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## **Interrogating the Academic Boycotters of Israel on American Campuses**

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### **I. Introduction**

Boycotts of Israeli universities and scholars are among the newest expressions of academic anti-Zionism and antisemitism. In the U.S., more than 1,000 scholars on more than 300 college and university campuses across the country have endorsed an academic boycott of Israel,<sup>1</sup> as have a number of American academic organizations, including the American Studies Association (ASA),<sup>2</sup> the Association for Asian American Studies,<sup>3</sup> and the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association.<sup>4</sup>

Academic boycotts of Israel have included the boycott of academic events such as conferences convened or co-sponsored by Israeli institutions,<sup>5</sup> institutional cooperation agreements with Israeli universities,<sup>6</sup> and study abroad programs in Israel.<sup>7</sup> The academic boycott of Israel has also been invoked to bar the participation of Israeli scholars in

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.amchainitiative.org/academic-boycott-of-israel-map/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.theasa.net/american\\_studies\\_association\\_resolution\\_on\\_academic\\_boycott\\_of\\_israel](http://www.theasa.net/american_studies_association_resolution_on_academic_boycott_of_israel)

<sup>3</sup> <http://amchainitiative.us2.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=0beb330b057061522bbe22a7f&id=9a76f2fa86&e=af475dce6a>

<sup>4</sup> <http://naisa.org/node/719>

<sup>5</sup> For example, see: <http://pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=2293>.

<sup>6</sup> For example, see: <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/nora/bds-roundup-new-year-and-new-boycott-campaigns-ahead>

<sup>7</sup> For example, see: <http://www.csun.edu/~vcmth00m/studyabroad.html>

academic conferences<sup>8</sup> and from inclusion in academic publications.<sup>9</sup>

Like virtually all anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaigns within the last several years, the academic boycott was established in response to the Palestinian political call to join the BDS movement against Israel.<sup>10</sup> That call<sup>11</sup> was issued by 171 Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations in 2005. The first and primary signatory of the Palestinian BDS Call was the Council of National and Islamic Forces in Palestine, which was founded by Yasser Arafat at the start of the Second Intifada in 2000 for the purpose of “organizing a unified effort among major Palestinian factions to oppose Israel and coordinate terror attacks.”<sup>12</sup> The Council includes among its constituent organizations Hamas, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and PFLP – General Command, all three of which are on the U.S. Department of State’s list of Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations<sup>13</sup> and are committed to the elimination of the Jewish state through violent means. Omar Barghouti, founder and most vocal advocate of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, has publicly described his desire to “euthanize” the “Zionist project,”<sup>14</sup> and his American counterparts, the academic founders of the U.S. Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (USACBI),<sup>15</sup> have all publicly expressed their opposition to the Jewish state. (See Appendix 1).

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<sup>8</sup> For example, see: <http://boycottzionism.wordpress.com/2010/03/10/a-joint-letter-to-the-international-society-of-iranian-studies-on-ariel-university-of-samaria-israel/>

<sup>9</sup> For example, see: <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2012/05/31/boycott-kills-u-texas-project-women-writers-middle-east#sthash.0TKAD3wt.dpbs>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.usacbi.org/mission-statement/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1801>

<sup>12</sup> [http://archive.adl.org/terrorism/symbols/palestinian\\_national\\_islamic\\_front.html](http://archive.adl.org/terrorism/symbols/palestinian_national_islamic_front.html)

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm>

<sup>14</sup> <http://jcpa.org/article/what-is-the-real-bds-endgame/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.usacbi.org/about-us/>

The recent controversy over the ASA's adoption of a resolution boycotting Israeli universities and scholars has focused considerable attention, predominantly negative, on the topic of academic boycotts. The ASA has been subjected to scathing criticism by several prominent academic associations, including the American Association of University Professors, more than 250 university presidents, state and federal legislators, and virtually every mainstream Jewish organization.<sup>16</sup> These groups have argued that a boycott of Israeli universities and scholars violates the tenets of academic freedom and is discriminatory towards Israelis and the Jewish state.

Despite the attention that the ASA and its boycott resolution have received to date, little attention has been paid to the individual faculty members who support and promote the academic boycott of Israel, nor has there been an assessment of the negative impact these academic boycotters have had on the universities where they teach. For example, since the passage of the ASA resolution, events promoting the academic boycott of Israel, organized by faculty who themselves are founders of academic boycotts and sponsored by multiple academic departments, have taken place on several university campuses, including New York University,<sup>17</sup> San Francisco State University,<sup>18</sup> University of California Riverside,<sup>19</sup> and University of California Davis.<sup>20</sup> In all of these cases, the departmentally-sponsored events and their faculty organizers have been directly linked to student anti-Israel divestment campaigns on these campuses, as well as to student complaints about anti-Jewish hostility and harassment.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.amchainitiative.org/organizations-universities-condemned-american-studies-associations-academic-boycott-israel/>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/asa+nyu.jpg>

<sup>18</sup> <http://ethnicstudies.sfsu.edu/content/news-events>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/UCR-Omar-Barghouti-event-announcement.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/events/410982679004835/?source=1>

In order to understand how the academic boycott of Israel has taken root and flourished on many American college and university campuses and its deleterious consequences for the campus community, this paper will address the following questions:

- Who are the academic boycotters: With what academic departments are they affiliated? What ideologies motivate them?
- How have boycotters used their university positions to promote the academic boycott of Israel?
- How has the university allowed efforts to promote the academic boycott of Israel flourish on campus?
- What are the effects of academic boycott efforts on college and university campuses?
- What can be done about the problem of faculty who use their university positions and university resources to promote a boycott of Israel?

