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**The assault on Lancet editor Richard
Horton.***Derek Summerfield*

For many years medical journals like the BMJ and the Lancet have faced attacks from pro-Israel loyalists whenever they have published papers critical of Israeli policies in the Occupied Territories. These pressure - which appear unique to the publication of material on Israel but on no

other State include calls for the editor to be fired and for the particular medical journal to be ostracised by the academic community. One notable case, in late 2004, followed the publication of a paper of mine in the British Medical Journal (BMJ). Such pressures on The Lancet go back as far as the late 1980s. In March this year the Lancet received a complaint signed by 396 academics worldwide, including 5 Nobel Laureates, headed by Professor Sir Mark Pepys of University College London. They attacked the Lancet, and in particular Editor Dr Richard Horton for its coverage of Operation Protective Edge (sic) in Gaza in summer 2014. They were particularly incensed by an open letter of protest published by Manduca et al, 30 doctors and academics in the UK and Italy (myself included). I will list some of their claims verbatim:

“An open letter for the people of Gaza by Manduca et al published in the Lancet on July 22, 2014 consists of numerous vicious and deliberately inflammatory falsehoods, omissions and abusive dishonesty, which have no place in any responsible publication”.

“Horton’s persistent and inappropriate use of the Lancet to mount a sustained political vendetta concerning the Israel/Palestine conflict to promote his own well known personal political agenda”.

“The Manduca et al publication is a disgraceful paradigm of malignant wilful disregard of honest and ethical medical authorship and editorship”.

“The Manduca et al letter contains false assertions unverifiable dishonest facts, many of them libellous, and glaring omissions, while deliberately concealing the grossest possible conflict of issues of its authors”.

“Under the direction of Horton the Lancet has become a vehicle for publication of deliberately false material which deepens polarisation between Israelis and Palestinians, and does nothing to promote either global health or the health of those involved in this conflict”.

Pepys et al also alleged that the authors of the Manduca letter had failed to declare possible conflicts of interest (which for them included involvement in the Lancet Palestine Health Alliance, an academic grouping engaged in health research and publication!).

The 396 signatories demanded that Lancet editor, Dr Richard Horton and the publisher Reed Elsevier comprehensively retract the article and formally apologise for their “grave breach of editorial ethics”. They threatened Reed Elsevier with action which would include withholding submitted scientific material from publications owned by them.

Pepys et al have been undeterred by the report from the Lancet Ombudsman which supported publication of the letter, and by such as Dr Richard Smith, former editor of the BMJ, who wrote that the Lancet was “speaking truth to power”.

In a BMJ editorial in May (“Politics, medical journals, the medical profession and the Israel lobby”) John Yudkin and Jennifer Leaning noted that Pepys et al were unambiguous in their assertion that the Lancet was being used for political purposes and for the “publication of deliberately false material.” They quoted what Pepys et al saw as the motivation for all this: “blood libels echoing those used for a thousand years to create anti-Semitic pogroms” and “being written by dedicated Jew haters.....who would have made Goebbels proud”. The BMJ editorial reprised some of the statistics on dead and injured amongst the Palestinian population, in particular children, asserted that the ethical practice of medicine could not avoid politics, and noted previous attempts to stifle coverage in medical journals of material critical of Israel on health and human rights grounds. They quoted a BMJ editor who had been subjected to such a campaign who asserted that “the best way to blunt the effectiveness of this type of bullying is to expose it to public scrutiny”.

Below are two responses that have been posted at bmj.com, the first by myself, **Derek Summerfield** and the second by the chair of BRICUP, **Jonathan Rosenhead**.

The response by Derek Summerfield

As one of the signatories of the Manduca et al letter I wish to respond to the attack by Pepys et al and to issue a challenge.

An early indication that the Pepys et al document is simply an indiscriminate smear letter is the inclusion of entirely irrelevant material - the Lancet publication of the Wakefield MMR paper 17 years ago, the reference to what one signatory might have said in a talk somewhere, what Internet material another signatory might have looked at etc.

