

Milestones in the history of the Israeli BDS movement: A brief chronology

Rachel Giora

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The emergence of the Israeli boycott, divestment, and sanction (BDS) movement has been influenced by a number of factors. In essence, however, the movement in Israel has been basically reactive - a response to (a) international calls following traumas, and to (b) ideas, primarily those introducing the South African model into the international and Israeli discourse; and perhaps most significantly, it has evolved in response to (c) calls by Palestinians to the international community to boycott Israel, divest and disinvest from it, and sanction it. Although the history of the BDS movement in Israel is reviewed here chronologically, the assumption is that all these factors have worked interactively and in tandem to influence the development of the BDS movement worldwide as well as in Israel.

The major role of the Israeli BDS movement has been to support international BDS calls against Israel and legitimize them both as clearly not anti-Semitic, as not working against Israelis but against Israeli governmental policies, and as supporting a legitimate nonviolent means by which Palestinian civil society can reclaim and re-own its people's rights and freedoms. Alongside solidarity with the Palestinians, the driving force behind the Israeli BDS movement has been the realization that the criminal occupation and repression of the Palestinian people, as practiced by Israeli governments, will not be redressed without significant international pressure.

1. The awakening

Al-Aqsa Intifada

[The first BDS call in Israel](#) was initiated by [Matzpen](#) during the first year of the first intifada, in February 1988.¹ It called on Israelis not to buy products made in Jewish settlements. This was how Israelis could divest from the settlements in the occupied territories including the Golan Heights. This call, which included a list of settlements' products, was also distributed among foreign missions in East Jerusalem. In March 1988, a group called The 21st Year published a [Covenant for the Struggle Against the Occupation](#) wherein its members declared their refusal "to collaborate with the Occupation and pledged to do either part or all of the following: never enter the occupied territories without an invitation from their Arab inhabitants, not allow their children to be exposed to the racist bias of the school system, boycott institutions and products of companies whose Palestinian

¹ <http://www.matzpen.org/index.asp?p=kria>

employees are denied human dignity and decent working conditions, boycott goods produced by Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, never confuse acts of protest and resistance by Palestinians with acts of terror, refuse any military command ordering them to take part in acts of repression or policing in the occupied territories and protest every act of violence and injustice committed by the Israeli regime in the occupied territories".²

In September 1997, Gush Shalom launched a call asking Israelis as well as the U.S., the European countries, and others having trade treaties with Israel to boycott products of the Jewish settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory. [The call proffered a provisional list in Hebrew, Arabic, and English of products produced in the settlements.](#)³

However, the first Israeli initiatives supporting international calls for comprehensive boycott against Israel emerged only following the outbreak of the second intifada known as the [Al-Aqsa Intifada](#), in September 2000. They were mostly responses, by a few individuals, to international calls for BDS against Israel. At the time, support for such calls did not come from Israeli organizations. On the whole, the Israeli left shunned such initiatives. The first boycott support action by Israelis that I recall, which again attracted few other Israelis, was the one initiated by the late Tel Aviv University linguist, Professor Tanya Reinhart, and myself, in April 2001, demanding that [the city of Ann Arbor divest itself of Israeli investments.](#)⁴

In April 2001, 35 Israelis published a call for boycotting Israel. The authors of this appeal are Israeli citizens and Jews of other nationalities whose families have been victims of racism and genocide in past generations, and who feel they cannot remain silent:

"We call on the world community to organize and boycott Israeli industrial and agricultural exports and goods, as well as leisure tourism, in the hope that it will have the same positive result that the boycott of South Africa had on Apartheid.

"This boycott should remain in force as long as Israel controls any part of the territories it occupied in 1967. Those who squash the legitimate

² <http://israeli-left-archive.org/cgi-bin/library?site=localhost&a=p&p=about&c=the21sty&l=en&w=utf-8>

³ <http://israelipalestinianpeace.org/issues/81toi.htm#Consumers>

http://gush-shalom.org.toibillboard.info/boycott_eng.htm

⁴ <http://www.think-israel.org/leftists.html>;

([http://209.85.135.132/search?q=cache:OOQqY2MK6UEJ:www.matzpun.com/+\"After+six+months+of+relentless+military+oppression+of+Palestinians+in+the+Israeli-occupied+territories,+the+government+of+Israel+has+made+daily+life+even+more+intolerable+for+the+Palest](http://209.85.135.132/search?q=cache:OOQqY2MK6UEJ:www.matzpun.com/+\))

aspirations of the Palestinians must be made to feel the consequences of their own bitter medicine.

"We urge every recipient of this appeal, irrespective of origin and nationality, to:

"1. Start practicing the boycott on a personal level immediately, and make sure that the steps taken are known in the community (for example: tell your shopkeeper why you will not buy Israeli products; avoid leisure travel to Israel).

"2. Add your name to the appeal, circulate it to your friends, and do whatever you can to have it endorsed by groups concerned about human rights.

"3. Organize activities to put pressure on your government to cut economic and commercial ties with Israel and to rescind preferential economic treaties with Israel".

Original signatures:

1. Meir Amor, Toronto, Canada
2. Yael Arbel, Tel-Aviv, Israel
3. Dita Bitterman, Tel-Aviv, Israel
4. Hagit Borer, Los Angeles, USA
5. Ouzi Dekel, Paris, France
6. Esty Dinur, Arena, USA
7. Aviva Ein-Gil, Tel-Aviv, Israel
8. Ehud Ein-Gil, Tel-Aviv, Israel
9. Arie Finkelstein, Paris, France
10. Rachel Giora, Tel-Aviv, Israel
11. Zamir Havkin, Givataim, Israel
12. Zvi Havkin, Tel-Aviv, Israel
13. Haggai Katriel, Haifa, Israel
14. Irit Katriel, Haifa, Israel
15. Justin Kodner, Princeton Junction, USA
16. Helga Kotthoff, Fulda, Germany
17. Miri Krasin, Tel-Aviv, Israel
18. Debby Lerman, Tel-Aviv, Israel
19. Mely Lerman, Tel-Aviv, Israel
20. Moshe Machover, London, UK
21. Yael Oren Kahn, Warwickshire, UK
22. Akiva Orr, Kfar Shmaryahu, Israel
23. Rachel Ostrowitz, Tel-Aviv, Israel

