

**The London School of Economics and Political Science**

*The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement:  
Activism Across Borders for Palestinian Justice*

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## **Abstract**

On 7 July 2005, a global call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) was declared to people around the world to enact boycott initiatives and pressure their respective governments to sanction Israel until it complies with international law and respects universal principles of human rights. The call was endorsed by over 170 Palestinian associations, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, charities, and other Palestinian groups. The call mentioned how broad BDS campaigns were utilized in the South African struggle against apartheid, and how these efforts served as an inspiration to those seeking justice for Palestinians. The call stated that boycott measures should be carried out until three demands are met – that Israel end the occupation of Arab lands, end discrimination against Palestinian citizens in Israel, and respect the Palestinian right of return.

This study explores the causes for the BDS movement, its organizational dynamics, and the potential outcomes the movement intends to gain through border-crossing solidarity groups and networks. Research questions guiding this investigation have been: What causal conditions have led to the emergence of the movement? How is the movement similar and/or dissimilar to other forms of challenging Israel? How is the BDS movement organized across borders, and how are local campaigns within the movement operationalized? This thesis is comprised of three sections that include a historical background, case study chapters on BDS campaigns, and a final section that analyzes the movement's structure and processes, its connection to global justice activism, and challenges and limitations of the movement. Thus, this thesis critically investigates the BDS movement through its operationalization across borders and argues that due to its scope, organizational structure, and collective action frames, the

transnational movement represents a new and different approach to challenging Israel in the Palestinian struggle for justice.

*For Qais*

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ACREC – Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (Presbyterian Church USA)

AFSC – American Friends Service Committee

AUT – Association of University Teachers

BDS – Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions

BIG – Boycott Israeli Goods

BIG – Buy Israeli Goods

BIN – Boycott Israel Network

BNC – BDS National Committee

BRICUP – British Committee for the Universities of Palestine

CC – Coordinating Committee (We Divest Campaign)

CHE – Council for Higher Education

DFLP – Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine

GUPW – General Union of Palestinian Workers

HBC – Hudson’s Bay Company

HRW – Human Rights Watch

IAW – Israel Apartheid Week

ICJ – International Court of Justice

J-BIG – Jews for Boycotting Israeli Goods

JVP – Jewish Voice for Peace

MSCI – Morgan Stanley Capital International

MSCI ESG – Morgan Stanley Capital International Environmental, Social, and Governance

NATFHE – National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education

NEC – National Executive Committee

NGO – Non-governmental organization

NLG – National Lawyers Guild

PA or PNA – Palestinian (National) Authority

PACBI – Palestinian Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel

PASSIA – Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs

PFLP – Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine

PLO – Palestinian Liberation Organization

PSC – Palestine Solidarity Committee

PTUC-BDS – Palestinian Trade Union Coalition for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions

SEC – Securities and Exchange Commission

SJP – Students for Justice in Palestine

SOAS – School for Oriental and African Studies

SRI – Socially Responsible Investment

SUSTAIN – Stop US Tax-funded Aid to Israel Now!

TIAA-CREF – Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association – College Retirement Equities Fund

TUC – Trade Union Congress

UCU – University and College Union

UNLCU – United National Leadership Command of the Uprising

USPCN – US Palestinian Community Network

VAT – Value Added Tax

WCAR – World Conference against Racism, Racial. Discrimination, Xenophobia and  
Related Intolerance

YMCA – Young Men’s Christian Association

YWCA – Yong Women’s Christian Association

## Introduction

On 7 July 2005, a global call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) was declared “against Israel until it complies with international law and universal principles of human rights.”<sup>1</sup> Over 170 Palestinian associations, trade unions, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), charities, and other Palestinian groups endorsed the call. The call mentioned how broad BDS campaigns were utilized in the South African struggle against apartheid, and how these efforts served as an inspiration to those seeking justice for Palestinians. The call stated that boycott measures should be carried out until the following three demands are met.

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 refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194<sup>2</sup>

This study explores the causes for the BDS movement, its organizational dynamics, and the potential outcomes the movement intends to gain through border-crossing solidarity groups and networks. A backdrop for the movement’s causal emergence is set in the first chapter and outcomes are addressed in the final chapter. The intervening chapters analyze how the movement is organized and are the main focus of this thesis. Thus, this thesis critically investigates the BDS movement through its operationalization across borders and in doing so argues that the transnational

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<sup>1</sup> BDS Movement, “Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS,” [www.bdsmovement.net/call](http://www.bdsmovement.net/call). For the full-text of the document see Appendix I: Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

movement is a new and different approach to challenging Israel in the Palestinian struggle for justice.

### **Research Questions**

I began investigating Palestinian resistance after completing a research project on the relationship between international institutions and Palestinian state formation. This prior research was heavily based in a neo-Gramscian theoretical framework that analyzed structural conditions surrounding the conceptualization of state formation in Palestine.<sup>3</sup> After completing this work, I felt the need to view Palestine more holistically by investigating the “agency” side of Palestinian politics, particularly through Palestinian resistance. While conducting preliminary research on Palestinian resistance generally, questions increasingly emerged regarding the relatively un-researched BDS movement. Because these questions remained unanswered and the movement has become more prominent in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it became clear that the movement not only warranted its own full-scale study, but that this research would also deepen and expand my knowledge of Israel/Palestine, social movements, and transnational activism.

In this process, the following research questions came to the fore and were the basis for my investigation into the BDS movement. The primary research question is: what are the causal conditions that led to the movement’s emergence, what mobilizing dynamics helped the movement develop, and how can the movement strategically conceptualize moving toward outcomes? This is examined in detail throughout the

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<sup>3</sup> Suzanne Morrison, “Configuring Palestine: a Neo-Gramscian Perspective of International Institutions in Palestinian State Formation” (MA Thesis, American University in Cairo, 2010); <http://dar.aucegypt.edu/handle/10526/724>.

following chapters in the thesis through a series of secondary research questions including: Why has the BDS movement emerged at this particular historical juncture? What are the motives for establishing the BDS movement? Why do people join the transnational movement? What other forms of struggle have preceded and influenced the creation of the BDS movement? What political conditions fostered an environment ripe for the development of a border-crossing BDS movement? How has the failure of other forms of struggle and the peace process led to the creation of the BDS movement? How is the movement similar and/or dissimilar to other forms of challenging Israel? How did structural conditions and factors of agency lead to the creation of the BDS movement? At what time can a movement be discerned from initial, seemingly disconnected boycott activities? How is the BDS movement organized across borders, and how are local campaigns within the movement operationalized? How does the BDS movement fit within a larger global justice framework? Finally, what challenges and limitations does the movement encounter, and how might these be overcome for the movement to further develop? These questions formed a foundation for my investigation into the movement and guided me through the research process.

## **Review of the Literature**

This thesis builds on and contributes to a range of scholarly literature. In the sections that follow, I review literature relating to Palestine-related BDS, South African-related BDS, Palestinian resistance, boycott literature, social movement theory, and transnational activism. In each section, I examine the general thrusts and main arguments of the respective literature to situate my research on the BDS movement within a broader context.

When I started to survey the literature on the BDS movement as I began my doctoral research in 2010, there were few scholarly works at that time to actually review. Since that time, the literature has expanded with nearly all works cited here being published during the time of my thesis research. The movement is clearly picking up academic interest as evidenced by the growing list of works cited below, and will likely increase in the coming years due to the prominence of the movement in analyses of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The bulk of the literature on the BDS movement is written by participants or supporters of the movement, and makes the case for the movement's rationale, tactics, and demands. In short, this body of work is a call for mobilization. The movement's first book, *Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions: the Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights* was written by prominent movement activist, Omar Barghouti.<sup>4</sup> This was followed by *The Case for Sanctions against Israel* edited by Andrea Lim, an editor at the leftist publishing house Verso Books, and *Generation Palestine: Voices of the BDS Movement* edited by long-term Palestine solidarity activist Rich Wiles.<sup>5</sup> All three books comprise self-contained chapters, sometimes of previously published articles, and the latter two are edited books with chapters written by notable activists or personalities. Similarly, a chapter on the movement by Hazem Jamjoun in an edited book by Julie Norman and Maia Carter Hallward on the second intifada and an article

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<sup>4</sup> Omar Barghouti, *Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions: The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Andrea Lim, ed., *The Case for Sanctions Against Israel* (Brooklyn: Verso, 2012) and Rich Wiles, *Generation Palestine: Voices from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement* (London: Pluto Press, 2013).

by Phil Marfleet and Tom Hickey on the “South Africa moment” in *International Socialism* both analyze the movement and argue for its promotion by activist-scholars.<sup>6</sup> These studies are a useful introduction for studying the BDS movement in that they provide some historical context for BDS and illustrate the arguments made in favor of the movement, thus providing much of the intellectual and ideological justification for the movement’s emergence and development.

Following from this body of work is again, a small but growing corpus, which argues against the movement. These texts for the most part seek to refute arguments in favor of the movement proffered in part through the texts discussed in the previous paragraph. *The Case Against Academic Boycotts of Israel*, edited by Cary Nelson and Gabriel Noah Brahm, and *The BDS War Against Israel: The Orwellian Campaign to Destroy Israel Through the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement* by Jed Babbin both seek to rebut claims made by participants in the movement. Both books assert that the movement seeks to destroy Israel as a Jewish state. Nelson states that BDS supporters “are effectively promoting the dissolution of the Jewish state...” and Babbin characterizes the movement as “an ideological assault on the existence of Israel as a Jewish nation.”<sup>7</sup> While the former text includes “academic boycott” in its title, most authors in the book discuss BDS more generally, and many argue that anti-Semitism plays an underlying role in the movement’s rationale, even if individuals in the movement are unaware of this or do not hold anti-Semitic beliefs.

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<sup>6</sup> Hazem Jamjoum, “The Global Campaign for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions against Israel,” in *Nonviolent Resistance in the Second Intifada: Activism and Advocacy*, eds., Maia Carter Hallward and Julie Norman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 133-151; Tom Hickey and Philip Marfleet, “The ‘South Africa Moment’: Palestine, Israel and the Boycott,” *International Socialism* 128 (13 October 2010): <http://isj.org.uk/the-south-africa-moment-palestine-israel-and-the-boycott/>.

<sup>7</sup> Cary Nelson and Gabriel Noah Brahm, ed., *The Case Against Academic Boycotts of Israel* (Chicago and New York: MLA Members for Scholar's Rights, 2014), Kindle ebook, Introduction; Jed Babbin, *The BDS War Against Israel: The Orwellian Campaign to Destroy Israel Through the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement* (New York: The London Center for Policy Research, 2014), 4.

Finally, a third body of work seeks to analyze the movement beyond the argumentative dichotomy that is “for” or “against” the movement, and rather seeks to investigate the movement from a variety of analytical approaches. In 2009, Abigail Bakan and Yasmeen Abu-Laban published an article in *Race and Class* in which they use a Gramscian approach and build on Charles Mills’ concept of the “racial contract” to argue that the transnational movement represents a challenge to the ideological hegemony of the Zionist narrative of the Israeli state. Similarly, in the same journal several years later Sean McMahon argues that the movement’s power lies in its “networked contestation of the discourse of Palestinian-Israeli politics.”<sup>8</sup> Lastly, in *Transnational Activism and the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict*, Carter Hallward analyzes why the BDS movement is so contentious in the US.<sup>9</sup> Carter Hallward’s book draws on and extends the analysis that she and Patrick Shaver proffered in 2012 in their case study of the University of Berkeley’s divestment bill that was published in *Peace and Change*.<sup>10</sup> In her book, Carter Hallward argues that “debates about identity” and fear mobilized to guard particular identities explicate why positions on the movement (in the US particularly) are polarized.

As noted above, there are few existing scholarly works on the BDS movement. The books and articles reviewed in this section provide a good introduction to the major topics and debates surrounding the movement, and are useful for knowing the current work available in the field. As one of the first in-depth studies of the movement, this thesis contributes to this small, but growing area of literature. My

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<sup>8</sup> Sean McMahon, “The Boycott, Divestment, Sanction Campaign: Contradictions and Challenges,” *Race and Class* 55, no. 4 (2014): 78.

<sup>9</sup> Maia Carter Hallward, *Transnational Activism and the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> Maia Carter Hallward and Patrick Shaver, “‘War By Other Means’ or Nonviolent Resistance? Examining the Discourses Surrounding Berkeley’s Divestment Bill,” *Peace and Change* 37, no. 3 (July 2012): 389-411.

research is part of the third body of work cited above in which scholars critically analyze the movement beyond explicit arguments that support or oppose the movement. Specifically, this thesis provides insight into and analysis of the movement's emergence and operationalization across borders, which adds to the modest literature on the movement and introduces new questions for future studies.

### *South Africa BDS*

Boycott, divestment, and sanctions activities were part of a larger decades-long struggle against apartheid in South Africa. Because the struggle to bring down apartheid in South Africa was multi-faceted, the literature reflects this dynamism. Of the literature that deals with BDS as part of the broader anti-apartheid struggle, there are generally three strands.