Our case rests on the substantive evidence base from a range of international and regional human rights and documentation centres generated by Operation Protective Edge and precedent events like the long-running siege of Gaza. The pitiless bombardment and mass killing of a helpless, trapped civilian population (including the bombing of 7 well-flagged UN schools serving as emergency shelters, leaving 271 civilians dead and injured here alone, the killing of hospital patients in their beds and of health professionals on duty) is at the centre of all these accounts. Pepys et al cannot be unaware of this evidence base but they ignore it entirely. I cite just one example, an independent medical fact-finding report organised by Physicians for Human Rights-Israel and other reputable documentation centres (1).

A blithe detachment from the human costs of Operation Protective Edge, and the medical ethical issues thrown up, was there from the start. Sir Mark Pepys was quoted in the Telegraph of 22 September 2014 as saying on 29 August, at the height of the bombardment, that the Manduca et al authors were displaying "most serious, unprofessional and unethical errors". Not a word about events on the ground in Gaza, yet these were the events which even then the UN, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch were all recording as prima facie evidence of war crimes!

Since then The International Criminal Court has opened a preliminary examination of war crimes violations during Operation Protective Edge.

I would suggest that if a letter of protest with exactly the same contents had appeared in The Lancet, but where the State concerned was, say, Sudan or Syria, Pepys et al would have no reason to see as it as objectionable or as inappropriate material for a medical journal, and might well have applauded such coverage- after all, the

medical profession has a duty to individual patients, but also a generally recognised wider ethical duty to address the social origins of distress and disease. So how are we to understand the apparent exceptionalism displayed here? In his classic work "Phenomenology of Sociopolitical Actions: A Methodological Approach to Conflict", the sociologist Max Weber distinguished between an "ethic of responsibility" and an "ethic of conviction". By "ethic of responsibility", Weber meant conformity to professional standards and accountability. In our profession this means the ethical standards by which doctors should practice, including a commitment to factual evidence - standards determined by their peers, employers, the General Medical Council and, on the international scene, by the World Medical Association. By "ethic of conviction", Weber was identifying actions that were inspired by personally valued ideals, political or other philosophies, or identities. In my 29 years of conflict-related human rights work (23 on Israel-Palestine), I have witnessed how regularly an ethic of conviction trumps an ethic of responsibility, not least amongst doctors, and this is sadly true of you too. Pepys et al seem united around a felt connection with Israel and a wish to defend it, and this is what counts for them. In the service of this they can dismiss war crimes, seek to bludgeon a medical journal into silence, and demand that a letter grounded on so multiply documented an evidence base be retracted. This is a flagrant abuse of medical ethics. They write as if they had the moral clarity and duty to speak out that would attach to, say, the discovery of research fraud in a published paper, and the further discovery that the editor of the journal concerned had been in knowing collusion with this fraud! Indeed this is precisely what they are alleging.

Those signatories who are Israeli are in support of the state of which they are citizens; the majority of signatories who reside elsewhere are serving the propaganda interests of a foreign power.

The allegations by Pepys et al are defamatory and libellous: that we published "deliberately inflammatory falsehoods....abusive dishonesty.....unverifiable dishonest 'facts'.....malignant wilful disregard of honest and ethical medical authorship and editorship.....under the direction of Horton, The Lancet has become a vehicle for publication of deliberately false material..." So we - both authors and editor - are publishing lies which we know to be lies in a famous international medical journal? Few

allegations made against a doctor could be much graver than this. Moreover, there is the assertion that our motivation is racist: as Yudkin and Leaning note, in an email chain soliciting support for this action, Pepys writes that the Manduca et al letter was "written by dedicated Jew haters...(who) would have made Goebbels proud".