24. Eran Razgour, Tel-Aviv, Israel
25. Eyal Rozenberg, Haifa, Israel
26. Hilla Rudich, Givataim, Israel
27. Herzl Schubert, Tel-Aviv, Israel
28. Ilan Shalif, Tel-Aviv, Israel
29. Oz Shelach, New York, USA
30. Ur Shlonsky, Geneva, Switzerland
31. Toma Sik, Budapest, Hungary
32. Ehud Sivosh, London, UK
33. Gideon Spiro, Jerusalem, Israel
34. Guy West, Herzliyya, Israel
35. Adeeb Yaffawy, Yaffa, Israel

The 35 original signatories were supported by [994 signatures worldwide](#).⁵

Then, in May 2001, as a keynote speaker before a nationwide meeting of Jewish anti-occupation activists in Chicago, Rela Mazali, an Israeli feminist and writer, one of the outstanding founders of [New Profile](#)⁶, called for suspension of US military aid to Israel.⁷

[Jenin Jenin](#)⁸

The year 2002, however, may be singled out as a turning point triggered by the Israeli army's large-scale assault on cities, towns, villages, and refugee camps in the West Bank in late March (titled Operation Defensive Shield but often referred to as the Jenin Massacre). This ferocious attack unleashed a wave of protest in the Arab world, Europe, the United States, and beyond. At this stage, it looked like the citizens of the world, including those sheltered in their ivory towers, could no longer be indifferent to the plight of the Palestinians. "Academics, artists, and intellectuals launched a number of initiatives, among them a movement to isolate Israel in the international arena through moratoria, boycotts, and a divestment campaign".⁹ The ferocious assault combined with the construction of the Apartheid Wall in July, which turned the West Bank into bantustans, affected some change among Israelis. On the whole, a growing number of activists protested the occupation, and some also voiced support of such boycott and divestment campaigns.

In March 2002, supporting the Suspend Aid Campaign of the Jewish Voice for Peace, the Israeli feminist author, Rela Mazali, wrote: "Arms are the motor of

⁵ <http://www.matzpun.com/>

⁶ <http://www.newprofile.org/english/>

⁷ Mazali, Rela (2001). "Someone Makes a Killing off War': Militarization and Occupation in Israel-Palestine," *Bridges, A Journal for Jewish Feminists and our Friends*, Volume 9, Number 1, Fall 2001, special insert.

⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jenin,_Jenin

⁹ (Mona Baker, 2009. *Chronology of Boycott*. Ms. in preparation).

militarization. Please reciprocate the young people inside Israel saying "NO" to the deployment of their bodies and souls, in the service of the occupation. Please join them by saying "NO" to arming it with your dollars".¹⁰ Her call to suspend military aid to Israel earned the full support of the members of the feminist organization New Profile.

In April 2002, a call for a Moratorium on EU and European Science Foundation support for Israel was launched. The call was initiated by Professor Steven Rose (Physics, Open University) and Professor Hilary Rose (Bradford University) and was [published in the Guardian on 6 April 2002](#).¹¹ More than 120 academics signed this call, among them about 10 Israeli academics:^{12 13}

Professor Amit, Daniel, Hebrew University

Bar, Iris, Haifa University

[Professor Farjoun, Emmanuel, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem](#)¹⁴

Professor Giora, Rachel, Tel-Aviv University

Professor Jablonka, Eva, Tel-Aviv University

Dr Katriel, Haggai, Haifa University

Professor Lavie, Smadar, Tel-Aviv

Dr Pappé, Ilan, Haifa University

Professor Razi, Zvi, Tel-Aviv University

Professor Reinhart, Tanya, Tel-Aviv University

[Dr Shlonsky, Tuvia, Hebrew University, Jerusalem](#)¹⁵

The letter had an immediate effect. It was soon followed by a unanimous decision made by the board of directors of the organization for professors and teachers in higher education in England to call for a more sweeping boycott. "The decision calls on all the British institutions of higher education to weigh - with the goal of severing - any future academic connection with Israel. It insists that such relations should be resumed only after a full withdrawal of all the Israeli forces, the beginning of negotiations to implement UN resolutions, and the promise of [full access for all Palestinians to institutions of higher learning](#)".¹⁶

In April 2002, an [Art boycott petition](#) was launched too, appealing "to all artists of good conscience around the world to cancel all exhibitions and other cultural

¹⁰ www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org

¹¹ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4388633,00.html>

¹² According to Tamara Traubman (2002), over 270 European scientists, including about 10 Israelis signed this letter. <http://www.inminds.co.uk/boycott-news-0033.html>

¹³ One should note that the idea of an academic boycott against Israel first originated at the "World Conference against Racism" in Durban, South Africa in 2001.

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/1059775.html>

¹⁴ <http://www.haaretz.co.il/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=155710&contrassID=2&subContrassID=5&sbSubContrassID=0&listSrc=Y&itemNo=155710>

¹⁵ <http://www.think-israel.org/leftists.html>; <http://www.inminds.co.uk/boycott-news-0033.html>

¹⁶ <http://www.inminds.co.uk/boycott-news-0033.html>

events that are scheduled to occur in Israel, to mobilize immediately and not allow the continuation of the Israeli offensive to breed complacency". It was endorsed by many signatories (more than 180) from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Palestine, Sweden, Switzerland, UK and US, and Israel.¹⁷

At the same time, several hundred students and about 100 staff at [Massachusetts Institute of Technology \(MIT\)](#) and [Harvard University](#) signed a [divestment petition](#) which was also supported by professors at several Israeli universities.¹⁸

In April 2002, a [US-initiated boycott letter](#) called for Boycotting Israeli Academics and Research.¹⁹ In June, Professor Mona Baker of the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (Umist) dismissed two Israeli linguists from the editorial board of the translation journal she edited. Such acts did not go unnoticed and stirred a heated debate among Israelis, giving the boycott movement a lot of visibility here.

