is located fully in an illegal Israeli settlement
- Playing their part in a militarized society, Israeli universities provide

preferential treatment to soldiers, granting scholarships and academic benefits based on military service. During the 2008-9 assault on Gaza, universities gave grants and academic credits to students for each day of military service. For obvious reasons, the vast majority of Palestinian citizens of Israel do not join the army and are thus excluded from this preferential treatment.

- The Israeli army is a huge presence on campuses. It runs hundreds of its training sessions in Israel’s universities who vie with each other to attract such courses. The Hebrew University in Jerusalem offers a special fast-track degree programme to members of the General Security Service, or the Shin Bet, which has used its intelligence gathering abilities to maintain the occupation, and which stands accused of torture. The University of Haifa offers custom designed Masters programmes for Israeli soldiers, with the University’s rector stating that the University of Haifa was proud to be an “academic



Young Palestinians at a-Zeitim checkpoint in East Jerusalem, between the neighborhoods of Abu Dis and At-Tur (Alison Deger)

home for the security forces.”¹³

- Israel’s Ministry of Education in 2012 urged students to participate in online hasbara (propaganda) campaigns to ‘influence global public opinion’.¹⁴ The universities of Haifa, Tel Aviv and Ariel offer hasbara (propaganda) programmes in conjunction with government ministries to train students to advocate and propagandise for the state.
- Psychometric tests (personality and aptitude tests) are used by Israeli universities to stop Palestinian students from entering university, since these students do worse in these tests. Indeed, the Israeli state abolished psychometric tests in 2003, but immediately re-introduced them. The reason for this, as an official explained, was that in the absence of such tests, too many Palestinian schoolchildren were getting into university.¹⁵

Since the Alternative Information Centre report was published in 2009, dissent within Israeli universities has been increasingly stifled. A report published in November 2012 by the Arab Culture Association highlights that “the 2011-2012 academic year saw more aggressive oppression of freedom of expression and of the organization of cultural and political activities by Arab students”.¹⁶

Israel’s attacks on Palestinian academic freedom

The academic boycott of Israeli universities is often presented by its opponents as an infringement of academic freedom, but one must ask what freedom do Palestinian universities have?

Under Article IV of the Geneva



Schoolgirls at an Israeli checkpoint in occupied Hebron

Conventions an occupying power is responsible for the security and normal life of the residents of the territory of which they have taken control. Rather than taking this responsibility, Israel has sought to disrupt the functioning of Palestinian universities. Below are just some of the ways in which this happens.

- Israel collects taxes in the Occupied Territories but provides no funds for Palestinian universities. Because of the devastated Palestinian economy many students cannot pay their fees. Palestinian universities rely on aid from NGOs and donations of material from overseas the flow of which is so often disrupted by Israel. Consequently, university infrastructure has become seriously degraded and students are often without the most basic material support for learning.
- Israeli authorities arbitrarily withhold or fail to renew work permits for foreign faculty members, and also for Palestinians with foreign citizenship. International students and foreign staff members are subject to aggressive and humiliating interrogation by Israeli soldiers, sometimes resulting in deportation. Staff of professorial rank and senior administrative responsibilities have been deported or denied entry when returning from foreign visits.
- Since 2000, Israel has prevented

all students from Gaza from reaching their places of study in the West Bank.

- The wider movement restrictions have created what are in effect internal borders in the Occupied Territories, as a result of which, new students are unable to enrol at any but their most local university. In October 2006 the Presidents of all eleven Palestinian universities issued an unprecedented joint letter on movement restrictions. These movement controls, they said, were threatening to empty the Occupied Territories of their educated population.¹⁷

