

Proposed Resolution for the Endorsement of Boycott of Israeli Academic Institutions

WHEREAS Palestinian civil society has issued a call for a campaign of boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel as long as it violates international law and Palestinian rights;

WHEREAS Palestinian students and academics have little recourse to address violations of their rights to free speech, assembly, association, and movement;

WHEREAS Israeli institutions of higher learning are a party to Israeli state policies that violate human rights and negatively impact the working conditions of Palestinian scholars and students;

WHEREAS in the recent (July-August 2014) war on the Gaza Strip dubbed “Operation Protective Edge”, Israeli universities declared they “embrace and support” the efforts of the Israeli Defense Forces, the same efforts which resulted in the deaths of 2,131 Palestinians, over 500 of whom were children, and 71% of whom were civilians;

WHEREAS Israeli professors and students at Israeli universities who speak out against discriminatory or criminal policies against Palestinians are ostracized and ridiculed if not publicly shamed, or worse;

WHEREAS academic institutions in the United States, Europe, and around the world, such as the American Studies Association, the Association for Asian American Studies, and the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, have endorsed the boycott of Israeli academic institutions;

WHEREAS these decisions, which were arrived at freely and democratically after engaged discussion and debate (sometimes several years in duration), have been greeted by condemnation, such as the statements of 250 university and college presidents, including the AAUP, and draconian attempts to curtail free speech, such as the bills proposed by New York and Maryland state legislators in the spring of 2014 to ban the use of state funds to academics and institutions that associate with professional institutions that or that themselves endorse the boycott;

WHEREAS in announcing the City University of New York’s condemnation of the American Studies Association endorsement of the boycott, then-Interim Chancellor William P. Kelly also announced “a new joint MBA program between the Zicklin School at Baruch College and the College of Management Academic Studies in Rishon LeZion”;

WHEREAS the Doctoral Students Council (DSC) of the Graduate Center, CUNY, democratically represents students and their interests;

WHEREAS the DSC wishes to support Palestinian students and academics in their struggle against the Zionist policies of the Israeli state and its restrictions, a struggle that is frequently deprived of access to materials, resources, and discussion by the Israeli state;

WHEREAS the DSC understands that the boycott of Israeli academic institutions is *not* the boycott of or prohibition of collaboration with individual Israeli scholars, nor does it engage or support any other ethnic or religious discrimination;

WHEREAS the DSC understands that academic freedom in Palestine and Israel is contingent upon free and open exchange and movement for Palestinian students and scholars and visiting students and scholars in and out of the West Bank, Gaza, and Israel;

Be it RESOLVED that the DSC hereby endorses the boycott of Israeli academic institutions and the divestment from Israeli companies, and calls for the end to the partnership between Baruch College and the College of Management Academic Studies;

Be it further RESOLVED that the DSC condemns the statements of university presidents that denigrate, ostracize, and intimidate scholars and students engaged in open debate on this issue.

Be it finally RESOLVED that the DSC condemns any and all legislative efforts to curtail the right of scholars and students to engage in academic boycotts as it is a basic aspect of free speech and association.