One body of work analyzes a range of internal and external factors that led to the fall of formal apartheid in South Africa. In *The UDF: A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa 1983-1991*, Jeremy Seekings argues that trade unions were a significant part of the UDF, which intensified resistance within South Africa and played an important role in ending apartheid.<sup>11</sup> Other factors, such as changing international conditions following the Cold War are emphasized in Nigel Worden's *The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Segregation and Apartheid*.<sup>12</sup> While a variety of internal and external factors are stressed in this corpus, BDS activities are not seen as primary factor in bringing down apartheid.

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<sup>11</sup> Jeremy Seekings, *The UDF: A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa, 1983-1991* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2000).

<sup>12</sup> Nigel Worden, *The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Apartheid, Democracy*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

On the other hand, a second strand of literature suggests that international solidarity efforts such as BDS were an important component in the anti-apartheid struggle. Neta Crawford and Audi Klotz's compilation, *How Sanctions Work: Lessons From South Africa* and Robert Massie's, *Loosing the Bonds: The United States and South Africa in the Apartheid Years* both argue that concerted pressure from abroad through a variety of BDS activities damaged the ruling apartheid regime and contributed to its downfall.<sup>13</sup> According to Klotz, "Numerous strategic, economic, and social sanctions also weakened the regime's ability to maintain apartheid, even undermining its ideological foundations."<sup>14</sup> Thus, in this corpus and unlike the body of work previously discussed, BDS activities are seen as a vital part of the larger anti-apartheid struggle and the eventual fall of the ruling white regime.

Finally, a number of texts deal with specific aspects of BDS, such as academic boycotts, the sports boycott, or the role of divestments and international sanctions on South Africa's economy in the anti-apartheid struggle. Lorraine Haricombe and F.W. Lancaster's *Out in the Cold: Academic Boycotts and the Isolation of South Africa* is the result of two large-scale surveys of South African scholars and argues that academic boycotts had more of a symbolic effect than a direct political effect.<sup>15</sup> In "Academic Boycott – Political Strategy or Moral Imperative? Selective Support as a Justifiable Alternative," Solomon Benatar analyzes the negative effects of academic boycotts and advocates "selective support," which is "unlike total boycott or uncritical

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<sup>13</sup> Neta Crawford and Audi Klotz, eds., *How Sanctions Work: Lessons From South Africa* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999); and Robert Massie, *Loosing the Bonds: The United States and South Africa in the Apartheid Years* (New York: Doubleday, 1997).

<sup>14</sup> Audi Klotz, "Making Sanctions Work: Comparative Lessons," in *How Sanctions Work: Lessons From South Africa*, eds., Neta Crawford and Audi Klotz (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 264.

<sup>15</sup> Lorraine Haricombe and F.W. Lancaster, *Out in the Cold: Academic Boycotts and the Isolation of South Africa* (Arlington, VA: Information Resources Press, 1995).

support.”<sup>16</sup> In “Hitting Apartheid for Six? The Politics of the South African Sports Boycott,” Douglas Booth investigates the “shifting objectives” of the sports boycott over 30 years, and concludes that interracialized sports weakened racial ideology and thus the apartheid regime more than sports boycotts.<sup>17</sup> Thus, in this body of work, scholars have analyzed specific campaigns to assess if and how they contributed to the anti-apartheid struggle and how they may or may not have aided in the downfall of the apartheid regime.

This scholarly work is important because it shows a range of interpretations of multiple factors that led to the downfall of apartheid in South Africa. These studies illustrate the role that BDS can play in a larger political struggle, and how scholars analyzed these activities. The texts above also demonstrate the way scholars can approach analyzing such a movement, especially after the activities and effects of the movement have occurred. As these studies indicate, this is particularly useful for assessing the outcomes and effectiveness of a movement. Considering the current BDS movement for Palestinian justice finds the South African example inspiring, these works are useful for understanding the dynamics of a similar border-crossing movement and the potential for creating social and political change through boycott endeavors.

### *Palestinian Resistance*

In addition to building on the literature of Palestine and South Africa related BDS, this thesis is also situated within the broader literature on Palestinian resistance. Of

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<sup>16</sup> Solomon Benatar, “Academic Boycott – Political Strategy or Moral Imperative? Selective Support as a Justifiable Alternative,” *South African Medical Journal* 79, no. 11 (June 1991): 661.

<sup>17</sup> Douglas Booth, “Hitting Apartheid for Six? The Politics of the South African Sports Boycott,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no. 3 (July 2003): 477-493.

this resistance, the contemporary BDS movement has its most direct historical connections to the Arab Revolt, the first intifada, and the second intifada.<sup>18</sup>

One corpus of literature relating to Palestinian resistance investigates the Arab revolt from 1936-39. In this body of work, scholars have studied the causes and outcomes of the revolt, along with strategies and tactics used to resist British occupation and increasing Jewish immigration. While scholars may emphasize particular tactics in their analyses, most agree that a range of tactics such as strikes (including a six-month general strike), boycotts, demonstrations, and guerilla tactics (bombings, shootings, etc.) were used to fight the British and Zionists. Speaking of the general strike in *Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood*, Rashid Khalidi says it was the “longest anti-colonial strike of its kind until that point in history.”<sup>19</sup> According to Rosemary Sayigh in *Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries*, armed resistance during the time was the “most sustained phase of militant anti-imperialist struggle in the Arab world before the Algerian War of Independence.”<sup>20</sup> Despite the revolt’s unfavorable outcomes for Palestinians, Mazin Qumsiyeh notes that taken together, “Violent and nonviolent resistance was a potent mix, making the country almost ungovernable.”<sup>21</sup>

Another part of literature that analyzes Palestinian resistance is that of the first intifada. Similar to the revolt in the 1930s, numerous tactics were used to challenge Israel’s occupation including demonstrations, boycotts, stone throwing, and the use of petrol bombs. The first intifada is widely known for its mass mobilization of

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<sup>18</sup> In this section I survey the literature on Palestinian resistance during these periods as it specifically relates to researching the BDS movement. For a general historical background see Chapter 1 on the Emergence of the Movement (§1.1 Challenging Israel in a Historical Context).

<sup>19</sup> Rashid Khalidi, *Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006), 106.

<sup>20</sup> Rosemary Sayigh, *Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries* (London: Zed Books, 2007), 43.

<sup>21</sup> Mazin Qumsiyeh, *Popular Resistance in Palestine: A History of Hope and Empowerment* (London: Pluto Press, 2011), 86.

Palestinian society and many scholars emphasize the “popular” or “nonviolent” character of the uprising. This is prevalent in the work of Qumsiyeh, who not only focuses on the first intifada, but as indicated in the title, *Popular Resistance in Palestine: A History of Hope and Empowerment*, traces popular resistance throughout Palestinian history. In *A Quiet Revolution: The First Palestinian Intifada and Nonviolent Resistance*, Mary King argues that Palestinians strategically chose to use nonviolent tactics to resist Israel’s occupation, and similar to Qumsiyeh, argues that these tactics have a long history in the Palestinian struggle.<sup>22</sup> These themes are also evident in two edited volumes on the intifada: *Intifada: Palestine at the Crossroads* edited by Jamal Nassar and Roger Heacock and *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising Against Israeli Occupation* edited by Zachery Lockman and Joel Benin.<sup>23</sup> According to Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, who wrote the introduction to Nassar and Heacock’s book, the intifada rendered a military solution to the conflict insufficient through, “the creative, militant but nonviolent techniques of organization and pressure it has used, and by the concrete daily practices of the people as they struggle to translate independence into reality.”<sup>24</sup>

In contrast, much literature on the second intifada emphasizes armed resistance used during the uprising. While armed resistance is discussed generally, the particular tactic of suicide bombing receives the most attention. In “Palestinian Suicide Terrorism in the Second Intifada: Motivations and Organizational Aspects,” Assaf Moghadam uses a “two-phase model” to explain various factors such as

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<sup>22</sup> Mary Elizabeth King, *A Quiet Revolution: The First Palestinian Intifada and Nonviolent Resistance* (New York: Nation Books, 2007).

<sup>23</sup> Jamal Nassar and Roger Heacock, eds., *Intifada: Palestine at the Crossroads* (New York: Praeger, 1990) and Joel Benin and Zachary Lockman, eds., *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising Against Israeli Occupation* (Boston: South End Press, 1989).

<sup>24</sup> Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, “Introduction: On Achieving Independence,” in *Intifada: Palestine at the Crossroads*, eds., Nassar and Heacock (New York: Praeger, 1990), 10.

economic, nationalist, and religious reasons that led to the tactic becoming prevalent during the intifada.<sup>25</sup> However, in his research on Palestinian suicide bombing Hisham Ahmed argues that Israel's repressive occupation is a primary factor in the tactic's rise during the second intifada. He states, "The more military operations the Israelis conduct in the occupied territories...the more 'human bombs' are mobilized in Palestinian society."<sup>26</sup>

A smaller strain of work in the literature on resistance during the second intifada seeks to draw attention to unarmed resistance during the uprising. This research suggests that armed resistance receives a disproportionate share of attention in the literature, thereby downplaying the presence and efficacy of other forms of challenging Israel. As mentioned above, Qumsiyeh's research details continuous popular Palestinian resistance to foreign occupation, of which the second intifada is a part. Julie Norman's *The Second Palestinian Intifada: Civil Resistance* and her edited book with Carter Hallward *Nonviolent Resistance in the Second Intifada: Activism and Advocacy* both argue that "nonviolent resistance did, and continues to, take place throughout Palestine in various forms."<sup>27</sup> Carter Hallward's other text on the second intifada, *Struggling for a Just Peace: Israeli and Palestinian Activism in the Second Intifada*, makes a similar argument, which created a foundation for her later work on the BDS movement that was reviewed in the earlier section on Palestine BDS.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Assaf Moghadam, "Palestinian Suicide Terrorism in the Second Intifada: Motivations and Organizational Aspects," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 26, no. 2 (March 2003): 65-92.

<sup>26</sup> Hisham Ahmed, "Palestinian Resistance and 'Suicide Bombing,' Causes and Consequences," in *Root Causes of Terrorism: Myths, Realities, and Ways Forward*, ed., Toro Bjorgo (New York: Routledge, 2005), 100.

<sup>27</sup> Julie Norman, *The Second Palestinian Intifada: Civil Resistance* (New York, Routledge, 2010) and Norman, "Introduction: Nonviolent Resistance in the Second Intifada," in *Nonviolent Resistance in the Second Intifada: Activism and Advocacy*, eds., Maia Carter Hallward and Julie Norman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 6.

<sup>28</sup> Maia Carter Hallward, *Struggling for a Just Peace: Israeli and Palestinian Activism in the Second Intifada* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011).

The literature reviewed above on Palestinian resistance suggests that a variety of strategies and tactics have been used in the Palestinian struggle for justice. Bearing in mind that BDS is a contemporary form of resistance, this work is important for understanding the historical trajectory of Palestinian resistance and evaluating how the BDS movement is similar or dissimilar from other forms of challenging Israel. The movement is a current and growing form of Palestine activism, and thus my research on it adds to this literature as a preliminary study on the movement. In particular, this thesis illustrates how the movement is a new and different approach to resisting Israel in the Palestinian struggle for justice, which is explored in detail in the chapters following this introduction.

### *Boycott Literature*

Although the practice of boycott has been around for centuries, the term became known through the effective tactics employed by Irish peasants in 1880 to ostracize Captain Charles Boycott.<sup>29</sup> Boycott was a retired English officer who worked as an agent on an Irish estate, where he collected rents from tenants on behalf of an absentee landlord. After a particularly bad harvest in 1879 due to poor weather, the peasants working on the estate sought rent reductions. The property owner of the estate refused the request and Boycott was instructed to evict the tenants. In response, the Irish Land League proposed not doing business with Boycott instead of directly attacking him. The tactic was successful, as nobody in the local area would work for Boycott, in his fields or in his home. Eventually loyalists in Ireland were brought in to

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<sup>29</sup> Joyce Marlow, *Captain Boycott and the Irish* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1973).

harvest Boycott's crops, but the cost of protecting them along the way far outweighed the worth of the crops.<sup>30</sup>

From that time, the term boycott has been used to describe actions by individuals and groups that use isolation as a way to protest unfavorable individuals, policies, and institutions. *Consumer Boycotts* by Monroe Friedman is a detailed study of boycotts in the US in the twentieth century.<sup>31</sup> Friedman argues that boycotts are a unique form of protest for two reasons. The first is that they are perceived as an effective tactic by targets of boycotts and they have "been used more than any other organizational technique to promote and protect the rights of the powerless and disenfranchised segments of society."<sup>32</sup> *Boycotts, Buses, And Passes: Black Women's Resistance in the U.S. South and South Africa* is a comparative study by Pamela Brooks of women's resistance and argues that during the 1950s women in both countries invoked similar forms of resistance to protest discriminatory policies and apartheid.<sup>33</sup>

Considering boycott on the state level, *From Boycott to Economic Cooperation* by Gil Feiler argues that the Arab states' boycott of Israel is a unique case of economic sanctions in the twentieth century in duration and objective, in that its original goal was not for Israel to reform its policies.<sup>34</sup> Rather, the boycott was aimed at eliminating Israel or making its existence very difficult. Initiated by the Arab League when the state of Israel was established in 1948, the Arab boycott covered diplomatic relations, products and business originating in Israel or companies doing

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Monroe Friedman, *Consumer Boycotts: Effecting Change Through the Marketplace and Media* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>33</sup> Pamela Brooks, *Boycotts, Buses, and Passes: Black Women's Resistance in the U.S. South and South Africa* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008).