## **II. Who are the Academic Boycotters of Israel?**

The following analyses are based on a set of data that includes the institutional and primary departmental affiliations of 938 faculty members in 316 American colleges and universities, who have signed or endorsed one or more of 15 statements<sup>21</sup> calling for an academic boycott of Israeli universities and scholars.

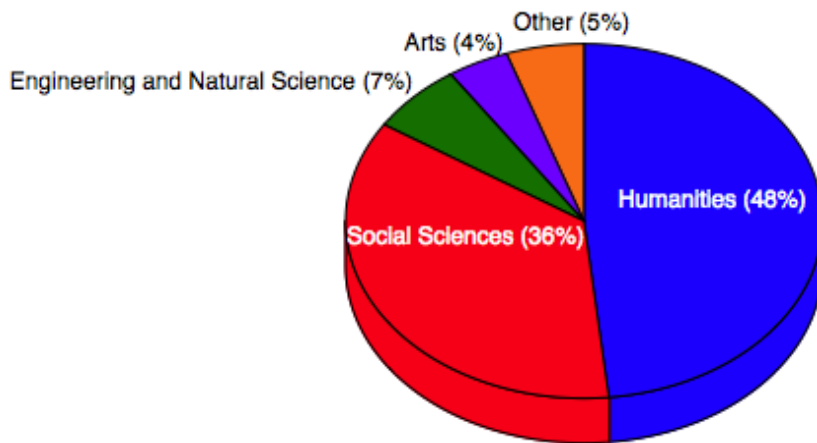
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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Petitions-calling-for-academic-boycott.doc>

### ***Divisional and Departmental Affiliations of Boycotters***

Of the 938 boycotting faculty, the vast majority -- 789 (86%) -- were in the Humanities (453 or 49%) or Social Sciences (336 or 37%). Only 61 (7%) of the boycotters were affiliated with departments in Engineering and Natural Science, and only 38 (4%) were affiliated with departments in the Arts division. See Figure 1 for boycotters' divisional affiliations.

**Figure 1: Academic boycotters of Israel by divisional affiliation**



The departments with the largest numbers of boycotters were English or literature (192 or 21%), followed by ethnic studies (96 or 10%), history (68 or 7%), gender studies (65 or 7%), anthropology (53 or 6%), sociology (44 or 5%), linguistics or languages (43 or 5%), politics (39 or 4%), American studies (33 or 3%), Middle or Near East studies (32 or 3%). See Table 1 for the top ten departmental affiliations of the boycotters.

**Table 1 – Top 10 Primary Departmental Affiliations of Academic Boycotters**

| <b>Department</b>           | <b>Number of Boycotters<br/>N = 938</b> |
|-----------------------------|---|
| English or Literature       | 192 (21%)                               |
| Ethnic Studies              | 96 (10%)                                |
| History                     | 68 (7%)                                 |
| Gender Studies              | 65 (7%)                                 |
| Anthropology                | 53 (6%)                                 |
| Sociology                   | 44 (5%)                                 |
| Linguistics, Languages      | 39 (4%)                                 |
| Politics                    | 53 (6%)                                 |
| American Studies            | 33 (3%)                                 |
| Middle or Near East Studies | 32 (3%)                                 |

***Ideological Motivation of Boycotters***

The above data clearly suggest that a boycotter’s field of study is related to his or her endorsement of an academic boycott of Israel. But why is this so? Why would a faculty member in the Humanities be far more likely to endorse an academic boycott of Israel than one in the Sciences or Engineering? Why would a professor of English be more likely to be a boycotter than a professor of history, linguistics, philosophy, or psychology?

In order to investigate this question, we looked more closely at 143 boycotters whose primary departmental affiliation was English. We did this not only because of the surprisingly high proportion of boycotters in English and literature departments – more than 1/5 of the total number of boycotters, a proportion which is significantly higher than the proportion of English faculty to total faculty in any university<sup>22</sup> – but also because there is no obvious connection between the discipline of English and the Israeli-

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<sup>22</sup> In a survey of 21 campuses with English departments that have one or more faculty members who have endorsed the academic boycott of Israel, English faculty made up an average of 5% of the total faculty at any institution, with a low of 1% and a high of 13%.

Palestinian conflict. Therefore, we reasoned that any difference in research focus between those English professors who have endorsed an academic boycott of Israel and those who have not could be an indicator that ideological factors are at play in a professor's choosing to endorse an academic boycott of Israel.

In examining the on-line descriptions of the research interests of several English professors who have endorsed the academic boycott of Israel, we discovered four recurring themes:

- 1) **Class:** including terms such as Marxism, Critical Theory, Class
- 2) **Gender:** including terms such as Feminism, Gender, Sexuality, Queer
- 3) **Race:** including terms such as Ethnic, Race, Native, Indian, African, Black, Indigenous, Asian
- 4) **Empire:** including terms such as Post-Colonial, Empire, Imperialism, Subaltern, Alterity

A comprehensive analysis of all 143 professors of English who endorsed the academic boycott of Israel reveals the following:

- 92% have research interests that include one or more of the above four categories.
- 63% have research interests that include Race.
- 46% have research interests that include Gender.
- 39% have research interests that include Empire.
- 26% have research interests that include Class.

In order to ensure that the predominance of these research themes among boycotting English faculty was not simply a function of departmental affiliation – in other words, perhaps 92% of *all* English faculty, irrespective of whether they have

endorsed an academic boycott of Israel, have research interests that include these four categories -- we conducted a survey of the research interests of all of the faculty in English departments at 21 American universities where one or more members of the English department had endorsed a boycott of Israel.<sup>23</sup>

We found the following:

- 40% of the total English faculty (N = 866) at the 21 universities surveyed have research interests that include one or more of the four research areas above, with the smallest percentage found at Bates College (10%) and the largest percentage at the University of Chicago (73%).
- 23% have research interests that include Race.
- 22% have research interests that include Gender.
- 9% have research interests that include Empire.
- 11% have research interests that include Class.

