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Architects against Israeli occupation

In deciding to [back the boycott](#) of Ariel theatre in the West Bank, Frank Gehry, the Canadian-American architect of [Guggenheim](#) fame, joins a growing body of professionals who are making a stand against the illegal settlements. Ariel, a quintessential illegal settlement, is continually expanding to fit the [over-generous boundaries](#) staked out over Palestinian land, choking the development of Palestinian villages nearby. Its new [state-funded cultural centre](#), 20 years in the construction, is due to open in November.

Architecture and planning are instruments of the occupation, and constitute part of a continuing war against a whole people, whether as a minority within Israel's green line, or in the occupied territories. Since this involves dispossession,

discrimination and acquisition of land and homes by force, against the Geneva conventions, it can be classified as participation in war crimes. Arbitrary planning laws are not enforced in the many illegal projects built by settlers, and major development plans are implemented without complete approval. Areas owned by Palestinians are simply declared to be green areas, making their presence there "illegal". What can one say about the Israeli architects who follow the state's policies and aims yet deny that their role is political? Despite all the evidence of illegality under international law and breaches of human rights in the land grabs, house demolitions and evictions, Israeli architects and planners continue their activities. They cannot claim that they do not know: there have been plenty of calls [for them to stop](#).

More of the illegal projects that have been built over the last four decades are [ready to go](#) now that the recent settlement freeze has ended – with no sign of resistance or protest from the Israeli Association of United Architects (IAUA). This applies not only to ultra-Zionist architecture firms but mainstream architects of international repute such as [Moshe Safdie](#) and [Shlomo Aronson](#). Safdie has been responsible for the now notorious [Plan 11555](#) for the extreme nationalist settler movement Elad that has, in effect, been given control of Silwan, a [Palestinian neighbourhood in East Jerusalem](#).

The [International Union of Architects \(UIA\)](#) has already taken note that Israeli architecture and planning in the West Bank is contrary to its professional ethics and codes of conduct. After Architects and Planners for Justice in Palestine raised this issue at the UIA council meeting in Brazil in July 2009, the UIA issued a statement saying: "The UIA council condemns development projects and the construction of buildings on land

that has been ethnically purified or illegally appropriated, and projects based on regulations that are ethnically or culturally discriminatory, and similarly it condemns all action contravening the fourth Geneva Convention."

With settlers now [celebrating the prospect](#) of thousands of new housing units being built in the West Bank, Israeli architects will continue reaping the bonanza of a housing boom that has continued for decades. [Writing in Haaretz](#) earlier this month, Esther Zandberg, the paper's architecture correspondent, said:

Trends and world-views seep in from the other side of the Green Line and impact on architecture in the rest of Israel more than architects are willing to admit. A protest by established architects within the community, figures with a reputation and influence, could lead to a protest movement that will draw many, restore to architecture its confidence in itself and its values, and may also make its own contribution to the end of the conflict over the land. Architects? Protest? Peace really can happen.

The international solidarity movement has decided that the best way to change Israel's behaviour is to take actions against Israeli companies and institutions in order to put pressure on the government there. Last year, as the result of a [campaign](#) led by APJP, [Pacbi](#) and universities in Europe, Spain disqualified architecture students from the "Ariel University Centre of Samaria" (sic) from a competition to build a solar house in the Solar Decathlon in Madrid. "Spain acted in line with European Union policy of opposing Israel's occupation of Palestinian land," [a Spanish official said](#). Since little seems forthcoming from the Israeli architects' body, despite appeals over the last decade, the responsibility falls on architects worldwide and the UIA to press for action to end this complicity, and defend the ethics and humanity of their profession.

Article by [Abe Hayeem](#)

See [guardian.co.uk](#) (4/10/2010)

A declaration by South African Artists against Apartheid

As South African Artists and Cultural Workers who have lived under, survived, and in many cases resisted apartheid, we acknowledge the value of international solidarity in our own struggle. It is in this context that we respond to the call by Palestinians, and their Israeli allies, for such solidarity.