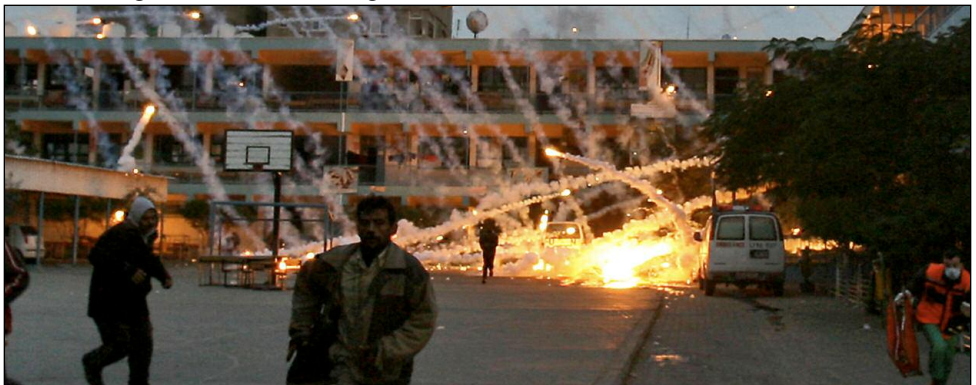
There have been numerous direct Israeli military attacks on Palestinian educational institutes, on students and on educators. Israeli security forces have frequently fired tear gas at Palestinian schools, resulting in students suffering from tear-gas inhalation. In several instances, direct attacks on schools or military use of schools have been reported.¹⁸

Taking just one operation as example: the Israeli military assault on Gaza of December 2008 /January 2009 ('Operation Cast Lead'). During this assault, ten schools and eight kindergartens were destroyed and at least 262 other schools and kindergartens were damaged or

severely damaged. Six university buildings were completely destroyed and 16 were damaged. An Israeli air strike also destroyed the American International School in Gaza. According to a UNESCO report 250 students and 15 teachers were killed in the assault, and 656 students and 19 teachers were injured.¹⁹

Under these conditions academic freedom for Palestinians is emptied of all real meaning. The destruction of infrastructure, civil society, and cultural and intellectual life cannot be separated from the issue of academic freedom. The ability of teachers, researchers and students to deliver and access teaching and research cannot be separated from the issue of academic freedom. The right to be free from arbitrary detentions and delays, and from the violence of an occupying army cannot be separated from the issue of academic freedom. This is to say that academic freedom is fundamentally linked with other kinds of protections and rights and is ineffective without them.

As the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education said in 2005, "military occupations are an appreciable curb on the human right to education, the most egregious example being the Israeli-Palestinian conflict".²⁰



Civilians and medics run to safety during an Israeli white phosphorus strike on a UN school in Gaza during Operation Cast Lead

Arguments against an academic boycott

Many arguments have been raised against the academic boycott. In this section we will go through the main ones and disentangle fact from myth.

Boycott = A new McCarthyism?

Claim: *The academic boycott would mean applying a test of political correctness to Israeli academics. Foreign academics would then only collaborate with those who ‘passed’.*

Reality: The *boycott is aimed at institutions, not individuals*. It applies to individual academics *only in so far as* they are acting on behalf of or as officials or representatives of Israeli academic institutions, or of Israeli higher education at the national level. There are no exclusion clauses, hence no tests of individual ‘correctness’.

What about Academic Freedom?

Claim: *The highest value of academics is free communication of information and ideas – in fact, academic freedom. To set up roadblocks to association, collaboration and discussion violates utterly this principle.*

Reality: The ideal of the universality of scientific and scholarly discourse is both important and attractive to academics. However, no principle can be an inviolable imperative, since there is always the possibility of conflict with other principles.

The widely-held default position in the practice of academic work is the avoidance of any discrimination on grounds of

citizenship, religion, politics, race, colour, language, age or sex. Only exceptional circumstances, such as the violation of other at least equally important principles, could justify its breach.

But exceptional circumstances do occur. The long-running academic boycott of South Africa was widely seen as justified both outside and within that country. As recently as 1998, all Serbian universities were suspended from CRE, the Association of European Universities. The exceptional circumstances regarding Israel have already been outlined in this pamphlet; they consist of systematic violations of international law, human rights and academic freedom in the Occupied Territories.