<sup>34</sup> Gil Feiler, *From Boycott to Economic Cooperation: The Political Economy of the Arab Boycott of Israel* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1998).

business with Israel.<sup>35</sup> The extent of the boycott and degree of application has varied over time, with some countries, such as Saudi Arabia, currently not boycotting Israel at all.

Scholarly research on boycott reveals that usage of the tactic has a long history. These studies are especially useful for showing the tactic of boycott is familiar and a widespread form of action that is applied in a variety of circumstances. Considering the BDS movement is centered on related political tactics of boycott, my research contributes to this literature by demonstrating the border-crossing use of the tactic as applied to the Palestinian struggle for justice.

### *Social Movement Theory*

Theories of collective action are largely concerned with describing and explaining when, why, and how individuals join together in attempts to create social and political change. Social movement theory in particular comprises a robust literature on causality, dynamics, and outcomes. However, the literature on collective action and social movements are wrought with much debate, with concepts such as structure and agency framing the terrain over which these debates are waged.

During much of the twentieth century, social scientists focused on structural causation that led to collective action. French sociologist Émile Durkheim developed a theory of functionalism, which sought to problematize the functions of social structures that comprise society. Influenced by Durkheim, Talcott Parsons popularized functionalism in US social science. In 1951, Parsons published *The Social System* wherein he argues that through human interaction a social system or

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

society materializes.<sup>36</sup> Neil Smelser and Chalmers Johnson were strongly influenced by Parsons' work, and later applied functionalism to collective action. Structural functionalism views society as a social system where norms and values are institutionalized and reproduced through socialization over time. In the view of these theorists, the failure of socialization leads to alienation and is the main impetus for individuals joining together to create social change.<sup>37</sup>

A different strain in social science at the time emphasized the psychological reasons people have for acting collectively. James Davies theory of rising expectations, Ted Gurr's relative deprivation approach, and Samuel Huntington's modernization theory were the most prominent. These theories utilized computer-assisted models and largely focused on collective behavior. Davies' "J-curve" model purports that a period of relative prosperity raises people's expectations so that, when followed by a sudden economic downturn, it is likely to create feelings of deprivation and frustration.<sup>38</sup> In *Why Men Rebel*, Gurr posits that the discrepancy between what people expect and their perceived material conditions can lead to frustration and aggression, thereby leading to disorderly collective behavior.<sup>39</sup> Huntington, perhaps the best-known proponent of modernization theory, integrated these approaches. According to modernization theory, social and economic changes associated with modernization (industrialization, urbanization, the spread of Western education systems, etc.) promote a new political consciousness that in turn leads to increased political demands. People may become rebellious if they expect political channels to be opened to them, channels through which they can be active participants and make

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<sup>36</sup> Talcott Parsons, *The Social System* (New York: Free Press, 1951).

<sup>37</sup> Neil Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behavior* (New York: Free Press, 1963); Chalmers Johnson, *Revolutionary Change* (Boston: Little Brown, 1966).

<sup>38</sup> James Davies, "Toward a Theory of Revolution," *American Sociological Review* 27 (February 1962): 5-19.

<sup>39</sup> Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970).

“meaningful” change, but are denied these democratic outlets. According to Huntington, the consequence is disorder and sometimes even revolution.<sup>40</sup>

Shortly thereafter, social scientists such as Charles Tilly, Doug McAdam, and Sidney Tarrow developed the political process approach, which identified a relationship between institutionalized politics on the one hand and that of collective action, social movements, and revolution on the other.<sup>41</sup> In general, the theory posits that structural changes in institutionalized politics and power relations form a variety of “political opportunities” and/or constraints, and can explain why a particular movement emerges at a certain time. Utilizing political process theory, US scholars mostly pursued case studies of individual movements while European theorists applied a comparative version of the approach to “new social movements,” which sought to explain cross-national variances of social movements in different national political contexts.

At the same time and in addition to structural causation – the *when* and *why* – of mobilization, a number of theorists started analyzing *how* actors are mobilized. Theorists such as Tilly, McAdam, John McCarthy, and Mayer Zald rejected notions that collective action was irrational, disorderly, or alienated behavior. Instead, they maintained that collective action particularly in the form of social movements were rational and goal-oriented.<sup>42</sup> The concept of “mobilizing structures” was developed to analyze the organizational forms and dynamics of movements. According to

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<sup>40</sup> Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968) and “Revolution and Political Order,” in *Revolutions: Theoretical, Comparative, and Historical Studies* 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, ed., Jack Goldstone (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1994), 37-45.

<sup>41</sup> Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1978); Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Sidney Tarrow, *Struggling to Reform: Social Movements and Policy Change During Cycles Of Protest* (Ithaca: Center for International Studies, Cornell University, 1983) and *Democracy and Disorder: Protest and Politics in Italy, 1965-1975* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>42</sup> Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*.

McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, mobilizing structures are "...those collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action."<sup>43</sup> These theorists argue that while movements emerge through political processes of opportunities and constraints, the structures of mobilization determine how movements develop. The most important theory of mobilization at the time was that of resource mobilization, which maintained that social movements emerge when they have access to resources and autonomous organization that enables their activity to be meaningful and effective.<sup>44</sup>

While political opportunities and mobilizing structures can explain why and how certain social movements emerge at particular times, they are insufficient for explaining dynamics within movements or non-structural reasons individuals may have for joining social movements. Resource mobilization for example cannot explain the causes for all social movements as some are created with limited resources mobilized. Furthermore, Jeff Goodwin and James Jasper argue in their renowned article, "Caught in a Winding, Snarling Vine: The Structural Bias of Political Process Theory" that concepts such as political opportunity and mobilizing structures ignore the roles of culture, ideology, and historical specificity in shaping causation and participant mobilization.<sup>45</sup> From the mid 1980s onward, scholars started considering these reasons, especially cultural aspects that may inform agency. These scholars said that structural theories of social movements overlooked the role of meanings and

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<sup>43</sup> Doug McAdam, John McCarthy, and Mayer Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 3.

<sup>44</sup> Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*; McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*; John McCarthy and Mayer Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," *American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 6 (May 1977): 1212-1241.

<sup>45</sup> Jeff Goodwin and James Jasper, "Caught in a Winding, Snarling Vine: The Structural Bias of Political Process Theory," *Sociological Forum* 14, no. 1 (1999): 27-54.

ideas in mobilization and failed to acknowledge the extent that social movements are involved in the production of and struggle over meanings.<sup>46</sup>

The concept of the “frame” was originally borrowed from Erving Goffman, who described the notion as a “schemata of interpretation.”<sup>47</sup> Frames are ways of thinking of and interpreting events or occurrences in life. Adapting this to social movements, David Snow and Robert Benford say that collective action frames are “intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists.”<sup>48</sup> Activists use reoccurring themes and ideas to convey messages about their cause, hoping to frame the way people think about and understand an issue. Collective action frames are especially used to articulate shared grievances and identify responsibility of a target for action. Thus, participants in social movements actively construct alternative ways of interpreting and comprehending a particular issue, problem, or solution.

In an early article titled, “Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation,” Snow et al. argue that “frame alignment” – a corresponding linkage between individual and social movement values, beliefs, or interests – is necessary for participant mobilization in movements.<sup>49</sup> Following this article, Snow and Benford wrote an article in *International Social Movement Research* that analyzed the role of ideology in social movements, particularly through the potency of framing efforts and the “frame resonance” of the movement’s espoused

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<sup>46</sup> David Snow and Robert Benford, “Master Frames and Cycles of Protest” in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* eds., Aldon Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 136.

<sup>47</sup> Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 21.

<sup>48</sup> Robert Benford and David Snow, “Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization,” *International Social Movement Research* 1, no. 1 (1988): 198.

<sup>49</sup> David Snow et al., “Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation,” *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 4 (August 1986): 464-481.

ideology.<sup>50</sup> According to the authors, four factors can determine the resonance of social movement frames among individuals. Building on their analysis of frame alignment and frame resonance of collective action frames, Snow and Benford went on to theorize macro-level mobilization through the development of “master frames.” Similar to the role of frames within social movements, master frames “provide the interpretive medium through which collective actors associated with different movements within a cycle assign blame.”<sup>51</sup> They argue that only on rare occasions has a frame been broad, inclusive, and resonate enough to develop into a master frame, such as rights and injustice frames.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and collective action frames, two other theoretical concepts – protest cycles or cycles of contention and repertoires of contention – have been important in the development of social movement theory. Tarrow’s concept of protest cycles is a way to explain the life cycle of social movements. In *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, Tarrow says cycles of contention are “a phase of heightened conflict across the social system,” which he argues is useful for analyzing when social movements emerge and decline.<sup>53</sup> Tilly developed the concept of the repertoire of contention over several decades and through numerous publications.<sup>54</sup> According to Tilly, a repertoire refers to “claim making routines” that activists use for performing opposition that are drawn on from previous struggles.<sup>55</sup> Repertoires refer to a wide range of actions that

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<sup>50</sup> Snow and Benford (1988), 199.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid (1992), 139.

<sup>52</sup> David Snow and Robert Benford, “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 619.

<sup>53</sup> Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), Kindle ebook, location 5109.

<sup>54</sup> Tilly, *The Contentious French: Four Centuries of Popular Struggle* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986); *Regimes and Repertoires* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2006); Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2007).

<sup>55</sup> Tilly (2006), 41.

activists use in social movements such as strikes, demonstrations, boycotts, petitions, etc.

Building on the theoretical development of political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes, but largely writing against what was now characterized as structuralism, McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly published *Dynamics of Contention* (DoC), which developed a research framework for “contentious politics” – a wide range of social phenomena such as strikes, social movements, revolutions, civil war, etc.<sup>56</sup> Their “relational approach” argues that analyzing dynamic mechanisms and processes of collective action are crucial to understanding mobilizations across time and space. Instead of objective, pre-existing structures of opportunity, mobilization, and framing, the three authors say that opportunity and/or constraints are subject to actor attribution, mobilization contingent on actor appropriation, and movement frames actively constructed by movement participants. While the authors presented a more nuanced theoretical approach for analyzing contentious politics, the book was cumbersome and complex (15 diverse cases ranging from Swiss Unification to the US Civil Rights movement), and the concepts, particularly the relationship and distinction between processes and mechanisms was unclear.

The literature on social movement theory showcases how scholars have studied social movements, including the main debates and advancements in theorizing that have shaped these studies. The main approaches highlighted above explicate when, why, and how actors mobilize into social movements, with a majority of work in the field focusing on the causes, dynamics, and outcomes of movements. In the

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<sup>56</sup> McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

theoretical framework section below, I detail the theoretical concepts from these texts that are most suitable for studying the BDS movement. My research on the BDS movement generally contributes to the literature on social movements by synthesizing approaches, which is applied to a contemporary case study.

### *Transnational Activism*

Particularly since the 1990s, numerous scholars have extended theorization and conceptualization of collective action to the transnational level. In their co-edited book, *Transnational Protest and Global Activism*, Tarrow and Donatella Della Porta define this as “coordinated international campaigns on the part of networks of activists against international actors, other states, or international institutions.”<sup>57</sup> This broad conceptualization is utilized throughout this thesis in considering how the BDS movement is organized across borders. Similar to research on national social movements, literature on border-crossing or transnational movements seeks most generally to critically analyze causal conditions, dynamics, and outcomes of these movements. As the BDS movements operates across borders, this literature represents another body of work in which this thesis is situated.

Similar to theorizations described in the previous section on the emergence of social movements in national contexts, one body of work on transnational activism seeks to analyze *when* and *why* social movements develop beyond their locale. While the study of social movements has always been an interdisciplinary affair, this strain in the literature is largely influenced by political science. Theorists are interested in the changing role of the state in global politics, especially through processes of

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<sup>57</sup> Tarrow and Donatella Della Porta, eds., *Transnational Protest and Global Activism* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004), 7.

neoliberal globalization, and the potential for state sovereignty to be challenged through transnational activism. They argue that activists participate in transnational social movements to change the behavior of their state and/or an international institution. In *The New Transnational Activism*, Tarrow builds on the DoC research program by offering an extensive typology of processes (global framing, internalization, diffusion and modularity, scale shift, externalization, and coalition-building) and mechanisms that he says have increased political opportunities for activists to mobilize outside their local contexts.<sup>58</sup> In a similar vein, three broad processes: diffusion, internalization, and externalization are the focus in his co-edited volume with Della Porta mentioned above. In both, the relationship between local and global politics is explored through activism across borders. While the authors say that contemporary transnational activism represents something new, the state, and its domestic political structures and processes, are still the primary site of contentious politics.

