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The European Platform for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (EPACBI) is born.

On the 25 and 26 September, the first international meeting of academics in support of the academic and cultural boycott of Israel was held in Paris. The meeting, convened jointly by BRICUP and AURDIP (Association des Universitaires pour le Respect du Droit International en Palestine) brought about 50 academics together from 9 countries to discuss the coordination of the campaign across Europe in order to respond more effectively to the call of Palestinian civil society for a comprehensive academic and cultural boycott of Israel. The countries were Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The outcome was the establishment of a new international platform – EPACBI (see EPACBI's draft launch statement below).

Together with representatives of PACBI (Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel), the European delegates overwhelmingly adopted the common principles laid out in the PACBI guidelines, signalling a significant extension of boycott activity. Priority areas for campaigning were agreed. These included the EU funding of Israeli academic research, extending the reach of EPACBI throughout Europe and support for academics of all nationalities who suffer harassment for their support for boycott. Working groups were identified to carry these objectives forward.

A basic structure to enable the network of national groups and organizations to exchange ideas and develop joint projects was agreed on. This included a small Coordinating Committee and plans for an email based communication system.

In the evening, delegates attended a public meeting in the centre of Paris, which brought together over 100 people to listen to prominent supporters of the academic and cultural boycott. These were, the English art critic, author and painter, John Berger, the Israeli film maker and harsh critic of Zionism, Eyal Sivan, Professor Christophe Oberlin, the eminent vascular surgeon who as part of a 3 member team from France, entered Gaza in January to treat the injured at the Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, together with BRICUP's Secretary, Professor Robert Boyce and AURDIP's President, Professor Ivar Ekelund .

The further development of EPACBI will be covered in future editions of this newsletter. The Coordinating Committee, on which Robert Boyce is BRICUP's representative, would welcome news of any mainland European academics known to be supportive of the academic boycott and who may be interested to hear more about the activities of EPACBI.

The participants are working on a statement of which the following is a draft of the introduction.

The Paris Declaration of a European Platform for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel

Academics representing organisations from nine European countries meeting in Paris announce the establishment of a common European platform for the academic and cultural boycott of Israel. The national, regional and local organisations adhering to this platform:

- Accept and promote the boycott of Israel's academic and cultural institutions;
- Do so in accordance with the call of Palestinian civil society for such a boycott and accept the terms of this call and the guidance on its implementation issued by the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel. (PACBI).
- Will continue to develop and strengthen the boycott until the Palestinian people secure a resolution of their current injustices in

compliance with international law and internationally acknowledged human rights

The University of Johannesburg Petition

A petition signed by 200 signatories from 22 academic institutions calls for a break between the University of Johannesburg and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev . The call is supported by: Professors Kader Asmal, Allan Boesak, Breyten Breytenbach, John Dugard, Antjie Krog, Mahmood Mamdani, Barney Pitsoana and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

South African academics support the call for UJ to terminate relationship with an Israeli institution.

The full text of the petition follows:-

As members of the academic community of South Africa, a country with a history of brute racism on the one hand and both academic acquiescence and resistance to it on the other, we write to you with deep concern regarding the relationship between the University of Johannesburg (UJ) and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU). The relationship agreement, presented as 'merely the continuation' of a 'purely scientific co-operation' is currently being reviewed owing to concerns raised by UJ students, academics and staff.

For reasons explained below and detailed in the attached Fact Sheet, we wish to add our voices to those calling for the suspension of agreement with BGU.

As academics we acknowledge that all of our scholarly work takes place within larger social contexts -particularly in institutions committed to social transformation. South African institutions are under an obligation to revisit relationships forged during the apartheid era with other institutions that turned a blind eye to racial oppression in the name of 'purely scholarly' or 'scientific work'.

The Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories has had disastrous effects on access to education for Palestinians. While Palestinians are not able to access universities and schools, Israeli universities produce the research, technology, arguments and leaders for maintaining the occupation. BGU is no exception, by maintaining links to both the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) and the arms industry BGU structurally supports and facilitates the Israeli

occupation. An example of BGU's complicity is its agreement with the IDF to provide full university qualification to airforce pilots within a special BGU programme. Furthermore, BGU is also complicit in the general discrimination at Israeli universities against Palestinians and Palestinian citizens of Israel.

It is clear to us that any connection with an institution so heavily vested in the Israeli occupation would amount to collaboration with an occupation that denigrates the values and principles that form the basis of any vibrant democracy. These are not only the values that underpin our post-apartheid South Africa, but are also values that we believe UJ has come to respect and uphold in the democratic era.

