

London, 30 August 2011

OPEN LETTER TO THE YARDBIRDS

Dear Yardbirds,

As ancient geezers ourselves, we support the principle of keeping going. So, the Yardbirds still playing gigs – excellent. The Yardbirds playing a gig in Israel, which illegally occupies Palestinian land and shows no sign of withdrawing – surely not.

Chris Dreja and Jim McCarty, founder members of the band – when you were enjoying such success during the 1960s, the British Musicians' Union had a policy of boycotting apartheid South Africa. We've been looking on-line for evidence that the Yardbirds broke that ban, and we're happy to say we can't find any. The world famous Yardbirds appear to have respected the South African liberation movement's call for artists and musicians to assist them by denying legitimacy to the racist state.

Have you thought through the implications of your appearance at the Barby Club in Tel Aviv on October 29? You're telling Palestinian civil society organisations that are similarly [calling for](#) a cultural boycott of Israel that their dispossession and their oppression don't matter. The Palestinian Teachers' Federation; the Writers' Federation; the League of Palestinian Artists; the General Union of Palestinian Women; and many others – your performance at the Barby will in effect tell all of these people that you side with the Israeli military occupation, that you don't mind helping to airbrush the cruelties of racism and ethnic cleansing, and that you're happy to behave as if there isn't a Palestinian struggle for liberation and justice.

So we're hoping you might think again.

Please reply to: BRICUP, BM BRICUP, London WC1N3XX
email: bricup@bricup.org.uk
www.bricup.org.uk

Here's Roger Waters talking about why he [supports](#) the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign against Israel. Here are Faithless and other musicians singing '[Freedom for Palestine](#)'. Here is Elvis Costello explaining why he [withdrew](#) from his two scheduled concerts in Israel.

There's a wave, Yardbirds – a whole international wave of people supporting justice for the Palestinians via consumer boycotts, academic boycotts, cultural boycotts. You can cancel your gig and ride that wave – or you can let one night at the Barby dash you on the shore. Please think again. Please don't go.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Haim Bresheeth
Mike Cushman
Professor Adah Kay
Professor Jonathan Rosenhead