I quote from the GMC publication Good Medical Practice (2006). In the section on Working with colleagues, doctors must "respect the skills and contributions of your colleagues" (para 41); "you must treat your colleagues fairly and with respect. You must not bully or harass them or unfairly discriminate against them by allowing your personal views to affect adversely your professional relationship with them. You should challenge colleagues if their behaviour does not comply with this guidance" (para 46); "you must not make malicious and unfounded criticisms of colleagues that may undermine patients' trust in the care or treatment they receive, or in the judgement of those treating them" (para 47). In the section on Probity, the GMC says that "probity means being honest and trustworthy, and acting with integrity: this is at the heart of medical professionalism" (para 56); "you must make sure that your conduct at all times justifies your patients' trust in you and the public's trust in the profession" (para 57). In the section on Writing reports, giving evidence etc, the GMC says that "you must do your best to make sure that any documents you write or sign are not false or misleading. This means that you must take reasonable steps to verify the information in the documents, and that you must not deliberately leave out relevant information" (para 65); "...you must be honest in all your spoken and written statements. You must make clear the limits of your knowledge or competence" (para 67).

As one of the signatories whose academic reputation Pepys et al seek to blacken, I am an involved party and I challenge them to justify their allegations evidentially or retract them. I have already written directly to them, so this is the second call. If Pepys et al fail to retract by the end of May, I and others will look to appropriate action, starting with a formal complaint to the General Medical Council.

Derek Summerfield

The response by Jonathan Rosenhead

Re: Politics, medical journals, the medical profession and the Israel lobby

The heavy-handed attempt by Pepys et al to force The Lancet to withdraw the Open Letter is better

understood as part of a pattern, one that extends well beyond medical journals and even beyond the media.

Two further examples must suffice, but there are many more. In summer 2014, sparked by the events in Gaza (as was the Open Letter) the well-respected Tricycle Theatre in North London asked the Jewish Film Festival which it was due to host not to accept financial support provided by the Israeli Embassy. (The Tricycle offered to make good the short-fall.) The theatre's grounds for the request was that it felt that to accept such funding in current circumstances would be to compromise its political neutrality in a highly charged situation. A public campaign against Tricycle was launched by a pro-Israeli group Campaign Against Antisemitism, leading to threats of withdrawal by funders and to statements by politicians including the then Culture Secretary Sajid Javid linking the decision to antisemitism. The Jewish Chronicle reported that it was a joint intervention by Javid and the Ambassador Daniel Taub which resulted in the Tricycle capitulating.

Still more recently the same pattern has affected academia. In April an international conference on International Law and the State of Israel: Legitimacy, Responsibility and Exceptionalism due to be held at the University of Southampton was cancelled at short notice by the University. Its distinguished organising committee included two Southampton Professors, one Israeli and the other Palestinian. The cancellation followed a campaign by pro-Israel groups, leading to criticism by two cabinet ministers, one of whom called it "an anti-Israel hate-fest".

In all three cases – the Lancet, the arts and the universities – there is a common theme: the attempt to selectively curtail the range of views that may be expressed. The shared modus operandi has been to suppress criticism of Israel's actions and policies by alleging an antisemitic bias. Those who care about the freedom of expression should be concerned. Those who care about real, as opposed to confected, antisemitism should be concerned about the devaluation of its currency through misuse.

Jonathan Rosenhead

Notes

(1) Gaza 2014. Findings of an independent medical fact-finding mission. Physicians for Human Rights-Israel, Al Mezan Center for Human Rights-Gaza, Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights-Gaza.

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Jonathan Rosenhead is an Emeritus Professor at the London School of Economics. Competing interests: Chair, British Committee for the Universities of Palestine

Not digging DIG

Jonathan Rosenhead

An article on this issue by the same author appeared in BRICUP Newsletter 77, with a follow-up in Newsletter 78. This article summarises those accounts and brings the story up to date.

DIG is a big-budget action-adventure television series with a British lead actor (Jason Isaacs) that finished its ten programme run on NBC in the United States in May. It has attracted a lot of attention. There are a number of problematic issues about DIG. One is filming in Jerusalem, a city illegally annexed by Israel. The producers benefitted from the offer of copious subsidies from the government of the occupying state: 22 million Israeli shekels (£3.8 million) - though part was dependent on them returning to film a second season.