As artists of conscience we say no to apartheid - anywhere. We respond to the call for international solidarity and undertake not to avail any invitation to perform or exhibit in Israel. Nor will we accept funding from institutions linked to the government of Israel. This is our position until such time as Israel, in the least, complies with international law and universal principles of human rights. Until then, we too unite with international colleagues under the banner of "Artists Against Apartheid."

Collaborating with institutions linked to the state of Israel cannot be regarded as a neutral act in the name of cultural exchange. In an official report commissioned by the South African government in 2009, the Human Sciences Research Council confirmed that Israel, by its policies and practices, is guilty of the crime of apartheid. Numerous others, including South Africans who have a deep familiarity with racial oppression (and resistance to it), have spoken of life in the shadow of Israeli repression as akin to or worse to that under apartheid in South Africa.

Artistic performances in Israel promote a "business as usual" attitude that normalizes and "whitewashes" a state that is guilty of daily forms of exclusion, violence and war crimes. Operation Cast Lead in Gaza saw over 400 children killed by the Israeli military; and the unconscionable attack by Israel in international waters aboard the Freedom Flotilla resulted in the death of nine humanitarian aid workers. Both have been described as crimes in violation of international law – the former by the 2009 Goldstone report and the latter by the UN Human Rights Council.

As artists of conscience we can act to resist the normalization of Israel's apartheid policies. Some

may hide behind the excuse that art is apolitical. However, artists have not been hesitant in taking a position against racism and inequality. As South Africans we benefitted from such a position of conscience. For example, members of the British Musicians' Union, pledged not to perform in South Africa as long as apartheid was in effect. Numerous organizations and artists in film, television, theatre and other arts fell in line against the South African regime and contributed to the denormalisation of South African apartheid which eventually led to that regime's demise – and to the birth of a free and democratic country, for all.

Inspired by the boycott of Apartheid South Africa, Palestinians have made a call for a Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign of Israel. This call has been actively supported by Israelis as well. British writer John Berger, Indian novelist Arundhati Roy, US poet Adrienne Rich, British film director Ken Loach and screenwriter Paul Laverty are just some of the prominent voices that have joined this call. In a movement that continues to gain momentum, a string of artists have recently either cancelled shows or pledged their refusal to be complicit in Israeli Apartheid. Some names include: Carlos Santana, Elvis Costello, Gil Scott-Heron, Dustin Hoffman, Meg Ryan, Faithless and Massive Attack. For further details see the [Record Sheet](#).

Mike Leigh cancels a teaching visit to Israel

The Bafta-winning film-maker [Mike Leigh](#) has pulled out of a teaching trip to Israel citing the proposed oyalty oath bill as the final cause. This bill, if passed, will require non-Jews seeking Israeli citizenship to pledge allegiance to Israel as a "Jewish and democratic state".

Leigh said that he was not prepared to take part in the "great masters" programme at the Sam Spiegel Film & Television School in Jerusalem. Writing to the school's director Renen Schorr, he said

“As you know, I have always had serious misgivings about coming, but I allowed myself to be persuaded by your sincerity and your commitment [...] and it is because of those special qualities of yours that I am especially sorry to have

to let you down. But I have absolutely no choice. I cannot come, I do not want to come, and I am not coming. Eight weeks after our lunch, the Israeli attack on the flotilla took place. As I watched the world very properly condemn this atrocity, I almost cancelled. I now wish I had, and blame my cowardice for not having done so. Since then, your government has gone from bad to worse. I need not itemize all that has taken place ... I had not faced up to the prospect of pulling out until a few weeks ago, but the resumption of the illegal building on the West Bank made me start to consider it seriously. And now we have the Loyalty Oath. This is the last straw – quite apart from the ongoing criminal blockade of Gaza, not to mention the endless shooting of innocent people there, including juveniles...”

The Director of the school is reported to have offered to convene a press conference where Leigh would have a platform to express his objections to Israeli policy and to have a direct influence upon public awareness and opinion. He argued that the school should not be punished for the actions of the Israeli government. This was unacceptable to Mike Leigh, as it is to all who heed the Palestinian call for a cultural boycott of Israel - see the PACBI column in this issue of the BRICUP Newsletter. Israeli academic and cultural institutions are complicit in the repression of the Palestinian people and boycott is the only ethical reaction.

