

February 2, 2011

Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI)

الحملة الفلسطينية
للمقاطعة الأكاديمية
والثقافية لإسرائيل



Palestinian Campaign
for the Academic & Cultural
Boycott of Israel

OVERVIEW

- PACBI is led by Palestinian academics and intellectuals promoting a “comprehensive and consistent boycott all Israeli academic and cultural institutions.” [PACBI website]
- Omar Barghouti - co-founder (doctoral student at Tel Aviv University)
- Ramallah-based. Following 2001 Durban NGO Forum, initiated a 2002 call for a comprehensive economic, cultural and academic boycott of Israel and 2003 statement calling for a boycott of Israeli academic institutions. [PACBI website] (Restated in July 2005 “Palestinian United Call for BDS against Israel.)
- Spearheads rhetoric and ideas behind global BDS campaigns, publishing the “guidelines for the international boycott of Israel.”
- Insists that boycotts will help “end Israel’s occupation, colonization and system of apartheid.” [PACBI website]
- Declares boycott will continue “until Israel withdraws from all the lands occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem; removes all its colonies in those lands; agrees to United Nations resolutions relevant to the restitution of Palestinian refugees rights; and dismantles its system of Apartheid” (referring to Arabs living within the 1949 armistice lines). [“Appeal to Trilok Gurtu,” PACBI website, January 4, 2011]
- Funding not transparent - no online information.

INFLAMMATORY RHETORIC

- Refers to Israel as an “apartheid state” with “racial exclusivity,” alleging that “the apartheid character has been part of the design of Israel since its

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inception.” [PACBI website]

- Claims that “resistance in all its forms is a legitimate right” of Palestinians, and that the “barriers” between Israelis and Palestinians exist because “the Zionist movement and the State of Israel did not stop for one day and massacred and uprooted [the Palestinians].” [MidEastWeb website, English translation of Arabic PACBI brochure “Why Must We Boycott ‘Peacemakers?’”]
- Accuses Israel of “war crimes,” “crimes against humanity,” and “genocidal policy,” and calls Gaza a “concentration camp.” [“An Open Letter from Gaza to Thomas Quasthoff,” PACBI website, December 31, 2010]
- Falsely states that 86% of casualties in the Gaza War (2009) were civilians, and accuses Israel of having “genocidal intentions,” and “annihilate[ing] all civilian infrastructure, target[ing] civilian shelters, [and] prevent[ing] medical teams from reaching victims.” [“Open Letter to International Academic Institutions,” PACBI website, January 17, 2009]

TARGETING ARTISTS

- PACBI publishes open letters to artists, urging them to cancel their planned appearances in Israel.
- Warns artists that they “will forever be attached to the draconian machine of Israeli colonial and racist policy,” and encourages treating Israel as “a pariah state.” [“Atwood - Do Not Accept Prizes from Apartheid Israel,” PACBI website, April 6, 2010]
- These letters often contain false information, such as alleging that Arab-Israelis are subject to ongoing martial law, [“Macy Gray, Performing in Israel is Already Political - Stand for Human Rights and Cancel!,” PACBI website, January 6, 2011] and falsely claiming that artists such as Bono and Snoop Dogg cancelled performances in Israel due to the boycott. [“Open Letter to Jon Bon Jovi: This one should go out to the Palestinians!,” PACBI website, January 6, 2011]
- Urges international audiences to boycott Israeli artists such as the Israel Ballet [PACBI website] and the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra, which it accuses of being a “partner with the state in planning, implementing, and whitewashing war crimes and international law violations.” [“Boycott the

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Israel Philharmonic Orchestra on its US Tour!," PACBI website, January 16, 2011]

ACADEMIC BOYCOTT

- PACBI pushes international academics to end their affiliations with all Israeli institutions.
- Accuses all Israel universities of being “deeply linked to the military-security establishment, playing indispensable -- direct and indirect -- roles in perpetuating Israel’s decades-old violations of international law and fundamental Palestinian rights.” [PACBI website]
- Claims that international academics attending conferences in Israel “lend legitimacy to the Israeli colonial project.” [“Implementing the Academic Boycott: Individuals vs. Institutions,” PACBI website, November 8, 2009]
- Acknowledges that academic boycotts violate academic freedom: “Obtaining justice and fundamental rights for the Palestinian people” overrides “the protection of academic freedom and the free exchange of ideas,” and is a more important “norm dictating the political engagement of scholars.” [“The Tired ‘Academic Freedom’ argument,” PACBI website, November 8, 2010]