Another corpus in the literature analyzes *how* transnational activism is operationalized across borders. Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink's work on "transnational advocacy networks" was one of the early, influential texts relating to transnational activism. In *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*, Keck and Sikkink argue that a number of social and political changes in recent decades are attributable to networks of non-state actors engaged in advocacy work across borders.<sup>59</sup> One way that activists have done this is through what they call the "boomerang effect" – where activists in a local context appeal to international allies to pressure the state from abroad, with the goal of changing the

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<sup>58</sup> Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>59</sup> Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), Google ebook.

policies and practices of the state in question. They say that this is particularly widespread in human rights activism, where external contacts can “amplify” the appeals of local groups. According to Keck and Sikkink, “It is no accident that ‘rights’ claims may be the prototypical language of advocacy networks.”<sup>60</sup>

Other work in the theoretical literature has considered what possible outcomes may have arisen from transnational mobilization. In this regard, a number of scholars have suggested that transnational activism has sometimes resulted in changes of international norms and/or states’ compliance with these norms. Through numerous case studies in the compilation, *Restructuring World Politics: Transnational Social Movements, Networks, and Norms*, the authors argue that transnational activism has played a critical role in transforming international norms and state practices in areas such as human rights, the environment and labor.<sup>61</sup> In *Social Movements for Global Democracy*, Jackie Smith argues that “social movements have been essential to democratizing the global political system...[and are] strengthening possibilities for democracy in global institutions.”<sup>62</sup> Thus, in this corpus, social movement scholars analyze correlations between transnational activism and political and social change, analyzing the effects of activism across borders.

Literature on transnational activism is useful for showing how some forms of collective action are organized across borders. The assertion by Tarrow and others suggested above that the main target of transnational activism is still the state, despite border-crossing structures and processes, is indicative of BDS activism as the state of Israel is the primary target. The literature on transnational activism is also helpful for

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid, “Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics,” *International Social Science Journal* 51, no. 159 (March 1999): 93.

<sup>61</sup> Sanjeev Khagram, James Riker, and Sikkink, eds., *Restructuring World Politics: Transnational Social Movements, Networks, and Norms* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

<sup>62</sup> Jackie Smith, *Social Movements for Global Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 14.

understanding the use and importance in applying a common discourse in the form of collective action frames such as human rights, which resonates with activists across borders. Similar to other contemporary social movements working on justice related issues across borders, the BDS movement frames the Palestinian struggle through Israel's violations of Palestinian human rights and other international laws, corporate complicity, etc. While the BDS movement has a specific Palestinian context for its emergence, the literature on transnational activism is important for analyzing organizational aspects (such as collective action frames) in the movement's border-crossing operationalization.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In this thesis, I draw on a range of concepts in the theoretical literature on social movements and transnational activism (reviewed in the previous sections) as a tool-kit for researching the BDS movement. In many ways, the historical development of social movement theory reads like the elaborate scholarly production of typologies for explaining causes, dynamics, and outcomes of social movements. While these extensive analytical categories explain a range of phenomena associated with social movements, and the BDS movement certainly could be explained in terms of its diffusion across borders or how many factors of resonance its movement frames meet, I have struggled to find great utility in researching the movement in this way. In her review of Tarrow's, *The New Transnational Activism*, Smith wrote of the expanded DoC program, "I, along with earlier critics of DOC, remain unconvinced that efforts to elaborate typologies of mechanisms...and processes...will generate intellectual

payoffs that justify the effort.”<sup>63</sup> Thus, in constructing a theoretical framework for researching the BDS movement I have utilized a number of the main concepts available in the literature, but have refrained from engaging the extensive categorizations that many social movement theorists have formulated.

In chapter one on the emergence of the movement I utilize the concept of political opportunities and constraints to explicate the structural-historical context in which the BDS movement originated. In this regard, the political environment after the Oslo process (constraints) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) Advisory Opinion on Israel’s wall (opportunities) were important in shaping a political context for the development of the movement. In the same chapter, I draw on the concept of mobilizing structures, though I focus more on dynamics of mobilization to explore the rise of the movement through early BDS activities. In doing this, the heavily structural conceptualization initially devised in social movement theory has been modified to allow for a more agency-influenced analysis of BDS mobilizations. In the case of the BDS movement, a number of mobilizing dynamics are important for examining the emergence of the movement. This includes The NGO Forum at the World Conference against Racism in 2001, early Palestinian calls for boycott and the creation of the Palestinian campaign for the academic and cultural boycott of Israel, early divestment initiatives, initial calls for a moratorium on research funding and an academic boycott of Israel, and a 2004 conference in London on resisting Israeli apartheid. Taken together, these introductory efforts by activists illuminate the dynamics of mobilization in which the BDS movement developed.

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<sup>63</sup> Smith, “The New Transnational Activism (review),” *The Canadian Journal of Sociology* 31, no. 4 (2006): 547.

Collective action frames are referred to throughout the thesis, and especially analyzed in chapter six, where BDS movement frames are considered in a global justice framework. BDS activists frame their campaigns around particular themes to construct an alternative way of seeing and thinking about Israel/Palestine. In the BDS movement, activists frequently highlight Israel's violations of international law and Palestinian human rights, the complicity of multinational corporations in these activities, and the importance of justice for Palestinians. These themes are used to frame the movement so that it is understood who the target is (Israel) and why it is being targeted (violations of international law and human rights). Framing the movement through these lenses is important in constructing a way of thinking of Israel/Palestine that challenges the status quo while also indicating how the movement understands itself. These reoccurring themes and ideas are interwoven with the movement's tactical repertoire of boycott (discussed below), and together form a conceptual and tactical program for action in the border-crossing BDS movement.

In addition to political opportunities/constraints, mobilizing dynamics, and collective action frames, I find Tilly's concept of the repertoire very useful for investigating aspects of the movement, specifically the tactical repertoire of boycott. It has become a familiar form of action for pressuring a target by withdrawing support and many groups and social movements have utilized the tactical repertoire of boycott such as labor unions, animal rights groups, environmental organizations, faith-based groups, and consumer organizations. Famous boycotts include the Montgomery bus boycott that started in 1955 when Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a public bus for a white person, the grape boycott in the 1960s organized by Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers union that brought attention to migrant labor, and those closest in resembling and influencing the BDS movement were the anti-apartheid

boycotts against the white South African regime that began in the 1950s and heightened in the 1980s-90s. In chapter six in particular, where I analyze the BDS movement in a global justice framework, I argue that the movement's tactical repertoire is one of four points of intersection that the movement has with other contemporary transnational social movements that work on justice related causes.

### *Movement-Relevant Theory*

In 2007, Douglas Bevington and Chris Dixon published an article in *Social Movement Studies* titled, "Movement-relevant Theory: Rethinking Social Movement Scholarship and Activism."<sup>64</sup> Their article was influenced by and builds on a chapter by Richard Flacks in the edited book dedicated to Gamson, *Rhyming Hope and History: Activists, Academics, and Social Movement Scholarship*.<sup>65</sup> In his chapter, Flacks raises the issue of "relevance" of social movement theory and contemplates "whether the substance of our systematic theorizing and research connects with the work of activists."<sup>66</sup> In their article, Bevington and Dixon note, "the biggest problem with contemporary social movement theory is that it is not particularly relevant to the very movements it studies."<sup>67</sup> They then make their call for "movement-relevant theory," which they say should be "related directly to the dynamics of the movements themselves."<sup>68</sup> With respect to the BDS movement, and Palestine activism more generally, this has been

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<sup>64</sup> Douglas Bevington and Chris Dixon, "Movement-relevant Theory: Rethinking Social Movement Scholarship and Activism," *Social Movement Studies* 4, no. 3 (December 2005): 185-208.

<sup>65</sup> David Croteau, William Hoynes, and Charlotte Ryan, eds., *Rhyming Hope and History: Activists, Academics, and Social Movement Scholarship* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

<sup>66</sup> Richard Flacks, "The Question of Relevance in Social Movement Studies," in *Rhyming Hope and History: Activists, Academics, and Social Movement Scholarship*, eds. Croteau, Hoynes, and Ryan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 4.

<sup>67</sup> Bevington and Dixon, 189.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 198. Though not directly discussed as movement-relevant theory, *Social Movement Studies* published a special issue in 2012 on "The Ethics of Research on Activism," which was subsequently issued as book by Routledge in 2015. The themes throughout discuss ethical challenges that social movement scholars encounter in their research, which indicates a growing consideration for more critically engaged research on social movements.

done on at least two occasions. The first is a chapter by Rafeef Ziadah and Adam Hanieh in *Learning from the Ground Up Global Perspectives on Social Movements and Knowledge Production* that was edited by Aziz Choudry and Dip Kapoor.<sup>69</sup> The second is a chapter by Brian Aboud titled, “Organizing and the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Strategy: The Turn to BDS in Palestine Solidarity Politics in Montreal.”<sup>70</sup> In both cases, the authors have sought to investigate questions that are directly relevant to organizing Palestine activism, especially BDS.

The call for movement-relevant theory is particularly important in the case of the BDS movement, as many who write about BDS are activists in the movement with varying motives and degrees of conviction. Most of the documentation, research, and analysis of the movement thus far has been raised and discussed by activists themselves. Given that much of the written output of the movement to date has been authored by participants, it is important that an academic study of the movement be relevant to others that are writing about the movement as well. Many of the dialogues and questions raised by the BDS movement directly relate to the dynamics of the movement such as strategy, tactics, and effectiveness. Thus, this scholarly investigation engages with topics relevant to movement participants and in turn hopes to contribute to an analysis of the movement’s structure and processes.

In addition to this, activists are part of a larger society and constructing movement-relevant theory is one way of making academic findings relevant to the general public. Theory that is engaged in a way that considers stakeholders can bridge

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<sup>69</sup> Rafeef Ziadah and Adam Hanieh, “Collective Approaches to Activist Knowledge: Experiences of the New Anti-Apartheid Movement in Toronto,” in *Learning from the Ground Up: Global Perspectives on Social Movements and Knowledge Production*, eds., Aziz Choudry and Dip Kapoor (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 85-99.

<sup>70</sup> Brian Aboud, “Organizing and the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Strategy: The Turn to BDS in Palestine Solidarity Politics in Montreal.,” in *Organize!: Building from the Local for Global Justice*, eds. Aziz Choudry, Jill Hanley, and Eric Shragge (Oakland: PM Press, 2012), 202-215.

a traditional divide between those inside and outside academia. Regarding the BDS movement, this is especially pertinent as mentioned in the previous paragraph that much of the writing on the movement is done by those involved. In this thesis, many of the topics and issues analyzed are drawn from an extensive reading of the BDS movement and therefore have general connections for developing BDS movement-relevant theory. In particular, in the second part of chapter six I analyze the challenges and limitations of the movement. I examine three key obstacles of the movement: 1) BDS alone cannot solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict 2) the movement's structure and process may be a weakness, and 3) not all movement targets are familiar or legitimate to activists not involved in the Palestinian struggle. I suggest how the movement might deal with these difficulties to build a stronger movement across borders.

In taking Bevington and Dixon's call for movement-relevant theory into consideration, it is important to note that not all theory (or movement research more generally) necessarily needs to be relevant to activists as academics must be able to engage and contribute to the theoretical discourse in their field. In addition, academics are part of a specific sector that requires particular activities for professional advancement such as publishing in peer-reviewed journals. The intended audience of these publications is other academics, not activists, and the purpose is to participate in scholarly debates and discussions. For these reasons, not all movement research can be relevant or can be produced to be relevant for movement participants. Therefore this thesis seeks to strike a balance and the task ahead is twofold: to utilize and engage with social movement theory where appropriate for analyzing aspects of the BDS movement, which has been outlined above, and also produce movement-relevant

research where possible, specifically in chapter six on the movement's challenges and limitations.

### **Methods for Researching the BDS Movement**

In her 2014 edited book on social movement methods, Della Porta notes that until that time only two other texts had been dedicated to the matter of methods for researching social movements. While the study of social movements has grown in past decades, scholarly attention to relevant methodology has not. Della Porta says that this is in part because of the interdisciplinary nature of social movement studies; and accordingly scholars have adopted an array of methods from different disciplines to conduct research on social movements. While lack of scholarly attention to methods may allow for great flexibility, I found the methodological terrain of social movement studies unclear. Therefore, to investigate the BDS movement for this thesis I employed research methods that are the most suitable for answering the research questions and are the most widely-used in studying social movements, including documentary research, semi-structured interviews, and organizational surveys.

I collected an immense amount of information on the movement through documentary research. Academic literature, some of which has been reviewed above, particularly on Palestinian history, social movements, and transnational activism was necessary to investigate my research on the movement in a broader historical context of Palestinian resistance and border-crossing activism. Internet research comprised a range of sources on the movement and other contemporary movements. This included news reports in the major daily newspapers such as the *New York Times*, *Guardian*, *Haaretz*, and the *Jerusalem Post*, in addition to hundreds of articles written in smaller publications on the movement or its constituent campaigns. Movement and anti-

movement websites, blogs, and other social media sites were important sources of information as well. Nearly all groups and organizations involved in the movement (and against the movement) have websites and are extensively represented on Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, etc. I am on several BDS-related mailing lists (e.g. the official BDS movement mailing list), and also connected to many BDS campaigns through Facebook and Twitter. News, commentary, and other information such as upcoming BDS activities are frequently circulated through these networks. Other sources, such as leftist publications, where the movement is frequently discussed (e.g. Electronic Intifada, Counterpunch, Common Dreams, etc.) and radio programs (e.g. Democracy Now!, Pacifica Radio, etc.), were also occasionally utilized.

