BOYCOTT DIVESTMENT SANCTIONS (BDS) AGAINST ISRAEL: AN ANTI-SEMITIC, ANTI-PEACE POISON PILL

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SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER
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For decades, diplomats, politicians, and pundits have weighed in as to how best bring peace to the Holy Land. In 2013, U.S. President Barack Obama is paying his first presidential visit to Israel and the Palestinian Territories to try to reboot hopes for peace.

There is, however, one campaign—BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions)—that presents itself as a pro-peace initiative but in reality is a thinly-veiled, anti-Israel and anti-Semitic “poison pill,” whose goal is the demonization, delegitimization, and ultimate demise of the Jewish State. Taking a page from the late twentieth century worldwide campaign against the South African Apartheid regime, BDS casts a global anti-Israel net on campuses, among unions, entertainers and Churches.

I, along with Dr. Shimon Samuels, the Center’s International Relations Director, were witness to its international launch at the ill-fated 2001 UN World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa. It is a movement that does not help better the life of a single Palestinian and which is oblivious to major human rights disasters erupting throughout the Middle East and beyond.

Finally, BDS campaigners are also hypocrites. I have yet to hear of a single BDS crusader refusing to utilize the outsized contributions of Israelis to cellphone technologies, the digital revolution, or biotech breakthroughs that have transformed the quality of life for billions and saved countless lives.

Dr. Harold Brackman’s Report provides a comprehensive overview of BDS. Please download it, read it, and share it with your friends, colleagues, and students in your family.

And you can partner with the SWC’s fight against BDS by reporting BDS activity online, in your community, campus or church. Email us the links at BDS2013@wiesenthal.com

Rabbi Abraham Cooper.
Associate Dean
Simon Wiesenthal Center
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Boycott/Divest/Sanctions (BDS) Movement against Israel was formally launched in 2005, but really began gathering momentum as a result of the Second Intifada of 2000 and the UN’s World Conference Against Racism in 2001.

This Report documents and dissects the BDS’ impact across a broad front of battlefields in the western world. These include economic struggles in corporate boardrooms and among trade unions, BDS’ “academic jihad” against Israel on campuses, the pressure on entertainment and cultural figures to cancel appearances in Israel, and efforts to gain support for BDS from important religious institutions.

BDS claims to be a peaceful movement whose goal is to use “punitive economic means” to pressure Israel to rectify the wrongs done to human rights in the Palestinian territories. In reality, BDS is a thinly-disguised effort to coordinate and complement the violent strategy of Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim “rejectionists” who have refused to make peace with Israel for over six decades, and to pursue a high-profile campaign composed of anti-Israel Big Lies to help destroy the Jewish State by any and all means.

Over and over again—whenever and wherever it emerged—the BDS Movement quickly threw off any trappings of moderate criticism of Israeli policies. Its true essence matches Natan Sharansky’s “three Ds” test for when legitimate criticism crosses the line into anti-Semitism:

FIRST: **Double Standards** - singling out Israel for criticism while ignoring the more egregious behavior of major human rights abusers in the Arab and Muslim world and beyond.

SECOND: **Demonization of Israel** - distorting the Jewish State’s actions by means of insidious and false comparisons with the Nazis and/or South Africa’s Apartheid regime.

THIRD: **Delegitimization** - when Israel’s fundamental right to exist is denied—alone among all nations in the world—this too is anti-Semitism.

- BDS claims to be peaceful or to favor “nonviolent punitive measures” (while refusing to denounce anti-Israel, anti-Jewish violence).
- BDS often downplays its programmatic commitment to the unlimited “right of return” of millions of Palestinians, not born in Israel but claiming refugee status that would spell the end of the Jewish State.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (cont.)

- BDS ostensibly wants to right the specific wrongs done to Palestinians, yet attacks the foundations of Israel’s entire economy and society: all (Jewish) Israelis are collectively guilty.

- BDS is fueled by and reinforces a one-sided historical narrative denying any responsibility of Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim “rejectionists” for destroying chances for peace and reconciliation—from before Israel’s establishment in 1948, to the 1980 Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty, to the 1993 Oslo Accords, to the 2000-2001 Camp David and Wye Summits, to the 2005 Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, and to this very day.

- BDS slanders Zionism and supporters of the Jewish State by falsifying the profound differences between Apartheid South Africa and democratic Israel.

- BDS utilizes—without admitting it—Christian “supersessionist” theological claims that Jews and Israel have lost divine favor because of the Jewish People’s alleged sins and as result Jews no longer have legitimate historic or moral claims to the Holy Land.

What’s the solution? Answer BDS’ Big Lies with cogent arguments and the historical record. As U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis wrote, “Truth is the best disinfectant.”

UC Berkeley: an anti-Israel demonstration during Israeli Apartheid Week
INTRODUCTION
The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement purports to be the world’s last, best hope for achieving peace in the Holy Land. BDS invokes the language of the American civil rights movement as well as the struggle against Apartheid South Africa in wide-ranging appeals to young people and minorities, including Jews. BDS presents itself as a nonviolent strategy utilizing punitive economic pressure to persuade Israelis to do the right thing by “ending the occupation” and thereby usher in a new age of justice for everyone.

Yet the stakes are too high for responsible people to accept without critical examination BDS’ sometimes alluring imagery and rhetoric as a viable path to peace. Is the BDS’ approach compatible with the survival of Israel—a UN member state established as a Jewish homeland? Is the BDS’ approach even a realistic alternative to hard diplomatic bargaining as a means to produce a viable, peaceful Palestinian state? Or is the BDS Movement the latest in a long history of Mideast mirages—from the Crusades to the Islamist Revival—that lure to their destruction those who mistake delusion for salvation?

The BDS movement has scored successes on North American campuses and in the media portraying itself, not as the tool of Israel’s mortal enemies, but as martyred defenders of the cause of “academic freedom.” Encapsulating BDS’ academic blitz was the predominately sympathetic coverage it received during the recent controversy surrounding the February 7, 2013, appearance of two high-profile BDS advocates, Palestinian intellectual Omar Barghouti, and UC Berkeley Professor Judith Butler, at a Brooklyn College event sponsored by the Political Science Department and funded by the taxpayers. Barghouti presented his arguments in favor of BDS as strategy to overwhelm Israel with millions of Palestinian returnees who would replace the Jewish State with a Palestinian “one state solution.” Butler defended a one-side-only discussion of the issues—after the spurning of pleas from Harvard Professor Alan Dershowitz and others that alternative points of view be given voice—as a perfect example of academic-freedom-in-action. Butler’s knee-jerk support for anti-Israel divestment dates back to 2002 when she criticized Harvard University President Lawrence Summers for “a blow against academic freedom” because he had warned that campus ‘anti-Zionism’ was being used to advance anti-Semitism.¹

When political voices, including many on the “progressive” left, questioned the use of public funds to subsidize orchestrated propaganda against Israel’s right to exist, they were denounced as academic McCarthyites in the editorial pages of the *New York Times* and from the New York Mayor’s Office. “I couldn’t disagree more violently with BDS,” Mayor Bloomberg tried to explain. “But I could also not agree more strongly with an academic department’s right to sponsor a forum on any topic that they choose. If you want to go to a university where the government decides what kind of subjects are fit for discussion, I suggest you apply to a school in North Korea.”²
Denied entrée to the *Times*’ opinion pages, the ADL bought an ad respectfully questioning the Mayor’s confusion between attempts to shut down free speech on or off campus—no BDS critics supported such suppression—and reasoned criticism of such rallies. It is telling, however, that there were no university officials who rose to protect the First Amendment rights of some pro-Israel students who braved the hostile crowd to attend the Brooklyn College event. These students were escorted out by City University of New York (CUNY) police. “I heard probably about half of what Judith Butler said when I got kicked out,” said Ari Ziegler, a 23-year-old CUNY graduate student studying experimental psychology. “CUNY police escorted us out and when we asked them what we did wrong they said, ‘we don’t have an answer’.”