We thus support the decision taken by UJ to reconsider the agreement between itself and BGU. Furthermore, we call for the relationship to be suspended until such a time that, at minimum, the state of Israel adheres to international law and BGU, (as did some South African universities during the struggle against South African apartheid) openly declares itself against the occupation and withdraws all privileges for the soldiers who enforce it.

The US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (USACBI) reports that over 500 academics have endorsed its campaign

Extract from the New York Jewish Daily, Wednesday, February 4th, 2009. Gerald Steinberg, a political science professor at Bar-Ilan University and co-founder of the International Advisory Board for Academic Freedom said "We have to be careful not to over-exaggerate on this, but we also have to be careful not to ignore it." "It is a festering wound and it needs to be countered, not ignored. "The danger is not these 15; the danger is if it becomes 500,"

See <http://usacbi.wordpress.com/>

When originally founded in 2009, only a handful of academics called for the academic and cultural boycott of Israel. The call was dismissed as having little to no significance and was reflected in the statement from Gerald Steinberg. For Steinberg and others, **the power of an academic and cultural**

boycott would be achieved with a critical mass of 500 endorsers. The USACBI is pleased to announce that we have reached that critical number. Endorsements by US academics and scholars recently crossed 500, and there are now 150 cultural workers who have also endorsed USACBI! This is a major victory for the growing academic and cultural boycott of Israel, and for the movement for justice and equality in Israel, as defenders of the status quo in Israel have repeatedly observed that the legitimacy of the state of Israel in the global court of public opinion is threatened by the boycott movement.

There is a growing shift in the tide of public opinion in the U.S. which has only swelled in the wake of Israel's massacre of international activists and relief workers on humanitarian aid flotilla's off the coast of Gaza in international waters on May 31. More people are realizing the urgent need for the international civil society to challenge the siege of the 1.5 million people imprisoned by the U.S.-backed Israeli blockade of Gaza and the exceptional impunity of Israel. The presence of Palestinian Israeli MP Haneen Zoabi on board the ship also sheds light on the state of apartheid in historic Palestine, [an issue that has long been suppressed but is increasingly drawing attention.](#) The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) has called on people of conscience around the world to pressure Israel to comply with international law by joining the growing boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel. As PACBI reports, 'Alice Walker has reminded the world of the . . . boycott of a racist bus company in Montgomery, Alabama during the civil rights movement, calling for endorsement of BDS against Israel as a moral duty.'

USACBI was formed during the war on Gaza in early 2009 and our list of endorsers has grown steadily. USACBI is linked to the larger BDS movement that is expanding across the U.S. This past year has seen Hampshire College's successful drive to divest from Israel spread to campuses across the U.S. On the cultural front, artists such as Elvis Costello, Gil Scott-Heron, and the Pixies, have cancelled shows in Israel as a sign of principled solidarity with the Palestinian people, similar to the cultural boycott of apartheid South Africa. Labor organizers and churches have also taken a moral stance by engaging in BDS campaigns. In Oakland, activists united with dock workers to prevent the

unloading of Israeli Zim line ships in response to the flotilla massacre.

USACBI calls on academics, students, and cultural workers (artists, filmmakers, writers, journalists, poets) to (1) endorse our call for academic and cultural boycott, if they have not done so already, by sending an email to uscom4acbi@gmail.com, and invite as many others as possible to do so (see our website for more information); and (2) join us in mobilizing with the expanding boycott and divestment movement in the US. There are several ways in which you could support the campaign! If you would like to get involved, please write to us at uscom4acbi@gmail.com. To see who is currently on our Organizing Collective or Advisory Board, check out our website.

The PACBI column.

BDS Goes South

In a landmark event held in New Delhi on 22-23 September 2010, the conference “A Just Peace for Palestine” ended with a clear call for BDS as a strategy for realizing justice for Palestinians. The conference was co-organized by the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC), the Committee for Solidarity with Palestine, the All India Peace and Solidarity Organization, and the recently established Indian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel. The conference ended with a resolution that called upon “the Indian government to end its military ties with Israel and return to its earlier commitment to the cause of the Palestinian people.” The conference also affirmed that “the world must declare that Israel is an apartheid state. It must call for global boycott and sanctions on Israel as long as it continues its illegal occupation of Palestine and its apartheid policies.” The resolution appealed to “people in India to join the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign as a show of solidarity with the Palestine people and their just struggle.” A plan of action was announced, in which several steps to show solidarity with Palestinians were outlined, particularly the launching of BDS campaigns and other measures by people’s action groups in the Asian region.