A supposedly “neutral” position (non-boycott) that uses the rationale that we are protecting the academic freedom of Israeli institutions ignores not only the academic freedoms of Palestinians but also their human rights. As we have discussed above, academic freedom does not really exist in Israel/Palestine. Rather what exists is academic privilege for one group, at the expense of another. It is somewhat of a misnomer to claim that one is defending academic freedom by opposing the boycott, when half of the population under Israeli control is not only deprived of their academic freedom but also their basic human rights.

Why pick on Israel?

Claim: *Many countries in the world have repressive regimes where torture is routine. Many countries violently discriminate against women and have an appalling record on human rights. Why*

aren't boycotters targeting all these countries? Why single out Israel?

Reality: There are many oppressive regimes in the world; we might hope that all of them would be universally condemned. But, inevitably, everyone singles out those issues that particularly concern them. Indeed to have any effect, it is necessary to be selective. Does anyone say to those who campaign against governments complicit in the murder of trade unionists in Latin America, or regimes involved in torture in Asia, “why single out these countries”? And of course many who feel strongly about Israeli policies have also participated in mobilisations against other repressive governments.

There are situations in which boycott is inappropriate. There are situations, such as Tibet, where the oppressed population has not called for boycott. Does that mean that it should not be used in those cases, such as Israel, where it can be effective and where the oppressed population has called for boycott? To bring up cases other than Israel implies that Israel should be immune from censure until all other wrongs everywhere else have been righted (i.e., forever).

There are, in addition, some good reasons for treating Israel as a special case with regards to Europe and the US. Israel is special as it continues to be a settler-state in the 21st century – a state which, contrary to countless UN resolutions, still illegally occupies lands which others had cultivated for centuries. Israel is again special in being the only nuclear power in the Middle East, yet somehow immune to the sort of pressure exerted on Iran.

Israel's creation and the subjugation of the Palestinian people is a direct result of the policies of European powers, and Israel

is maintained by regular financing from the US and the EU. The discrimination against Palestinians by the Israeli state thus has a direct link to western governments. This places a more urgent obligation on western civil society groups to speak out. For while Israel portrays itself as akin to a western liberal democracy and sees itself as part of the West, the reality for Palestinians is far from democracy.

Nevertheless, the EU finds Israel to be ‘special’ – special enough to ignore the human rights clauses in its own treaties to give Israel special trading privileges and ensure that Israel benefits hugely from EU funding for its academic/military research. The EU has embraced Israeli arms companies, such as the Israel Aerospace Industries, for joint collaboration on green technology and other civilian high-tech projects. These companies' core business, however, is the production of arms, with only a peripheral section of their enterprise dedicated to other technology destined for civilian use. The lack of transparency about the intended use of the jointly produced EU-Israeli technology suggests that much of the collaboration in research ends up benefitting the Israeli arms industry.²¹

The EU has been successful in signing preferential trade agreements (PTAs) with many Middle Eastern and North African countries (MENA region) who are incentivized to sign up to human rights obligations in particular when the potential volume of trade with the EU is significant.

Research has shown that when PTAs have been made conditional on compliance with human rights objectives, they have been effective in decreasing some state repression in those countries on which the conditionality is imposed. This boycott would encourage the EU to comply with its own conditionality clauses

on human rights and respect – in particular – the EU code of conduct on arms exports.

The double standards that operate in international affairs are those which favour Israel, rather than the reverse. The boycott then is a tactical pressure, appropriate to the circumstances of Israel, to secure change in its policies.

Isn't the boycott just anti-Semitism in action?

Claim: *Isn't the reason for picking on Israel in this selective way just another manifestation of anti-Semitism?*

Reality: The boycott is not a boycott of Jews – indeed many prominent supporters of the boycott are Jewish, with many Jews around the world distancing themselves from the acts of the Israeli state as a way of reclaiming the Jewish tradition of justice and universality. The claim of anti-Semitism confuses Israel – a state; and Jews – a religious or ethnic group. Not all Jews are Israelis. Equally not all Israelis are Jewish – a fifth of the population of Israel is not. Nor is the boycott aimed at individual Israelis (Jewish or otherwise) working either inside or outside Israel.