Source of material: [Ben Child](#) in [guardian.co.uk](#) on 18-10-2010

From Johannesburg to Oslo, the Israel academic boycott spreads

With the 29 September 2010 decision by the Senate of the University of Johannesburg "not to continue a long-standing relationship with Ben Gurion University (BGU) in Israel in its present form" and to set conditions "for the relationship to continue," a new campaign for the academic boycott of Israel was born at the southern tip of the African continent.[1] Almost in tandem, on 11 October, at the northern tip of the European continent, a fresh academic and cultural boycott was announced in Oslo, endorsed by 100 leading Norwegian figures in the academy, culture and sports.[2]

Two weeks earlier, the European Platform for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (EPACBI) was established, after a successful meeting in Paris of 50 representatives of academic boycott campaigns from 9 European countries and a PACBI representative. The meeting was called at the initiative of the French campaign, AURDIP (Association des Universitaires pour le Respect du Droit International en Palestine), and BRICUP (British Committee for the Universities of Palestine).

Across the Atlantic, in Montreal, Quebec (Canada), on 22 October, more than 600 BDS supporters and organizers -- academics, students, trade unionists, feminists, LGBT activists, indigenous rights advocates, etc. -- gathered at the particularly inspiring opening of the BDS Conference there, breaking into smaller sectoral groups over the next two days to plan, debate, strategize, share, critique and evaluate. The academic BDS workshop witnessed one of the liveliest discussions about the many campus divestment and other academic boycott campaigns planned across Canada for this new school year. Student and faculty BDS supporters at McGill University and Concordia University have already announced a joint campaign to scuttle exchange programs with Israel's Technion University.[3] At Carleton University, Ottawa, an ambitious divestment drive against companies profiting from Israel's occupation and violations of international law has already been launched earlier this year.[4]

Crossing the border south to the US, tens of divestment campaigns have mushroomed across campuses. Inspired by the successful drive last year by Hampshire College student activists to divest their College's investment portfolio from companies implicated in the Israeli occupation and the benchmark campaign to divest at the University of California Berkeley later, BDS activists in many public and private colleges have launched their own drives, learning the lessons and best practices of previous experiences. A particularly unifying campaign in this respect is the one targeting TIAA-CREF, initiated and led by Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP).[5] The endorsement by the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC) of this campaign [6] has helped to raise interest in it among many BDS student activists across the USA. Given the size of the TIAA-CREF

investments and the spread of its beneficiaries on most campuses, this promises to become one of the leading BDS campaigns anywhere.

In many universities around the world, in Johannesburg, Montreal, Oslo, Paris, London, Delhi, Rome, Beirut, Caracas, Melbourne, San Francisco and tens of other cities, the discussion is no longer on whether the academic boycott of Israel should be adopted, but, rather, on how, when and how gradually. As the Jewish Telegraphic Agency put it: [7]

The fear is that Israel is subject to a growing tide of delegitimization that, if unchecked, could pose an existential threat. The nightmare scenario has the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement gaining more traction and anti-Israel opinion moving from Western campuses to governments, followed by a lifting of the protective American diplomatic umbrella.

Anyone who was active in the South Africa anti-apartheid movement in the West knows well that when US and other Western campuses started adopting divestment initiatives against apartheid, the beginning of the end of apartheid was in sight. The real "delegitimization" the Palestinian-initiated BDS campaign on western campuses is promoting is that of Israel's occupation, colonization, ethnic cleansing and apartheid against the Palestinian people. Israel's recently passed loyalty oaths and other manifestations of a deep-rooted, but now bare-teethed, racism have intensified BDS campaigns against it in many liberal circles in the West as well. Israel's continued disregard for international law, its intensifying construction of the Wall and colonies, all illegal under the Fourth Geneva Convention, its ongoing slow genocide in Gaza, and accelerating ethnic cleansing of Palestinian communities in Al-Araqib in the Naqab (Negev) as well as in occupied Jerusalem, are all revealing Israel's true face to the world, adding fuel to the already raging fire of the non-violent BDS campaign in international civil society, and college campuses, in particular.