The BDS National Committee (BNC) was represented by BNC Secretariat member and Stop the Wall director Jamal Juma’, and PACBI founding and steering committee member Lisa Taraki. The Palestinian delegation also included Mustafa

Barghouti, Palestinian Legislative Council member and head of the Palestinian National Initiative; and Keneset member Jamal Zahalqa, leader of the National Democratic Assembly parliamentary bloc. Notable speakers included Richard Falk, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory; former UN General Assembly President Father Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann; Israeli dissident academic Ilan Pappé; Walden Bello, Member of the Philippines House of Representatives; notable Indian academics and writers Aijaz Ahmed, Achin Vanaik, Githa Hariharan and Upendra Baxi; veteran trade union leader from Bangladesh Rashed Menon; the chairman of the Communist Party of Bangladesh Manzurul Khan; Prakash Karat, general secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist); Mordecai Briemberg of the Canada-Palestine Support Network; noted Indian journalist Seema Mustafa; member of parliament of Bangladesh, Moinuddin Khan; A.B. Bardhan, general secretary of the Communist Party of India; D.P.Tripathi, general secretary of the Nationalist Congress Party; and several other public personalities from India.

During and after the conference, some of the participants from Palestine went on to speak at a number of Indian universities and colleges, as well as at public meetings and press conferences. PACBI’s Lisa Taraki visited the cities of Calicut and Hyderabad, where she spoke with academics, students, political figures, parliamentarians and the press about BDS as a strategy chosen by Palestinian civil society, focusing on the academic and cultural boycott of Israel.

Of particular note was a meeting with members of the newly-established Indian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel and other Indian academics and cultural activists. A plan of action for activating the academic and cultural boycott in India was developed at this meeting; PACBI looks forward to working with our Indian partners in bringing BDS to India and expanding the reach of the academic and cultural boycott movement.

PACBI is proud to have been involved in this historic conference. Now that the reach of the BDS movement has been firmly extended to West and South Asia, we can expect to see a further enhancement of the global movement in solidarity with the Palestinian people and the launching of boycott campaigns led by Indian and other Global South academics, writers, artists, and intellectuals.

The level of support for Palestine in India encountered by the delegation among ordinary people, students, political leaders and people's movements was phenomenal. We are hopeful that campaigns led by our partners in India will contribute toward influencing the policy of the Indian government, which has been building a military and political alliance with Israel. This is particularly important due to India's history of fighting colonial rule and leading the nonaligned movement.

Supporting the Palestinian BDS call from within

The following open letter was addressed to the board and member theatres of the European Theatre Convention (ETC) on September 14th 2010

“ We, Jews, Palestinians, citizens of Israel, write to you today asking you to cancel the Israeli theatre The Cameri's membership of the ETC, due to The Cameri's implicit and now also explicit role in sustaining the occupation of Palestine and the oppression of the Palestinian people.

“As you may already know, on Wednesday, August 25, an Israeli newspaper revealed [1] that the major theatres in the country, including The Cameri, are to perform in the newly established cultural centre of Ariel. Ariel is one of the largest settlements in the occupied West Bank, located approximately 16 kilometres east of the internationally recognized “green line”, on expropriated agricultural Palestinian land. As any other settlement for Jews-Only, Ariel's existence is in itself a violation of international law, breaching article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention which prohibits an occupier from transferring it's own civilian population into occupied territories. Ariel regularly contaminates Palestinian water and agricultural lands [2]. Moreover, the West Bank separation wall and the roads for Israelis only that surround it form severe restrictions on Palestinian freedom of movement and further expropriate Palestinian lands and resources. In 2004 the international court of Justice in Hague ruled the Israeli-built West Bank separation wall to be entirely illegal as well.

Following this publication, dozens of Israeli theatre artists signed a protest letter declaring they refuse to perform in Ariel.[3] They were later joined by 150 Israeli artists and intellectuals, expanding the

boycott to include academic institutions and events as well [4]. This rare voice of protest was soon met by threats and denunciation from the Israeli prime-minister and government [5], the Knesset, and the managers of Israeli theatres themselves, including The Cameri.

In spite of The Cameri's shifting into active involvement in the occupation of Palestinian territories, this recent development merely exposes the theatre's continued complicity in sustaining the apartheid policies of its main funder, the state of Israel. Like all Israeli cultural institutions, especially on the international level, The Cameri functions as a fig leaf for the Israeli regime and its human rights violations, remaining silent and serving to obscure them. The Cameri's ties with the Israeli army, providing benefits and discounts for soldiers [6] whose main task is to oppress another people - though considered 'normal' in Israeli society - should not be approved as such by the international community.