Table 2 provides a comparison of the research interests of those English faculty who have endorsed the academic boycott of Israel and of all English faculty on 21 university campuses with respect to the categories of Race, Gender, Class or Empire. As can be seen, boycotters are significantly more likely to be engaged in research in these four areas than their departmental colleagues, suggesting that these areas of study may predispose faculty members to endorse an academic boycott of Israel.

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<sup>23</sup> Research activity of all faculty in the English Departments of the following universities was surveyed: Bates College, College of Staten Island, Cornell University, Florida State University, Fordham University, Hofstra University, Indiana University South Bend, Indiana University Bloomington, Michigan State University, Middlebury College, Ohio State University, Pace University, San Jose State University, University of California Davis, University of California Los Angeles, University of Chicago, University of Hawaii, University of Massachusetts Boston, University of Pennsylvania, University of Vermont, West Chester University.



**Table 2 – A Comparison of the Research Interests of Boycotting English Faculty and All English Faculty in 21 University English Departments**

| <b>Research Interests</b>     | <b>English BoycotTERS<br/>N = 143</b> | <b>Total English Faculty<br/>N = 866</b> | <b>Statistical Significance</b> |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Race, Gender, Empire or Class | 132 (92%)                             | 326 (38%)                                | $\chi^2 = 147$ ; $p < .0005$    |
| Race                          | 92 (63%)                              | 201 (23%)                                | $\chi^2 = 101$ ; $p < .0005$    |
| Gender                        | 67 (46%)                              | 198 (22%)                                | $\chi^2 = 35$ ; $p < .0005$     |
| Empire                        | 57 (39%)                              | 80 (9%)                                  | $\chi^2 = 100$ ; $p < .0005$    |
| Class                         | 38 (26%)                              | 91 (11%)                                 | $\chi^2 = 30$ ; $p < .0005$     |

This conclusion is supported in part by the fact that faculty whose primary affiliation is in ethnic studies or gender studies show the second and fourth highest rates of academic boycotting, respectively, despite the fact that these two departments are, in general, significantly smaller than other departments on most campuses.

These data beg the question: What, if anything, do these four areas of study have in common, and why might they predispose a faculty member engaged in studying one or more of them to boycott Israel?

One possibility is that all four areas represent ideological paradigms which divide the world into oppressed and oppressor along the lines of Race, Gender, Empire, or Class, making it a short ideological leap to seeing the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the same binary terms, casting the Palestinians as the oppressed and the Israelis as the oppressor. Moreover, these areas of study all grew out of, and to some extent continue to have ties to social movements such as the civil rights movement, feminism, anti-imperialism, and Marxism, which were established to pursue “social justice” for the oppressed by combating the “evils” of the racist, sexist, colonialist, capitalist oppressor, a fact which makes for the blurring of the lines between scholarship and activism. The linkage between scholarship and activism inherent to the study of Race, Gender, Empire, and

Class not only helps to explain the disproportionate number of English faculty among the academic boycotters of Israel, it also helps to explain why some faculty feel justified in bringing their anti-Israel activism onto their campuses and into their classrooms.

### **III. How Have Faculty Promoted the Academic Boycott of Israel on Their Campuses?**

Here are seven examples of the diverse ways in which founders and organizers of the academic boycott of Israel have used their university positions and the university's resources to promote the boycott:

#### ***1. As Part of the Course Curriculum***

David Lloyd is a Distinguished Professor of English at University of California Riverside.<sup>24</sup> He is also a founder of USACBI. In January he organized on his campus a lecture by Omar Barghouti, the founder and most vocal advocate of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel. The talk was funded and sponsored by the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences along with the Department of Ethnic Studies, a third of whose faculty have endorsed the academic boycott of Israel, including the department chair.<sup>25</sup> Students in eight courses were required to attend and listen to Barghouti's talk, which consisted of anti-Israel

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.english.ucr.edu/people/faculty/index.html>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/UCR-Omar-Barghouti-event-announcement.pdf>

propaganda laced with classic antisemitic tropes used to promote the academic boycott of Israel.

## ***2. At an Academic Conference***

Lisa Duggan is a professor of Social and Cultural Analysis at New York University.<sup>26</sup> She is also the President-Elect of the American Studies Association and was an organizer and vocal advocate of the ASA's resolution to boycott Israeli universities and scholars. A few months after the ASA's membership approved the boycott resolution, Duggan helped to organize the annual conference of NYU's American Studies Program, entitled "Circuits of Influence: U.S., Israel, and Palestine." The conference, which was co-sponsored by three other NYU departments, included talks by 21 BDS-supporting academics and activists focusing on "using boycotts as a tactic and substantive challenge to systems of injustice" that include Israel's "racialization, empire, and settler colonialism". The conference also featured workshops on how to boycott Israel, run by representatives of virulently anti-Zionist organizations such as Adalah-NY, Students for Justice in Palestine, and Jewish Voice for Peace.<sup>27</sup>

## ***3. On the University Website***

David Klein is a mathematics Professor at California State University Northridge and the faculty advisor for CSUN Students for Justice in Palestine.<sup>28</sup> He is also a founder of USACBI and organized a petition to boycott the Israel Abroad program on CSU

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<sup>26</sup> <http://sca.as.nyu.edu/object/LisaDuggan>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/asa+nyu.jpg>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.csun.edu/~vcmth00m/>

campuses in solidarity with the academic boycott of Israel.<sup>29</sup> For more than four years Klein has been using his university's server to promote his web page entitled "Boycott Israel Resource Page" calling for the economic, academic, and cultural boycott of Israel. His university-hosted web page contains a litany of false and inflammatory statements and photographs intended to incite hatred and promote political activism against the Jewish state, particularly boycott.<sup>30</sup>