In May 2002, [Professor Tanya Reinhart published an article in *Yediot Aharonot*](#), the then most popular Israeli daily, in which she endorsed a boycott of Israeli academic institutions for being complicit in the Palestinians' oppression by turning a blind eye to their plight, not least the plight of Palestinian academic colleagues: "Never in its history did the senate of any Israeli university pass a resolution protesting the frequent closure of Palestinian universities, let alone voice protest over the devastation sowed there during the last uprising". The type of academic boycott she endorsed drew on a model used effectively in South Africa. "The economic pressure on South Africa", she said, "was combined with another aspect of pressure -- cultural boycott and social isolation: South Africa was kicked out of international sports; professional and academic organizations did not cooperate with South-African organizations; there was a ban on conferences and cultural events. All these helped. South Africa was forced to change".²⁰

A comparison of the occupation with South African Apartheid was also brought up by Nobel Peace Prize laureate [Desmond Tutu](#) in October 2002. "If apartheid ended", he said, "so can this occupation, but the moral force and international pressure will have to be just as determined. The current divestment effort is the first, though certainly not the only, necessary move in that direction".²¹ The

¹⁷ <http://oznik.com/petitions/020407.html>

¹⁸ http://www.merip.org/mer/mer223/223_urbina.html

¹⁹ <http://is.gd/5IG1y>

²⁰ http://www.monabaker.com/pMachine/more.php?id=96_0_1_12_M5

²¹ <http://www.counterpunch.org/tutu1017.html>

analogy to the South African case, made explicit by various thinkers,²² will affect the minds of many Israeli leftists. Not only will the numbers of Israeli boycott supporters increase, but more importantly, the Israelis' attempts to resist the occupation will be geared towards collaborating with the Palestinian resistance movement, thus modeling their action after the joint struggle for liberation of South Africans.

Earlier that autumn, when [interviewed in September 2002 for Labournet](#), [Dr. Ilan Pappé](#), a renowned historian and boycott supporter at [Haifa University](#), had expressed his views on his support for boycott, including academic and cultural boycott: "a cultural and academic boycott can drive the message to good Israelis that there is a price to be paid for being indifferent. Not only for doing the things themselves, but even for being silent in Israel itself".²³

Before the year was out, in December 2002, the administrative council of Marie Curie University - Paris VI - "demanded that the European Union (EU) not renew its 1995 Association Agreement with Israel, giving that country commercial concessions, but also providing funds for infrastructure and research. The university's motion called on Israeli academics to adopt positions on the measures being taken against Palestinian universities, whose work has been rendered impossible, and called on the university's president to foster contacts with academics from both sides, [in order to promote a peaceful solution](#)".²⁴

In January 2003, this decision was endorsed by Palestinian academics who issued a letter of support to French colleagues. In the same spirit, in February 2003, Professor Tanya Reinhart also [expressed support for this resolution](#).²⁵

Inspired by the South African resistance movement, [Anarchists Against the Wall](#) (AATW) – an Israeli direct action group - was founded in 2003 to oppose the Apartheid Wall Israel had started building on Palestinian land in the Occupied West Bank. The group is essentially Palestinian led. It works in cooperation with Palestinians in a joint popular struggle against the occupation.²⁶ Many of its members will later make up the nucleus of [BOYCOTT! Supporting](#)

²² "The Israeli left has been discussing this comparison since at least the late 1980s, when Israeli anthropologist Uri Davis published his famous work, *Israel: An Apartheid State*. At the September 2001 UN conference on racism in Durban, South Africa, calls to compare occupation with apartheid were drowned out by the more incendiary claim that "Zionism is racism," and therefore received little substantive or even-handed coverage in the press". http://www.merip.org/mer/mer223/223_urbina.html

²³ <http://www.labournet.net/world/0209/pappe1.html>

²⁴ [http://209.85.135.132/search?q=cache:X_fMyDQsuOAJ:www.monabaker.com/pMachine/more.php%3Fid%3D155_0_1_0_M5+%22demanded+that+the+European+Union+\(EU\)+not+renew+its+1995+Association+Agreement+with+Israel%22&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=il](http://209.85.135.132/search?q=cache:X_fMyDQsuOAJ:www.monabaker.com/pMachine/more.php%3Fid%3D155_0_1_0_M5+%22demanded+that+the+European+Union+(EU)+not+renew+its+1995+Association+Agreement+with+Israel%22&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=il)

²⁵ <http://www.phronline.org/articles.php?ArtID=377>

²⁶ http://www.monabaker.com/pMachine/more.php?id=96_0_1_12_M5

²⁶ <http://www.awalls.org/>

[the Palestinian BDS Call from Within](#)²⁷ - an Israeli group of Palestinians, Jews, Israeli citizens and residents resisting Israeli Apartheid by supporting BDS initiatives against Israel.

In May 2003, Dr. Ilan Pappé [called for divestment, boycott, anti-Apartheid campaigns against Israel](#). Expressing his views on the analogy to the South African case, he declared: "it is difficult to compare Israel's apartheid system with the one that existed in South Africa"... "Conditions the Palestinians live under are much worse than South Africa's".²⁸

2. The impact of the Palestinian Civil Society calls for BDS against Israel on the BDS movement

The Palestinian calls for BDS against Israel affected the BDS movement worldwide. These calls were a significant milestone, inducing a much more sweeping support for BDS against Israel than observed earlier. The most influential Palestinian calls for BDS against Israel emerged in August 2002 when a group of Palestinian organizations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory called for a comprehensive economic, cultural, and academic boycott of Israel: "For the sake of freedom and justice in Palestine and the world, we call upon the solidarity movement, NGOs, academic and cultural institutions, business companies, political parties and unions, as well as concerned individuals to [strengthen and broaden the global Israel Boycott Campaign](#)".²⁹ Then, in October 2003, Palestinian academics and intellectuals in the occupied territories and in the Diaspora called for a boycott of Israeli academic institutions. These calls were later followed by a group of Palestinian academics and intellectuals who launched the [Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel \(PACBI\)](#) in Ramallah in April 2004, highlighting the institutional nature of the boycott.³⁰