EXPLOITING PRO-BDS ISRAELIS AND THE ISRAELI LEFT

- Israelis who support BDS “must be willing to accept that there is a price to pay to end the colonial oppression...the price that some conscientious Israelis may pay as an unavoidable byproduct of the boycott is quite modest when compared to the price Palestinians have to pay.” [PACBI website]
- Dismisses efforts of “peacemakers” who promote mutual understanding and civil dialogue as “deceptive” and “false hypocrisies.” [MidEastWeb website, English translation of Arabic PACBI brochure “Why Must We Boycott ‘Peacemakers?’”]
- “The overriding consideration here is not the creation of a positive atmosphere conducive to scholarly cooperation between Palestinian and anti-colonial Israeli academics... rather, it is how to isolate Israeli academic

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institutions.” [PACBI website]

OMAR BARGHOUTI

- Co-founder and Steering Committee member of PACBI; doctoral student at Tel Aviv University. [“Academic Boycotter to Study in Tel Aviv,” Jewish Chronicle, April 23, 2009]
- Very active in speaking on behalf of BDS on campuses around the world.
- Supports a one-state solution, which he labels the “more just, moral and therefore enduring alternative for peaceful coexistence.” [“The Essential Obstacle to a Just Peace in Palestine,” Counterpunch, December 13, 2003]
- Nazi rhetoric: “Many of the methods of collective and individual ‘punishment’ meted out to Palestinian civilians at the hands of young, racist, often sadistic and ever impervious Israeli soldiers at the hundreds of checkpoints littering the occupied Palestinian territories are reminiscent of common Nazi practices against the Jews.” [“‘The Pianist’ Of Palestine,” Countercurrents website, November 30, 2004]
- At a Sabeel conference in a California church (March 2010), Barghouti alleged that Israel is committing “slow genocide” in Gaza by contaminating the water supply: “There are no death camps. Israel is too sophisticated for that. Israel is a more evolved war criminal. It does things slower.”
- Falsely claims a “right to resist”: “International law does give people under occupation the right to resist in any way, including armed resistance.” [“Rise of Palestinian Civil Rights Movement,” The Real News Network, September 4, 2010]
- Uses racially-charged rhetoric: “Palestinian communities... have been recently subjected to some of the worst, ongoing Israeli campaigns of gradual ethnic cleansing intended to Judaize their space.” [“Our South Africa Moment Has Arrived,” Palestine Chronicle, March 18, 2009]
- Uses “apartheid” to describe treatment of Israeli Arabs, saying “Apartheid is also alive and well inside Israel... it is legalized and institutionalized racism and that’s what makes it apartheid.” [“‘Boycotts Work’: An Interview with Omar Barghouti,” Electronic Intifada website, June 1, 2009]
- Makes false claims of discrimination, including that it is illegal for non-Jews

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to purchase property in “most places in Israel, I mean, in 93 percent”; that non-Jews are “not entitled to even apply” for most jobs in government ministries, healthcare and education; that “there are many bureaucratic rules that make it very difficult for [non-Jewish Israelis] to get service” in healthcare clinics in predominantly Jewish neighborhoods; and that “only a Jew can be a national in Israel. Non-Jews cannot be nationals.” [“Should People Boycott Israel?,” The Real News Network, August 29, 2010]

AFFILIATIONS WITH OTHER GROUPS

- US version: U.S. Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (USACBI)
- Member of the BDS National Committee (BNC), the coordinating body for the BDS campaign. [BDS Movement website]
- PACBI officials publish articles and statements in Electronic Intifada.
- PACBI’s “Call for Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel” is endorsed by NGOs, including Al Awda-Right of Return Coalition, the National Forum of Martyrs Families, and European government funded groups Al Mezan, Badil, Defense for Children International-Palestine Section, Holy Land Trust, and Miftah. [PACBI website]

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