Another issue is the explicitly stated intention of the Israeli government to use the series, in the words of Naftali Bennett, then the Minister of Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs, "to brand Jerusalem as an international tourism destination" (<http://www.timesofisrael.com/nbcs-dig-starts-filming-in-jerusalem/>). Variety added that it would "most crucially help brand Jerusalem and the State of Israel in a positive light" (<http://variety.com/2014/tv/news/series-from-homeland-heroes-producers-gets-new-israeli-production-grant-1201114197/>). Bennett went to meet the entire DIG team as soon as they arrived in Israel, and the US co-producer Tim Kring remarked that "the mayor of Jerusalem was involved on a daily basis". That's Mayor Nir Barkat, notorious for his exertions in ethnic cleansing. So definitely no normal project.

The high profile and possibly trend-setting nature of DIG goes some way towards explaining why there has been a stream of protests about it. But it

is other issues which bring this particular piece of chutzpah into BRICUP territory. The story-line is threaded on archaeology, and archaeology in Israel is highly politicised. The plot is too convoluted and fantastical to go into here, but think a lone FBI hero and a murder mystery set (the victim is an archaeologist) against the backdrop of Jerusalem “a city shrouded in ancient intrigue”. He discovers “a conspiracy thousands of years in-the-making that threatens to change the course of history.” Crucially for us the story (and some of the filming) is centred on Silwan – a major archaeological site and a highly contested area of Jerusalem.

Silwan nestles just under the walls of the Old City, and pre-dates it. Its present day Palestinian residents are being subjected to creeping displacement by archaeologists. But not archaeologists as known and respected in much of the world. Think a politically and religiously militant Indiana Jones – with a spade in one hand and a bible in the other. They are digging through what they call the City of David looking for evidence to ‘prove’ Jerusalem’s Jewish origins; no nonsense then about scientific objectivity. How has this come about? The answer is that some 20 years back the Israeli government transferred control of the City of David project from the Israel Antiquities Authority to the right-wing settler organisation Elad, whose goals include “settling families in the City of David and developing the site as a Jewish neighbourhood”. Its excavations have undermined and made Palestinian homes uninhabitable. Palestinians have been dislodged in large numbers, and Jews now form the majority of the population within the City of David itself. (For more detail see <http://savageminds.org/2014/07/06/digging-the-occupation-the-politics-of-boycotts-and-archeology-in-israel-bds-pt-3/>)

Archaeology in Israel/Palestine is wreathed in suspicion. There are some 12,000 archaeological sites in the West Bank, and 1200 of them have been excavated by Israeli archaeologists without any Palestinian participation or access. Rumours abound of unprofessional practices, and even of unearthed artefacts being reburied on a different site to ‘prove’ its linkage to a biblical period or story. When I was in Jerusalem in April I visited an archaeological site, a former car park, just across the road from the main entrance to the City of David. I was with Robert Boyce of BRICUP and Gudrun Sveinbjarnardottir, an archaeologist and activist from Iceland; and we were guided round by a senior archaeologist working on the

dig. (The site will revert to Elad once the dig is completed.) She expressed her relief that all their findings date to the 9th century BCE, rather than the 10th. One century earlier and their work would have been seized on and twisted as necessary to try to make political ‘facts on the ground’.

Silwan then is contested and volatile. When NBC announced plans for DIG it was inundated with demands that no filming should take place there. It replied to the PLO saying “there are no plans, and there will be no plans, to film ‘DIG’ in the City of David National Park or the village of Silwan.” Filming started on 5 June 2014; and by the end of that week DIG vehicles were spotted parked outside the entrance to the City of David. It is a reasonable assumption that filming was going on. Within days the whole crew (lead actor, director etc) were discovered filming, not actually in Silwan, but in excavated tunnels underneath the Old City, an area called Solomon's Quarries. Ten days into filming objectors inside Israel tracked down the DIG crew filming in Jaffa, leading to an impromptu street demonstration. Then the unexpected took charge. On 2 July the Palestinian teenager Mohamed Abu Khdeir was brutally murdered in Jerusalem in a revenge killing. Disturbances broke out in Jerusalem, and violence escalated. On 8 July Israel launched the Operation Protective Edge assault on Gaza, Hamas’s rockets were let off in volleys, Israel’s Iron Dome missile shield was brought into play, and the DIG team took to the hills. Or more accurately Croatia, where after a two-month hiatus they restarted filming – and some more in New Mexico. At one level Protective Edge was not really the unexpected, as Israel always attacks Gaza when it has some new weaponry it wishes to test and then market as battle-proven. But the precise timing was not known in advance, at least to DIG’s producers. As a result the actual screening of the series in the US had to be put back from 2014 into the following year.