PACBI

[1] <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1377>

[2] <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1384>

[3] <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article11593.shtml>

[4] <http://www.rabble.ca/news/2010/01/carletons-war-portfolio-students-demand-divestment-apartheid>

[5] <http://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/campaigns/tiaa-cref-divest-occupation>

[6] <http://bdsmovement.net/?q=node/775>

[7] <http://www.jta.org/news/article/2010/07/06/2739921/as-israels-image-sinks-wither-israeli-pr>

The PACBI column

Visits by International Academics and Artists to the OPT

Some international organizations that are involved in organizing events and activities in cooperation with -- or using the facilities of -- boycottable Israeli institutions and venues have tried to "balance" their involvement in such activities by organizing parallel activities with Palestinian institutions.

PACBI and the entire BDS movement reject any such attempts to break the Palestinian boycott. Any presumed parity between Israel and the Palestinians ignores the concrete reality of Israel's colonial oppression and denies the fact that there can never be symmetry between oppressor and oppressed. Projects premised on such symmetry between the "two sides" are therefore detrimental to the application of international law and the pursuit of justice and comprehensive peace.

The following guidelines, developed through ongoing interaction with the community of Palestinian artists, academics, and BDS activists, represent PACBI's position on this specific means of circumventing and violating the boycott in the academic and cultural fields. We urge international organizations, academics, artists and others to respect these principles and to refrain from undermining them, whether directly or indirectly.

Boycott Guidelines Applicable to Visits by International Academics and Artists to the OPT

Based on the 9 July 2005 Palestinian Civil Society Call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel [1] and the 6 July 2004 PACBI Call for the academic and cultural boycott of Israel; in the interest of promoting a culture of boycott and popular resistance and unifying academics, artists and other cultural workers and academic and cultural institutions on the principles and clear, objective criteria for applying the academic and cultural boycott of Israel; PACBI calls on all Palestinians working in the cultural and academic fields as well as Palestinian academic and cultural institutions to endorse and uphold the following guidelines regarding visits by international artists, academics, and cultural workers to the occupied Palestinian territory to participate in academic or

cultural activities that contribute to our struggle for freedom, justice, and self determination:

When extending an invitation to any international academic, artist, or other cultural worker, Palestinian institutions commit themselves to the principles and criteria of the academic and cultural boycott adopted by Palestinian civil society by ensuring that they:

- (1) Apply the boycott guidelines and refrain from organizing any joint activity, whether directly or indirectly, with any Israeli institution that is subject to boycott, [2] regardless of the pretext and of the sponsors of this activity;
- (2) Refuse to cooperate in any way in attempts by international organizations to breach the boycott through organizing activities for international academics, artists, or performing arts groups with Israeli institutions that are subject to boycott and then attempting to "whitewash" this complicity by organizing, in parallel, events for them with Palestinian cultural or academic institutions/entities under the rubric of "balance" and "parity" (even if no direct relation is entailed between the two sides);
- (3) Refrain from hosting any international academic, artist or cultural worker in Palestinian academic and cultural institutions during a visit that includes any relations with boycottable Israeli institutions, so as not to allow using the Palestinian institution as a fig leaf to cover up boycott violations; and
- (4) Urge visiting international artists and academics, in the spirit of the South African boycott campaign against apartheid there, to endorse the BDS/PACBI Call.
- (5) This document, like all other boycott criteria and guidelines documents that apply in various fields, is subject to revision through an extensive community-based dialogue process, whenever relevant conditions and developments warrant such a revision.

PACBI 28/11/ 2010

[1] <http://bdsmovement.net/?q=node/52>

[2] Institutions that are regarded as "boycottable" or "subject to boycott" are Israeli institutions that do not recognize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, paramount among which is the right to self determination; or any Israeli or international institution that is complicit, whether directly or indirectly, in the Israeli regime of occupation, colonialism and apartheid. For details, see the Guidelines for the International Cultural Boycott of Israel (<http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1047>) and the Guidelines of the International Academic Boycott of Israel (<http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1108>).