#### ***4. Through Departmental Sponsorship of a Student BDS Event***

Sunaina Maira is a professor of Asian American Studies<sup>31</sup> and Middle East/South Asia Studies<sup>32</sup> at University of California Davis, as well as a founder of USACBI and an organizer of the ASA's academic boycott resolution. About a month after the ASA vote to boycott Israel, Maira helped the UC Davis Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) to organize an event featuring Omar Barghouti and three other anti-Israel activists, who demonized and delegitimized the Jewish state and encouraged students to engage in activism against it, particularly boycott.<sup>33</sup> The event, which was used by the SJP group to kick off their campaign to pass an anti-Israel divestment resolution in the student senate in the spring, was co-sponsored by four academic units, including Maira's Asian American Studies department, more than half of whose faculty has endorsed an academic boycott of Israel.

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<sup>29</sup> <http://www.csun.edu/~vcmth00m/studyabroad.html>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.csun.edu/~vcmth00m/boycott.html>

<sup>31</sup> <https://asa.ucdavis.edu/faculty/sunaina-maira>

<sup>32</sup> <http://mesa.ucdavis.edu/faculty/me-sa-faculty/sunaina-maira>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/events/410982679004835/?source=1>

## ***5. By Advising Pro-Palestinian Students***

Rabab Abdulhadi is a professor of ethnic studies and senior scholar of the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas Initiative at San Francisco State University,<sup>34</sup> a founder of USACBI, and the faculty advisor of the General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS) at SFSU. As a featured speaker at student-organized events, Abdulhadi has advocated overthrowing the “settler colonial” occupation of Palestine by any means, including by armed violence and BDS.<sup>35</sup> She has also posted messages on the GUPS Facebook page promoting BDS. In her role as GUPS faculty advisor, Abdulhadi helped the GUPS students organize an event in November 2013 that featured an image of PFLP terrorist Leila Khaled holding a rifle with the caption “resistance is not terrorism,”<sup>36</sup> and another with the words “My Heroes Have Always Killed Colonizers.”<sup>37</sup> Abdulhadi was also the personal mentor of former GUPS president Mohammad G. Hammad,<sup>38</sup> who was expelled from SFSU in January 2014 for numerous violent social media postings glorifying terrorism and threatening to kill Israelis and their supporters.<sup>39</sup>

## ***6. In the Academic Senate***

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<sup>34</sup> <http://www.sfsu.edu/~amed/faculty.html>

<sup>35</sup> See for instance Abdulhadi’s talk at a student-organized conference at University of British Columbia entitled “Return and Liberation” in May 2013, which was attended by some GUPS students: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0vSYbScWAs>.

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Leila-Khaled-GUPS-.jpg>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/GUPS1.jpg>

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.amchainitiative.org/mohammad-g-hammads-tumblr-postings-about-sfsu-professor-rabab-abdulhadi/>

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.amchainitiative.org/mohammad-h-hammads-tumblr-postings-5713-111013/>

Manzar Foroohar is a professor of history at California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo<sup>40</sup> and a founder of USACBI. She has also served as the chair of Cal Poly's Academic Senate Faculty Affairs Committee since 2002 and currently serves as the chair of the CSU Faculty Affairs Committee. Foroohar has used her leadership roles in the campus and state-wide academic senates to advance her anti-Israel positions, as well as to silence criticism of herself and other faculty who use the university's name and resources to promote anti-Israel activism, including boycotts of Israel. After Foroohar and two other CSU faculty members were criticized by a community organization and many members of the public for using their university affiliations and resources to host talks by Ilan Pappé, a well-known advocate of the academic boycott of Israel, in February 2012,<sup>41</sup> Foroohar drafted an academic resolution condemning "appalling attempts by political pressure groups to quell academic freedom on campuses and to impose their political agenda on our educational institutions."<sup>42</sup> Her resolution was approved with slight revision by the Cal Poly Academic Senate Executive Committee and adopted by the Cal Poly Academic Senate. Later that year, Foroohar volunteered and was appointed to chair the state-wide faculty senate committee charged with implementing the "Governor's Task Force on Tolerance and Anti-Semitism Training," apparently in an attempt to subvert that committee's charge.<sup>43</sup> In January 2014, at a meeting of the statewide Academic Senate Plenary that took place in the Office of the CSU Chancellor Timothy White, Foroohar criticized White for his public

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<sup>40</sup> [http://cla.calpoly.edu/hist\\_foroohar.html](http://cla.calpoly.edu/hist_foroohar.html)

<sup>41</sup> [http://www.amchainitiative.org/pappe\\_at\\_csu/](http://www.amchainitiative.org/pappe_at_csu/)

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Foroohar-Academic-Senate-Resolution-on-Academic-Freedom-.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.jns.org/news-briefs/2012/12/11/bds-linked-professor-to-chair-california-university-anti-sem.html#.UzwRm4WU6Hk>

statements condemning the ASA's academic boycott of Israel, which she claimed inhibited "faculty and student advocacy for Palestinian organizations."<sup>44</sup>