The launch of the series was quite unusually glitzy. Of the work by NBC’s marketing and PR sections Tim Kring said “this is as big a push, as unique a push, as I've ever seen”. His Israeli co-producer Gideon Raff agreed: “They've really done a spectacular job” (<http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/live-feed/dig-creators-tim-kring-gideon-779378>). It was noticeable that in all the interviews with producers and star actors there was one word never used – “Palestine”. And this despite the fact that all the filming in the Old City and Silwan was

actually within that country. Evidently the programme makers preferred not to acknowledge this aspect of reality – witness insert titles such as “2 months later – Jerusalem, Israel”. Lessons in geography or international law would be in order. As the March 2015 initial transmission date approached so the protests stepped up, and got main stream coverage (eg the Los Angeles Times). A strong statement was circulated from more than 20 Palestinian civil society organisations. And a powerfully ironic spoof video (http://youtu.be/TbhEX5_ZFWE) was circulated on-line.

So, what did the audience think? The show aired for ten Thursdays from 5 March through 7 May. The publicity blitz brought it an initial viewership of 1.8 million, but that lurched downwards a couple of time before flattening out at 1 million. Not enough – on 12 May the decision not to commission a second season was slipped out.

This is what Mahmoud Nawajaa, the general coordinator of the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC) had to say about the cancellation: "We welcome NBC's decision to cancel DIG, a drama series produced in close cooperation with the Israeli government to whitewash its apartheid policies against Palestinians and legitimize the illegal annexation of the city. The failure of this project came after intense civil society protest and consequent bad publicity it generated for NBC and the cast of the series. DIG was the flagship project of a bigger Israeli government plan to lure movie productions to Israel. The failure of DIG amid controversy is a stark reminder that there is no business to be made from apartheid and human rights abuses, particularly at a time when Israel's image around the world is eroding. We call on producers worldwide to refuse to take part in Israel's re-branding efforts that distract public attention from its crimes against Palestinians." (A longer statement from a group of human rights organisations is at <http://www.endtheoccupation.org/article.php?id=4473>.)

Did the adverse publicity help in this result? Or was the show just not quite up to snuff, the plot too fantastical, the stars not quite bankable enough? These are unanswerable questions. What we do know however is that pro-Palestinian groups on several continents cooperated effectively to use the opportunity to educate a new potential audience about the Israel/Palestine situation; that the show's stars had the problematics of filming in Jerusalem pointed out

to them (including by fellow actors); and that as a one season-only series it is much less likely to be purchased to affront our sensibilities on terrestrial programming in the UK and world-wide.

Update on AHAVA

Editor

Ahava, the Israeli company that bases its products on illegally mined Dead Sea minerals and has received EU research grants, is situated in the occupied Palestinian territories: it is controlled by Kibbutz Mitzpe Shalem. The company has come under great pressure from the BDS movement and three years ago was forced to close its London cosmetics outlet which had become a focus of protest demonstrations.

It has now been reported in "Globes." (Shai Shalev on June 8th 2015) that pressure from the BDS movement has caused the company to move its operations to the other side of the Green Line. The kibbutz will invest NIS 10 million in a new production plant at the nearby Tamar Regional Council, which is inside the "Green Line."

Ahava will not be the first Israeli company to move its production facilities out of the West Bank. Sodastream International Ltd. moved its production facilities from Maaleh Adumim, and Bagel Bagel and Mul-T-Lock moved out of the Barkan Industrial zone

Tel Aviv academics discuss BDS

Editor

Haaretz has reported that Tel Aviv University academics recently held their first-ever discussion of BDS ([Or Kashti](http://www.haaretz.com/news/israel/.premium-1.660328) June. 9, 2015) (<http://www.haaretz.com/news/israel/.premium-1.660328>)

About 30 Tel Aviv University students, mostly graduates and Ph.D. candidates, took part in a discussion about the boycott movement against Israel, particularly the academic boycott. The very fact that a discussion was held that did not completely condemn the BDS movement and included some expressions of support, is considered unusual.