These calls mobilized many academics worldwide, including in Israel. In March 2004, [an Open Letter addressed to the Israeli academic leadership was released to the press](#). Nearly 300 academics from around the world, including Israel, called for "leaders of Israeli universities to lay their political cards on the table

²⁷ <http://boycottisrael.info/>

²⁸ <http://www.washington-report.org/archives/may03/0305063.html>

²⁹ <http://www.badil.org/en/press-releases/55-press-releases-2002/330-press268-02>

³⁰ <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=868>

<http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1051>

See also Professor Mona Baker "On the distinction between institutions and individuals in relation to academic boycott". On targeting institutions rather than individuals and on how the only joint projects Palestinians and Israelis can consider are those resisting injustice, see Omar Barghouti

Lisa Taraki April 2005. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/comment/0,10551,1463752,00.html>

<http://www.monabaker.com/BakerLondonConference.htm>

and reveal whether they support the government's policies on the border conflict".³¹

In January, 2005, the [Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions \(ICAHD\) issued a statement supporting sanctions against Israel.](#)

"Since sanctions are a powerful, non-violent, popular means of resisting the Occupation, a campaign of sanctions seems to us the next logical step in international efforts to end the Occupation. While it will develop over time, ICAHD supports the following elements at this time:

- "Sales or transfer of arms to Israel conditional upon their use in ways that do not perpetuate the Occupation or violate human rights and international humanitarian law, violations that would end if governments enforced existing laws and regulations regarding the use of weapons in contravention of human rights;
- "Trade sanctions on Israel due to its violation of the "Association Agreements" it has signed with the European Union that prohibit the sale of settlement products under the "Made in Israel" label, as well as for violations of their human rights provisions;
- "Divestment from companies that profit from involvement in the Occupation. In this vein ICAHD supports initiatives like that of the Presbyterian Church of the US which targets companies contributing materially to the Occupation and certainly the campaign against Caterpillar whose bulldozers demolish thousands of Palestinian homes;
- "Boycott of settlement products and of companies that provide housing to the settlements or which play a major role in perpetuating the Occupation; and
- "Holding individuals, be they policy-makers, military personnel carrying out orders or others, personally accountable for human rights violations, including trial before international courts and bans on travel to other countries.

"ICAHD calls on the international community – governments, trade unions, university communities, faith-based organizations as well as the broad civil society – to do all that is possible to hold Israel accountable for its Occupation policies and actions, thereby hastening the end of this tragedy. While we also call on the Palestinian Authority to adhere to human rights conventions, our support for selective sanctions against Israel's Occupation policies focuses properly on Israel which alone has the power to end the Occupation and is alone the violator of international law regarding the responsibilities of an Occupying Power".³²

³¹ <http://phrconline.org/articles.php?ArtID=808>

³² <http://www.icahd.org/eng/news.asp?menu=5&submenu=1&item=218>

In April 2005, [Dr. Ilan Pappé appealed to the British Association of University Teachers \(AUT\)](#), expressing support of a prospective resolution to boycott the Israeli universities, Haifa and Bar-Ilan. Publishing his appeal in the Guardian he explained that “outside pressure is effective in a country where people want to be regarded as part of the civilized world, but their government, with their explicit and implicit help, pursues policies which violate every known human and civil right. Neither the UN, nor the US and European governments, and societies, have sent a message to Israel that these policies are unacceptable and have to be stopped. It is up to the civil societies, through organizations like yours, to send messages to Israeli academics, businessmen, artists, hi-tech industrialists and every other section in that society, that there is a price tag attached to such policies”.³³ [To Haaretz, Dr. Pappé said](#) that he hoped that his support of the boycott had contributed to the boycott decision imposed on Haifa and Bar-Ilan universities by the British Association of University Teachers.³⁴

In May 2005, [Professor Tanya Reinhart published an article explaining why Israeli academia deserved to be boycotted](#).³⁵

In July 2005, the Palestinian United Civil Society (involving about two hundred organizations) [call for BDS was launched](#), stating:

“We, representatives of Palestinian civil society, call upon international civil society organizations and people of conscience all over the world to impose broad boycotts and implement divestment initiatives against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era. We appeal to you to pressure your respective states to impose embargoes and sanctions against Israel. We also invite conscientious Israelis to support this Call, for the sake of justice and genuine peace.

“These non-violent punitive measures should be maintained until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people’s inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law by:

“1. Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall;

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

“3. Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian

³³ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2005/apr/20/highereducation.uk3>

³⁴ <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=569361>

³⁵ <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article3879.shtml>

refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194".³⁶

This call for BDS against Israel was endorsed by [171 organizations and individuals](#).³⁷

Among the welcoming followers were the [British Committee for the Universities of Palestine \(BRICUP\)](#), which was formed in 2005 in the UK in response to the Palestinian Call for an Academic Boycott,³⁸ and [Professor Mona Baker](#), translation and intercultural studies specialist and ardent British activist and writer, supporting the BDS movement against Israel.³⁹ These initiatives have been endorsed by a growing number of Israeli academics and activists.