Anti-Semitism is a form of virulent racism. It is a long-standing and worldwide phenomenon, a deeply-held negative fantasy about the character of Jews as Jews. It is an antagonism towards Jews, irrespective of what Jews do. Anti-Semitism needs no particular facts to sustain itself, even though Israeli mistreatment of Palestinians has unfortunately served as its agent. People working towards progressive change need to challenge all forms of racism. Undoubtedly this includes anti-Semitism; it also includes Israel's treatment of Palestinians.

"We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians."

- Nelson Mandela

Israel is different to South Africa...

Claim: *Academic boycotts may occasionally be justified, as in the case of apartheid, but Israel's case is quite different from that of South Africa.*

Reality: The similarities between apartheid South Africa and present day Israel and the Occupied Territories are uncanny. The development of settlements (contrary to repeated UN resolutions) and the web of military roads divide the Occupied Territories into the equivalent of South Africa's bantustans. There is covert, but sometimes open, racism – open for example when Cabinet Ministers and MPs advocate the forcible expulsion of Arabs from Israel.

Identity cards in Israel/Palestine incorporate a racial identity marker. Together with domicile control (especially in East Jerusalem) they constitute an equivalent of South Africa's Pass Law system. A similar effect to the South African Group Areas Act is achieved in Israel by land seizures and the selective refusal of construction permits to Palestinians. The education systems for Israelis and Palestinians are separate and unequal. Racial discrimination permeates all aspects of life, including those as surreal as the sight of "Jewish-only" parking lots in Jerusalem.

There are of course differences. For example Israel does not have the enforced social apartheid of South Africa – it operates instead by the systematic

exclusion of Palestinians from land, access and resources. Another difference is that the population Israel subjects to direct discrimination is of comparable size to its own, rather than a great majority, which was the case in South Africa. (However, the more than five million Palestinian refugees must also be counted as part of an eventual solution).

Regardless, the similarities between Israel and apartheid South Africa are profound. Israel too has been a force for instability and war in the wider region; its internal policies have generated increasing and wide-spread international criticism; there has been a call from representative organisations of the oppressed for international boycott, divestment and sanctions. Indeed, the differences are less important than the very fact of apartheid – as defined by the International Criminal Court – being practised at all. The award-winning documentary ‘Roadmap to Apartheid’ explores these similarities in great detail.

Many prominent South Africans have emphasised these parallels and expressed their support for an academic boycott of Israel. They include Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and Ronnie Kasrils (a Jewish ANC freedom fighter and former Minister in the South African Government).

Are Israeli academics not the Palestinians’ best Israeli friends?

Claim: *Many of those Israelis most critical of their country’s policies towards the Occupied Territories are academics. What sense does it make to target them by a boycott?*

Reality: There are indeed courageous

Israeli academics who raise their voices against repressive Israeli government policies. Not all, but many, of these academics also support the academic boycott. But those academics who raise their voices – irrespective of their view on boycott - are painfully few. That no university has officially adopted a critical position is not surprising. But neither has there been a single motion passed by an Israeli university senate in defence of Palestinian academic freedom. Nor has there been one by any academic professional association or trade union. This is despite the deliberate degradation of the Palestinian universities and educational system, as described above.

There is no absence of critical debate on these issues in, for example, the Israeli press. In many countries universities and their teachers are centres of dissenting thought. In Israel, possibly because of their very close links to the military, academic institutions have been quiescent. It is unfortunate that far from being friends to the Palestinians, Israeli academics have been key participants in their oppression.

Should we not be talking instead of boycotting?

Claim: *Even if Israeli university staff and institutions have not opposed the occupation of Palestine and the repressive policies in force there, surely it is better to keep talking to them, to build bridges, rather than have them retreat into their shells.*

Reality: This is a curious claim. In reality, those proposing the boycott are active in dialogue wherever and whenever possible. It is Israeli universities and opponents of the boycott who attempt to

silence critics rather than debate with them.

