ENDING ISRAELI APARTHEID IS EASY AS... UNTIL THEN... ISRAEL & WAR PROFITEERS

Boycott... Israel & War Profiteers

Birthright Unplugged
Provides travel, education, and movement building programs in Palestine and North America
www.birthrightunplugged.org  info@birthrightunplugged.org

What is BDS:
• “BDS” is an acronym for boycott, divestment and sanctions, and is a non-violent, global movement that seeks to end its violations of human rights and international law.
• BDS will end when Israel:
  1. ends its illegal occupation of Palestinian lands and dismantles the Wall.
  2. recognizes the equal rights of its Palestinian citizens.
  3. respects the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes.

Why do we participate in BDS:
• Because Palestinian are living under an illegal occupation and Israel continues to deny them their internationally recognized right to self-determination.
• Because Israel is an apartheid state that denies Palestinians equal rights and freedom of movement.
• Americans have a special obligation to do BDS because our government uses our taxes to fund Israel’s violations.

Won’t BDS censor people?
• No. BDS doesn’t prevent Israelis or Israeli institutions from saying or doing anything. Rather, they demand that the rest of us withhold support for Israel’s actions until it abandons policies that violate human rights.

Why Israel?
• Palestinians have a special concern with Israel because it is the largest single recipient of our country’s foreign military aid. In fiscal year 2008, the U.S. gave Israel close to $2.5 billion in military aid (www.state.gov/documents/organization/100149.pdf), a number only expected to rise.
• Israel uses all that aid to finance its military and occupation forces. Israel would be unable to maintain its 40-year occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem or its siege of the Gaza Strip without this financial assistance.
• This means, then, that Israeli military expenditures are funded by the United States, rendering Americans financially responsible for Israel’s crimes.

BDS isn’t unfairly single out Israel?
• No. BDS campaigns have targeted many countries for their human rights violations. For example, activists in Europe have long-led boycott campaigns against Burma. This campaign targets not just Burma violations of human rights.
• BDS, then, does not single out Israel. In fact, BDS treats Israel no differently than any other country guilty of human rights abuses. Supporting BDS is not part and parcel of an overall commitment to policy, a commitment consistent with opposition to human rights abuses anywhere in the world (e.g., Burma, Darfur, Kashmir, Tibet).

BDS anti-Semitic?
• No. Israel is a state and like any other state, it must comply with international law.
• Collapsing that state’s actions has nothing to do with condemning Judaism or Jewish people.
• It is important to remember that not all Israelis are Jewish — ending the second-class status of Palestinian citizens of Israel is a key demand of the BDS movement.
• Moreover, not all Jewish Israelis support their government; not all Jewish people support Israel; and many Jews and Israelis support BDS.
• For Israeli support of BDS, see www.whooprails.org and www.boycottIsrael.info.

BDS one-sided?
• Yes. It stands on the side of those living under occupation and apartheid, on the side of the international law and human rights, and against the side of the occupier and those who violate human rights.
• BDS hurts Israelis? It might. Our quest, however, is not with Israelis but with the Israeli government and Israeli institutions. These must change, not any individual Israeli person.

Won’t BDS alienate Israelis?
• BDS does not hurt Israelis who support Palestinian rights.
• BDS may indirectly “hurt” some Israelis, even some who support Palestinian rights. Universities, for example, may not have the same opportunities for international collaboration if their institution is being boycotted, so individual researchers may be affected. Artists may experience a loss of income due to canceled tours or performances. Students might find their produce costing more internationally.
• However, the goal of BDS is not to harm Israelis. It is to end Israel’s illegal occupation and apartheid regime and restore to Palestinians their internationally recognized rights.

BDS demands implementing the right of return for Palestinian refugees. Doesn’t this mean the destruction of Israel?
• According to international law, Palestinians who were displaced in the war of 1948–49 have the right to return to their homes and be compensated for their losses.
• However, Israel denies this right to Palestinian while promoting the citizenship and emigration of others—namely, Jewish people from all over the world—to its land. Effectively, Israel refuses citizenship and rights to non-Jews on the basis of their religion and ethnicity. However, human rights require that no state should be allowed to discriminate on the basis of religion, race, or anything else. Israel is no different.

Is Israel really an apartheid state?
• “Apartheid” means separation. The crime of apartheid has been defined by United Nations as “policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination” which are “committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically organizing them” (www.un.org/law/treaties/avl/asp/african_convention_1966.htm).
• Israel has done this. It has constructed a separate system of law, schools, health care, roads and highways, identification papers, and citizenship based on ethnicity. Through this system of segregation (judaica in Hebrew), Palestinians are denied access to land, water, housing, healthcare, decent roads, freedom of movement, education, and work (for the sole reason that they are not Jews). In essence, Israel has created a democracy for Jewish people only.
• Israel has also nearly completed construction of the Wall, a network of barriers including a 6-meter high concrete walls, military watch-towers, and barbed wire fencing; that within complete will have illegally annexed some 46% percent of the West Bank. The path of the Wall makes clear the nature of Israeli apartheid: separation in service of discrimination.

But aren’t Israel’s policies justified by security rather than racism?
• If that were true, the Wall in the West Bank would be constructed along the 1967 “Green Line” border. But 85% of it is built inside the West Bank. Its sealing goal—which effectively appropriates Palestinian land for the Israeli “side” while leaving the Palestinian community of farmers who own that land on the other—exposes it as essentially a land grab rather than a security measure. For a map of the Wall’s path, see www.btselem.orgGlyph/cnt/010306/3828.html.
• Even if Israel’s motivations were security-based, erecting an 8-meter high concrete Wall, implementing a vast apparatus of ethnic, religious, and racial segregations, perpetuating a military occupation, and engaging in regular house demolitions and punitive restrictions on people’s daily lives are not the way to achieve security. This is instead a recipe for the perpetuation of oppression.
• Finally, we must remember that Palestinians are also entitled to security. Currently, Palestinians live in profound insecurity—feeble sanitation, forced unemployment, segregation, and ghettoization—so that others can feel “safe.” No one will be secure, however, until Israel complies with international law and upholds the rights of all people, regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity.

PALESTINE BASED RESOURCES
Palestinian BDS Campaign National Committee (BNC). www.bdmovement.net
Causasus Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign (Stop the Wall). www.stopthewall.org
Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI). www.pacbi.org