In August 2005, in their [13th International Conference in Jerusalem under the title "Women Resist Occupation and War"](#), [Women in Black](#) expressed support for the Palestinian call on the international community to impose 'non-violent and effective measures such as divestment and sanctions on Israel, for as long as Israel continues to violate international law, and continues the occupation and the oppression of the Palestinian people'.⁴⁰ In that conference, at the workshop on Sanctions, Boycott and Divestment, Dr. Dalit Baum "was emphasizing the importance of knowledge-building as a condition for such a campaign. Of compiling a list of institutions and companies to be divested from or boycotted". [Rela Mazali](#) too raised her voice in support of endorsing BDS against Israel, asking the international community: "Please, boycott me. Boycott my country. Sanction it till it stops committing these crimes. And sanction as well those outside it who are profiting".⁴¹

In March 2006, Shir Hever from [The Alternative Information Center \(AIC\)](#) published an in-depth analysis of the dependence of Israel on the global economy and its vulnerability to the effect of BDS campaigns against it. The conclusion of his analysis is straightforward: "International reluctance to buy Israeli arms or to sell arms to Israel will encourage Israel to find [non-violent ways of dealing with the Palestinians](#)".⁴²

³⁶ <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=66>

³⁷ <http://www.fosna.org/content/palestinian-civil-society-divestment>

³⁸ <http://www.bricup.org.uk/>

³⁹ <http://www.monabaker.com/>

⁴⁰ <http://gilasvirsky.com/declaration.html>

⁴¹ http://coalitionofwomen.org:80/home/english/events/women_in_black_0805/conf_participants/rela_mazali

⁴² Shir Hever (2006). The Economy of the Occupation Part 6: The Question of Sanctions and a Boycott against Israel.

<http://www.alternativenews.org:80/publications/econoccupation.html>

In May 2006, following the Palestinian call, I expressed support for comprehensive boycott of Israel including academic boycott ([published by Yediot Acharonot](#)).⁴³

In May 2006, the feminist organization, [New Profile](#), sent a letter of support to the [Presbyterian Church USA \(PCUSA\)](#), initiated by New Profile activist [Dr. Dorothy Naor](#), for contemplating adopting a policy of selective divestment as a means of bringing peace to Palestinians and Israelis. "We fervently support such an endeavor, and hope that PCUSA will indeed adopt divestment as a non-violent means of ending Israel's Occupation of Palestinians and their lands".⁴⁴

In the same month, [New Profile also expressed support for selective divestment](#). Given that economic pressure is a non-violent means of ending this catastrophic Occupation, they argued, "New Profile welcomes and supports selective divestment aimed at divesting from companies that contribute to the continuation of the Occupation by supplying arms, other equipment, or staff".⁴⁵

In June 2006, about 100 Israeli individuals, organizations, and movements expressed their support of the Ontario wing of [Canadian Union of Public Employees \(CUPE\)](#)⁴⁶ who, in May, had voted unanimously to pass a resolution in support of the "international campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel until that state recognizes the Palestinian right to self-determination". Endorsing the July 2005 Palestinian call, the CUPE Ontario resolution demands the dismantling of the Apartheid wall as well as [the right of return for all Palestinian refugees](#).⁴⁷

In June 2006, [Reuven Abergel](#), founder of Israel's Black Panthers, expressed support for the academic boycott of Israel.⁴⁸ At the same time, [Gideon Levy](#), Haaretz journalist, [published an op-ed supporting boycott resolutions](#).⁴⁹

Also in June 2006, [a group of more than 50 Israeli citizens](#) supporting BDS against the occupation was formed issuing a statement to this effect later on in June 2007.⁵⁰

In May 2007, Professor Kenneth Mann of Tel Aviv University, the chairperson of the advisory council of [Gisha, the Legal Center for Freedom of Movement](#), [called upon Israeli university presidents to protest the government's restrictions](#)

⁴³ <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3257291,00.html>

⁴⁴ http://www.kibush.co.il/show_file.asp?num=14061

⁴⁵ http://www.kibush.co.il/show_file.asp?num=14061

⁴⁶ http://www.cupe.on.ca/aux_file.php?aux_file_id=241

⁴⁷ <http://www.icl-fi.org/english/spc/supplements/cupe.html>

⁴⁸ <http://boycott-occupation.mahost.org/?q=node/19>

⁴⁹ <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=722611>

⁵⁰ <http://www.jai-pal.org/content.php?page=540>

[imposed on Palestinian university students in 2000](#). Only four university presidents signed the appeal to Defense Minister Amir Perez to lift the ban: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev President Professor Rivka Carmi, Technion Institute of Technology President Professor Yitzhak Apeloig, Hebrew University President Professor Menachem Megidor, Haifa University President Professor Aharon Ben Zeev.⁵¹

In June and July 2008, open letters were issued by Palestinian and Israeli BDS groups to Snoop Doggy Dog, Branford Marsalis, and Mercedes Sosa, all of whom were scheduled to perform to Israeli audiences. During that month, over 100 European Organizations, including the Israeli Committee against House Demolitions, joined the [Palestinian BDS National Campaign](#) (BNC)⁵² in calling for [suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement](#).⁵³

In September 2008, [Dr. Kobi Snitz and Roe Harush](#) published a report about a working group's discussions on how to build the BDS campaign by Israeli citizens.⁵⁴ They were documenting the way the Israeli BDS group, called BOYCOTT! Supporting the Palestinian BDS Call from Within, was formed during that year.

In October 2008, [Shir Hever](#) from the Alternative Information Center called for "economic resistance to the occupation through divestment".⁵⁵

3. [Gaza's Guernica](#)⁵⁶

Following the Gaza offensive by the Israeli army in December 2008, titled Operation Cast Lead, [over 540 Israelis](#) (backed by more than 5000 internationals) issued a call initiated by the philosopher, Dr. Anat Matar, the publisher Yael Lerer, and other members of BOYCOTT! Supporting the Palestinian BDS Call from Within, for "support of the Palestinian human rights community call for international action":

"We are calling on the world to stop Israeli violence and not allow the continuation of the brutal occupation. We call on the world to condemn and not become an accomplice in Israel's crimes...