Many of the same people who are saying ‘build bridges’ (in order to head off a boycott) are intent on demolishing them should any serious discussion of boycotts or Israeli policies occur. The most common way they do this is through the accusation of anti-Semitism and the practice of ‘lawfare’ – threatening or actually implementing legal actions against bodies that discuss or implement boycott. British trade unions such as Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) have learned to weather such threats.²²

In fact, none of the boycotters wants to stop talking to Israeli academics. We are always happy to talk, to debate, to discuss with Israeli colleagues and do so at all opportunities. What we do not want is business as usual – that is to give Israeli academics, and through them the Israeli public, the impression that whatever they do to Palestinians has no consequences for them.

Will the boycott not hurt Palestinians?

***Claim:** Ordinary Palestinians will also suffer because of the boycott. Rather than boycotting Israeli Universities, why don't we demand that they open up access to Palestinians more, and also help Palestinian universities?*

Reality: Our boycott campaign is not just about Palestinian universities, but is provoked by the multiple assaults on human rights and international law perpetrated by the Israeli government. In any case it is not ‘help Palestinian universities or boycott Israeli ones’. There is no contradiction; people can work to

both help Palestinian universities and to boycott Israeli ones. Having said that, assistance to Palestinian Universities, whether by way of visiting foreign staff or financial donations, is so often hampered by the actions of the Israeli state (see above). Moreover, Palestinians do not want to be objects of charity; they want their human and political rights so as they can develop and run their own society.

Claims that boycott hurts Palestinians are akin to earlier claims made by supporters of South African apartheid that boycott hurts black South Africans. In response, both Palestinians and black South Africans issued unambiguous and repeated calls for boycott of a deeply racialised system which offers them no future.

Our academic colleagues in these Palestinian universities are calling for us in unequivocal tones to boycott Israel. There is clear reason for this: they know that Palestinian universities need an end to the Occupation, and that boycott is a non-violent way of helping bring this about. It would be hypocritical and patronising to speak of ‘helping the Palestinians’, while ignoring what they say.

Following the TUI vote in favour of boycott, the major academic unions in Palestine wrote to thank the TUI for the vote. Referencing the earlier pledge by Irish artists to boycott Israel,²³ they had this to say:

The TUI has proven beyond doubt, just as many leading Irish artists have in 2010, that effective solidarity with the oppressed, including by isolating the oppressor, is the most morally and politically sound contribution to the struggle to end oppression and to promote human rights as well as a just future for all.²⁴

Moving on: What can you do?

In this section we discuss the relationship between Irish Universities and Israel and conclude by outlining the practical ways in which Irish academics can take a stand for Palestinian rights, and implement the boycott.

The EU, Irish universities and Israel

Israeli universities, in conjunction with the Israeli arms industry, benefit hugely from EU research funding. To date Israel has coordinated 1071 EU research projects (i.e. been responsible for their development and implementation) and has been a project partner on an additional 3,090. The funding of these projects represents billions of euro.

The EU has funded Israeli projects with direct military applications (e.g. drone development), with indirect applications (e.g. biotechnologies that have uses in torture), and projects in settlements (e.g. Ahava who make Dead Sea cosmetics). The EU has thus been supporting the occupation and collaborating in Israel's military development very directly through R&D funding over the years. Israeli military companies such as Elbit Systems and Israel Aerospace Industries have received public funding from the EU, collaborating with European universities through their participation in EU Framework funded projects, of which Horizon 2020 is the latest iteration. Both Elbit and Israeli Aerospace Industries have supplied drones used by Israel to kill civilians, and both have unlawfully developed and provided security and surveillance equipment for Israel's illegal Separation Wall.