### ***7. Using a Faculty Advocacy Group***

Sondra Hale is Professor Emeritus of Anthropology and Women's Studies at UCLA<sup>45</sup> and was the previous co-director of the UCLA Center for Near Eastern Studies. She is also a founder of USACBI and helped organize a petition calling for the boycott of the Israel Abroad program on University of California campuses in solidarity with the academic boycott of Israel.<sup>46</sup> In 2009, Hale and three other California-based co-founders of USACBI established California Scholars for Academic Freedom, and most of that organization's membership consists of California faculty who have endorsed the academic boycott of Israel, including David Lloyd, Sunaina Maira, David Klein, Rabab Abdulhadi, and Manzar Foroohar. Although the organization describes itself as a group of more than 100 academics whose goal is to protect California scholars from violations of academic freedom,<sup>47</sup> their primary focus has been protecting the rights of California faculty who wish to promote the academic boycott of Israel and engage in other anti-Israel activism on their respective campuses. To this end, they have written numerous letters to UC, CSU and state legislative leaders defending California faculty who have been criticized for engaging in anti-Israel activism in their classrooms and conference halls,<sup>48</sup> censuring a UC report<sup>49</sup> and State Assembly resolution<sup>50</sup> that documented and

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<sup>44</sup> [http://www.calstate.edu/AcadSen/documents/DRAFT\\_January\\_2014\\_Plenary\\_Minutes.pdf](http://www.calstate.edu/AcadSen/documents/DRAFT_January_2014_Plenary_Minutes.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> <http://web.international.ucla.edu/cnes/person/61>

<sup>46</sup> <http://normanfinkelstein.com/2009/another-important-initiative/>

<sup>47</sup> <http://cascholars4academicfreedom.wordpress.com/about/>.

<sup>48</sup> See for example: <http://cascholars4academicfreedom.wordpress.com/2014/03/13/letter-to-dr-leslie-wong-president-sfsu-re-amcha-letter/> and

condemned antisemitism on California campuses, and disparaging the CSU president's statement condemning the ASA's academic boycott of Israel.<sup>51</sup>

#### **IV. Institutional Factors that Allow Faculty to Promote the Academic Boycott of Israel on Campus**

The above examples demonstrate how academic boycott leaders have not only promoted anti-Israel campaigns on their respective campuses but have sought to stifle all criticism of their behavior. To a large extent their efforts have been successful. This is primarily the result of three conditions that exist on many university campuses today.

##### ***1. Academic Departments That Encourage Political Activism***

A number of academic departments devoted to the study of race, gender, class, or empire explicitly or implicitly encourage their faculty to engage in political advocacy and activism, including against the Jewish state. For example, the following departments, one or more of whose affiliated faculty have endorsed the academic boycott of Israel, have incorporated the promotion of political activism, especially the pursuit of "social justice," into their mission statements:

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<http://cascholars4academicfreedom.wordpress.com/2013/09/26/letter-to-president-of-sdsu-re-ghassan-zakaria/>.

<sup>49</sup> <http://cascholars4academicfreedom.wordpress.com/2012/08/14/letter-to-uc-president-yudof-regarding-campus-climate-report-on-situation-of-jewish-muslim-and-arab-students/>

<sup>50</sup> <http://cascholars4academicfreedom.wordpress.com/2012/09/24/an-open-letter-from-california-scholars-for-academic-freedom-to-california-assemblymembers-linda-halderman-bonnie-lowenthal-and-66-co-authors-of-california-house-resolution-35/>

<sup>51</sup> <http://cascholars4academicfreedom.wordpress.com/2014/01/09/letter-to-chancellor-white-re-response-to-asa-resolution/>



- **San Francisco State University Ethnic Studies:** “The College of Ethnic Studies aims to actively implement a vision of social justice focusing on eliminating inequalities motivated by race and ethnicity.”<sup>52</sup>
- **University at Albany:** “Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies is an interdisciplinary field of study that recognizes excellence in research, teaching, and service in three important ways...Social Justice, a commitment to dismantling sexism, racism, classism, and other oppressive practices in our research, teaching, and service to different communities.”<sup>53</sup>
- **University of California Santa Barbara:** “[T]he sociology department has a strong tradition of mixing scholarship with activism and concerns for social justice.”<sup>54</sup>
- **University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, Asian American Studies:** “Faculty, staff, and students associated with the department are expected to contribute to this mission not only through teaching, research, and service activities, locally and nationally, but also through active participation in social, intellectual, and political endeavors.”<sup>55</sup>

Some departments even consider the anti-Israel activism of their faculty as a valued aspect of academic service and mention it on their departmental websites. For instance, in her official faculty biography on the website of the UCLA Center for Near Eastern Studies, Emeritus Professor Sondra Hale is described as “an activist academic”

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<sup>52</sup> <http://ethnicstudies.sfsu.edu/home3>

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.albany.edu/womensstudies/ws-mission.shtml>

<sup>54</sup> See: <http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/graduate-studies>.

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.asianam.illinois.edu/about/>

who is “co-founder of the U.S. Committee for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel.”<sup>56</sup>

In light of such departmental emphasis on political and social activism, a faculty member’s on-campus promotion of the boycott of Israel is more likely to be applauded by his or her departmental colleagues than condemned.

## ***2. The Vagueness and Malleability of Academic Freedom***

The use of university affiliation and resources to promote the boycott of Israel has been publicly challenged as an abuse of academic freedom in the cases of all seven of the academic boycott founders and organizers cited in the previous section. However in each case, university administrators, who themselves have condemned the academic boycott of Israel on the grounds that it violates the tenets of academic freedom and is antithetical to the mission of the university, have declared that the behavior of these professors is absolutely protected by academic freedom – even the behavior of mathematics professor David Klein, who has used his university’s web server to post his “Boycott Israel Resource Page,” whose contents are totally unrelated to his field of scholarly expertise.

This raises the question of what, exactly, academic freedom denotes, a question which becomes even more complicated when we consider that academic freedom has been so confidently invoked in each of the following contexts:

- Academic boycotters claim that the academic boycott is being imposed on Israel as a response to Israel’s violation of the *academic freedom* of Palestinian scholars.