As we shall see, the BDS Movement has no answers because it relies on the many-faced Big Lie. Here are six reasons why the Movement has had considerable success in advancing its dishonest agenda:

- BDS presents itself as peaceful and favoring “nonviolent punitive measures,” but refuses to denounce anti-Israel, anti-Jewish violence.

- BDS systematically downplays its programmatic commitment of the unlimited “right of return” of millions of Palestinians, not born in Israel but claiming refugee status that would spell the end of the Jewish State.

- BDS claims to want to right the wrongs against Palestinians yet attacks the foundations of Israel’s entire economy and society: all (Jewish) Israelis are collectively guilty.

- BDS is committed to a one-sided historical narrative denying any responsibility of Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim “rejectionists” for destroying chances for peace and reconciliation—from before the founding of Israel in 1948, to the 1980 Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty, to the 1993 Oslo Accords, to the 2000-2001 Camp David and Wye Summits, to the 2005 Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, to this very day.

- BDS slanders the Zionist Movement by falsifying the profound differences between Apartheid South Africa and democratic Israel.

- BDS utilizes—without admitting it—Christian “supersessionist” theology claiming that Jews and Israel have lost divine favor because of the Jewish people’s alleged sins.

This Report seeks to help address and correct pro-BDS, anti-Israel bias. It lays out some of the reasons to reject BDS as a dead-end alternative to the rigors of real peacemaking. The ultimate verdict: the BDS Movement is a manipulator’s gambit and magnet for the naïve that would lead twenty-first century seekers of a brave new world not forward but back into history’s nightmares of irrational politics and obsessive hatreds.
UC Berkeley: an anti-Israel demonstration during Israeli Apartheid Week
“The road—ideologically, not practically speaking—from Durban to Bergen-Belsen is shorter than many people think.”—Sever Plotzker, September, 2001

The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Campaign against Israel has long roots going back to the Arab League Boycott designed to snuff out the nascent Jewish State and the even earlier to the bloody 1929 Arab Riots against the Holy Land’s Jews. Indeed, Anthony Julius has argued convincingly that the Campaign resonates with the medieval Judeophobia that fueled the expulsion of the Jews from England in 1190.

Yet the modern BDS campaign is also very much a twenty-first century phenomenon.

The World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR), held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001, just before the 9/11 attacks, was largely devoted to delegitimizing and demonizing Israel and defaming the United States.

The main platform to demonize the Jewish State and the U.S. was the NGO Forum, held in Kingsmead Stadium in Durban. Attended by 8,000 representatives from as many as 3,900 NGOs, the Forum boasted a majority contingent of U.S. NGOs, generously funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and the Ford Foundation.

The WCAR’s biased Declaration of Principles was reason enough for the decision by the U.S. and Israel to boycott Durban as an Orwellian propaganda circus using the pretence of anti-racism to reinforce hatred of Jews and Israel. The NGO Forum’s separate Declaration of Principles proved to be of even more enduring significance. Calling for a revival of the UN’s “Zionism equals Racism” Resolution (passed in 1975 and repealed in 1991), the Forum’s Declaration condemned Israel for war crimes, ethnic cleansing, genocide, and even “ecocide.” Israel’s Deputy Foreign Minister, Rabbi Michael Melchior, accused the drafters of making Israel “the new anti-Christ . . . or the devil of the international community.” The Simon Wiesenthal Center’s Associate Dean, Rabbi Abraham Cooper, was among the leaders of a walkout by every single Jewish delegate from the meeting where the NGO Declaration was adopted after a paragraph was voted down describing “charges of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and Apartheid [against Israel], as a virulent contemporary form of anti-Semitism.”

The crux of the NGO Declaration, adopted in the newly-democratic South Africa, was the condemnation of Israel as “an Apartheid state.” This was the animating idea of “the Durban strategy”—including the call for “mandatory and comprehensive sanctions and embargoes, the full cessation of all links (diplomatic, economic, social, aid, military cooperation and training) between all states and Israel”—that became the battle cry for the developing BDS Movement.

The 2001 NGO Forum—at which the Palestinian Solidarity Committee of South Africa distributed copies of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion—was so toxic that former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, who served as WCAR Secretary General, later admitted that throughout the Durban Conference, “There was horrible anti-Semitism present—particularly in some of the NGO discussions. A number people said they’ve never been so hurt or so harassed or been so blatantly faced with anti-Semitism.”
There is a great tradition of boycotts protesting oppressive laws and unjust regimes: from the boycott against British East India Tea waged by freedom-loving American colonists, to anti-Nazi boycotts and Gandhian campaigns against imperial Britain of the 1930s, to the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott that launched the career of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., to the anti-Apartheid boycotts of South Africa during the 1980s.\(^\text{10}\)

But well-meaning people who hear this tradition invoked against Israel and ostensibly in favor of suffering Palestinians by speakers from academic podiums to church pulpits should think twice before they assume that today’s BDS Movement is part of the same tradition.

The 1930s witnessed two boycott campaigns: one against Hitler—and one by and for the Nazis against the Jews. In the 1920s, the Nazis launched their campaign for a boycott of Jewish businesses. Not limited to street-corner rabble-rousers, the campaign had resonance on campuses where 76 percent of the national German student union voted to exclude Jews including Jewish converts to Christianity. The Nazi seizure of power in 1933 put the authority of the state behind Stormtroopers shouting *Deutsche! Wehrt Euch! Kauft nicht bei Juden!* —“Germans! Defend yourselves! Do not buy from Jews!”—as they attacked Jewish storekeepers. In broken store windows, signs were posted “Jews Are Our Misfortune!” and “Go back to Palestine!”\(^\text{11}\)

The Nazi Boycott Campaign also went international. In Poland, Cardinal Hlond called for a boycott of Jews. Across the Atlantic in Quebec, French-Canadian nationalists took the lead in organizing boycotts. In the U.S., the most rancorous voice was “radio priest” Father Charles Coughlin. In Palestine, the first anti-Jewish boycotts coincided with the bloody anti-Jewish riots of 1929. The rioters proclaimed: “O Arab! Remember that the Jew is your strongest enemy of your ancestors since olden times.”\(^\text{12}\)
Clothed in the rhetoric of nonviolent resistance to evil, the BDS movement today nevertheless chooses demonization in pursuit of its goals. Unlike the Montgomery Bus Boycott—which invoked Christian love against white racism—BDS habitually crosses the line from legitimate criticism of Israeli government policies to historically toxic language demonizing the Jewish State and its supporters everywhere.

BDS’ public goal is to “end occupation in the territories,” but Israel had already unilaterally withdrawn from Gaza in 2005 and committed to a two-state solution, if only it had a peace partner willing to accept a Jewish, democratic neighbor. Indeed, unlike South Africa—or Assad’s Syria—Israel is not a minority regime lording it over an internal majority denied its rights. The Jewish State grants full rights to its internal Arab minority, and wants nothing more than to fulfill its democratic and Jewish national destiny within secure borders. Still, critics of Israel, like Omar Barghouti of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI), insist on stigmatizing Israel as a “pariah state” rather than a normal member of the international community with territorial disputes.13

And, as for BDS, Barghouti was perhaps more honest than most when he told Palestinian students, the BDS Movement is really a public relations stunt designed to prepare the ground for the ultimate goal of the destruction of Israel: “If the refugees were to return, you would not have a two state solution, you’d have a Palestine next to a Palestine,” he declared.14
BDS Movement and Sharansky’s “3Ds” Test for Anti-Semitism

Officially, the BDS Movement was born on July 9, 2005, with “the Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS” in which over 100 named Palestinian organizations declared that “fifty-seven years after the state of Israel was built mainly on land ethnically cleansed of its Palestinian owners, . . . Israel’s entrenched system of racial discrimination against its own Arab-Palestinian citizens remains intact.” Ostensibly “inspired by the struggles of South Africans against Apartheid,” the signatories joined to articulate three objectives to be achieved by “nonviolent punitive means”:

1. Ending its [Israel’s] occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall.

2. Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality.

3. Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.

Yet there was also important pre-2005 groundwork. Palestinian demands for a comprehensive economic, cultural and academic boycott of Israel were issued in August 2002, followed by a campaign to boycott Israeli academic institutions, launched by Palestinian intellectuals in October, 2003, and then the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel in 2004.

During this early period, the BDS Movement’s Palestinian center was sometimes led by its periphery in North America and the UK. Among academic institutions, the UK took the first steps, followed by elite campuses like Harvard, MIT, and UC Berkeley, which used the Internet to disseminate the Movement’s ideas to American colleges and universities nationwide. University of Indiana Professor Francis Boyle was proposing “a divestment campaign against Israel” to the Palestinian Authority (PA), at the same time as the PA was allegedly negotiating peace with Israel under the auspices of the Clinton Administration. Among religious institutions, some American mainline Protestant churches like the American Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) were in the vanguard, setting a pro-divestment example for the Church of England.

Over and over again—whenever and wherever it emerged—the BDS Movement quickly threw off the trappings of moderate criticism of Israeli policies. It revealed its true essence in terms of Natan Sharansky’s “three Ds” test for anti-Semitism: first, double standards singling out Israel for criticism while ignoring the more egregious behavior of major human rights abusers in the Arab and Muslim world and beyond; second, demonization of Israel distorting the Jewish State’s actions by means of false comparisons with the Nazis or South Africa’s Apartheid regime; third, delegitimization “when Israel’s fundamental right to exist is denied—alone among all peoples in the world—this too is anti-Semitism.”
At 2012’s Third International Solidarity Conference of South Africa’s ruling African National Congress, Baleka Mbete—who chaired the event—had an answer for the lone delegate who challenged the party’s dominant, virulently anti-Israel Middle East paradigm. Mbete said that she had personally visited “Palestine” where the situation is “far worse than Apartheid South Africa.” As Ben Cohen points out, the linking of Palestinian with South African freedom struggles was pioneered by the Communist regime of the now defunct Soviet Union, but is now franchised worldwide by the deeply troubled, post-Mandela ANC regime. The next logical step is coercing Jews who disagree with ANC policy. In 2009, one ANC official, Bongani Masuku suggested that Jewish recalcitrants “must not just be encouraged but forced to leave.” The South African Human Rights Commission found him guilty of “hate speech.”

The truth is that the equation of Israel with South African Apartheid is both a false analogy and an historical libel at the center of the BDS campaign to isolate and ultimately destroy Israel. The South African regime was a racist throwback to Nazi Germany whose victory in World War II was hoped for by many Afrikaner leaders. In 2013, Israel is damned for alleged “racism” and “genocide” by those who became tongue-tied when it came to condemning Sudan’s genocide in Darfur and Assad’s bloodbath in Syria.

The world only voted to recognize the Jewish people’s rights to its homeland in 1947. But the Jewish People had a legitimate historical claim to a sovereign nation in the Holy Land dating back thousands of years. In the modern world, all nations require their own nationalism. That of the Jews—Zionism—was no different except for the compelling vision of modern Zionism’s founder, Theodor Herzl, that reborn Israel would be an “old-new state” fulfilling perennial biblical promises at the same time as it built a forward-looking beacon for human progress. Zionism’s founding fathers and mothers disagreed on much. Yet they were unanimous in their commitment to constructing a multi-cultural, multi-color democracy that has, in fact, become a magnet attracting Jews to the Jewish State from everywhere including Jewish communities of many hues in Europe, North Africa, the Americas, Australia, and Asia. In today’s Israel they all strive to succeed in building a common future, while honoring their distinctive heritages.

In Israel, Arabic as well as Hebrew is an official language. Not only Arab men but also Arab women have the right to vote (still not universal in Arab countries). Israeli Arab citizens are regularly elected to the Knesset where they denounce government policies in no uncertain terms. Israeli Arabs have served in Cabinet posts as well abroad as ambassadors and on the Supreme Court. Just as Israeli Arab legislators use parliamentary immunity to attack the Jewish State in declarations viewed by many as seditious, an intellectual like Qatar-born Omar Barghouti exploits the academic freedom offered by Tel Aviv University to pursue an advanced degree while comparing Israelis to “mad dogs.” He views all Israeli academics as members of “occupation reserve army” who should be boycotted en masse, not just as individuals.
BOYCOTT DIVESTMENT SANCTIONS (BDS) AGAINST ISRAEL: AN ANTI-SEMITIC, ANTI-PEACE POISON PILL

BDS MOVEMENT AND SHARANSKY’S “3Ds” TEST FOR ANTI-SEMITISM (cont.)

There are those who argue that “occupation” is the wrong term to apply to Israel’s administration of Palestinian territories since 1967. But even accepting the term “occupied territories,” the manifest desire of not just Palestinians but Israelis to “end the occupation” should be clear. The difference is that the Israelis insist on ending it as part of a peace settlement ensuring security. The end result would be the creation—not of South African-style “Bantustans” among the Palestinians—but of a sovereign Palestinian state on over 90 percent of the Arab territory Israel captured in the 1967 Six Day War. In the meantime, Israel stays out of Gaza except when it reacts against terrorist attacks. The Gaza economy is thriving, especially in the Hamas-run, internationally funded government sector, contrary to Palestinian complaint that the Israeli embargo against military imports amounts to “economic strangulation.” Under the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords, Israel turned over civilian control of Palestinian communities on the West Bank while retaining military jurisdiction. The territories became Israel’s responsibility only after it preempted the coordinated 1967 strategy by Egypt and Syria, and belatedly joined by Jordan, to destroy the Jewish State.23

Are the Israeli people and government serious about withdrawals from territory as part of a negotiated two state solution? Actions speak louder than words. Israel has turned over civilian control of the West Bank and military as well as civilian control of Gaza by unilaterally withdrawing its military and evacuating all 9,000 Jewish residents in 2005. Israel has gotten action in return from the new Gaza Hamastan—first suicide bombings, then 8,000 rockets launched across the Green Line. From President Mahmoud Abbas’ Fatah Movement in the West Bank, Israel has gotten words—but the wrong ones in the form of escalating barrages of hate propaganda against the Jewish State and Jewish history and values, from mosques to the media.24

As early as 1934, David Ben-Gurion, later Israel’s first president, told Palestinian nationalist Musa Alami: “We do not want to create a situation like that which exists in South Africa, where the whites are the owners and rulers, and the blacks are the workers.” To avoid a self-fulfilling prophecy and if peace is their ultimate goal then perhaps Palestinians must be encouraged to divest themselves from self-destructive illusions and behavior that, in some ways, are reminiscent of racist Afrikaners.25
Ostensibly a movement to use economic pressure to achieve political results, BDS has had more success in the political domain than in influencing decisions in corporate boardrooms: witness the setbacks to Israel’s economic outreach to the Arab world in the 1990s, and the 2011 European Union decision to consider state-level sanctions against companies doing business in the Territories. Caterpillar is the BDS’ ultimate villain for selling Israel land-moving equipment. Yet BDS has never made much effort to impact Caterpillar’s board or stock. The retirement fund TIAA-CREF divested from Caterpillar, which suffered a “social responsibility” ratings downgrade by Morgan Stanley Chase that mentioned Middle East “controversies,” but cited primarily a labor-management dispute, not the company’s sales to Israel, as the reason. The exception, which proves the rule about BDS’ limited corporate impact, is Veolia, the Paris-based water, wastewater treatment, and transportation giant that aroused BDS’ ire by involvement in the Jerusalem Light Rail (JLR) project. BDS went after Veolia in a big way with a French human rights lawsuit and a California lobbying campaign. The anti-Veolia campaign scared off a few European public authorities, and may have caused Veolia to withdraw from bidding on a Sacramento project, but otherwise had little impact, failing even to convince the Saudis to terminate lucrative environmental management projects with the French firm. The primary economic impact of BDS may have been hurting Arab farmers selling abroad through Israeli cooperatives.