Another method I used to investigate my research questions was to conduct interviews with BDS supporters and activists. I conducted semi-structured interviews, which is a method of collecting data that allows for flexibility and standardization. Semi-structured interviews are flexible in that a general set of interview questions are tailored to a specific individual. I adapted questions and sought elaboration of points directly relevant to the participant being interviewed. Because a general set of interview questions were pre-determined, the process of each interview varied minimally. For analytical purposes, this provided sufficient standardization to test research questions and determine relationships among participant responses.

I conducted 38 interviews in the West Bank, Israel, and Britain. Of these, 29 took place in the West Bank of which a majority (26) were with Palestinian groups and organizations that were signatories to the 2005 global BDS call. Three interviews took place in Israel with Jewish-Israeli members of Boycott from Within, and five interviews were conducted in Britain with members of the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine (BRICUP). With the exception of one interview that was

conducted via skype, all interviews were in-person. A majority of the interviews in the West Bank occurred in the offices of the organizations I was interviewing. Several took place in public cafes. In Israel, I met one interviewee at the Israel Museum and the other two took place in a café in Tel Aviv. In Britain, two interviews were conducted in the homes of those I was interviewing, two took place at universities, and one occurred at the British Museum.

All interviews in the West Bank, Israel, and the one interview via Skype occurred between February and November 2012. Interviews in Britain were in July 2013. All interviews were between one and two and a half hours in duration, and were recorded on a digital voice recorder. All interviews were transcribed shortly after they took place, with key points and themes transcribed verbatim.

For interviews in the West Bank, I first emailed groups and organizations I hoped to interview and received very few responses. I then called the organizations, often through individuals' direct mobile numbers, which I obtained from the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA) directory. I briefly introduced myself and my research project on the BDS movement. I then requested an interview with the person at a time and place of their choosing. In nearly all cases, I was granted an interview. When I arrived at the interviews I again briefly introduced my research project and asked the interviewee if they had any questions about me or my research. Often, the person I interviewed would be interested in my background, specifically how I came to research BDS and Palestine more generally. I explained that the death of my friend, Rachel Corrie, in Rafah, Gaza in 2003 by the Israeli military had a profound effect on me, and that I subsequently lived in Gaza in 2005. I also explained that after that time, I did a MA degree at the American University in Cairo for which I researched Palestinian state formation (and

briefly lived in Beit Sahour in 2009 to conduct fieldwork). This discussion of my background was important for setting a foundation of trust so that the people I interviewed could see my long-term engagement with the region and were comfortable in the interviews.

I also interviewed Jewish-Israelis that are part of the group Boycott from Within, the only group in Israel dedicated solely to the BDS movement. I first emailed individuals in the group and of those that agreed to an interview, the follow-up occurred through email and phone. In the interviews, I recapped my background and research. As members of this group have far-left political beliefs and often work directly with the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC), it was important to not only emphasize my personal and academic background, but also that I had already conducted numerous interviews with Palestinian groups that had endorsed the 2005 global call. This was important for showing them that my interest in their group was part of a larger research project on the movement.

For interviews that were conducted in Britain, I first emailed those I hoped to interview and received all responses via email. One person was out of the country and unavailable for an interview. In all other cases, the time and place of the interview was agreed through email. In each email, I briefly introduced my research project and myself. For these interviews, I emphasized that my research was for a doctoral thesis, that I was a student at the LSE, and that my research was being supervised by Dr. John Chalcraft. Similar to my interviews in the West Bank and Israel, this background was important for building trust first for the interview to take place, and once in the interview for the person being interviewed to feel comfortable speaking freely.

In the interviews, I first asked basic information, such as the history and objectives of the organization, and the interviewee's role in that group. I then asked

more substantive questions, e.g. “Why did your group endorse the 2005 BDS call?” After each interview, initial observations and trends were noted. Responses to questions were further analyzed through coding to determine themes and relationships between interviews. Coded responses were then organized into categories to analyze prevalent themes and relationships.

In addition to interviews, I also conducted a survey of Palestine solidarity groups involved in the BDS movement. The survey was “organizational” in that it was of groups and organizations in the movement, and the statistical data obtained from responses to the survey were analyzed mainly to determine the dynamics of border-crossing solidarity in the BDS movement and the relationships between external groups that participate in BDS.

The survey was conducted online via Survey Monkey.<sup>71</sup> I first conducted a pilot of the survey for one month in August 2012, in which I emailed 20 Palestine solidarity organizations across Europe, whose contact details I found on the groups’ websites. I received four responses, and felt I needed a better strategy for reaching groups. After I interviewed the European Coordinator for the BNC on 7 September 2012, I asked for his assistance in distributing the survey to Palestine solidarity organizations. He, and two other contacts that he provided, sent the survey to groups mainly in the UK, US, and Australia.<sup>72</sup> I received 88 responses by the time the survey period ended in February 2013.

The survey consisted of 22 questions. All questions were optional and could be skipped. All responses to each question were recorded, along with the number of

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<sup>71</sup> Though the link to the survey is no longer available as the survey period has ended, Palestine solidarity groups clicked on the following link to access the survey during the survey period: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SurveyBDS>.

<sup>72</sup> For the full-text of the survey, see Appendix II: BDS Survey.

responses and number of questions skipped. The first four questions asked basic information, e.g. “Where is your group located?” Questions 5 through 21 were the substantive questions of the survey, and the final question was open-ended, “Please feel free to add any additional information to this survey in the space below.” Six questions in the survey were open-ended. 13 questions were closed, e.g. “My group coordinates with the Palestinian Boycott National Committee (BNC)” with potential responses: Frequently, As Needed, Never. Three questions were a mix, such as, “My group primarily works on BDS campaigns” with potential responses: Yes, No, Other (please specify).

Survey Monkey automatically compiles data collected from the survey. After the survey period ended, I downloaded all survey data in Excel and PDF formats. I chose options within the online program for creating graphs and charts based on the data collected, and printed hard copies for my records. I then analyzed all the data from the organizational surveys, specifically looking for overt responses (e.g. of the 83 responses to Question 5, nearly 75 percent of respondents “strongly agree” that it is important to support the BDS movement because the principles and ideas are Palestinian-led). I also looked for relationships between questions and responses (e.g. Questions 18 and 19 regarding coordination with other Palestine solidarity groups and coordination with the BNC). After this, I drew conclusions based on my analysis and interpretation of the data, and created a document based on survey conclusions.

In addition to documentary research, semi-structured interviews, and organizational surveys, I also used two other methods – historical contextualization and content analysis – to investigate the BDS movement. Historical contextualization was necessary to situate the movement within a broader historical and political trajectory of the Palestinian struggle, and content analysis was required for

deconstructing the written output of the movement in order to answer the research questions relating to causes, dynamics, and outcomes of the border-crossing movement.

Historical contextualization is an analytical lens for situating a particular person, event, or phenomena in a larger background and setting. This gives a broader perspective for evaluating and explaining the relevance and/or significance of the object of study. With respect to the BDS movement, this was particularly important for comparing the BDS movement with other forms of challenging Israel such as the historical use of boycott (and related practices), border-crossing solidarity activism, armed resistance, and the state-based Arab League boycott of Israel. Historical contextualization was important for determining not only how the movement is similar and dissimilar to other tactics and strategies, but also to ascertain where the movement fits in the larger Palestinian struggle for justice. Likewise, the method was useful for analyzing the political environment in which the movement emerged such as the failure of the Oslo peace process and the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on Israel's wall, and situating the origins of the movement in the theoretical framework of political constraints and opportunities. This analysis is specifically presented in chapter one on the emergence of the BDS movement (§ 1.1 Challenging Israel in a Historical Context and § 1.2 The Rise of BDS I: Political Constraints and Opportunities).

Content analysis is a process of analyzing patterns of concepts and ideas to investigate meanings in a study. Words and phrases are analyzed in texts, and coding is used to identify patterns such as frequency. With respect to the BDS movement, this was effective for understanding how the movement understands and portrays itself. This was particularly important for researching two parts of this thesis – the

case study chapters and the collective action frames of the movement. Content analysis was useful for taking an in-depth look at how the movement operates across borders through its localized constituent campaigns, which is presented in the case study chapters (chapters two, three, and four). The method was also specifically useful for identifying and analyzing the collective action frames of the movement. Analyzing reoccurring themes such as human rights, corporate complicity in Israel's violations of international laws, and justice for Palestinians is important for understanding the motivations of participants in the movement and recognizing how the BDS movement links with other contemporary transnational social movements. Taken together, all of these research methods helped me answer the research questions on causes, dynamics, and outcomes of the movement.

### **Thesis Outline**

The first part of this thesis sets a historical background for the emergence of the BDS movement. In chapter one, I first consider how BDS is similar or dissimilar from other forms of challenging Israel to situate the movement in a larger historical trajectory of Palestinian resistance. Next, I consider the rise of BDS in two sections. The first explores the structural constraints and opportunities that set a political context for the movement's emergence, while the second section details early BDS mobilizations. The chapter ends with the global call for BDS in 2005, and flags important aspects of the call.

The second part comprises three case study chapters in which I analyze a BDS campaign in each chapter. Chapter two explores the academic boycott in Britain, chapter three investigates the We Divest campaign, and chapter four examines product boycotts of the Ahava skincare company. In each chapter, I provide a

background of the target and BDS campaign, groups involved in the campaign, organizational dynamics of the campaign, significance of the case, dynamics between BDS campaigners and opponents, and analysis of each case.

The third part of this thesis explores organizing dynamics of the BDS movement. In chapter five, I first consider the Palestinian Boycott National Committee and the question of leadership in the movement; specifically addressing the notion of a Palestinian-led movement across borders. Then, I outline the concept of “context-sensitivity” and the role of local organizing in the movement. Finally, I illustrate the extensive networks that comprise the movement’s structure and how the movement coordinates across borders. Chapter six strategizes movement outcomes in two sections. The first considers BDS in a global justice framework; situating the movement in a larger dynamic of transnational contention and activism. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the movement’s challenges and limitations, and proffers recommendations for attending to these impediments for the movement’s further development.

# Chapter 1 – Emergence of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement

## **Introduction**

This chapter is an overview of the emergence of the BDS movement and is a background to the subsequent chapters that analyze the organizing and operationalization of the movement across borders. As a central argument of this thesis is that the movement represents a new and different approach to challenging Israel, I first outline the main ways the BDS movement is similar or dissimilar from other forms of resisting Israel in a historical context. In this regard, there is a specific Palestinian background for the BDS movement as boycott has been used throughout the Palestinian struggle and border-crossing solidarity activism, especially as developed during the second intifada, created willing participants across borders for BDS activism. However, the current BDS movement differs dramatically from other tactics and strategies such as armed resistance and the state-based Arab boycott. The former differs tactically as no arms are taken up as part of the BDS movement and the latter is a state-based initiative that is different from the present movement that is organized by non-state actors.

In the next two sections I identify a number of political constraints/opportunities and mobilizing dynamics that existed prior to the establishment of the current BDS movement to discern why and how the movement originated. Drawing on the political process approach in social movement theory discussed in the review of social movement literature in the introduction to this thesis, I outline how the counterproductive Oslo process and its fallout created a constraint in the Palestinian political system. The process was a political constraint because it

failed to deliver meaningful change to Palestinians, and thus indicated a new strategy was necessary for achieving Palestinian justice. Another structural factor that led to the movement's emergence was the Advisory Opinion by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which activists interpreted as a political opportunity for validating claims of Israel's violation of international law. Though activists referred to international law before the Opinion, it proved to be decisive in solidifying international law as a collective action frame in the budding BDS movement as activists frequently thereafter cited it in their BDS activities and was specifically acknowledged as a reason to act in the global Palestinian call for BDS in 2005.

After the section on the constraints and opportunities that created a political environment ripe for the emergence of the BDS movement, I explore the specific early BDS activities that established mobilizing dynamics and set a foundation for the movement to take off after the official Palestinian call was made. This includes numerous initial activities such as the NGO Forum at the World Conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa in 2001, the establishment of the academic and cultural boycott in Palestine, and divestment initiatives across US university campuses and in Christian churches. The movement began with small initiatives from seemingly disparate individuals and groups, although within a few years, boycott and divestment campaigns were multiplying in different countries and becoming more connected to each other. Thus, these early BDS activities created mobilizing dynamics for the development of a border-crossing movement after the official call was made in 2005. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the call, highlighting the ways the call was a culmination of BDS activities until that time and noting other significant aspects of the text.

## 1.1 Challenging Israel in a Historical Context

In this section, I provide a historical context to situate the BDS movement within a larger trajectory of Palestinian and solidarity resistance. Throughout the Palestinian struggle, a variety of methods has been utilized for confronting colonial takeover and occupation. This section is not a comprehensive overview of all the strategies and tactics utilized in the Palestinian struggle for justice, rather the purpose is to show the main ways that the BDS movement is similar to or different from other forms of challenging Israel. In this regard, the movement draws on its historical connections to a long lineage of boycotts, non-cooperation, and anti-normalization, in addition to border-crossing solidarity activism. At the same time, it is important to identify the ways the BDS movement is distinctive from other ways of confronting Israel, and how so. In this regard, the movement differs from the Arab boycott and armed resistance in that it contrasts with both these methods in terms of those directing, organizing, and conducting the resistance. It is also distinct from the Arab boycott in terms of goals and operationalization, and tactically different from armed resistance. While the movement has connections to other forms of challenging Israel (e.g. a history of boycott in the Palestinian struggle), the movement is innovative and unique in its approach given its border-crossing scope and organizational structure, which is illustrated in the chapters that follow.