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<sup>56</sup> [http://www.international.ucla.edu/person.asp?Facultystaff\\_ID=61](http://www.international.ucla.edu/person.asp?Facultystaff_ID=61)

- Critics of the academic boycotters claim that the imposition of such a boycott violates the *academic freedom* of Israeli scholars and those American scholars who would choose to work with them.
- Academic boycotters claim that their *academic freedom* to champion the *academic freedom* rights of Palestinian scholars is being violated.
- Critics of the academic boycotters claim that boycotters are stifling their *academic freedom* to complain about the boycotter's violation of *academic freedom*.

In fact, the answer to the question of what academic freedom denotes is so confusing, and the concept applied in such contradictory ways, as to render it almost meaningless in any discussion about academic boycotts of Israel and their advancement by faculty on campuses. Nevertheless, until clarity is brought to the concept and clear guidelines established for its use, claims of academic freedom will continue to provide cover for faculty who wish to promote an antisemitic boycott of Israel at their college or university.

### ***3. The Unwillingness of Administrators to Enforce University Policies and the Law***

In contrast to the vagueness and malleability of academic freedom, university policy and state and federal laws provide objective standards of behavior for faculty, and several of them seem to clearly apply to the case of faculty who promote an antisemitic boycott of Israel on campus:

- **University policies that protect the academic mission of the university from political indoctrination:** For example, the University of California Regents Policy on Course Content provides that “Misuse of the classroom by, for example, allowing it to be used for political indoctrination... constitutes misuse of the University as an institution.”<sup>57</sup>
- **Laws that prohibit state and federal monies from being used for purposes not consistent with the educational mission of the university:** For example, California Government Code 8314 prohibits the use of public resources for political or personal purposes.<sup>58</sup>
- **Laws that prohibit discriminatory boycotts:** For example, NY Human Rights Law section 296 prohibits boycotts based on national origin,<sup>59</sup> and the Ribicoff Amendment of the Tax Reform Act of 1976 makes it a federal violation to “participate or cooperate with an international boycott.”<sup>60</sup>
- **Laws that prohibit the harassment and discrimination of Jewish students:** For example, Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination against students on the basis of race, color, or national origin, and has included Jewish students since 2010.

Although university policies and laws such as these could provide an excellent means of protecting the campus community from the harmful effects of faculty bringing

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<sup>57</sup> [www.universityofcalifornia.edu/regents/policies/6065.html](http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/regents/policies/6065.html)

<sup>58</sup> <http://law.onecle.com/california/government/8314.html>

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.dhr.ny.gov/law#296>

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/enforcement/oac>

the boycott of Israel onto campus, university administrators have been loathe to acknowledge, let alone enforce, these policies and laws.

## **V. Effects of Academic Boycott Efforts on Campuses**

Faculty members' unbridled use of the university for promoting the boycott of Israel has had three primary negative consequences for the universities at which they are being carried out.

### ***1. Corruption of the academic mission of the University***

The political nature of the campaign to promote a boycott of Israel damages the educational endeavor that is at the heart of the University. In a 2012 report of the California Association of Scholars entitled "A Crisis of Competence: The Corrupting Effect of Political Activism in the University of California,"<sup>61</sup> the authors detail the extent to which UC campuses have been harmed by the politicization of their academic programming. They conclude that when the focus of a professor or department is political advocacy, the quality of teaching and research is compromised. One-sided partisan teaching also limits the access of students to vital information about complex topics of global importance, and it violates their fundamental right to be educated and not indoctrinated.

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<sup>61</sup> See: [www.nas.org/images/documents/A\\_Crisis\\_of\\_Competence.pdf](http://www.nas.org/images/documents/A_Crisis_of_Competence.pdf).

## ***2. Creation of a hostile environment for Jewish students***

Professors who use their university positions and university resources to promote campaigns to harm or dismantle the Jewish state and who encourage students to do the same, contribute to the creation of a hostile and threatening environment for many Jewish students, who report feeling emotionally and intellectually harassed and intimidated by their professors and isolated from their fellow students. Moreover, in light of the fact that no other racial, ethnic or religious group has been subjected *by faculty* to such pervasive harassment and intimidation, Jewish students experience this flagrant double standard as a kind of institutional discrimination that is antisemitic in effect if not in intent.

Unfortunately, Jewish students who feel emotionally or intellectually threatened as a result of their professor's anti-Israel advocacy are often afraid to come forward and confront the professor or to complain to an administrator, because they are concerned about potential retaliation. In addition, students who do try to speak up about faculty harassment and intimidation risk being accused of violating their professors' academic freedom and subject to further harassment and intimidation.

## ***3. Giving academic legitimacy to global campaigns to harm Israel***

American college campuses have become a critical front in the war of ideas being waged against the Jewish state. The language and imagery used to demonize Israel and portray the state as worthy of destruction, as well as the BDS campaigns intended to be the first steps towards that end, are the main weapons of this "war by other means," and they have caused significant harm to the reputation of Israel and her supporters, both on and off campus, in America and around the world. Moreover, when antisemitic tropes

and campaigns are promoted by faculty in their classrooms and at departmentally sponsored events, a cloak of academic legitimacy attaches to them, considerably enhancing their ability to flourish on campus and well beyond, and contributing to the growth of global antisemitism.

## **VI. Conclusions**

As the foregoing analysis has demonstrated, faculty on hundreds of university campuses across the country have endorsed an academic boycott of Israeli universities and scholars. Predominantly hailing from the humanities and social sciences, many of the academic boycotters are involved with the study of Race, Gender, Class or Empire, and seem to be motivated by ideologies which divide the world into oppressed and oppressor and are linked to social movements which pursue social justice for the oppressed by combating the perceived oppressor, in this case Israel.