Nevertheless, BDS should be credited with ingenuity and imagination both inside and outside the U.S. in projecting a high-profile image of itself as a grassroots movement challenging established institutions, from beyond or below, sometimes using “new media.” Its 2010 campaign that made the Olympia Food Co-Op in Washington State the first American grocery store to boycott Israeli goods was a PR success. In 2012, the Valentine’s Day boycott targeting Boston chocolatier Max Brenner was also successful. Brenner is a wholly-owned subsidiary of The Strauss Group, whose corporate “social responsibility” mission is to provide support (in the form of gift packages and sponsorship of recreational facilities) for Israeli soldiers. Additionally, the first-ever national boycott of SodaStream coincided with the fourth quarter of Superbowl Sunday in 2013.

BDS substitutes slippery slope for clear-cut economic and political logic. It moves from targeting the occupied territories to secondary boycotts of firms doing business in Israel proper to the Jewish State as a whole. Incredibly, this contrasts with the Palestinian National Authority (PNC), which still speaks of economic cooperation with Israel, which is a member in good standing of the World Trade Organization.

BDS tries to make up for its minimal impact on business by exerting muscle through the union movement. But at least in the U.S., the results for BDS have been limited even in that arena. How does the Movement weigh its modest success in obtaining the support of SEIU Local 721 Caucuses in Los Angeles against the decisive failure of AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka to back divestment?
In Canada, “grassroots” BDS campaigns target everything from Golan Heights-grown wine and the entire Israeli alcoholic beverage industry to the non-Jewish owned Le Marcheur shoe store in downtown Montreal for selling shoes made in Israel. And the Canadian union movement has been more responsive to the boycott campaign than in the U.S. In 2006, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) voted to support BDS. A prime target was Indigo, a retail chain that sells books and music. Its majority owners run a charity for Israeli veterans. Also in 2006, the Ontario section of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) approved a resolution to “support the international campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel until that state recognizes the Palestinian right to self-determination.” In 2009, CUPE’s Ontario University Workers Coordinating Committee announced plans to introduce Resolution 50 that would ban Israeli academics from speaking, teaching or researching at Ontario universities. In 2013, the Hamilton and District Labour Council in Ontario adopted a resolution to boycott SodaStream products, an Israeli company with an industrial park in Ma’aleh Adumim, adjacent to Jerusalem on the West Bank.30

BDS’ track record in the UK provides both similarities and differences with North America. In terms of direct action, BDS launched “a boutique boycott” of the London Diamond Market: “BDS Activists—as well as ‘Marilyn Monroe’—joined Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign colleagues in Hatton Garden, London’s jewelry quarter and centre of the UK diamond trade, to educate jewelry retailers, customers and the general public about Israeli blood diamonds.” BDS picketers carrying vile placards also tried to force leading retailers like Selfridges, Tesco, Herridges, and Marks & Spencer to stop carrying Israeli products. Most shoppers were appalled, but one told a reporter: “I love and revere the suicide bombers. Every time I hear of a suicide bomb going off I wish it had been 80 or 90 Jews instead of a pitiful handful.”31

Still, the BDS Campaign has won important victories in the UK and elsewhere in Europe. Over 60 years of amicable relations between Histadrut, Israel’s labor federation, and the British Trades Union Congress (TUC) came to an end around the time of the 1982 Lebanon War. Recently, Norway’s 450 billion euro Oil Fund excluded two Israeli firms, and five Spanish unions in Galicia adopted the boycott.32

The nadir came almost 20 years after the Lebanon War later when Israel’s June 2010 clash with the Gaza Flotilla coincided with the annual conferences of Unite, Britain’s largest union, and the Union and College Lecturers Union (UCU). The UCU invited convicted South African anti-Semite Bongani Masuku to attend its conference, while UCU General Secretary Sally Hunt—also an official of the TUC—attended a pro-boycott rally outside the Israeli Embassy with flowers in her hair. Yet the threat of litigation dating from 2007 by UCU members opposed to BDS boycotts hung like a Sword of Damocles over the UCU implementing its boycott resolutions.33
BDS’s Multiple Battlefields: From Boardroom to Union Halls To Supermarkets (cont.)

In a case of the tail wagging the dog, the British BDS Movement successfully pressured the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) to abandon its traditional cooperation with the Histadrut.³⁴

BDS in the UK demonstrated that pro-boycott, anti-Israel sentiment was stronger in the faculty lounges than the shop floors where the rank-and-file generally ignored anti-Israel agitation. This is why we now shift attention from old-fashioned unionism to college and university campuses on both sides of the Atlantic that are major incubators of BDS.

Academic Institutions and the BDS Jihad Against Israel

College campuses and towns have been the focus of BDS activities even before there was a formal BDS. In 1984, Taxpayers for Peace in the Middle East sought unsuccessfully to put a measure on the ballot in Berkeley, California, that called for U.S. foreign aid to be reduced by the amount Israel spends on settlements. This period coincided with the achievement of an important campus beachhead for forces hostile to Israel with the ascendancy of a new kind of Middle East Studies Department, often generously funded by U.S. government grants and Arab oil money. Columbia University Professor Edward Said’s influential theory of “Orientalism” decried an alleged conspiracy by Western scholars to besmirch the Arab world and Islam at the expense of the Palestinians and other oppressed Middle East peoples. Georgetown University Professor John Esposito saw no evil in Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Islamic Republic of Iran even after the 9/11 attacks, while Columbia University Professor Nicholas de Genova declared: “The heritage of the victims of the Holocaust belongs to the Palestinian people. The State of Israel has no claim to the heritage of the Holocaust.”³⁵

The major eruption of academic support for anti-Israel boycotts occurred after the violent Second Intifada ignited in December, 2000. By 2002, 34 divestment petitions were circulating on major campuses. In response, some 300 American college and university presidents had spoken against academic boycotts by 2007.³⁶

Grassroots student activists against divestment and sympathetic to Israel scored some victories beginning at UC Berkeley in 2001-2002 when pro-academic freedom student leaders including Rebecca Ann Simon successfully campaigned for a candidate slate that squelched efforts to disinvite former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak to speak on campus. At Duke University in 2004, members of the Palestinian Solidarity Committee suffered an embarrassment when they fell silent in the face of a challenge from opponents of terrorism that they denounce “the murder of innocent civilians” in Israel. But despite the best efforts of Israel supporters, the national tide was against them. An extreme case occurred at San Francisco State University where Jewish Studies Chair Laurie Zoloth (who subsequently left for Northwestern University) described peaceful pro-Israel marchers being “surrounded by a large, angry crowd of Palestinians and their supporters . . . They screamed at us ‘to go back to Russia’ . . . ‘Get out or we will kill you’ [and] ‘Hitler did not finish the job’.”³⁷
Academic Institutions and the BDS Jihad Against Israel

(continued)

U.S. churches, as we shall see, led international moves to divest from Israel, but the academic honors belonged to the British. In 2002, Steven Rose and Hillary Rose, two British academics, circulated a petition to members of the Association of Union Teachers (AUT) and the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) for divestment. This inspired Monica Baker, editor of a scientific journal, to remove the name of two Israeli colleagues from the publication board. Professor of Pathology Andrew Wilkie, of Oxford University, rejected the application of an Israeli student solely because of his nationality, later explaining he “had a huge problem with the way that Israelis take the moral high ground from their appalling treatment in the Holocaust, and then inflict gross human rights abuses on the Palestinians.” In Israel, Hebrew University and Al-Quds University jointly cooperated against the campaign to undermine higher education in the Holy Land.³⁸