The long hand of Israel

The Bricup Newsletters of November 2009 and February 2010 (numbers 22 and 25) included items describing the treatment that Jameel Zayed, a British citizen, received when he attempted to visit Israel. He is now having difficulties entering the USA seemingly due to the issue of a sinister Security Advisory Opinion by the Israeli/USA authorities. He describes his experiences in the following personal account.

My name is Mr Jameel Zayed and I am a PhD student in the Department of Chemistry at Cambridge University. In September 2009 I was refused entry to Israel through Ben Gurion airport. Two months later, I received notice from the Israeli embassy in London that I was banned from entry to Israel for 5 years until 2015.

Recently it came to my attention that at the 8th International Council for Science's Committee on Freedom and Responsibility in the conduct of Science (ICSU CFRS) meeting in Singapore in July 2010, my case was discussed under item 7.2 'Israel, Scholarly Access and HUGO'. Therein, the decision of item 7.2 was, as it relates to my case, and I quote; "To note, with concern, the various reports where Israeli scholars and institutions had been subject to restrictions on freedom of association; to make enquiries with the UK Royal Society regarding the case of Jameel Zayed".

My being banned from Israel jeopardised a planned research collaboration between ourselves at Cambridge and a group at Tel Aviv University towards which we were applicants to a British Council-funded Britain-Israel Research and Academic Exchange Partnership (BIRAX). All subsequent collaboration efforts have ceased since the refused entry. Secondly, I am unable to see my family who live in north Jerusalem. This includes my grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins.

Upon reading the ICSU CFRS meeting minutes, publically accessible online, I sent a letter to Professor Deliang Chen, Executive Director of the ICSU, to thank the committee for discussing my case, as well as to highlight some recent

developments.

This summer, in 2010, I travelled to the U.S. twice, first to Berkeley where I was due to participate in a summer course, then again to Boston for an international, American Chemical Society conference. As a British citizen, application of an ESTA through the visa waiver program sufficed for the Boston conference trip. For the Berkeley course however, due to its course credit, an F1 student visa was necessary.

I applied for this F1 visa at the U.S. Embassy, London, three weeks prior to travel once I had received all the necessary documentation required for the visa application. There a lady interviewed me through a glass window, asking me a few questions about me and my visit. Throughout the 5-minute interview she asked numerous times whether I have dual nationality, and ended the interview with "...its just because your name sounds Arab", to which I just gave a perplexed smile at this seemingly irrelevant and quite unprofessional comment.

I was given a reference number to check the status of my visa application, which for most takes only up to a week. One week turned into two, and two into three, until in the last few days prior to my scheduled trip I still had no visa. Finally, with only 2 days left, I enlisted the help of a London-based American lawyer, Mr Richard Goldstein, who offers visa expedition services.

According to the professional advice of Mr Goldstein on reviewing the documentation given to me by the U.S. Embassy at the end of the interview entitled 'Non-immigrant visa suspended under 221(g) for further processing'; my being refused entry to Israel had undoubtedly become a part of my international visa history and very likely contributed to my U.S. F1 student visa application being 'suspended' by the U.S. Embassy in London, likely as result of a Security Advisory Opinion (SAO) being issued on my name upon applying for the visa.

In the end, I managed to attend the course at Berkeley under the visa waiver program, though luckily, and at the discretion of the border authorities at San Francisco airport where I was held for two hours. I had no problems entering Boston a few weeks later, although unlike my

colleagues travelling with me, I was taken to the side for 20 minutes for further questioning. I am now cautious though about any future visa applications to the U.S. since being denied the F1 visa.

The events at Ben Gurion airport in 2009, have therefore not only jeopardised academic research plans, but also tarnish my name as it relates to international travel in general, particularly to the U.S. where I am due to commence a post-doctoral position in one year.