Academic boycotters have found multiple points of entry for advancing the boycott of Israel on their campuses, including in the classroom, conference hall, and campus square, on the university website, and through the academic senate. Faculty boycotters have also created advocacy groups to defend the right of faculty to continue using university resources to promote BDS. The boycotters' efforts have been facilitated by the activist focus of some departments in the social sciences and humanities, the lack of clarity about academic freedom, and the unwillingness of administrators to enforce university policy and state and federal laws that would curb the behavior of the

boycotters. The net result is that many universities have become bastions of political hatred directed against Israel, and inhospitable to Jewish students who identify with the Jewish state.

The problem is a serious one and worsens with each campus-based boycott effort that goes unchallenged. But what can be done to stem the tide of virulent hatred directed against the Jewish state and its supporters? In the absence of a willingness on the part of faculty and administrators to address the problem, pressure must be brought from outside of the university. Such pressure could be applied in the following ways:

- **Public Pressure** - Information about BDS and other antisemitic efforts on campuses, as well as the names and affiliated departments of faculty members who endorse them, should be published and circulated widely. Then, university consumers and stakeholders -- students, prospective students, alumni, parents, donors, and taxpayers -- should be encouraged to express their outrage at the university's collusion with an antisemitic campaign to eliminate the Jewish state. Potential loss of student or donor revenue and the erosion of the goodwill of the taxpaying public send a compelling message to university administrators to address the problem.
- **Legal Pressure** – When the behavior of faculty, students or administrators violates state or federal law, legal action, or the threat of legal action, may prove effective.
- **Legislative Pressure** - Virtually all universities, but especially public universities, are beholden to state and federal legislators for essential support of their institutions. To date, legislation which would withhold public monies from



universities that engage in anti-Israel boycotts has been proposed in five states, as well as in the U.S. Congress. Such legislation could go a long way towards curbing the behavior of academic boycotters.

In the 1930's, thousands of Jewish professors were kicked out of German universities, simply because they were Jews. Shamefully, today in the United States Jewish professors are threatened with being thrown out of scholarly conferences, prevented from publishing in scholarly journals, and denied research or employment opportunities, simply because they are citizens of the Jewish state. Although the problem is a global one, it must be fought locally, on each and every campus where the antisemitic boycott of the Jewish state rears its ugly head.

## Appendix

### **Statements or Endorsements of Statements Opposing a Jewish State by the Academic Founders of the US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel<sup>62</sup>**

**Rabab Abdulhadi**, San Francisco State University

- Signed a petition stating that “the rights of the Palestinian people - and our land - the entire land of Palestine - are not for sale or bartering at the negotiations table.”<sup>63</sup>
- Has argued for “a liberated Palestine” that is “an inclusionary alternative to the exclusionary strategy of Zionism.”<sup>64</sup>

**Lara Deeb**, Scripps College

- Signed a letter to President Elect Barack Obama which, among other things, argues for elimination of the Jewish state.<sup>65</sup>

**Nada Elia**, Antioch University, Seattle

- Signed a petition for “Palestinian Right of Return and a democratic state throughout historic Palestine — ‘From the River to the Sea’ — with equal rights for all.”<sup>66</sup>
- Signed a letter to President Elect Barack Obama which, among other things, argues for elimination of the Jewish state.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> <http://www.usacbi.org/about-us/>

<sup>63</sup> <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/viewform?formkey=dERVMFdtcGR4UG5LN045ZFJQTnlLa1E6MA#gid=0>

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/5010/debating-palestine-representation-resistance-and-l>

<sup>65</sup> <http://pulsemedia.org/2009/01/19/open-letter-to-obama/>

<sup>66</sup> <http://jfpror.wordpress.com/2013/01/09/jews-for-palestinian-right-of-return-update/>

<sup>67</sup> <http://pulsemedia.org/2009/01/19/open-letter-to-obama/>

**Manzar Foroohar**, California Polytechnic State University – San Luis Obispo

- Signed a petition calling on Israel to end its “occupation and colonization of all Arab lands,” which is clearly referring to all of Israel.<sup>68</sup>
- Signed a statement calling Israel’s treatment of Palestinians a “crime against humanity” which “symbolizes a regime rooted in more than six decades of piracy, ethnic cleansing, racism, and apartheid against Palestinians and other indigenous people of the region.”<sup>69</sup>

**Cynthia Franklin**, University of Hawai’i at Manoa

- Signed a petition for “Palestinian Right of Return and a democratic state throughout historic Palestine — “From the River to the Sea” — with equal rights for all.”<sup>70</sup>
- Signed a letter to President Elect Barack Obama which, among other things, argues for elimination of the Jewish state.<sup>71</sup>

**Jess Ghannam**, University of California, San Francisco

- Co-founded Al-Awda: Palestinian Right of Return, an organization which “unequivocally supports the fundamental, inalienable, historical, legal, individual and collective rights of all Palestinian refugees to return to their original towns, villages and lands anywhere in Palestine from which they were expelled,” “supports the struggle for the liberation of Palestine and views it as a struggle against all forms of

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<sup>68</sup> <http://laborforpalestine.net/2011/07/14/u-s-trade-union-statement-in-support-of-palestinian-call-for-full-and-immediate-arms-embargo-against-apartheid-israel/>

<sup>69</sup> <http://boycottzionism.wordpress.com/category/international-bds-actions/page/29>

<sup>70</sup> <http://jfprior.wordpress.com/2013/01/09/jews-for-palestinian-right-of-return-update/>

<sup>71</sup> <http://pulsemedia.org/2009/01/19/open-letter-to-obama/>

colonialism,” seeks “the dismantlement of the exclusionary and racist character of ‘Israel’, and until all Palestinians are granted the right to return and achieve equality,” and “[t]he formation of an independent, democratic state for all its citizens in all of Palestine.”<sup>72</sup>