In the UK, the anti-Israel academic boycott continues to gather momentum. For example, this year after Alon Roth-Snir, Israel’s Deputy Ambassador to the UK, was announced to speak at Essex University, Students’ Union President Nathan Bolton declared on Facebook: “I’ve made my position crystal clear. The Students’ Union has a position, which reflects my own, that the state of Israel is a state, which its very existence is a crime. [sic] The land was stolen from the Palestinian people and then those same people were then systematically exiled from their own homes and continue to be exiled to this day. I’m proud to not give him the attempt to justify his states oppression. I’m sure the hundreds of students were too. Freedom of expression isn’t applicable here.”³⁹

The “the moral high ground” on American campuses remains very much contested territory a decade after organized anti-Israel fervor emerged in 2002. Among the battles: at Princeton, the Strauss Group, the Israeli co-owner (with PepsiCo) of Sabra brand hummus, was attacked because it supports the Golani and Givati brigades with gift packages. In the BDS lexicon, hummus abuse and human rights abuses of the Palestinians are synonymous. Of course, BDS advocates display no distaste for human rights abuses in Cuba, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Sudan, Turkey, Nigeria, Iraq, North Korea, or China.⁴⁰

American campuses, from UC Berkeley to the University of Michigan to Harvard, witnessed escalating boycott campaigns during Israel’s Gaza Incursion starting in December 2008.
Academic Institutions and the BDS ‘Jihad Against Israel’ (cont.)

In 2012, the University of Pennsylvania distanced itself from a BDS conference. “The University of Pennsylvania has clearly stated on numerous occasions that it does not support sanctions or boycotts against Israel,” President Amy Gutmann declared. “Indeed, Penn has important and successful scholarly collaborations with Israeli institutions that touch on many areas of our academic enterprise.” Still, in January 2013, the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) boasted: “2012 has been an exciting year for the growth of the cultural and academic boycott of Israel, a pillar of the global BDS movement.”

In 2013, the battle for true academic freedom against those who would silence or demonize Israel’s supporters continues unabated from New York’s Brooklyn College to California’s finest Universities.

BDS’ ‘Shaming’ Cultural War on Israel

Long the realm of prophets, the Middle East in the twenty-first century has gone global in its embrace of celebrity glamor as a new form of charismatic politics. The cult of celebrity is central to the BDS’ strategy of projecting its influence beyond the academic ivory tower to the planetary echo chamber of media hype, culture and entertainment, and glittering endorsements.

One paradigm for this is the proactive embrace by celebrity true believers of the BDS cause. A case in point was the letter signed by three dozen British celebrities, including actress Emma Thompson, followed by 2012 protest demonstrations, trying unsuccessfully to force a cancellation at London’s Old Globe Theater of a Hebrew language performance of The Merchant of Venice by Israel’s renowned Habima Theater. Its crime? Because allegedly, “Habima has a shameful record of involvement with illegal Israeli settlements in Occupied Palestinian Territory.” Of course, the protestors had no difficulty, despite brutal Chinese repression in Tibet, in quietly accepting an official performance of Richard III in Mandarin. Around the same time, “Beethovians for Boycotting Israel” sang their own version of the Ode to Joy repeatedly during a concert by the Israeli Philharmonic at London’s Royal Albert Hall.

More typical than proactive celebrity endorsements was reactive BDS support, especially from American celebrities, as a consequence of the application of what Omar Barghouti of PACBI calls “shaming” or various forms of pressure, ranging from bad publicity to death threats, resulting in cancellation of previously scheduled visits to Israel. Often, there were mixed signals over whether the cancellation was the result of BDS pressure or just “scheduling conflicts.” Examples include Meg Ryan, Dustin Hoffman, Carlos Santana, Elvis Costello, Stevie Wonder, Snoop Dogg, Harry Belafonte, and novelist Alice Walker, among many others.

Sometimes, the resultant publicity generated by a cancellation—for example, the cancellation by The Yes Men of The Yes Men Fix the World at the Jerusalem Film Festival—exceeded what these second-ranking performers would have gained if they had gone ahead and performed and then criticized Israeli policies. On the other hand, there was less media buzz when the Creative Community for Peace—composed of music executives, talent agents, lawyers representing Aerosmith, Celine Dion, Lady Gaga, Jennifer Lopez, and Justin Timberlake—formed to counter the boycott of Israel.
The Middle East has been religion-driven since the time that Abraham—claimed by the three great monotheistic religions — turned his back on idolatry. Today, the controversies swirling around the BDS Movement may appear to be about politics, economics or culture, but in fact, are also deeply impacted by ethno-religious identities, theological debates, and interfaith relations.

Israel and the Palestinian territories are of course real places on the map, but they are also projections of the religious imagination. Since Saladin’s time, traditional-minded Muslims had often extended hospitality to Jews in the Holy Land as a “People of the Book,” to be taxed but protected. In contrast, the BDS Movement seems to resonate more with a hostile image among both secular nationalists and religious extremists that Jews are alien intruders—and not only in the so-called occupied territories. Both secular and religious-minded Palestinian radicals consider as a victory a ruling at UNESCO that the Tomb of the Patriarchs and Rachel’s Tomb were designated, not as Jewish, but as Palestinian “heritage sites.” Both moves feed the current pseudo-histories denying the existence of David’s and Solomon’s Kingdoms and the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.46

Yet it is among Palestinian Christians—whose percentage of the population of the territories, due to persecution by Muslims not Jews has declined from 15 percent in 1950 to under 2 percent today—that the turn to an extreme anti-Jewish theology linked to BDS support is most striking. Yasser Arafat notoriously encouraged Arab Christians to demonstrate their Palestinian patriotism by endorsing his own Muslim-approved version of Christian Arab theology: “[Jesus was] the first Palestinian Fedayeen” or “freedom fighter” who “carried his sword along the road which the Palestinians today carry their cross.” Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas echoed this in his recent speech at the UN calling for un-negotiated Palestinian statehood by linking the Prophet Mohamed and Jesus while cleansing Abraham, Moses and Isaiah from the Holy Land’s history.47

A prime exponent of this new Palestinian theology is American-educated Rev. Dr. Naim Ateek of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem, author of the acclaimed *Justice, and only Justice, A Palestinian Theology of Liberation* (1989), who declared in 2005 that:

> In this season of Lent, it seems to many of us that Jesus is on the cross again with thousands of crucified Palestinians around him. It only takes people of insight to see the hundreds of thousands of crosses throughout the land, Palestinian men, women, and children being crucified. Palestine has become one huge Golgotha. The Israeli government crucifixion system is operating daily. Palestine has become the place of the skull.48

Rev. Dr. Ateek’s main constituency is Anglo-American. It includes the Anglican Church hierarchy, and has made him “a rock star” among many of America’s mainline Protestant denominations. Politically, elements of the Roman Catholic Church, which now has full diplomatic relations with Israel, has also been sympathetic to Palestinian Christian advocates of BDS, but—steady in its adherence to Vatican II—Rome has so far drawn the line at endorsing their theology. The case is different with many of those in America’s mainline Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, United Church of Christ, and Protestant denominations.49
Rev. Dr. Ateek’s theology imagining Israelis as the latter-day crucifiers of a Palestinian Christ is not “progressive”—but rather a throwback to pre-Vatican II “replacement theology” that viewed Jews as surrendering the divine blessings for their alleged sins. An Ateek ally, Anglican Archbishop of Jerusalem, Riah Abu el-Assal, has declared, “We are the true Israel. No one can deny me the right to inherit the promises, and after all, the promise was given to Abraham and Abraham was never spoken of in the bible as a Jew.” It is not difficult to understand how Palestinian Christian theologians—caught up between anger at the Israelis and fear of his Muslim brethren—might succumb to such a theology of contempt for Judaism. But how to explain this regressive theology’s appeal among the western world’s mainline Protestants who—since the call for divestment by the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 2001, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) in 2004, the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church in 2005, and an umbrella National Council of Churches (NCC) coalition of Presbyterians, Baptists, Lutherans and Methodists in 2012—have flirted with this toxic tradition?