### *Palestinian Boycotts, Non-Cooperation, and Anti-Normalization*

While boycott is a widely known form of protest (i.e. tactical repertoire) that has been deployed in a wide range of circumstances, as indicated in the review of the boycott literature in the introduction to this thesis, there is a specific Palestinian historical context for the current BDS movement. The movement draws on an enduring history

of boycotts, non-cooperation, and anti-normalization, which are related practices of protest that form a broad conceptualization of the refusal to engage with or oblige colonial authorities. This underlying repertoire has been instrumental in shaping the framework of the current BDS movement, with its wide-range of campaigns including product boycotts, cultural boycotts, academic boycotts, divestment initiatives, etc.

To clarify the terms, boycott is the act of withdrawing support, non-cooperation is the refusal to comply or coordinate with, and anti-normalization is to refrain from engaging in regular or typical relationships (culturally, diplomatically, etc.). In the Palestinian context, these practices have taken on a myriad of interpretations. For example, refusing to apply to the Israeli authorities for permission to travel, taking long routes around checkpoints, or continuing to work or go to school in difficult conditions. Often these forms of refusal are individual acts of “everyday resistance” and are largely undocumented, making the tracing of their trajectory in Palestinian history difficult. However, when utilized collectively, the episodes in which these tactics have been used and recorded illuminate sustained efforts of non-cooperation and related forms of protest against foreign colonization and occupation.

Boycott and non-cooperation in particular have been used throughout the Palestinian struggle, while anti-normalization is more recent. In late February and early March of 1920, a small uprising took place, in which Palestinians resisted British occupation and Britain’s endorsement of Zionist settlement in Palestine through a series of actions. Palestinians demonstrated in all major cities, in addition to widespread strikes, petitions, and resignations to prevent the implementation of the Balfour Declaration.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Qumsiyeh, *Popular Resistance in Palestine*, 54; King, *A Quiet Revolution*, 30-31, 35.

Tensions rose as Jewish immigration persisted and British Mandate authorities often violently responded to Arab concerns and demands. In Jaffa, a demonstration in 1933 turned violent and ended fatally for several Palestinians and one British soldier, which led to a general strike, protests, and riots across the country.<sup>74</sup> Retaliatory violence between Jews and Arabs intensified as Jewish immigration persisted, as well as Arab attacks against the British. In April 1936, an Arab National Committee was formed in Nablus and called for a general strike. National committees were then created in the towns and villages, which led to the strike and nonpayment of taxes quickly spreading across the country. The five main political parties endorsed the strike, and under the leadership of the Grand Mufti formed the Arab Higher Committee (AHC). The AHC approved a resolution that called for the general strike until the British substantially changed their policies.<sup>75</sup>

A conference of the national committees was held and encouraged non-cooperation to continue in many forms such as resignations, petitions, tax revolts, and boycotts. The conference also reaffirmed that the strike should continue until the demands of the Arab population were met. By that time, the general strike had been effectively implemented throughout the country, as nearly all trade had been halted and the Jaffa port closed. Students, religious leaders, and mayors joined the strike. Intermittent local demonstrations, especially after Friday prayers, accompanied the massive civil disobedience and the national committees that had been set up in the towns and villages provided local support and services while businesses remained closed.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> King, 44.

<sup>75</sup> Palestine Royal Commission Report (London, July 1937), 96;  
<http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/88A6BF6F1BD82405852574CD006C457F>.

<sup>76</sup> Qumsiyeh, 80; Palestine Royal Commission Report, 97.

In October 1936, Palestinians ended the general strike at the request of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Transjordan.<sup>77</sup> Palestinian towns and villages remained relatively calm until mid-1937 when the Peel Commission's plans for partition were leaked.<sup>78</sup> Resistance against the British and Zionists resumed, often taking on more violent forms, as civil resistance proved ineffective throughout the general strike.<sup>79</sup> In 1937, British Mandate authorities declared the AHC and the national committees illegal and increased repression on members.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, the unity that existed among Arabs in the general strike broke down over differences in strategies and tactics in the subsequent years. By 1939, the lacking unity of Palestinian resistance, continued British military repression, and proposed policy changes by the British ended the revolt.<sup>81</sup>

Boycotts and non-cooperation continued throughout the following decades largely on an individual basis, although the next significant, highly organized, and widely spread collective form of these tactics took place in the first Palestinian intifada that started in 1987. Anti-normalization, or the rejection of Israel as a normal state in the region, also started to develop among Palestinians at that time. Egyptian leftists had always criticized the signing of the 1979 Camp David Accords, seeing it as a tool to normalize the existence of the state of Israel in the region through official relations while simultaneously enhancing US power in the region.<sup>82</sup> Inspired by the Egyptian left, Palestinians integrated the concept of anti-normalization into a wider

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<sup>77</sup> King, 53.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 54.

<sup>79</sup> Qumsiyeh, 83.

<sup>80</sup> King, 54.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 55.

<sup>82</sup> Elliott Colla, "Solidarity in the Time of Anti-Normalization," *Middle East Report* 224 (Autumn 2002): 11.

resistance framework in which boycotts and non-cooperation were already a part.

According to Palestinian scholar Adel Samara,

“Anti-normalization started in Egypt from 1978-79 by Egyptian leftists. We were trying to boycott Israeli products here, but it wasn’t in a critical context. The first time we challenged ourselves with normalization was the first intifada...it was ignited by the people – ‘internal withdrawal’ – the people withdrew to themselves. This was the beginning of boycotting by the people.”<sup>83</sup>

In 1987, Israeli repression dramatically increased with mass arrests, deportations, and the closing of universities. Palestinian political prisoners went on a hunger strike and large demonstrations followed in solidarity. In December of that year, several workers from Gaza were killed by an Israeli truck at a checkpoint as they were returning home from work in Israel. In the following days, thousands of Gazans attended the funerals of the workers and demonstrations that began in Jabalyia refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip soon spread across the occupied Palestinian territories.<sup>84</sup>

Initially the uprising was directed through local support committees in Palestinian cities and villages. Shortly thereafter, the four main Palestinian political factions created the United National Leadership Command of the Uprising (UNLCU). The UNLCU acted as a coordinating body for the intifada, although in the first several years power was largely decentralized and was shared with the local committees. Information was disseminated to the broader Palestinian society through leaflets or communiques. The leaflets encouraged boycotts, sit-ins, strikes, resignations, tax resistance, and other forms of non-cooperation with Israel’s occupation authorities.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Adel Samara interview, 5 April 2012.

<sup>84</sup> King, 203-204.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 205, 237.

In 1988, the mostly Christian town of Beit Sahour, adjacent to Bethlehem in the West Bank, implemented a tax revolt against Israel. Some residents had stopped paying taxes to the occupation authorities years prior, although not until the intifada did the entire town collectively stop cooperating with Israel's tax collection system. Individuals and families stopped paying taxes and filing tax returns, while businesses refused to pay value-added tax (VAT). Israel responded severely by bringing military tax collectors and the IDF to the village to stop and search people in the street and confiscate cars.<sup>86</sup> Elias Rishmawi, a pharmacist from the village recalls,

“The people in Beit Sahour responded by gathering in the municipality [i.e. municipal government offices] the next morning and ‘throwing back’ their I.D.s in the famous incident where the deputy mayor of Beit Sahour, who was then the acting mayor, took the I.D.s and sent them to the military governor of Bethlehem...”<sup>87</sup>

The following year, Israel put the town under siege, performing house-to-house searches, placing the residents under a 24-hour curfew, cutting the phone lines, and declaring the town a closed military zone.<sup>88</sup> Tax authorities seized property, arrested residents, and prevented consular generals from several Western countries and the media from entering the town. The siege on Beit Sahour lasted for over a month, although Israel continued sporadic tax raids in the town into the early 1990s.<sup>89</sup>

The second intifada did not materialize into the mass uprising that the first had, and as indicated in the review of literature relating to Palestinian resistance in the introduction to this thesis, many scholars analyze the armed elements of the intifada.

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<sup>86</sup> Elias Rishmawi quoted in Maxine Kaufman-Lacosta, *Refusing to be Enemies: Palestinian and Israeli Nonviolent Resistance to the Israeli Occupation* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 2011), Kindle edition, location 3743.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, location 3745.

<sup>88</sup> King, 232; Anne Grace, “The Tax Resistance at Bayt Sahur,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 19, no. 2 (Winter 1990): 100.

<sup>89</sup> King, 233.

Nevertheless, many Palestinians still engaged a variety of unarmed tactics that have a long lineage in the Palestinian struggle. A number of popular committees, for example, were formed in Palestinian villages and organized weekly demonstrations against the wall and urged boycotting Israeli products.<sup>90</sup> As discussed below, border-crossing solidarity activists often participated in the demonstrations organized by popular committees during the second intifada. This activism combined with the Palestinian experience of non-cooperation, boycotts, and anti-normalization are historical ways of challenging Israel that the BDS movement has drawn on in developing a transnational movement for Palestinian justice.

### *Border-Crossing Palestine Solidarity*

Similar to Palestinian resistance, solidarity activism with Palestinians has taken on various forms and has changed throughout the struggle for Palestinian justice. After Israel's annexation of the Palestinian territories in 1967, the PLO, with its strategy of guerrilla insurgency to liberate the homeland connected ideas and tactics from various places such as Algeria, Vietnam, and Cuba, and stressed that their liberation was one front in the global anti-imperialist struggle.<sup>91</sup> During the first intifada, many solidarity activists tried to raise awareness of the situation of the Palestinians and their plight for self-determination. In the following decade of the Oslo process, activists participated in many programs and projects that brought Israelis and Palestinians together to forge

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<sup>90</sup> Norman, *The Second Palestinian Intifada*, 36-37. In this thesis, the term "wall" is used for the structure that Israel is building, as this is the label adopted by the UN General Assembly and the ICJ in their Advisory Opinion on the matter. See ICJ, Reports 2004, Advisory Opinion, "Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory," 9 July 2004, 164 paragraph 67 and 170 paragraph 82; [www.icj-cij.org](http://www.icj-cij.org).

<sup>91</sup> Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), Oxford Scholarship online ebook, Ch. 8 and Paul Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), Chapter 1.

“people-to-people” relationships. During the second intifada, foreign activists started travelling to Palestine to directly support Palestinians.

Although some foreigners began travelling to Palestine in the late 1980s as part of grassroots solidarity initiatives, this approach increased in the second intifada and became an identifiable strategy. Sometimes referred to as “travel activism,” the main objective was to be “on the ground” as a form of solidarity.<sup>92</sup> This place-based strategy allowed activists to experience the conditions under which Palestinians lived and attempted to use “Western-privilege” in acts of direct intervention between the Israeli military and Palestinians in an effort to decrease Palestinian suffering.

Numerous groups took part in the strategy of bringing foreigners to Palestine such as the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), Campagne Internationale de Protection du Peuple Palestinien (CIPPP), International Women’s Peace Service (IWPS), Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), and the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) among others. Most of these groups had connections with long-standing organizations. EAPPI for example is a project of the World Council of Churches and the establishment of the ISM was assisted by George Rishmawi and Ghassan Andoni of the Palestinian Center for Rapprochement between People (PCR). Both Rishmawi and Andoni are from Beit Sahour and were active in the boycott and non-cooperation activities of the first intifada, and PCR took part in organizing the village-wide tax revolt during that time.<sup>93</sup>

Many of the activities that participants engaged in were “direct actions.” This included removing roadblocks, intervening at checkpoints, tearing down sections of

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<sup>92</sup> Sophia Stamatopoulou-Robbins, “The Joys and Dangers of Solidarity in Palestine: Prosthetic Engagement in an Age of Reparations,” *The New Centennial Review* 8, no. 2 (Fall 2008), 117. This kind of activism has also been referred to “conflict activism” or “tank tourism.”

<sup>93</sup> Charmaine Seitz, “ISM at the Crossroads: The Evolution of the International Solidarity Movement,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 32, no. 4 (Summer 2003): 54.

the wall, harvesting olives, delivering food and medicine, or rebuilding homes that had been demolished by Israel. Direct action also included accompaniment, or the act of escorting those in need of protection. For example, activists would accompany children to school in Hebron, where they were under constant physical threat from Israeli settlers. The olive harvest in autumn of each year also required accompaniment, as villagers frequently came under attack from Israelis in nearby settlements. Other activists such as health professionals took part in ambulance accompaniment to escort injured Palestinians in need of medical care through Israeli military checkpoints.<sup>94</sup>

As noted above, Palestinian popular committees have organized weekly demonstrations in the West Bank areas of Budrous, Biddu, Bil'in, South Bethlehem, and the South Hebron Hills, against Israel's construction of the wall that often detracts from the Green Line and confiscates huge swaths of Palestinian land to make way for its path. Popular committees were organized in the villages during the first intifada to coordinate resistance against Israel and played an important role in organizing the uprising locally. Though largely dormant during the Oslo process, the popular committees re-emerged during the second intifada. Groups such as the ISM and CPT, along with Israeli groups such as Ta'ayush, Gush Shalom, Anarchists against the Wall, and Peace Now participated in the weekly demonstrations in solidarity with the Palestinians.<sup>95</sup>

In addition to a variety of direct actions and weekly demonstrations at the wall, numerous other border-crossing solidarity activities took place. This included

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<sup>94</sup> Veronique Dudouet, "Third-party Non-violent Intervention in Conflict Areas: from Gandhi's Shanti Sena to the International Solidarity Movement in Palestine," in Joseph Siby, *Contemporary Perspectives on Peace and Non-Violence* (Wardha, Institute of Gandhian Studies, 2010), [www.mkgandhi.org/ebks/peace\\_nonviolence.pdf](http://www.mkgandhi.org/ebks/peace_nonviolence.pdf).