**Sherna Berger Gluck**, California State University, Long Beach

- Signed a petition for “Palestinian Right of Return and a democratic state throughout historic Palestine — “From the River to the Sea” — with equal rights for all.”<sup>73</sup>
- Is on the list “of those who have publicly disavowed Gilad Atzmon due to his recognizing a connection between Jewish cultural identity and Zionist ideology.”<sup>74</sup>

**Sondra Hale**, University of California, Los Angeles

- Signed a petition opposing the Geneva Accord since it “provides a Palestinian-Arab cover for the exclusive nature of the Israeli polity as a ‘Jewish State’, thus abrogating the national character of the Palestinian people within 1948 borders. It therefore fails to recognize the right of the 1.2 million Palestinian citizens of Israel to live in a democratic state for all its citizens: Jews and Palestinians.”<sup>75</sup>
- Signed a letter to President Elect Barack Obama which, among other things, argues for elimination of the Jewish state.<sup>76</sup>

**Salah D. Hassan**, Michigan State University

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<sup>72</sup> <http://www.al-awda.org/pou.html>

<sup>73</sup> <http://jffpror.wordpress.com/2013/01/09/jews-for-palestinian-right-of-return-update/>

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.gilad.co.uk/writings/what-shall-we-not-talk-about-today.html>

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.al-awda.org/geneva.html>

<sup>76</sup> <http://pulsemedia.org/2009/01/19/open-letter-to-obama/>

- Signed a letter to President Elect Barack Obama which, among other things, argues for elimination of the Jewish state.<sup>77</sup>

**David Klein**, California State University, Northridge

- Signed a petition for “Palestinian Right of Return and a democratic state throughout historic Palestine — “From the River to the Sea” — with equal rights for all.”<sup>78</sup>
- Signed a letter to President Elect Barack Obama which, among other things, argues for elimination of the Jewish state.<sup>79</sup>

**Dennis Korthauer**, California State University, Long Beach

- Signed a petition for “Palestinian Right of Return and a democratic state throughout historic Palestine — “From the River to the Sea” — with equal rights for all.”<sup>80</sup>
- Signed a letter to President Elect Barack Obama which, among other things, argues for elimination of the Jewish state.<sup>81</sup>

**David Lloyd**, University of California, Riverside

- Has stated that Israel is “an apartheid state, whose self-declared constitution as a ‘Jewish State for a Jewish People’ should have no more international legitimacy than South Africa’s ‘white state for a white people’ or Northern Ireland’s ‘Protestant State

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<sup>77</sup> <http://pulsemedia.org/2009/01/19/open-letter-to-obama/>

<sup>78</sup> <http://jfpror.wordpress.com/2013/01/09/jews-for-palestinian-right-of-return-update/>

<sup>79</sup> <http://pulsemedia.org/2009/01/19/open-letter-to-obama/>

<sup>80</sup> <http://jfpror.wordpress.com/2013/01/09/jews-for-palestinian-right-of-return-update/>

<sup>81</sup> <http://pulsemedia.org/2009/01/19/open-letter-to-obama/>

for a Protestant people,' both of which finally fell to a combination of military and civil resistance and international opprobrium.”<sup>82</sup>

- Wrote the letter to President Elect Barack Obama which, among other things, argues for elimination of the Jewish state.<sup>83</sup>

**Sunaina Maira**, University of California, Davis

- Belongs to the organization South Asians for the Liberation of Falastin (Palestine)<sup>84</sup>
- Claims that Israel “has at its core a settler-colonial perspective” and calls for Arab American and Asian American Studies to both have anti-Zionism as their disciplinary platform.<sup>85</sup>
- Signed a letter to President Elect Barack Obama which, among other things, argues for elimination of the Jewish state.<sup>86</sup>

**Fred Moten**, University of California, Riverside

- Rejects Israel’s existence as a settler-colonial state based on racial domination.<sup>87</sup>
- Signed a letter to President Elect Barack Obama which, among other things, argues for elimination of the Jewish state.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> <http://curate.tumblr.com/post/68047890/gaza-and-the-ghetto-in-september-1939-nazi>

<sup>83</sup> <http://pulsemedia.org/2009/01/19/open-letter-to-obama/>

<sup>84</sup> <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2008/cm130308p.html>

<sup>85</sup> [http://www.academia.edu/3580480/Arab\\_Asian\\_Americans](http://www.academia.edu/3580480/Arab_Asian_Americans)

<sup>86</sup> <http://pulsemedia.org/2009/01/19/open-letter-to-obama/>

<sup>87</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVb879D5b0M>

<sup>88</sup> <http://pulsemedia.org/2009/01/19/open-letter-to-obama/>

**Eddie Pistolessi**, California State University, Northridge

- Signed a letter to President Elect Barack Obama which, among other things, argues for elimination of the Jewish state.<sup>89</sup>

**Steven Salaita**, Virginia Tech University

- Has stated: “My hope is that in the end, we’ll let lie Israel’s dead soul and examine its destruction of actual minds and bodies instead.”<sup>90</sup>
- Has stated: “I would urge you not to limit your critique of Israel only to its errors of judgment or its perceived excesses; it is more productive to challenge the ideology and practice of Zionism itself... I am not arguing that Americans should reassess their level of support for Israel. I am arguing that Americans should oppose Zionism altogether.”<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> <http://pulsemedia.org/2009/01/19/open-letter-to-obama/>

<sup>90</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/note.php?note\\_id=295686450465836](https://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=295686450465836)

<sup>91</sup> <http://electronicintifada.net/content/why-americans-should-oppose-zionism/9003>