Here are two possible explanations. One is to accept these Churches’ self-justification that they are motivated solely by the felt necessity to bear Christian witness to oppressed Palestinians. The other is to look to the declining membership and clout of elite Protestant denominations that are nostalgic for “the good old days” before they lost momentum to evangelical Christian—and predominately pro-Israel—denominations. Some among the elite denominations yearn for past glories associated with the campaigns against the Vietnam War, for American civil rights, and in opposition to South African Apartheid. Could it be that mainline Protestant denominations have jumped on board the BDS bandwagon as a way to reverse their declining status and loss of certainty—even though the price of a ticket is to buy into discredited and dangerous prejudices against Judaism and the people of Israel?

Now, some liberal Protestants are joining radical Muslims in increasingly targeting Evangelical and conservative Christians—Israel’s most important allies—for “conversion” from Christian Zionism to Christian Palestinianism. Those who won’t convert are stigmatized as too pro-Israel. Tarring other Christians with the charge of being “too Jewish” has a long history in the tradition of internal Christian polemic. Yet we are starting to see this tactic used in the twenty-first century by liberal Christians in their war to regain lost ground from other Christians who embrace Israel. Palestinians are mostly bystanders to this internal Christian power struggle over BDS.
It should not be assumed that advocates and antagonists of BDS can be typecast along simple religion lines. Some Palestinian farmers, laborers, and consumers criticize the BDS Movement. And among Jews inside and outside Israel, BDS has defenders as well as critics. For example, Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz explains her support of BDS this way: “Far from being protected by Israel, I feel exposed to danger by the actions of the Israeli state. . . . I am declaring another way to be Jewish. . . I renounce my right to return.” In other words, she replaces the traditional lament, “If I Forget Thee Jerusalem” with a new mantra—“Let’s Forget It—and Now!”

Defenders of BDS

Lebanese American Palestinian Professor of Political Science, As’ad Abu Khalil 2012:
“The real aim of BDS is to bring down the State of Israel . . . That should be stated as an unambiguous goal. There should not be any equivocation on the subject. Justice and freedom for the Palestinians are incompatible with the existence of the state of Israel.”

BDS activist Michael Warschawski in 2012:
“Peace—or, better yet, justice—cannot be achieved without a total decolonization (one can say de-Zionization) of the Israeli state; it is a precondition for the fulfillment of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians—refugees, those living under military occupation, and the second-class citizens of Israel.”

University of Michigan student activist Amer Zahr in 2010:
“What we want is not actual economic divestment from Israel. Everyone knows that the U.S. will never pull investments out of Israel like that. Instead, we are looking to shift the dialogue to whether or not to divest from Israel, without extraneous discussion of the basics. We hope that in 10, 20 years the public will just take for granted the premises that Israel is an Apartheid state, and then we can move from there.”

Electronic Intifada co-founder Nigel Parry in 2010:
“The dilemma in which the Palestinians find themselves is like that of a man who, falsely imprisoned for most of his life and demonized by society, finds himself in a dark room being raped by a highly decorated prison guard, when . . . he suddenly notices a rocket launcher lying within reach.”

Omar Barghouti of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) in 2010:
“If the refugees were to return, you would not have a two state solution, you’d have a Palestine next to a Palestine . . . If you don’t leash the mad dog, it will bite everyone.” (Interviews)
**Defenders of BDS** (cont.)

**Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz, BDS supporter:**
“Far from being protected by Israel, I feel exposed to danger by the actions of the Israeli state. . . . I am declaring another way to be Jewish. . . I renounce my right to return.”

**Sabeel Center founder Rev. Dr. Naim Ateek 2010:**
“It seems to many of us that Jesus is on the cross again with thousands of crucified Palestinians around him... The Israeli government crucifixion system is operating daily.” (Easter Day Message)

**Critics of BDS:**

**Virulent critic of Israel Norman Finkelstein in 2012 calling his fellow BDS supporters hypocrites:**
“Stop trying to be so clever, because you’re only clever in your cult. The moment you step out, you have to deal with Israeli propaganda . . . . They say, ‘No, they’re not really talking about rights; they’re talking about they want to destroy Israel.’ And in fact I think they’re right, I think that’s true . . . . [It is] not an accident, an unwitting omission, that BDS does not mention Israel: they know it will split the movement, because there’s a large segment-component-of the movement that wants to eliminate Israel.”
Critics of BDS (cont.):

Adam Shay writing for the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs in 2012:
“Apartheid is an Afrikaans word that originally denoted the system of racial segregation and curtailment of rights of the non-white population of South Africa between 1948 and 1994. It is difficult to imagine a country more diverse and less segregated than Israel, where 15 religions have official status and where Muslims, Arabs, Christians, and others are represented in all professions, serve in the military and the Knesset (Israeli parliament), the Supreme Court and play leading roles in sports and the arts. Israel has welcomed and embraced Vietnamese ‘Boat People’ and Cambodian refugees from genocide. Gay, lesbian and transgender people from all over the Middle East have found refuge in Israel. Israel’s Christian community is the only Christian community in any nation in the Middle East that has grown in number since 1948. But these facts have never gotten in the way of the mythic fantasies promoted by the BDSers whose sole goal is the destruction of the only functioning role model of human rights in the Middle East, Israel.”62

South African Judge Richard J. Goldstone in 2010 in the New York Times:
“Those who conflate the situations in Israel and the West Bank and liken both to the old South Africa do a disservice to all who hope for justice and peace.”63

“Calls to boycott Israel, for sure, both resonate with historical anti-Semitic campaigns against Jews, and draw on the language of anti-Semitic polemic . . . . What happens when people are boycotted? The ordinary courtesies of life are no longer extended to them. They are not acknowledged in the street; their goods are not bought, their services are not employed; invitations they hitherto could rely upon dry up; they find themselves isolated in company. The boycott is an act of violence, though of a paradoxical kind—one of recoil and exclusion rather than assault.”64

British musician John Lydon in 2010:
After he went to Tel Aviv to headline a concert in August 2010, Lydon responded to criticism by saying: “If Elvis-fucking-Costello wants to pull out of a gig in Israel because he’s suddenly got this compassion for Palestinians, then good on him. But I have absolutely one rule, right? Until I see an Arab country, a Muslim country, with a democracy, I won’t understand how anyone can have a problem with how they’re treated.” (Responding to criticism of the post-punk group PiL’s decision to go to Tel Aviv to headline the Heineken Music Conference 2010 Festival)65

Bar-Ilan University Professor Gerald Steinberg and Jason Edelstein of the NGOP Monitor, 2010:
“The need to refute their [BDS organizations] allegations is clear, [and] students and community groups must also adopt a proactive strategy to undermine the credibility and influence of these groups. This strategy will marginalize many of the BDS movement’s central actors, and expose the lie that BDS is a grassroots protest against Israeli policy. Exposing their abuses and funding sources, and forcing their campaign leaders and participants to respond to us will change the dynamic in this battle.”66
Critics of BDS (cont.):

Economist magazine, editorial, 2007:
“Under closer inspection, the boycotts look flimsy. . . . The chief difference between the Israeli and South African cases is . . . in the moral sphere. Israel is a robust democracy with vibrant academic freedom. Whereas it was plain to most South Africans that ‘separate development’ was a cover for a gross system of racism, the rights and wrongs in Palestine are both murkier and more fiercely contested. . . blaming Israel alone for the impasse in the occupied territories will continue to strike many outsiders as unfair.”