An open letter to the Tindersticks... Please Do Not Undermine the Palestinian Boycott on Israel

**To Stuart Staples, David Boulter, and Neil
Fraser of Tindersticks,**

We are a group of Israeli citizens who support the [Palestinian Call](#) for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) on Israel, as a means of bringing to an end the decades-long systematic oppression of the Palestinian people, which occurs daily in our name. We were surprised to learn about your upcoming performances in Israel and urge you not to let your music become part of the Israeli facade of normalcy, enabling the ongoing and ruthless oppression of the Palestinian people.

On July 9th, 2005 over 170 Palestinian civil society organizations of Diaspora refugees, citizens of Israel - which are systematically discriminated against - and Palestinians under occupation and siege, have issued the BDS Call for an international boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel. At this time, if you come to perform in Israel, you are not only crossing the picket lines of this struggle, you are also actively contributing to the normalization of a situation in which a Palestinian teenage kid, a fan of your music who has been living under Israeli martial law throughout her entire life, is not allowed by law to attend your concert in Tel-Aviv.

It goes without saying that the daily implications of Israeli martial law under which Palestinians live, go much farther than a teenage girl not being able to attend a show because of her ethnicity: for many

decades, Palestinian farmers have been fighting against dispossession, being continuously denied access to their own agricultural lands, their most basic needs, seized by Israeli settlements and the separation wall. The Israeli government grants the military a free hand at arresting any Palestinian, for any and no reason, for any amount of time, and without charge or viable trial. Gazan Palestinians are put under a cruel and severe Israeli siege, not allowing any Palestinian to exit or go to the Strip, banning exports all-together, and making the economy completely dependent on Israeli imports. West Bank Palestinian water and resources are exploited by Israeli settlements and cities. West Bank Palestinians are also not allowed to travel on some of the roads connecting their villages and cutting through their own land because they are restricted to usage by Israelis only.

An international performance in Israel elicits a message of 'business as usual' -- that nothing has to be changed because things are fine the way they are. In the past few months, many artists have adhered to the BDS Call to shake off this facade of normalcy, and canceled their planned performances in Israel -- artists such as Gorillaz Sound System, The Pixies, Elvis Costello, Gill Scott-Herron, Klaxons, Leftfield, Devendra Banhart, as well as filmmaker Mike Leigh. Some artists who undermined the boycott and performed in Israel have asserted that they empathize with the suffering of the Palestinians but that they are "only coming to play music and not do politics" -- that their message is a humane one, and that music dwells on a different realm from that of politics. However, when the time came for them to perform, regardless of their own opinions, regardless of the humane message they wished to bring with them, regardless of what they had said on stage, their performances were interpreted amongst the Israeli public opinion as an endorsement of Israel's policies and an approval of the situation. Placebo, for example, played to a huge crowd of Israelis waving Israeli flags, as the Israeli media was keen to expose. Elton John's performance was widely celebrated as a pro-Israeli act. Almost every performance -- large as small - is announced in the Israeli media in relation to undermining the boycott and siding with Israel.

For decades on, people in Israel have been electing governments and joining an army that keep a population of about four million people in an open-air prison of sorts, with no rights, no citizenship,

and with a structured prevention of basic control over their own lives. In the current social reality inside Israel, your performance will inevitably become embedded in this discourse: performing in Israel will actively contribute to the construction of a facade of normalcy to daily horrors which take place 45 minutes from the venue of your show in Tel-Aviv.

Boycott, divestment and sanctions efforts were proved successful against South-Africa apartheid, and music had a huge part in this success when Artists Against Apartheid raised awareness to the South-African issue with their Sun-City single. As Elvis Costello stated in his cancellation announcement, "there are occasions when merely having your name added to a concert schedule may be interpreted as a political act that resonates more than anything that might be sung... sometimes a silence in music is better than adding to the static and so an end to it".

Sincerely,

Boycott! Supporting the Palestinian BDS Call from within.

<http://boycottisrael.info>

Ohal Grietzer, Ayala Shani, Kobi Snitz, Ofer Neiman, Anat Guthmann, Rachel Giora, Dorothy Naor, Jonathan Pollak, Liad Kantrowicz, Naama Farjoun, Kelvin Bland,

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BRICUP is the **British Committee for the Universities of Palestine**. Comments and suggestions are welcome. Email them to:-

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