<sup>95</sup> Norman, 44.

nonviolence training programs, political tourism and “alterative tours,” research and documentation on the occupation, and the production of alternative and documentary media.<sup>96</sup> Most groups had designated activists in charge of media and separate media sections. Other alternative media sources such as the *Electronic Intifada* were also launched at this time. All these activities worked together as activists attempted to prevent human rights abuses of Palestinians, documenting anything that occurred, and then releasing that information to the rest of the world via independent news and video.

The strategy of bringing foreigners to Palestine to participate in direct action encountered numerous difficulties, and as such could only play a limited role in the broader Palestinian struggle for justice. To begin with, the strategy depended on foreigners to some degree, as they took part in activities that Palestinians could not or would have been harshly punished for. The strategy also required foreigners being physically present in the occupied Palestinian territories. Given that activists in foreign countries have other responsibilities at home such as family and work, it is impossible for a large amount of foreigners to be on the ground the entire year.<sup>97</sup> Consequently, there were peak phases for mobilization such as summer and Christmas holidays, when foreigners had time to travel abroad. In addition, the strategy was susceptible to the larger dynamics of the colonial occupation in that Israel ultimately controlled the situation. As Israel guarded all borders to the occupied Palestinian territories, the state determined who was allowed entry by Israel’s border control. During this time, denial of entry to suspected Palestine solidarity activists and deportation of participants was common.

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<sup>96</sup> Nancy Stohlman and Lauriann Aladin, *Live from Palestine: International and Palestinian Direct Action Against Israeli Occupation* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2003); Norman, 47-57.

<sup>97</sup> Dudouet, “Third-party Non-violent Intervention,” [www.mkgandhi.org/ebks/peace\\_nonviolence.pdf](http://www.mkgandhi.org/ebks/peace_nonviolence.pdf).

While the strategy's main priority was to get foreigners to Palestine to experience the conditions under Israeli occupation, witness the suffering of the Palestinian people, document human rights abuses, intercede with direct action, and let the world know about the situation through independent media; the activists also played important roles when they returned home. Because many activists had gone to Palestine, they came back with stories of real experiences. Seeing and experiencing life under Israeli military occupation provided a new way of talking to people upon return. Often activists that had volunteered in Palestine created support groups and local chapters back home. They established media contacts, organized "report backs" and speaking tours, sold fair trade items such as Palestinian embroidery and olive oil, and did fundraising for future volunteers. These efforts helped raise awareness of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and mobilize participants into Palestine solidarity activities.

Many of the groups that brought foreigners to Palestine would go on to support the BDS movement or activists that had participated in the groups would go on to participate in boycott activities. For instance, the World Council of Churches, which sponsors the EAPPI project, has been active in calling for divestment initiatives and the ISM supports BDS. According to Huwaida Arraf, one of the co-founders of the ISM,

"...the promotion of 'boycott, divestments and sanctions' (BDS), called for by many Palestinian civil society groups, is in fact one of [the] main current strategies of intervention...."<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Huwaida Arraf quoted in Dudouet, "Third-party Non-violent Intervention," [www.mkgandhi.org/ebks/peace\\_nonviolence.pdf](http://www.mkgandhi.org/ebks/peace_nonviolence.pdf).

In this way, the border-crossing solidarity activism that took place during the second intifada played a significant role in the development of the BDS movement.

According to the Khalid Himdi, Director of the Union of Agricultural Work Committees,

“Boycott is because people take home what they have seen here. BDS is working because people see real experiences. This contradicts what Israel is saying. In 2005, the idea [for boycott] could be successful because many people had seen by then. I wish it could have happened in the 1950’s, but it couldn’t have happened then.”<sup>99</sup>

The border-crossing solidarity activism of the second intifada helped establish dynamics of mobilization in the BDS movement as it created willing participants in solidarity with Palestinians and the Palestinian cause. The activists that took part in these activities were keen to support Palestinians on the ground in the region and back home, thereby making BDS campaigns an outlet for Palestine solidarity activism in their own locales. Thus, historically the BDS movement has connections with other forms of challenging Israel as the movement builds on border-crossing solidarity activism together with the continued use of boycott in the Palestinian struggle.

### *Armed Resistance*

In addition to unarmed tactics such as boycotts, non-cooperation, and anti-normalization, armed resistance has always played a role in the Palestinian struggle. Even prior to the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, armed tactics were utilized to fight colonial British authorities and Jewish immigrants. While armed struggle has waxed and waned over the past century, it has been a consistent part of resistance against Israel (and prior to the state’s creation against imperial control

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<sup>99</sup> Khalid Himdi interview, Union of Agricultural Work Committees, 21 March 2012.

through the British Mandate as well). Armed tactics are numerous and can include but are not limited to bombings, shootings, stabbings, hijackings, throwing petrol bombs, and beginning in 1993 (the first year of the Oslo Accords), the use of suicide bombings.

As discussed above, a number of unarmed tactics were used in the Arab Revolt that began in 1936, with the six-month general strike as the most notable in terms of scope and duration. While the use of these tactics plays an important part of a historical trajectory contributing to the development of the current BDS movement, in general, the period after the fall of the Ottoman Empire was characterized by mass uncertainty and turbulence. Clashes between native Arabs and Zionist immigrants were frequent, as well as resistance against British colonial authorities allowing the immigration. A number of official British inquiries at the time all indicated that disturbances were an expression of Arab opposition to the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.<sup>100</sup> While 1936 is characterized for the general strike, after the report of the Peel Commission was revealed the following year, armed resistance increased over rising insecurity as the British recommended the creation of a Jewish state in addition to an Arab state. By 1938, armed rebels took control of large portions of the country making travel unsafe.<sup>101</sup> British forces escalated repression of the armed resistance, and the revolt ended in 1939 with deepening divisions among Palestinian Arabs.

In the following years, the situation for Palestinians worsened as Britain left the Mandate system, the state of Israel was subsequently created in 1948, and independent Arab states were established with disparate interests, especially relating

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<sup>100</sup> Pearlman, 32-33, 38.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 51.

to the Palestinians. According to Yezid Sayigh, in the first decade after Israel was created, armed Palestinian resistance was “channeled through existing political parties in Arab host states and their extensions in the West Bank and Gaza, or else took the form of localized and short-lived groups of infiltrators and students.”<sup>102</sup> Palestinian guerillas – fedayeen – increased in numbers and became more organized. The PLO was established in May 1964, and the following year Fatah commenced guerilla attacks against Israel. According to Wendy Pearlman,

“From Fete’h’s launching of the Palestinian revolution in 1965 until the late 1980s, the national movement was generally committed to armed struggle against Israel. Like other movements, the PLO regarded armed force as an appropriate response to injustice and a necessary strategy for coercing a powerful adversary to make concessions. It also believed arms to be essential to protect its institutions and civilian constituents against violent threats...For Palestinians residing outside Israel’s borders, civil disobedience and noncooperation hardly appeared a viable means to pressure the Jewish state.”<sup>103</sup>

During the 1950s-60s, much of the armed resistance was through cross-border attacks by Palestinian fedayeen, and in the 1970s, these assaults started to occur outside Israel/Palestine, and the Middle East more generally. The international attacks included tactics such as shootings, bombings (car bombs, letter bombs), hijacking of airplanes, and taking of hostages. Notable events during the time were the taking hostage of 11 Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic summer games in 1972 and the Dawson Field hijackings, when members from the Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) attempted to hijack four aircrafts and land them at an airfield outside Amman, Jordan.

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<sup>102</sup> Sayigh, Part I, 8.

<sup>103</sup> Wendy Pearlman, *Violence, Nonviolence, and the Palestinian National Movement* (Cambridge, UK: 2011), 73-74.

As mentioned in the previous section, although some armed resistance was used in the first intifada it was insignificant (e.g. occasionally throwing petrol bombs during demonstrations). In the decade following the first intifada, during the Oslo process armed resistance against Israel resumed as this served a dual purpose of attacking the occupier and demonstrating opposition to the Oslo process within internal Palestinian politics. During the Oslo period, the tactic of suicide operations, mostly in the form of bombings, began to occur. Hamas and Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for most attacks during the time, and among other groups increasingly deployed the tactic in the second intifada.

As indicated in the review of literature on Palestinian resistance in the introduction to this thesis, there is much scholarly and media attention paid to the armed resistance of the second intifada. In particular, the tactic of suicide operations during the period. Pearlman estimates that between 2000-05, there were 123 Palestinian suicide bombings.<sup>104</sup> For several years, it was the primary form of armed resistance taken up by Palestinian fighters. During this time, numerous factions took part in the armed resistance as most factions had armed wings, and numerous other splinter groups and independent militias were formed. Another tactic developed during the second intifada, particularly during the latter years as suicide bombings declined, was that of firing homemade rockets and missiles, mostly from Gaza into Israel. Currently, the use of this tactic is the dominant form of armed resistance in the Palestinian struggle.

Much of the armed resistance has been organized through Palestinian political groups and factions, though not all. Factions associated with the PLO and those outside its structure (e.g. Hamas, Islamic Jihad, etc.) have been organizationally

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<sup>104</sup> Pearlman, 165.

integral to directing and executing armed resistance against Israel. Some of this resistance has been through designated military wings or militias of the Palestinian political factions, while other activities such as some of the international attacks during the 1970s occurred through splinter or unaffiliated groups such as the Black September Organization or the Abu Nidal Organization. Each political faction, and the PLO as a broader umbrella organization for many of the factions, has their own organizational structure and processes, though most factions and armed groups have favored hierarchical and “charismatic” leadership.<sup>105</sup>

The current BDS movement differs significantly from armed Palestinian resistance. Tactically, the forms of challenging Israel are radically different as no physical arms are taken up as part of the BDS call or the wider movement across borders. Strategically, the tactics are used in different ways as well in that armed attacks are often intended to wear down Israel to the point where concessions are made from an inability to continue with the status quo. Boycotts, divestment, and sanctions on the other hand, are political tactics used for the broader strategy of pressuring and persuading Israel to comply with international law and respect universal principles of human rights. In addition, armed resistance is sometimes random, though in the Palestinian struggle it has often been operationalized through organized political channels such as the factions or armed splinter groups. As

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<sup>105</sup> For general information on the organizational structures and processes of the factions and PLO see: Yezid Sayigh (citation above); John W. Amos II, *Palestinian Resistance: Organization of a Nationalist Movement* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1980); Faris Giacaman, “Political Representation and Armed Struggle,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 43, no. 1 (Autumn 2013): 24-40; William Quandt has argued that historically, cultural conceptions of leadership and the fragmenting of Palestinian society after 1948 has led to decentralization and a strong sense of individualism in terms of leaders. See William B. Quandt, Paul Jabber, and Ann Mosely Lesch, *The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 80-81; On charismatic leadership see: Rex Brynen, “The Neopatrimonial Dimension of Palestinian Politics,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 25, no. 1 (October 1995): 23-36 and Ali Jarbawi and Wendy Pearlman, “Struggle in a Post-Charisma Transition: Rethinking Palestinian Politics after Arafat,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 36, no. 4 (Summer 2007): 6-21.

discussed below and demonstrated in the following case study chapters, the current BDS movement is comprised of activists across borders that largely decide for themselves how to operationalize the movement in their local context. Thus, the BDS movement tactically aims to confront Israel through a variety of targets in a wide-range of venues, and in doing so renders a new and different approach to challenging Israel.

### *Arab League Boycott*

In addition to the use of the above-mentioned tactics and strategies by Palestinians and solidarity activists, Arab states initiated boycotts before the state of Israel was created, and formalized an Arab League boycott after 1948. Prior to that time, Arab states boycotted Jewish products and services as Jewish immigration increased in Palestine in the early twentieth century. This was done to prevent the economic development of an economy that was based on Zionist funds for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The first formal declaration of the boycott was made by the Arab League Council in 1945, and the following year the League created the Permanent Boycott Committee, which was established to monitor and evaluate the implantation of the boycott in member states.<sup>106</sup> The boycott consists of three tiers – the primary, secondary, and tertiary boycotts. The primary boycott forbids citizens of Arab League states from entering into a business relationship with an Israeli citizen or the government, and the secondary prohibits business contracts with companies outside League countries that do business with Israel. The tertiary boycott is extended to companies that do business with those blacklisted for violating the secondary boycott.

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<sup>106</sup> Feiler, *From Boycott to Economic Cooperation*, 24-25, 32.