Harvard Law Professor Alan Dershowitz in 2006:
“People who advocate boycotts and divestiture will literally have blood on their hands, . . . They encourage terrorism and discourage the laying down of arms.” (From Keynote Speech at Bar-Ilan University’s Conference on Academic Freedom)

“Divestiture is really not the goal. It’s a campaign to miseducate and misinform the next generation. It’s a variation of Goebbels’ Big Lie. If you repeat something often enough, it will be true.” (2002 Speech)

Thomas L. Friedman in 2002 in the New York Times:
“Singling out Israel for opprobrium and international sanction—out of all proportion to any other party in the Middle East—is anti-Semitic, and not saying so is dishonest.”
Conclusion

The BDS Movement has already fulfilled part of its potential—as a stalking horse for those seeking to destroy Israel by other means. It is a key component of the global asymmetrical war on the Jewish State. It’s committed not to peace but to a piecemeal elimination of Israel—not to non-violence but to blackmail. It doesn’t believe in its own distinctions between “targeted” and “total” boycotts. Nor is it really interested in the economic welfare of Palestinians.

Above all, it lacks the one virtue that Hamas possesses: credible honesty about its intention to replace by any and all means Jewish Israel with (Islamist) Palestine.

Those truly committed to a “Two State Solution” will never serve the cause of peace by embracing the anti-Semitic BDS. Honest people have a choice between two options only: a return to currently unfashionable, always difficult, peacemaking to forge two viable, peaceful states or the grim alternative, stripped bare of pretenses, of a deadly specter astride a Pale Horse.
APPENDIX

BDS
HALF OF SHAME—A CHRONOLOGY

2001
Ahava’s cosmetic products sparked controversy because they are manufactured in the Israeli settlement of Mitzpe Shalem, located on the Dead Sea in the West Bank. The store chain Selfridges temporarily withdrew Ahava’s products.71

2002
Harvard and MIT faculty signed petitions urging their universities to divest from Israel.72
The Scottish TUC (STUC) called for a temporary boycott of Israeli goods and services until Israel complied with UN resolutions.73
Unison adopted the first in a series of resolutions including calls for an arms embargo on Israel, for Israel to withdraw to its 1949 borders while allowing the 1948 refugees to return, for the demolition of the security barrier, and for the removal of all West Bank settlements.74
The Anglican Consultative Council commended the American Episcopal Church for divesting from companies whose corporate investments “support the occupation of Palestinian lands …. ”75
The Toronto Assembly of the United Church of Canada (UCC) supported a boycott of good produced in Jewish settlements.76

2004
The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) voted to “initiate a process of phased selective divestment in multinational corporations operating in Israel.”77
The first “Israeli Apartheid Week” was held in February on North American and British campuses.78

2005
The World Council of Churches (WCC) condemned the “illegal” Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza while highlighting plans to apply “economic pressure” on Israel.79
The New England Conference of the United Methodist Church adopts a resolution to support divestment.80

2006
Britain’s National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) and the Association of University Teachers (AUT) voted to support an academic boycott against Israel. The AUT ban was overturned by members at an Emergency General Meeting a few weeks later, while the boycott expired when AUT merged to form the University and College Union.81
2006 (cont.)

The Ontario section of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) approved a resolution to “support the international campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel until that state recognizes the Palestinian right to self-determination.”

The Anglican Synod backed a call from the Episcopal Synod in Jerusalem to divest “from companies profiting from the illegal occupation such as Caterpillar. Former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord George Carey called these, “inappropriate, offensive and highly damaging.”

Following controversy about the proposed deal to allow UAE-owned DP World to purchase the management contracts for New York, Baltimore, and other major U.S. ports, the Bush Administration pressured the government of the United Arab Emirates to abandon the Arab League’s economic boycott of Israel.

The Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) voted to support BDS. A prime target was Indigo, a retail chain that sells books and music. Its majority owners run a charity for Israeli veterans.

A letter is signed by ninety-three authors, filmmakers, musicians, and performers calling for a cultural boycott of Israel.

2007

Bar-Ilan University’s International Advisory Board (IAB) for Academic Freedom began to coordinate and speak on behalf of all of Israeli universities.

The British National Union of Journalists (NUJ) called for the boycotting of boycott Israeli products, but then backed off implementing the resolution. The Transport Workers Union (TGWU) passed boycott resolutions. So did Unison, Britain’s largest union. Shortly after, Unison’s general secretary wrote to the Histadrut to say the motion was not really a boycott motion and hopefully they could continue to work together in the future.

Pressured by the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign (IPSC), the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) backed divestment, joined by IMPACT, the largest public-sector union in the Republic of Ireland; and the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA).

Under fire from the Stop the Boycott organization, Britain’s University and College Union (UCU) announced that, based on legal advice, an academic boycott of Israel would run a serious risk of infringing UK discrimination legislation and could not be implemented.

2008

The British Rail and Maritime Transport Union RMT voted by a two-thirds majority for a two-state, pro-solidarity, anti-boycott, anti-Hamas position on Israel/Palestine, overturning existing pro-boycott policy.
2009

The British Trades Union Council (TUC)’s General Council voted, “as a result of the Gaza offensive,” to “condemn the Israeli military aggression and the continuing blockade of Gaza,” and “seek EU agreement to impose a ban on the importing of goods produced in the illegal settlements . . . .”

CUPE’s Ontario University Workers Coordinating Committee announced plans to introduce Resolution 50 that would ban Israeli academics from speaking, teaching or researching at Ontario universities. Sid Ryan, president of CUPE Ontario, stated that “Israeli academics should not be on our campuses unless they explicitly condemn the [Islamic] University bombing and the assault on Gaza in general.”

The Belgian government decided to stop exporting weapons to Israel that would bolster its military capabilities.

Dockworkers in South Africa refused to unload an Israeli ship as “as part of a refusal to support oppression and exploitation.” The Congress of South African Trade Unions, COSATU, compared Israel to “dictatorial and oppressive” states such as Zimbabwe and Swaziland.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka denounced boycott Israel campaign, defying pressure from pro-Palestinian union movement.

Hampshire College approves a proposal by Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) for a boycott of companies profiting from the Israeli occupation.

The World Council of Churches adopted an anti-Israel divestment resolution.

The U.S. Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (USACBI) announced it had collected 500 endorsements from U.S. academics for an academic and cultural boycott of Israel.

The Yes Men, announce the withdrawal of their film, The Yes Men Fix the World, from the Jerusalem Film Festival.

Dozens of prominent artists and writers, including Harry Belafonte, Naomi Klein, and Alice Walker, issue a letter to the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) demanding that TIFF end involvement in the Brand Israel campaign.

2010

The Olympia Food Co-Op in Washington State became the first American grocery store to boycott Israeli goods.

Carlos Santana cancelled an upcoming performance in Israel. Israeli promoter, Shuki Weiss, blames the boycott campaign.

Deutsche Bank, Germany’s largest bank, sold its holdings in Elbit Systems for its role in building a West Bank anti-terrorist barrier.

The British Methodist Church decided to begin boycotting products originating in Israeli settlements, becoming the first major Christian denomination in Britain to officially adopt such a policy.
2010 (cont.)