In light of such typical institutional complicity and due to the fact that all other forms of international intervention have failed, the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) has issued in 2004 its call for a boycott of all Israeli cultural institutions [7]. Supporters of the call have asked individuals and institutions abroad to refrain from any form of academic and cultural cooperation, collaboration or joint projects with Israeli institutions.

PACBI's statement delineates the extent of the Israeli colonial rule on the Palestinian people. This includes the denial of the 1948 ethnic cleansing of Palestine carried out by the Israeli forces and the ensuing consistent refusal to grant compensation and the right of return to the Palestinian refugees; the systematic discrimination of Palestinian citizens of Israel; and the 1967 military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and their further colonization in violation of international law and UN resolutions.

Along the same principles, a wide spectrum of 171 Palestinian civil society organizations have issued the 2005 general Call for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel until it complies with international law and universal principles of human rights [8]. PACBI's Call and the BDS Call signify a

Palestinian resort to non-violent tactics that has gained tremendous support throughout the world, sending a strong message of “no business as usual” to the Israeli government and to its complicit institutions.

The Cameri's membership in a respectable organization such as the ETC, as well as any form of cooperation with it, reflect back on the ETC and its members and implicate you too in condoning the Israeli colonial policies. We therefore appeal to you to bring about the cancellation of The Cameri's ETC membership and refrain from cooperating with it from now on, until the basic rights of the Palestinian people are respected by Israel.

For signatories see <http://boycottisrael.info>

1 <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/major-theaters-raise-curtain-across-green-line-1.310040>

2 http://www.btselem.org/ENGLISH/video/20090111_ariel_sewage_in_salfit.asp

3 <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3944791,00.html>

4 <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/150-academics-artists-back-actors-boycott-of-settlement-arts-center-1.311149>

5 <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3945238,00.html>

6 http://www.cameri.co.il/index.php?page_id=2103

7 <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=869>

8 <http://bdsmovement.net/?q=node/52>

The 86th Annual OECD Tourism Conference in Jerusalem

Open letter from BRICUP to Mr Anthony Gooch, Director, OECD Public Affairs and Communications Directorate. September 14th 2010

We are an organisation of British academics who work to support Palestinian academic freedom, which as you know, has been undermined for decades by Israel's occupation. To this end, we have

run a campaign working with other academics in Britain, Europe and the United States to raise awareness of the plight of Palestinian students, teachers and universities. Our ultimate aim is to help Palestinians fight the Israeli occupation that has blighted so many lives and careers.

As a result, we deprecate all actions that purport to treat Israel as a state which has no record of oppression, and that can be understood to reward it for its practices. It is in this context that we write to express our extreme dismay at the projected conference of the OECD tourism committee to be held on October 20-22 2010 in Jerusalem. We have received representations on this subject from a number of distinguished academics whose research area is tourism with a special interest in the Middle East/Mediterranean region, expressing their incredulity and asking us to take it up with you.

Here are just a few of the tourism-related issues that make this choice of location so bizarre. Will the Conference be made aware of the Jewish settlements and Israeli-only roads in the occupied West Bank and the besieged and destitute Gaza Strip amongst Israeli tourist sites? Or the evictions of Palestinians from their homes in Jerusalem, and the frequent house demolitions that take place there? We understand that the OECD is linking the forthcoming meeting to its 'green' tourism policies in the region. If this is so, we are wondering if anyone involved in planning this Conference has seen the environmental destruction that afflicts the occupied Palestinian territories, with thousands of uprooted olive trees and orchards, bulldozed forests, as in the illegal Har Homa settlement outside Jerusalem, which replaced an ancient wooded hill, and the toxic effluent from settlements that routinely pours down onto Palestinian villages? The separation wall that Israel has been building on Palestinian territory since 2001 has swallowed up acres of agricultural land – in Bethlehem alone, the wall has made 11% of municipal Bethlehem into a wasteland.

There are no new facts here. It is all in the public domain, and we would be happy to refer you to the numerous sources and websites which detail the effects of Israel's occupation on the Palestinians. What we would like is to urge you to reconsider the decision to hold this conference in Jerusalem. The OECD, as a major international organisation, is well

placed to give a signal to the Israeli authorities. Cancelling the conference, even at this stage, would send a powerful signal to Israel that its policy against the Palestinians is not condoned by the outside world.

We would appreciate a dialogue with you on these matters, and look forward to your response.

BRICUP

Netherlands cancels tour by Israeli mayors because the participant list includes settlement representatives.

