

US Scholars Endorse Boycotting Israel

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

Global Research, December 18, 2013

Region: [Middle East & North Africa, USA](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

The American Studies Association (ASA) is the nation's oldest and largest organization involved in the interdisciplinary study of US culture and history.

In 1951, it was chartered. It has 5,000 members. It's affiliated with 2,200 libraries and other institutional subscribers.

Members represent many academic disciplines. They include history, literature, religion, art, architecture, philosophy, music, science, ethnic studies, anthropology, sociology, political science, education, and gender studies among others.

Members include academics, researchers, librarians, and public officials and administrators.

On December 16, [ASA headlined](#) "ASA Members Vote to Endorse Academic Boycott of Israel." They did so decisively. Over 66% of members support doing so. Less than 31% opposed. Another 3.4% abstained.

The vote followed ASA's December 4 [resolution](#), stating:

"Whereas the American Studies Association is committed to the pursuit of social justice, to the struggle against all forms of racism, including anti-semitism, discrimination, and xenophobia, and to solidarity with aggrieved peoples in the United States and in the world;

Whereas the United States plays a significant role in enabling the Israeli occupation of Palestine and the expansion of illegal settlements and the Wall in violation of international law, as well as in supporting the systematic discrimination against Palestinians, which has had documented devastating impact on the overall well-being, the exercise of political and human rights, the freedom of movement, and the educational opportunities of Palestinians;

Whereas there is no effective or substantive academic freedom for Palestinian students and scholars under conditions of Israeli occupation, and 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 the American Studies Association is cognizant of Israeli scholars and students who are critical of Israeli state policies and who support the international boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement under conditions of isolation and threat of sanction;

Whereas the American Studies Association is dedicated to the right of students and scholars to pursue education and research without undue state interference, repression,

and military violence, and in keeping with the spirit of its previous statements supports the right of students and scholars to intellectual freedom and to political dissent as citizens and scholars;

It is resolved that the American Studies Association (ASA) endorses and will honor the call of Palestinian civil society for a boycott of Israeli academic institutions.”

“It is also resolved that the ASA supports the protected rights of students and scholars everywhere to engage in research and public speaking about Israel-Palestine and in support of the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement.”

In 2012, ASA’s Academic and Community Activism Caucus (ACAC) asked its Executive Committee (EC) to consider a resolution endorsing an academic boycott of Israel.

It followed a call from Palestinian civil society to do so. ASA’s EC forwarded the resolution to its National Council (NC).

Deliberative discussions followed. NC unanimously endorsed a revised version of the above resolution.

It did so “as an ethical stance, a form of material and symbolic action,” said ASA.

“It represents a principle of solidarity with scholars and students deprived of their academic freedom and an aspiration to enlarge that freedom for all, including Palestinians.”

ASA called its endorsement justified for the following reasons:

- US military and other support for Israel;
- Israel’s systematic violation of international laws and UN resolutions;
- the harsh impact of its longstanding occupation;
- “the extent to which Israeli institutions of higher education are a party to state policies that violate human rights,” and
- strong ASA member support.

It’s symbolic. It’s binding “until Israel ceases to violate human rights and international law,” said ASA. It bars official collaboration with Israeli institutions.

It doesn’t apply to individual Israeli scholars engaged in “ordinary forms of academic exchange, including conference presentations, public lectures at campuses, or collaboration on research and publication.”

Following Israel’s 2006 war of aggression on Lebanon, ACA’s International Committee (IC) discussed a possible boycott.

After Israel’s Cast Lead aggression on Gaza, ASA again considered doing so. Study and

discussions followed. In 2012, so did an academic boycott resolution.

“In the last several decades,” said ASA, it “welcomed scholarship that critically analyzes (America), its role domestically and abroad, and that reaches out beyond US borders.”

ASA’s National Council calls the above resolution “of particular significance” to American Studies scholars. “Together, we endorse it, and recommend” ASA members do so, it said.

Nineteen academics comprise ASA’s National Council. Universities they represent include Stanford, Yale, Northwestern, University of Illinois, UC Berkeley, Bryn Mawr, and Rikko University, Tokyo among others.