A number of leading Irish universities

are collaborating with Israeli research institutes and companies on military, security and surveillance research projects funded by the EU, for example: Trinity College Dublin with both Israeli drone manufacturers Elbit Security Systems (TASS) and Israel's International Security and Counter-terrorism Academy (TACTICS); UCC with Israel's prime weapon's development institute, Technion (COMMONSENSE); University of Ulster with Bar Ilan University on a security project (SAFE-COMMS); and NUI Galway with Tel Aviv University on aerospace project (INTAS).²⁵ To date, Irish universities have collaborated with Israel in 257 projects to date, seven of them listed as 'security', thirteen as 'aerospace' These programs are administered by Irish EU Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn.

This type of institutional collaboration implicates Irish academia in support of Israeli military projects and the occupation. In 2011, Palestinian academic organisations reiterated their call for European universities not to collaborate with such projects and to "Immediately end all research collaboration with Israeli military companies and all Israeli research institutions that are involved in violating international law and human rights."²⁶ We believe Irish academic institutions should heed this call.

What you can do to support the boycott

Apart from seeking to influence the academic institutions we are part of to respect the boycott, there are actions that all of us can take in our own academic life.

The following list of actions contains suggestions about what we can do. The list is not intended to be exhaustive; it is impossible to cover all cases that may arise, and for difficult cases academics can always consult their Palestinian colleagues through the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI). However the following actions suggested by PACBI, cover many of the situations in academic life.²⁷

- Refrain from organizing any joint activity, whether directly or indirectly, with any Israeli institution that is subject to boycott, regardless of the pretext and of the sponsors of this activity
- Refrain from visiting Israeli universities or participating in conferences held in these universities
- Refuse to collaborate with Israeli research institutions on EU funded projects
- Refrain from publishing in or refereeing articles for academic journals based at Israeli universities
- Refrain from availing of visiting lecturers or student exchange programmes sponsored by Israeli

academic institutions or by the Israeli state.

- Object to the convening in Israel of conferences and meetings of international bodies and associations; and to conferences which include the participation of Israeli institutions.

It is important to let Israeli institutions understand why you are taking the action that you are; the reason for not associating with them is not lack of time or interest, but because as an academic, you are taking the moral stand of respecting the Palestinian call for boycott. Stephen Hawking's decision in mid-2013 not to attend a conference in Israel sent a powerful message to Israelis and Palestinians alike. The reason it made such an impact was because he sent a letter to the conference organisers openly stating that he would not attend because he was heeding the advice of his Palestinian colleagues to respect the boycott. By informing the Israeli institution clearly and politely that you are one of a growing number of academics who support the boycott, you are informing them that 'business as usual' is no longer possible.



Palestinian students in Birzeit University in the Israeli-occupied West Bank

In addition, boycott actions will be more successful if there is strong consensus around them. Therefore it is important to organize awareness-raising talks within your academic institutions for staff and for students.

Join Academics for Palestine

Academics for Palestine has been set up to help create awareness about the issue and to build the academic boycott campaign in Ireland. We aim to organise and publicise meetings, discussions and events on campuses across the island of Ireland, to keep members informed about ongoing developments in Palestine/Israel,

and to encourage unions and academic bodies in Ireland to take a leading role in the academic boycott of Israel, just as they took such a role in relation to the boycott of apartheid South Africa.

If you are interested in organising an event, or in becoming a member of Academics for Palestine or would simply like to discuss the issues more with us, you can contact us at:

academicsforpalestine@gmail.com

You can also visit our website at:

www.academicsforpalestine.ie



Palestinian students celebrate graduation in An-Najah University, Nablus

Appendix I: The Palestinian Call for Boycott

In full, the PACBI call for boycott reads:

CALL FOR ACADEMIC AND CULTURAL BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL



Palestinian Campaign
for the Academic & Cultural
Boycott of Israel

Whereas Israel's colonial oppression of the Palestinian people, which is based on Zionist ideology, comprises the following:

- Denial of its responsibility for the Nakba -- in particular the waves of ethnic cleansing and dispossession that created the Palestinian refugee problem -- and therefore refusal to accept the inalienable rights of the refugees and displaced stipulated in and protected by international law;
- Military occupation and colonization of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza since 1967, in violation of international law and UN resolutions;
- The entrenched system of racial discrimination and segregation against the Palestinian citizens of Israel, which resembles the defunct apartheid system in South Africa;

Since Israeli academic institutions (mostly state controlled) and the vast majority of Israeli intellectuals and academics have either contributed directly to maintaining, defending or otherwise justifying the above forms of oppression, or have been complicit in them through their silence,

Given that all forms of international intervention have until now failed to force Israel to comply with international law or to end its repression of the Palestinians, which has manifested itself in many forms, including siege, indiscriminate killing, wanton destruction and the racist colonial wall,

In view of the fact that people of conscience in the international community of scholars and intellectuals have historically shouldered the moral responsibility to fight injustice, as exemplified in their struggle to abolish apartheid in South Africa through diverse forms of boycott,

Recognizing that the growing international boycott movement against Israel has expressed the need for a Palestinian frame of reference outlining guiding principles,

In the spirit of international solidarity, moral consistency and resistance to injustice and oppression,

We, Palestinian academics and intellectuals, call upon our colleagues in the international community to comprehensively and consistently boycott all Israeli academic and cultural

institutions as a contribution to the struggle to end Israel's occupation, colonization and system of apartheid, by applying the following:

- Refrain from participation in any form of academic and cultural cooperation, collaboration or joint projects with Israeli institutions;
- Advocate a comprehensive boycott of Israeli institutions at the national and international levels, including suspension of all forms of funding and subsidies to these institutions;
- Promote divestment and disinvestment from Israel by international academic institutions;
- Work toward the condemnation of Israeli policies by pressing for resolutions to be adopted by academic, professional and cultural associations and organizations;
- Support Palestinian academic and cultural institutions directly without requiring them to partner with Israeli counterparts as an explicit or implicit condition for such support.

Endorsed by:

Palestinian Federation of Unions of University Professors and Employees; Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions; Palestinian NGO Network, West Bank; Teachers' Federation; Palestinian Writers' Federation; Palestinian League of Artists; Palestinian Journalists' Federation; General Union of Palestinian Women; Palestinian Lawyers' Association; and tens of other Palestinian federations, associations, and civil society organizations. (6th July 2004)

Appendix II: TUI Motion

The Teachers Union of Ireland motion in full reads:

Motion 241. Executive Committee/Dublin Colleges (x4)

TUI demand that ICTU step up its campaign for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against the apartheid state of Israel until it lifts its illegal siege of Gaza and its illegal occupation of the West Bank, and agrees to abide by International law and all UN Resolutions against it.

Congress instructs the Executive Committee to:

- (a) Conduct an awareness campaign amongst TUI members on the need for BDS
- (b) Request all members to cease all cultural and academic collaboration with Israel, including the exchange of scientists, students and academic personalities, as well as all cooperation in research programmes.

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Responding to the Palestinian call for a boycott of Israeli academic institutions, a group of concerned academics in Ireland has begun a campaign to urge Irish-based academics to support the boycott, which is intended to last until Israeli academia ends its complicity in - and in many cases its active support for - the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, its role in the unequal treatment of Israeli citizens whose ethnicity is Palestinian, and its support for illegal settlements that usurp lands in the occupied West Bank and in Jerusalem.

This information booklet explains the origin of the academic boycott campaign and explores its rationale by addressing frequently asked questions about the campaign. It explains what the boycott entails and the kinds of actions it excludes. For example, the boycott is directed at institutions but not at individual academics. The booklet also includes a section on the framework of European Union funding which aids Israel's military-industrial complex, and information on a number of weapons-related projects that Irish universities are implicated in through their collaboration with Israeli companies. Although a full list of such egregious collaborations is not available, we hope that by launching this campaign, the lid will be lifted on the extent of Irish academic support for Israel's occupation and its system of apartheid. Lastly, we provide a list of suggested actions that academics can take to advance the boycott.



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