"In light of the above, we call on the world to implement the call by

⁵¹ <http://www.inminds.co.uk/article.php?id=10115>

⁵² <http://www.bdsmovement.net/?q=node/126>

⁵³ <http://www.badil.org/en/al-majdal/item/1250-over-100-european-organizations-join-bnc-in-calling-for-suspension-of-eu-israel-association-agreement>

⁵⁴ <http://www.badil.org/en/al-majdal/item/91-israeli-citizens-for-a-boycott-of-israel>

⁵⁵ <http://www.jai-pal.org/content.php?page=757>

⁵⁶ <http://www.odsg.org/co/index.php/Statements/1071-gazas-guernica-enough-is-enough.html>

Palestinian human rights organizations which urges:

- "The UN Security Council to call an emergency session and adopt concrete measures, including the imposition of sanctions, in order to ensure Israel's fulfillment of its obligations under international humanitarian law.
- "The High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Conventions to fulfil their obligation under common Article 1 to ensure respect for the provisions of the Conventions, taking appropriate measures to compel Israel to abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law, in particular placing pivotal importance on the respect and protection of civilians from the effects of the hostilities.
- "The High Contracting Parties to fulfil their legal obligation under Article 146 of the Fourth Geneva Convention to prosecute those responsible for grave breaches of the Convention.
- "EU institutions and member states to make effective use of the European Union Guidelines on promoting compliance with international humanitarian law (2005/C 327/04) to ensure Israel complies with international humanitarian law under paragraph 16 (b), (c) and (d) of these guidelines, including the adoption of immediate restrictive measures and sanctions, as well as cessation of all upgrade dialogue with Israel".⁵⁷

In January 2009, members of BOYCOTT! Supporting the Palestinian BDS Call from Within, including Prof. Yoram Carmeli, Dr. Anat Matar, Jonathan Pollak, Dr. Kobi Snitz, myself, and another 17 members [published a call in The Guardian](#) appealing to EU leaders to "use sanctions against Israel's brutal policies and join the active protests of Bolivia and Venezuela". We also appealed to the citizens of Europe: "please attend to the Palestinian Human Rights Organisation's call, supported by more than 540 Israeli citizens (www.freegaza.org/en/home/658-a-call-from-within-signed-by-israeli-citizens): boycott Israeli goods and Israeli institutions; follow resolutions such as those made by the cities of Athens, Birmingham and Cambridge (US). This is the only road left. Help us all, please!"⁵⁸

In April 2009, BOYCOTT! called on musician [Leonard Cohen](#) to [cancel his planned concert in Israel](#): "We see our society becoming more and more calloused and racist and given your longstanding, vocal commitment to justice, we cannot envision you cooperating with continued Israeli defiance of justice and morality; we cannot envision you playing a part in the Israeli charade of self-righteousness. We appeal to you to add your voice to those brave people the world over who boycott Israel. We urge you to cancel your planned performance in Israel".⁵⁹

⁵⁷ <http://www.petitiononline.com/freegaza/petition.html>

⁵⁸ www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jan/17/gaza-israelandthepalestinians1

⁵⁹ <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article10493.shtml>

In May 2009, I sent [a letter of support to BRICUP's pre University and College Union \(UCU\) Congress 2009 meeting](#), which said, in part:

"in spite of the growing plight of their Palestinians colleagues, universities' senates and heads have never spoken up against the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory or against the oppression of the Palestinians; nor have they protested the destructive damage inflicted on Palestinian academic institutions by the Israeli military; nor have they shown any concern for or solidarity with their Palestinian colleagues. And when given the chance to protest "the policy of the Israeli government which is causing restrictions of freedom of movement, study and instruction, and [...] call upon the government to allow students and lecturers free access to all the campuses in the Territories, and to allow lecturers and students who hold foreign passports to teach and study without being threatened with withdrawal of residence visas", only very few ([407 out of over 5000](#)) [faculty have chosen to sign this petition](#).⁶⁰ Is "academic freedom" only the prerogative of the powerful?

These are only shreds of evidence testifying to the complicity of Israeli academic institutions in the state's apartheid policies against the Palestinians".⁶¹

Also in May 2009, BOYCOTT! [appealed to the European Union](#) via its embassies in Israel to suspend existing trade agreements with Israel and to "implement the human rights clause that is part of your trade agreement with Israel and suspend the existing trade agreements with Israel until it upholds international and humanitarian law".⁶²

In the same month, BOYCOTT! sent a message to [Madonna](#) asking her to [cancel her planned performance in Israel](#): "A performance here would imply that Israel is behaving in an acceptable manner, and would be interpreted by Israelis as moral support for the illegal and inhumane policies, described by many as war crimes and crimes against humanity".⁶³

Also, during May 2009 BOYCOTT! joined the [Coalition of Women for Peace](#) in [calling on Norway to divest from the Israeli occupation](#). Twenty Israeli organizations urged the Norwegian pension fund to "remove from the fund's

⁶⁰ <http://academic-access.weebly.com/>

⁶¹ http://www.bricup.org.uk/documents/israel_unis/Giora.pdf

⁶² http://www.israel-academia-monitor.com/index.php?type=large_advic&advice_id=7065&page_data%5Bid%5D=174&cookie_lang=en&the_session_id=50ac1a7049bcbe47a50e7c2fb45248b9&BLUEWEBSESSIONSID=51516d04fe803b39109a09d40ef3a5d2

⁶³ <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1249418563695&pagename=JPost/JPostArticle/ShowFull>

investment portfolio all corporations that support and maintain the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory".⁶⁴

In the same month, BOYCOTT! [sent a message to the Barcelona Department for International Cooperation](#) wondering if Barcelona is still cooperating with Tel Aviv, even after the Gaza massacres. The letter reminded Barcelona that "keeping up the business as usual charade will only encourage Israel to proceed with its illegal, atrocious, and unjust practices that have been going on for the past 42 years without much interference from the international community".⁶⁵

In July, 2009 BOYCOTT! sent a message to [UNICEF](#) on the issue of [their partnering with Motorola](#), letting them know that we consider it "is immoral for UNICEF to partner with a company which undermines UNICEF's efforts by its actions. We ask that UNICEF end its partnership with Motorola until Motorola stops selling equipment used by the Israeli army to violate the rights of Palestinian children along with those of many others".⁶⁶

In the same month, BOYCOTT! joined PACBI's call on [Amnesty](#) to follow their appeal to boycott all Israeli academic and cultural institutions and withdraw their support from [Leonard Cohen's concert in Israel](#).⁶⁷