The Netherlands has cancelled a tour of the country by a group of Israeli mayors that included representatives of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. The group was due to study public policy and local governance, but when the Dutch Foreign Ministry found out that regional council heads from the West bank settlements Efrat and Kiryat Arba were due to participate, they decided to cancel the tour. The Israeli Foreign Ministry was not best pleased, saying "This is undoubtedly useless and harmless politics, and we hope that this is not the final word on the topic." Local Council Chairman Shlomo Buchbut wrote to the Dutch foreign minister, saying that he regarded the decision "with great severity [...] These kinds of actions only hurt the cause of advancing peace."

But the decision is not 'harmless politics' at all. It is a principled reaction to an attempt to normalize the Israel/Palestine situation and it is much to be hoped that the Dutch Foreign Ministry adheres to its decision.

Australian columnist cleared of 'anti-Semitic' writing. September 19th, 2010

A complaint against Mike Carlton, a journalist who writes a weekly column in the Sydney Morning Herald, was dismissed last week by the Australian Press Council after a reader had accused him of expressing "anti-Semitic elements" that "bring opprobrium on Jews through the use of racist imagery [and] factually incorrect statements." Following the Gaza flotilla incident Carlton had accused the pro-Israel lobby of being "a ferocious

beast" that "lunges from its lair, fangs bared" He described Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as "an unprincipled thug addicted to the use of military force."

The Press Council acknowledged that Carlton's work was strongly critical but ruled that he did not breach its principle that material should avoid placing gratuitous emphasis on a particular ethnicity, religion or nationality. In fact Carlton has said that he was "entirely content" that Israel exists "as a free and independent Jewish homeland." But he added, "What I do object to is Israel's brutal and unconscionable oppression of the people of Gaza and the attempts, in this country and around the world to silence those who speak out about it."

<http://www.jta.org/news/article/2010/09/19/2740962/australian-columnist-cleared-of-anti-semitic-writing>

To readers who are not already on the BRICUP Supporters' List

We are currently reviewing the supporters' list for BRICUP – the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine – aims below – and would like to invite you to join the list. Although BRICUP is a UK-based organisation, we envisage the supporters' list as more international and although primarily academic, more broadly based.

The list will not be published, but will enable us to contact our supporters from time to time with specific information or requests. Nor does it involve you in any cost, although we would welcome donations to the address below. You will receive our monthly newsletter and occasional other e-mails about urgent developments; we guarantee not to overfill your inbox.

If you want to be included on the list please send a message to supporters@bricup.org.uk, simply saying

'I want to support BRICUP'

- If you work at a university or college please include which institution and the post you hold.
- If you are not at a university please include other relevant affiliations that will help us to

identify who can help us on particular issues and also the city and country where you live.

BRICUP is an organisation of academics whose twin missions are:-

- To support Palestinian universities, staff and students.
- To oppose the continued illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands with its concomitant breaches of international conventions of human rights, its refusal to accept UN resolutions or rulings of the International Court, and its persistent suppression of Palestinian academic freedom

In support of these aims, BRICUP's aims are to:-

Put pressure on the EU and the UK government for the exclusion of Israel from the European Research Area.

Develop a policy that encourages individual academics to break their professional links with Israel by such actions as:

- i) Refusing research collaborations with Israeli institutions or to referee papers or grant applications issuing from such institutions
 - ii) Refusing to attend academic conferences in Israel
 - iii) Supporting Israeli academic colleagues working with Palestinian colleagues in their demand for self-determination and academic freedom
 - iv) Working within our trades unions and professional organisations in support of such actions
- Explore forms of support to Palestinian academic colleagues

You can read more about our work on our website www.bricup.org.uk, or by purchasing our pamphlet "Why boycott Israeli Universities?" (Price including postage and packing within the UK £5.00).

Donations and pamphlet purchase requests to: BM BRICUP, London WC1N 3XX, UK

Mike Cushman for BRICUP

Financial support for BRICUP

BRICUP needs your financial support.

Please do consider making a donation .

One-off donations may be made by sending a cheque to the Treasurer, at BRICUP, BM BRICUP, London, WC1N 3XX, UK or

by making a bank transfer to BRICUP at

Sort Code 08-92-99

Account Number 65156591

IBAN = GB20 CPBK 0892 9965 1565 91

BIC = CPBK GB22

Like all organisations, while we welcome one-off donations, we can plan our work much better if people pledge regular payments by standing order.

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

More details can be obtained from treasurer@bricup.org.uk

Follow BRICUP on twitter

twitter.com/bricup

BRICUP is the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine. We are always willing to help provide speakers for meetings. All such requests and any comments or suggestions concerning this Newsletter are always welcome.

Email them to: newsletter@bricup.org.uk