The discussion was held under the auspices of the university's sociology and anthropology

department. It was the first such event held by the department, and apparently the first at Tel Aviv University. One of the speakers was Dr. Hila Dayan of Amsterdam University College in Amsterdam, one of a group of about 40 anthropologists who oppose the attempt by the Israeli Anthropological Association to ban discussion on Israel at an upcoming international conference. The association is due to discuss the issue. Dayan drew a connection between what she said was the failure of Israel's universities to deal with inequality in education and "their indifference to what is happening in the occupied territories." She said that she did not support an academic boycott "because I think that Israel will be saved from itself only thanks to the enlightened world." But she said she supported an "inner boycott."

According to Dayan, "sanctimoniousness reigns" among leftists who oppose a boycott. "Many of them think that an economic boycott, like the pressure on Orange and boycotting the settlements is legitimate, but an academic boycott is not. Why, though?" Dayan criticized the universities for "on the one hand claiming that they are for dialogue and an exchange of views and on the other, vehemently opposing any demand to take a stand on the occupation. So what kind of an exchange of opinions is that?" she asked.

Professor Dan Rabinowitz of the university's sociology department and head of its Porter School of Environmental Studies pointed to a petition signed by some 1,300 anthropologists worldwide calling on universities in Israel to persuade the government to withdraw from the territories as one of the conditions for lifting the boycott.

"That is a condition that cannot be met," he said. "The universities are not in a position to make an institutional stand on political issues. We don't know the opinion of Tel Aviv University on the occupation and refugees, just as we don't know the opinion of UCLA Berkeley on climate change, Guantanamo or the war on terror."

According to Rabinovitz, BDS is led by people who "never believed in a two-state solution, or who gave up on it," while in the Israeli academic world there are still many people who believe in Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. For people who believe that it is better for Israel as a political entity to stop existing, "the presence of Israelis who can show an enlightened face and arouse empathy is an obstacle. Therefore Israeli

academic and cultural institutions are a nuisance. The universities are more dangerous to the post-Zionist vision than Netanyahu, Bennett, and Shaked," he added.

First such event held by the sociology and anthropology department, and possibly the university; fact that discussion did not completely condemn BDS, and included some expressions of support, is considered unusual.

Building scientific collaborations in Palestine : a Palestinian initiative.

Johnny Stiban, Bernard Vandenburg

In April 2015 a group of scientists - biologists, physicists, chemists, biochemists, bioengineers, environment scientists, computer scientists and mathematicians from five Palestinian Universities met with scientists from France, the UK and Portugal at Birzeit University, to present their work and to discuss common interests and prospects for increased collaborative research in biology. An analysis emerged which concluded that physics, chemistry, mathematics, engineering and computer science have all contributed importantly to increased understanding of the structure and dynamics of the components of living systems. It was recognised that, in living systems, most physiological functions are not carried out by a single molecule; rather they result from dynamic interactions between multiple components in complex molecular systems or functional modules. Even greater understanding and control of the dynamics of these processes in living cells and tissues is possible today because of the availability of powerful new techniques of molecular microscopy. These new approaches require the collaboration of multiple disciplines and the use of dedicated technical platforms. Examples of basic and applied fields where multidisciplinary approaches can open new perspectives were discussed but the success of an approach based on that analysis will depend on the development of an active network of close collaborations between experimental and theoretical, fundamental and applied researchers in many basic disciplines.