In July 2009, [Women's International League for Peace and Freedom \(WILPF\)](#) Israel decided on **joining the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Campaign against Israel**: "Taking into account that up till now our calls for significant international pressure on Israeli policy have not been answered, and in spite of having utilized all the means we have had available to us, these actions have not brought about change in Israeli policies, we, therefore join the call for BDS on Israel."⁶⁸

In August 2009, Dr. Neve Gordon, a longtime peace activist and head of the political science department at Ben-Gurion University, published an op-ed in the [Lost Angeles Times](#), endorsing the Palestinian call for BDS against Israel.⁶⁹

In September 2009, BOYCOTT! also joined the [Toronto declaration](#)⁷⁰ supporting the call to protest the Toronto International Film Festival's City-to-City Spotlight on Tel Aviv. Filmmaker, writer, and visual artist, [Udi Aloni and the artist David Reeb](#)⁷¹ were also among the supporters of [the declaration](#).⁷²

⁶⁴ <http://boycottisrael.info/content/israeli-organizations-call-norway-divest-israeli-occupation>

⁶⁵ <http://boycottisrael.info/content/barcelona-still-cooperating-tel-aviv-even-after-gaza-massacres>

⁶⁶ <http://boycottisrael.info/content/unicef-and-motorola-partnership>

⁶⁷ <http://boycottisrael.info/content/entertaining-apartheid-israel-deserves-no-amnesty>

⁶⁸ www.wilpf.int.ch/PDF/Statement%20on%20BDS%20Movement.pdf

⁶⁹ <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/aug/20/opinion/oe-gordon20>

⁷⁰ <http://torontodeclaration.blogspot.com/>

⁷¹ <http://opedisrael.blogspot.com/2009/10/attacking-conscience-corporate-owned.html>

In October 2009, Michel (Mikado) Warschawski a prominent member of The Alternative Information Center, published a reply to [Uri Avnery](#) titled ["YES to BDS!"](#) in which he states:

"For us Zionism is not a national liberation movement but a **colonial movement**, and the State of Israel is and has always been a **settler's colonial state**. Peace, or, better, justice, cannot be achieved without a total decolonization (one can say de-Zionisation) of the Israeli State; it is a precondition for the fulfillment of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians – whether refugees, living under military occupation or second-class citizens of Israel... any attempt for reconciliation **before** the fulfillment of rights strengthens the continuation of the colonial domination relationship. Without a price to be paid, why should the Israelis stop colonization, why should they risk a deep internal crisis?

"This is where the BDS campaign is so relevant: it offers an international framework **to act** in order to help the Palestinian people achieving its legitimate rights, both on the institutional level (states and international institutions) and the civil society's one... The BDS campaign was initiated by a broad coalition of Palestinian political and social movements. No Israeli who claims to support the national rights of the Palestinian people can, decently, turn his or her back to that campaign".⁷³

In the same month, Uri Yacobi Keller from The Alternative Information Center published a document justifying the academic boycott of Israeli universities titled ["The Economy of the Occupation: Academic Boycott of Israel"](#). He further argues that "An academic boycott of Israel represents a threat that could damage one of the most important cultural connections between Israel and the western world".⁷⁴

In November 2009, [The Coalition of Women for Peace](#)⁷⁵ passed a motion to join the BDS movement in Israel. It's the first such endorsement by a major Israeli organization, representing thousands of activists. This initiative has been preceded by a three year long project it had run (initiated in November 2006), titled [Who Profits: Exposing the Israeli Occupation Industry](#), coordinated by Dr. Dalit Baum, Merav Amir and other members of the Coalition. Who Profits aims to expose Israeli and international corporations which are involved in the

⁷² <http://www.counterpunch.org:80/alon08282009.html>

<http://www.haaretz.com:80/hasen/spages/1116151.html>

⁷³ <http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article1733>

<http://toibillboard.info/144boyc.html>

⁷⁴ <http://kanan48.wordpress.com/2009/10/23/the-economy-of-the-occupation-academic-boycott-of-israel-by-uri-yacobi-keller/>

⁷⁵ <http://coalitionofwomen.org/home/english>

construction of Israeli colonies and infrastructure in the occupied territories, in the settlements' economy, in building walls and checkpoints, and in the supply of specific equipment used in the control and repression of the civilian population under occupation. The question Who Profits investigates is not the traditional complaint about the costs incurred by the occupation but the extent to which those involved in it benefit: Who profits from Control of Population, Economic Exploitation, and The Settlement Industry.⁷⁶ The Who Profits data base has become a mainstay of the international BDS movement, providing much of the research and information that is vital for worldwide economic activism against companies and corporations benefitting directly from Israel's occupation.

In the same month, BOYCOTT! [sent an Open Letter to the Board of Governors of Trondheim University](#), asking them to follow the Palestinian call to boycott the Israeli academy. "Indeed, it has to be recognized by academics the world over that Israeli universities are part and parcel of the structures of domination and oppression of the Palestinian people. They have played a direct and indirect role in promoting, justifying, developing or supporting the state's racist policies and persistent violations of human rights and international law".⁷⁷

BOYCOTT! also joined [Adalah-NY's call on others to tell the New York Mets that they should refrain from supporting Hebron's settlers](#).⁷⁸

In December 2009, members of BOYCOTT!, "including Emmanuel Farjoun, Hebrew University; Rachel Giora, Tel Aviv University; Anat Matar, Tel Aviv University; Kobi Snitz, Technion; and Ilan Pappé now at Exeter" supported the [US campaign for academic boycott against Israel](#) who issued [a statement calling for a boycott of Israeli academic and cultural institutions](#).⁷⁹

In January 2010, [ICAHN issued a renewed statement](#) titled "in support of a campaign of BDS based upon the fundamental principles of the Palestinian civil society call:

- "Ending Israel's occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall;
- "Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and
- "Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194".