The Israel Action Network, directed by the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) in partnership with the Jewish Council of Public Affairs (JCPA), becomes a defense agency against the BDS. 106

A delegation of gay residents of Tel Aviv was banned from joining a gay pride march in Madrid in response to Israeli actions on a humanitarian ship convoy headed to the Gaza Strip. Organizers of the Madrid event said that it would have been “barbaric” to allow the Israelis to take part. 107

Swedish port workers decided to refuse processing Israeli ships for a period of one week in retaliation for an Israeli raid of a ship to the Gaza Strip. Port workers in Norway launched similar boycotts in response to the Israeli raid. 108

Protesters organized a 24-hour boycott of the port of Oakland against the unloading of an Israeli Zim Line ship. 109

The cultural boycott of Israel gained the support of 500 artists from the city of Montreal, including Lhasa, Gilles Vigneault, Richard Desjardins, members of Bran Van 3000 or Silver Mt. Zion, claiming that Palestinians “face an entrenched system of racial discrimination and segregation, resembling the defeated Apartheid system in South Africa.” 110

Meg Ryan cancelled participation to a festival in Israel, allegedly because of the Gaza Flotilla incident. 111

The South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU) called for an “escalation of the boycott of Israeli goods.” 112

2011

French singer Vanessa Paradis and her husband Johnny Depp acceded to calls to cancel a Tel Aviv show made by Palestinian boycott campaigners, who threatened to boycott them too. 113

American punk artist Jello Biafra, former singer for the Dead Kennedys, cancelled a performance in Tel Aviv, citing discussions with pro-Palestinian and Israeli activists. Punks throughout the world create the network “Punks Against Apartheid” to get the cultural boycott message across to other punk artists. 114

Palestine solidarity activists gathered at the Occupy Wall Street encampment in lower Manhattan to promote the BDS campaign. 115

The University of Johannesburg decided to suspend ties in biotechnology and water purification with Israeli Ben-Gurion University, citing the University’s support for the Israeli military. Two days later, Ihron Rensburg, vice chancellor and principal of the Johannesburg University declared, “UJ is not part of an academic boycott of Israel.” 116

Though Israeli chocolate company Max Brenner was targeted by some Australian Palestinian activists, the Australian Foreign Minister and former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said, “I don’t think in 21st-century Australia there is a place for the attempted boycott of a Jewish business.” 117
Former Pink Floyd frontman Roger Waters was among artists such as Carlos Santana and Elvis Costello supporting boycott against Israel.\(^{118}\)

Creative Community for Peace—composed of music executives, talent agents, and lawyers representing Aerosmith, Celine Dion, Lady Gaga, Jennifer Lopez and Justin Timberlake—formed to counter boycott of Israel.\(^{119}\)

The Israeli Knesset passes legislation that made endorsing a boycott of Israel or Israeli settlements a civil offense.\(^{120}\)

### 2012

University of Pennsylvania President Amy Gutmann said that the university “has clearly stated on numerous occasions that it does not support sanctions or boycotts against Israel,” and that the school was not a sponsor of a BDS conference taking place on campus.\(^{121}\)

The Presbyterian Church (USA) General Assembly decided to reject divestment by a vote of 333 to 331.\(^{122}\)

Leaders of major U.S. Christian denominations—including Protestants, Presbyterians, Baptists, Lutherans and Methodists—asked members of Congress to reconsider U.S. aid to Israel in light of “widespread Israeli human rights violations.” In response, the Simon Wiesenthal Center, the ADL and other Jewish groups withdrew from a scheduled interfaith dialogue.\(^{123}\)

The General Council of the United Church of Canada approved a recommendation to boycott products made in Israeli settlements.\(^{124}\)

American investment firm MSCI removes Caterpillar from three “socially responsible” stock indices.\(^{125}\)

Madonna said that her concert in Tel Aviv was a “peace concert,” and offered about 600 tickets to the show to various Israeli and Palestinian groups, but her offer was rejected by Anarchists Against the Wall and the Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity groups. Madonna’s performance was criticized by a group called “Boycott from Within” as “a blatant attempt at whitewashing Israeli crimes” and Omar Barghouthi said, “by performing in Israel, Madonna has consciously and shamefully lent her name to fig-leafing Israel’s occupation and Apartheid and showed her obliviousness to human rights.”\(^{126}\)

The United Church of Canada’s (UCC) 41st General Council in Ottawa considered divestment.\(^{127}\)

The African National Congress supported a call for a boycott of Israel.\(^{128}\)

The Cour de Cassation, the Supreme Court of France, ruled that calls for a boycott of Israeli products constitute discrimination and as such are illegal under French law.\(^{129}\)
2013

First ever national interfaith anti-Israel boycott of SodaStream coincided with fourth quarter of Superbowl Sunday. Tweeting encouraged under these hashtags: #SodaStreamParty and #BoycottSodaStream!\(^\text{130}\)

Brooklyn College hosted a Political Science Department-sponsored BDS Conference with public funds. No alternative points of view were heard. Pro-Israel students were escorted out by City University of New York (CUNY) police.\(^\text{131}\)

Anti-Israel activist and international anarchists are targeting Israeli fruit growers for a BDS “Day of Action.”\(^\text{132}\)

The Marseille branch of CIMADE, a French Protestant organization that saved Jews during the Holocaust, refused an invitation to the region’s main memorial ceremony for Jewish Holocaust victims because CRIF, the umbrella group representing French Jewish communities, organized the event with the municipality. The values that led CIMADE to save Jews make the group “equally committed to oppose the colonial, discriminatory and bellicose policy of Israel with regards to the Palestinians,” CIMADE regional deputies Francoise Rocheteau and Jean-Pierre Cavalie wrote in a letter to the local CRIF branch on Dec. 21. It also said CIMADE was determined to fight “Apartheid.”\(^\text{133}\)

On Valentine’s Day, BDS targeted in Boston chocolatier Max Brenner, a wholly-owned subsidiary of The Strauss Group, one of Israel’s largest food products manufacturer. The group’s corporate “social responsibility” mission is to provide support (in the form of gift packages and sponsorship of recreational facilities) for Israeli soldiers.\(^\text{134}\)

Ninth Annual Israeli Apartheid Week (February-March).\(^\text{135}\)

The Costcutter Supermarket at the University of York was pressured to initiated a boycott of Israeli goods, despite revelations it continues to sell Iranian pistachios, an industry controlled by the Iranian government.\(^\text{136}\)

Vote by the Students’ Union at Oxford to boycott Israel, after a hateful week that saw hate mail, accusations of racism, and a furious exit from a debate by pro-Saddam Hussein former MP George Galloway who said: “I refused this evening to debate with an Israeli, a supporter of the Apartheid state of Israel. The reason is simple: No recognition, No normalization. Just Boycott, divestment and sanctions, until the Apartheid state is defeated.”\(^\text{137}\)

After the announcement to speak at Essex University of Alon Roth-Snir, Israel’s Deputy Ambassador to the UK, Students’ Union President Nathan Bolton declared on Facebook: “I’ve made my position crystal clear. The Students’ Union has a position, which reflects my own, that the state of Israel is a state, which its very existence is a crime. [sic] The land was stolen from the Palestinian people and then those same people were then systematically exiled from their own homes and continue to be exiled to this day. I’m proud to not give him the attempt to justify his states oppression. I’m sure the hundreds of students were too. Freedom of expression isn’t applicable here.”\(^\text{138}\)
ENDNOTES


ENDNOTES


50 Lim, ed., The Case for Sanctions Against Israel, pp. 219-23.


74 Ibid.


80 Lim, ed., *The Case for Sanctions Against Israel*, p. 221.


83 Ibid.


ENDNOTES
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89 Lim, ed., The Case for Sanctions Against Israel, p. 221.
100 Lim, ed., The Case for Sanctions Against Israel, p. 222.
103 Lim, ed., The Case for Sanctions Against Israel, p. 222.
104 Ibid., 223.
105 Ibid., 225.
106 Ibid., 223.


115 Lim, ed. The Case for Sanctions Against Israel, p. 225.


123 Lim, ed., The Case for Sanctions Against Israel, p. 227.