It was resolved to build such a network in Palestine (acronym PalBioSys). This will be a bottom-up process. PalBioSys is open to scientists and engineers who share the vision of driving forward through interdisciplinary research as discussed above and are willing to share competence and resources. Inspired by the

effectiveness of boycotts in the effort to abolish apartheid in South Africa during the 1980s, members of PalBioSys endorse the call to comprehensively and consistently boycott all Israeli academic and cultural institutions in the framework of [the BDS campaign](#). PalBioSys is an opportunity to foster collaborations among Palestinian Universities, with a special attention to Gaza Universities, as well as between Palestinian Universities and scientific institutions abroad. The PalBioSys network will circulate information about funding opportunities and facilitate partnerships between members for mutual development and research advancement. A scientific board will be identified whose members will represent PalBioSys in their Institutions. This board will orchestrate the network activities and assume related responsibilities, while promoting collective decision making.

Members of PalBioSys know that interdisciplinary ventures are demanding. They require time for members to become familiar with each other's language, concepts and expertise. They require that each discipline should recognise its own limits: appropriately balanced teams have a value much beyond the sum of individual specialties. The PalBioSys network will foster collaborations for the development of interdisciplinary research and training programs in the study of biological systems and processes in Palestine. This will be achieved through the organization of short intensive courses and focused workshops, as well as exchanges of students and faculty members, and M.Sc and PhD co-supervisions. Hands-on training for students will be a major emphasis. Small capacity building projects as well as more comprehensive projects such as Erasmus+ strategic partnerships will be implemented. Computational research will play an important role in modelling and simulation for both the conception and the analysis of experiments. It can be performed away from the experimental platforms - requiring expertise, computers, software and interactions with biologists.

Advances can be anticipated that will have important impacts on environmental medicine and health programs in Palestine and developing countries in general. The network will offer real opportunities to Palestinian researchers living behind a wall, just as theoretical physics became a field of expertise for scientists in Eastern Europe before the fall of the iron curtain. **PalBioSys is**

open to scientists and engineers who share the vision of driving forward through interdisciplinary research. If you are interested please contact the following

Palestine: Johnny Stiban (Birzeit University, Palestine)

Emails: jstiban@birzeit.edu and/or jstiban@gmail.com

France: Bernard Vandebunder (CNRS & Lille 1 University, France)

Email: bernard.vandebunder@iri.univ-lille1.fr

Booklet available on Cultural Boycott

Readers of BRICUP's March Newsletter 85 will know about the formation of Artists for Palestine UK (APUK), and the public launch of their cultural boycott pledge, now signed by more than 1000 cultural workers.

APUK has produced a booklet *The Case for a Cultural Boycott of Israel*. It explains why the boycott of Israel's cultural establishment is needed, and addresses the misapprehensions which some people may have about the boycott (and which supporters of Israel try to propagate). Topics covered include

- What Israel does to Palestinian culture
- How Israel uses culture as diplomacy to whitewash its brutality
- How the boycott targets Israel's cultural institutions, not individual artists
- Why touring Israeli theatre and dance companies and orchestras meet a hostile reception
- Why opponents of the boycott accuse it of antisemitism and why they are wrong
- Why free cultural exchange cannot exist in a situation of injustice
- What cultural boycott means in practice.

In her Foreword to the booklet, novelist Kamila Shamsie says

Why join a cultural boycott? There are many answers to that question laid out with clarity and nuance in this booklet. Of all those answers here is the one lodged deepest in the gut: because of the Palestinians who are asking it of us.

Copies of *The Case for a Cultural Boycott of Israel* can be ordered for £3 a copy from:

www.artistsforpalestine.org.uk

See also:

Facebook: Artists for Palestine UK

Twitter: [@Art4PalestineUK](https://twitter.com/Art4PalestineUK)

artistsforpalestine@gmail.com

Notices

BRICUP is the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine.

We are always willing to help provide speakers for meetings. All such requests and any comments or suggestions concerning this Newsletter are welcome.

Email them to: newsletter@bricup.org.uk

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BRICUP needs your financial support.

Arranging meetings and lobbying activities are expensive. We need funds to support visiting speakers, book rooms for public meetings, print leaflets and pay the whole range of expenses that a busy campaign demands.

Please do consider making a donation .

One-off donations may be made by sending a cheque to the Treasurer, at BRICUP, BM BRICUP, London, WC1N 3XX, UK or by making a bank transfer to BRICUP at Sort Code 08-92-99

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