⁷⁶ <http://www.whoprofits.org/>

⁷⁷ <http://usacbi.wordpress.com/category/israeli-organizing/>

⁷⁸ <http://boycottisrael.info/content/tell-new-york-mets-say-no-hebron's-racist-violent-settlers>

⁷⁹ <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article10967.shtml>

It then goes on to give details about ICHAD's support of BDS not mentioned in the original statement, such as:

- "Boycott of Israeli academic institutions, which have not fulfilled their responsibility of upholding the academic freedoms of their Palestinian counterparts. Our call for an academic boycott of Israeli universities is targeted at the institutions, opposing, for example, the holding of international academic conferences in Israel or funding joint research ventures. It does *not* call for boycotting individual scholars or researchers in any way".⁸⁰

In the same month, filmmaker and artist Udi Aloni [published an article in Ynet](#), explaining why BDS is the right tool to level against the occupation:

"[W]e must try to create the preconditions for non-violent resistance to emerge, in order to render violent resistance unnecessary.

"The most provably-effective form of pressure known to us so far is BDS. Thus, BDS action does not amount to negative, counter-productive action, as many propagandists try to portray it. On the contrary, BDS action is a life-saving antidote to violence. It is an action of solidarity, partnership and joint progress. BDS action serves to preempt, in a non-violent manner, justified violent resistance aimed at attaining the same goals of justice, peace and equality."⁸¹

4. Impact: Israel is losing its legitimacy

The BDS movement against Israel is growing worldwide. The Israeli public and policy-makers, including military officers, cannot ignore it any longer.⁸² Israelis are witnessing the loss of Israel's legitimacy and beginning to grasp the cost of continued Israeli disregard of international law.

In September 2009, in his article, ["The third threat"](#), Gabriel Siboni registers the impact of the BDS movement against Israel:

"In recent years, however, an additional threat has been developing. Its main thrust: attempts by pro-Arab organizations to **destroy Israel's legitimacy** as a political entity. There are many examples of this such as accusations of an apartheid policy, Holocaust denial and the claim that the state's establishment was an illegal act, as well as accusations that Israel has

⁸⁰ <http://www.icahd.org/eng/>

⁸¹ <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3829694,00.html>

⁸² <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2010/0106/1224261731116.html>

committed war crimes. These lead to boycotts of Israeli companies and products, academic and cultural boycotts and ultimately calls to destroy the Zionist entity" (emphasis added, R.G.).⁸³

In October 2009, [Aluf Benn](#), Haaretz correspondent testifies:

"Only one thing does bother the Israelis, according to the **polls: fear** of a diplomatic embargo and an international boycott. The Goldstone Report and the International Court of Justice in The Hague are arousing concern and interest, far more than Obama's peace speeches. **However, as long as relations with the rest of the world are satisfactory, Israelis see no reason to emerge from indifference and listen to the president of the United States**" (emphasis added, R.G.).⁸⁴

During the same month, in his article "[Israel needs legitimacy to wage war and peace](#)", Haaretz mainstream journalist, Ari Shavit, counts the threats to Israel's loss of legitimacy, including the BDS movement against Israel:

"But things are not all right - they really are not. Why? Because underneath those still waters on which Israel's ship is sailing lurks an iceberg. The Goldstone report marked the iceberg's first appearance. Turkey turning its back on Israel was the second. Attempts by European courts to try Israel Defense Forces officers were the third; the boycott of Israeli products and companies in various places round the world was the fourth".⁸⁵

In November 2009, mainstream journalist, [Sever Plocker](#), admits that

"Israel's image has hit a nadir; it is isolated, unwanted, and perceived as bad. The world is telling us that should we continue along the same contemptible path, we will **lose our legitimacy**" (emphasis added, R.G.).⁸⁶

In the same month, in his article titled "[How we became a night unto the nations](#)", Haaretz mainstream columnist Yoel Marcus laments Israel's loss of legitimacy:

⁸³ <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1117739.html>

⁸⁴ <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1116923.html>

⁸⁵ <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1121263.html>

⁸⁶ <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3798761,00.html>

"Israel is ... described as a strong country, aggressive and domineering, as Charles de Gaulle once said. President Shimon Peres was recently greeted by angry demonstrations in Argentina and Brazil. Many countries boycott Israeli products, and Israeli lecturers on college campuses throughout the West endure catcalls. During Ehud Olmert's recent lecture tour of the United States, he was greeted almost everywhere he went with cries such as 'child killers!'

"Ever since Operation Cast Lead in Gaza, officers in the Israel Defense Forces have been at risk every time they land in an international airport. ... it would be preferable for our government to discuss how we got to where we are - no longer a light unto the nations - and what needs to be done to stop the **freefall in our international image** before it's too late" (emphasis added, R.G.).⁸⁷

Still, in the same month, [Yoav Karny writes in Globes](#):

"Israel will not continue to exist if the educated middle class of the West turns against it. The experience of South Africa has taught all the boycotters in the world that **there isn't a more effective tool to weaken a society's stamina** than the withdrawal of foreign investments" (emphasis added, R.G.).⁸⁸

In January 2010, Gidi Grinstein, the founder and president of the [Reut Institute](#), a policy group designed to provide real-time long-term strategic decision-making support to the Government of Israel,⁸⁹ acknowledges the [de-legitimization threat](#):

"And so, our politicians and military personnel are threatened with lawsuits and arrest when they travel abroad, campaigns to boycott our products gain traction, and our very existence is challenged in academic institutions and intellectual circles. The country is increasingly isolated".⁹⁰

The BDS movement against Israel, supported by a growing number of Israelis, is biting. It threatens to undermine Israel's position in the civilized world. It holds up a mirror to the ugly face of Israel as Oppressor. Sooner or later, mainstream Israelis will have to acknowledge the face in the mirror as their own. The sooner they do, the sooner they will press for a drastic course correction in partnership with Palestinians that will bring justice for all and will set the country on the path to regaining its legitimacy.

⁸⁷ <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1130262.html>

⁸⁸ <http://www.globes.co.il:80/news/article.aspx?QUID=1056,U1259349558910&did=1000517467>

⁸⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reut_Institute

⁹⁰ <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1142739.html>

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