ASA president Curtis Marez called the boycott “the best way to protect and expand academic freedom and access to education.”

“Palestinian academics are frequently impeded by Israeli occupation authorities, schools and universities have been bombed by US-supported Israeli military forces, and the Wall blocks educational access for thousands of students,” he stressed.

“As an association of scholars and educators, the ASA has an ethical responsibility to act.”

ASA’s boycott followed Association for Asian American Studies (AAAS) members unanimously approving their own resolution last April.

It was the first scholarly organization to do so. Inside Higher Education is a daily online publication. It focuses on academic topics.

It called ASA’s resolution a big victory for the Israeli boycott movement. It has widespread European support. It’s been absent in America until this year.

The Anti-Defamation League is one of 52 Zionist organizations. They disseminate pro-Israeli propaganda. They support Israel’s worst crimes. They do so disgracefully.

ADL denounced ASA’s decision. It called it “shameful, morally bankrupt and intellectually dishonest...”

Separately, ADL national director Abe Foxman called ASA’s resolution “myopic...fundamentally distorted (and) manifestly unjust.”

The [New York Times](#) one-sidedly supports Israel. It commented on ASA’s resolution. It called it “a symbolic sting.”

It’s part of a “movement to isolate and pressure Israel. (It’s) gaining ground in Europe.” It’s getting growing numbers of US supporters.

ASA’s endorsement represents “a milestone” for global boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) supporters, said The Times.

Omar Barghouti is founder and director of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI).

He called ASA’s resolution “perhaps the strongest indicator yet that the BDS movement is

reaching a tipping point, even in the US, the last bastion of support for Israel's unjust system."

Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas is a longtime Israeli collaborator. He's coup d'état leader.

Israel rigged his election. He has no legitimacy whatever. He opposes boycotting Israel. He does so disgracefully. Barghouti commented harshly, saying:

"There is no Palestinian political party, trade union, NGO, network or mass organization that does not strongly support BDS."

"Any Palestinian official who lacks a democratic mandate and any real public support, therefore, cannot claim to speak on behalf of the Palestinian people when it comes to deciding our strategies of resistance to Israel's regime of occupation, colonization and apartheid.

"Any Palestinian official who today explicitly speaks against boycotting Israel shows how aloof he is from his own people's aspirations for freedom, justice and equality, and how oblivious he is to our struggle for their inalienable rights."

Stanford University Professor/ASA member David Palumbo-Liu said:

"People who truly believe in academic freedom would realize protesting the blatant and systemic denial of academic freedom to Palestinians, which is coupled with material deprivation of a staggering scale, far outweighs concerns we in the West might have about our own rather privileged academic freedoms."

Cornell University Professor/ASA member Eric Cheyfitz said:

"I am a Jew with a daughter and three grandchildren who are citizens of Israel."

"I am a scholar of American Indian and Indigenous studies, who has in published word and action opposed settler colonialism wherever it exists, including of course the Palestinian West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem."

"It is worth noting in this respect that just as the myth of American exceptionalism seeks to erase the genocide and ongoing settler colonialism of Indigenous peoples here in the United States so the myth of Israeli exceptionalism seeks to erase Israeli colonialism in Palestine and claim original rights to Palestinian lands."

"It is from these personal and professional positions that I applaud the decision of the NC to support the academic boycott of Israel, which I support, and urge ASA members to affirm that support with their votes."

UC Santa Cruz Professor Emerita/ASA member Angela Davis compared Israeli enforced segregation to Jim Crow in America.

She called endorsing ASA's resolution "an ethical imperative. (I)t should be clear that a mass movement in solidarity with Palestinian freedom is long overdue."

Many others feel the same way. ASA's resolution is important. Hopefully other initiatives will

follow.

Longstanding Israeli lawlessness is abhorrent. Opposing it is a moral, ethical and legal imperative.

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His new book is titled "Banker Occupation: Waging Financial War on Humanity."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanII.html>

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<http://www.progressiveradionetwork.com/the-progressive-news-hour>

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