In 1947, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 181, which called for the partition of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states. Arab states did not accept the Resolution and intensified application of the boycott. Several years later in 1951, the Arab League established the position of Boycott Commissioner and set up the Central Boycott Office (CBO) in Damascus. Similar to the earlier Permanent Boycott Committee, the role of the Commissioner and the CBO was to ensure the boycott was being enforced and coordinate with boycott offices in member countries. In addition, the CBO established blacklists of companies violating the boycott. A year after the Boycott Commissioner and the CBO were established, the Palestine Department was created in the League Secretariat to oversee the CBO. In 1954, the Unified Law on the Boycott of Israel was passed by the Arab League Council, which attempted to simplify the consistent application of the boycott. The text of resolution was passed by the League and incorporated into the national laws of most member states.<sup>107</sup>

The current status of the Arab League boycott is insignificant as its regulations are nonbinding on member states, and each state decides for itself how much to implement the boycott. Numerous countries and entities have economic or diplomatic relations with Israel such as Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority. In addition, Gulf Cooperation Council countries announced in 1994 that the secondary and tertiary boycotts would be lifted, and only the primary boycott would be enforced in those countries.

Importantly, the current BDS movement varies considerably from the Arab League boycott of Israel. The most significant difference being the source of the boycott. The Arab League boycott is a state-based boycott whereas the contemporary

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 26-32.

BDS movement is based in grassroots organizing efforts. While the League has sought to apply the boycott to companies beyond its borders, it originates from those countries belonging to the League, in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Horn of Africa. In the present BDS movement, a campaign can be created anywhere in the world by anyone that chooses to do so. In addition, the boycott of League member states applies to goods and services, however, the grassroots BDS movement applies to a wide range of companies (through divestment initiatives and consumer boycotts), cultural workers and events (through the cultural boycott), academic institutions and related events (through the academic boycott), and sporting events (through the sports boycott). The current BDS movement is comprised of these broad-based border-crossing constituent campaigns and is completely different in terms of the organizational structure and processes of the League's state-based boycott.

### *BDS in a Historical Context*

In the preceding sections, I laid out ways that the BDS movement is similar and dissimilar to other forms of challenging Israel. In these regards, the contemporary transnational activism makes use of a long historical tactical repertoire of boycott-related activities in the Palestinian struggle and border-crossing solidarity activism. On the other hand, the tactics and objectives of the contemporary BDS movement differ from those of armed resistance and from the state-based Arab League boycott of Israel. That said, it is important to analytically clarify where unarmed tactics such as BDS, and the movement as a whole, fits within the broader Palestinian struggle.

The BDS movement is part and parcel of larger Palestinian struggle for justice. The movement exists alongside other forms of resistance, including the use of other unarmed and armed tactics. While the movement takes no official political

position on the use or non-use of armed resistance in the Palestinian struggle, the movement is inherently unarmed and nonviolent. This is the case on the tactical level, as boycott, divestment, and sanctions are political tactics that do not require arms. It is also the case on strategic and practical levels as well. The border-crossing BDS movement is comprised of its localized constituent campaigns that exist where activists have decided to act collectively in support of BDS. The tactical repertoire (and collective action frames) of BDS are accessible to activists across borders and appeal to the nonviolent character of contemporary Palestine solidarity activism. As noted above, many of the activists involved in the BDS movement have taken part in Palestine solidarity activities in other nonviolent groups or campaigns such as the ISM or PSC. Thus, the movement is part of the larger Palestinian struggle for justice, though it has clear roots in historical nonviolent strategies and the tactical repertoire of boycott in Palestinian resistance.

In addition to the accessibility of BDS tactics across borders and its appeal among nonviolent activists, the transnational movement has partly developed due to the failure of other forms of challenging Israel (e.g. armed resistance and the Arab League boycott) in producing constructive change in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While the BDS movement exists alongside these other tactics, it is important to note that to a certain extent it originated because of the inability of other forms of struggle to bring justice to Palestinians thus far. According to Barghouti,

“...the largest Palestinian political factions, with their predominant focus on armed struggle, seem unable to recognize the indispensable role of civil resistance. Either by inertia or reluctance to evaluate critically their programs in light of a changed international situation, these forces became addicted to the military model of fighting the occupation, ignoring the troubling moral questions raised by certain

indiscriminate forms of that resistance and its *failure to achieve positive ends*.<sup>108</sup> (my emphasis)

As I noted in the review of literature on Palestinian resistance in the Introduction to this thesis and in introductory paragraphs to this subsection on Challenging Israel in a Historical Context, a variety of armed and unarmed tactics have regularly been used throughout the Palestinian struggle. However to date, there has not been a single strategy or tactic that has been able to improve the political conditions for Palestinians. Thus, the BDS movement has origins in a long historical tactical repertoire of boycott, noncooperation, and anti-normalization in the Palestinian struggle, and it is accessible across borders to activists. It also stems from a political vacuum, in which other forms of struggle and the Oslo process, which is analyzed in the following section, fostered an environment for the establishment of a transnational movement based on BDS.

## **1.2 The Rise of BDS I: Political Constraints and Opportunities**

As discussed in the review of the social movement literature in the introduction to this thesis, the political process approach considers the political opportunities and constraints – the political context – in which a social movement arises and develops. In the case of the BDS movement, this context includes the Oslo process and its fallout (constraints), along with Israel's construction of a wall and the subsequent ICJ Advisory Opinion on the issue (opportunities), which taken together contributed to a political environment for the emergence of the BDS movement.

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<sup>108</sup> Omar Barghouti, "Putting Palestine Back on the Map: Boycott as Civil Resistance," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 35, no. 3 (2006): 55.

## *The Oslo Process*

The Oslo process that was ushered in during the 1990s followed the first Palestinian intifada (1987-1993), which as indicated in the review of Palestinian resistance literature, numerous scholars note was a period in Palestinian history that witnessed remarkable political unity and mass mobilization against Israeli military occupation. The signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 created a new set of circumstances, with differing ideas and opinions about the agreements, and conditions of the process.

In general, there were those who supported the signing of the Accords, the new emphasis on state building by the Palestinian leadership, and the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA or PA). This included Yasser Arafat, the Fatah party to which he belonged, and a number of other supporting factions in the PLO.<sup>109</sup> Other factions in the PLO, such as the PFLP and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), along with Islamist factions not part of the PLO such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad opposed the Accords.<sup>110</sup> These factions saw the Accords as a betrayal to the Palestinian struggle to liberate the historic homeland, and was seen by PFLP and the DFLP as a way for Arafat and the Fatah party to consolidate power over Palestinian politics.<sup>111</sup>

During the Oslo process, dramatic transformations took place in Palestinian political, economic, and social spheres. One of the most important political changes, as suggested above, was the creation of the PA, which was set up as a Palestinian governing body with limited control over some areas of the occupied Palestinian territories. The establishment of the PA was problematic for a number of reasons, of

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<sup>109</sup> Pearlman, 126.

<sup>110</sup> Jamil Hilal, "The Polarization of the Palestinian Political Field," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 39, no.3 (2010): 26.

<sup>111</sup> Pearlman, 136.

which one was the Palestinian leadership's shift in emphasis of the historic Palestinian struggle from a movement to liberate Palestine to a minimal state building project in the occupied Palestinian territories. The newly established PA only had marginal "self-rule" over a small amount of territory, which amounted to little more than restricted administrative functions.

In addition, the PA in effect, only represented one group of Palestinians – those living in the occupied Palestinian territories. The PA was an internationally established structure and as such depended on international assistance for its formation and maintenance. The early years of the PA proved to be very corrupt and repressive as Arafat sought to entrench his rule and that of Fatah party over and within the structure of the Authority. The authoritarian-like rule over institutions and the daily lives of Palestinians facilitated brewing political contention within Palestinian politics and society.

As Palestinian politics fragmented, Israel's control over Palestinians became more institutionalized through various structures and processes during the Oslo period. Movement and access restrictions along with social separation of Israelis and Palestinians intensified through the issuing of different ID cards, license plates, and dividing the occupied Palestinian territories for security and political control into Areas A, B, and C.<sup>112</sup> Israel's illegal settlement population throughout the territories doubled during the Oslo process, thereby further obstructing the possibility of a

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<sup>112</sup> In Area A, Palestinians manage civil administration and security. Area B is a mix of Palestinian civil administration and Israeli security. Israel fully controls civil administration and security matters in Area C. In total, Israel oversees 82.8 percent of the West Bank, while Palestinians are only in full control of the remaining 17.2 percent. See "Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip," Article XI, Map No. 1, Appendix 6 to Annex I (Washington, D.C., 28 September 1995); [www.mfa.gov.il](http://www.mfa.gov.il).

territorially contiguous Palestinian state in the future.<sup>113</sup> In addition, there was a lack of movement on any final status issues (borders, Jerusalem, settlements, and refugees) during the Oslo process, which have been paramount throughout the Palestinian struggle.

Although not limited to these factors alone, in many ways, the Oslo process further fragmented Palestinians politically, economically, and socially, especially by establishing the PA and institutionalizing a system of disconnected enclaves in the occupied Palestinian territories. As Palestinians saw Israel expand its illegal settlements, Israeli-only road system, checkpoints, closures, etc., many came to pessimistically view the Oslo process and the strategy of negotiations more generally.

In late 2000, the second intifada erupted after continued clashes between the Israeli military and Palestinians. The al-Aqsa intifada embodied Palestinian frustrations about the on-going Israeli occupation and counterproductive Oslo process. The process failed to deliver a foreseeable state in the future or even a decline in Israel's dominance, as it continued with its colonial expansion of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories and control over Palestinians, particularly in Areas B and C. The uprising exposed Palestinian political fragmentation, especially among Palestinian factions, that had been intensifying during the 1990s and revealed the structural flaws imbedded in the Oslo process. The intifada was both a rejection of Israel's colonial control over Palestinians and their land, and the corrupt Fatah-led PA apparatus that had failed to gain legitimacy among many Palestinians. The intifada illuminated the harsh realities of continued Israeli occupation, the increasingly illegitimate PA, and international indifference to Palestinian self-determination.

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<sup>113</sup> Amnesty International, "Israel and the Occupied Territories: The Issue of Settlements must be Addressed According to International Law," Amnesty International AI Index: MDE 15/085/2003 (8 September 2003); [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org).

The immense changes that occurred during the Oslo process and political fragmentation of Palestinians created a political constraint within internal Palestinian politics. The limited political environment led some actors to pursue political participation and seek change through other avenues. Birzeit University researcher and member of the Palestinian academic and cultural boycott, Samia al-Botmeh notes,

“The role of the Oslo Accords in giving rise to the BDS movement is very important...It has become clear since the Oslo Accords that the international community is not really interested in human rights, justice, etc...Dialogue and peace talks are totally the wrong way and relying on international governments is highly problematic because Israel has been in violation of the Oslo Accords on many occasions, with the recognition of the parties endorsing the Accords...Learning from this experience – the Palestinians try to reach out to people in the world – the popular level.”<sup>114</sup>

In this way, the Oslo process and its fallout created a political environment that facilitated the development of the BDS movement. The process failed to produce meaningful change for Palestinians, and in many instances worsened the situation on the ground in the occupied Palestinian territories. While some took part in the armed resistance of the second intifada, numerous other resistance activities were taking place, as illustrated in the review of Palestinian resistance literature in the introduction to this thesis, and specific BDS activities during this time are discussed in detail in the section below on early BDS mobilizing dynamics. The Oslo process was a structural constraint in Palestinian politics that resulted in some seeking an alternative strategy for achieving Palestinian justice through boycott and divestment campaigns. Another structural factor, discussed below, that assisted these developments was the Advisory Opinion on Israel’s wall by the International Court of Justice. Activists interpreted the

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<sup>114</sup> Samia al-Botmeh interview, Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, 28 February 2012.

Opinion as a political opportunity that assisted in demonstrating their claims about Israel's violations of international law, and helped international law more generally become a collective action frame of the movement.

*The International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on the Wall*

In 2002, Israel began construction of a wall along the 1949 Armistice Line (Green Line), with portions extending into the occupied West Bank. At the request of the Chairman of the Arab Group (Syria), which was supported by the Non-Aligned Movement through the Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau (Permanent Representative of Malaysia) and the Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference Group (OIC) at the United Nations (Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran), the UN General Assembly resumed its Tenth Emergency Special Session in October 2003 to discuss Israel's construction of the wall.<sup>115</sup>

Immediately following the resumption of the Emergency Session a resolution was passed that demanded Israel discontinue building and deconstruct the wall built in occupied Palestinian territory, and called on Secretary-General Kofi Annan to report on Israel's compliance with the resolution. In November 2003, Secretary-General Kofi Annan submitted his report stating that Israel had not complied with the resolution. Following the Secretary General's report on Israel's non-compliance with the Assembly's resolution in October, the General Assembly then passed another resolution in December. In this resolution, the Assembly noted that Israel refused to

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<sup>115</sup> UNGA, A/ES-10/242, "Letter dated 15 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the General Assembly," 15 October 2003; A/ES-10/243, "Letter dated 15 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the General Assembly," 15 October 2003; A/ES-10/244, "Letter dated 16 October 2003 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the General Assembly," 20 October 2003; all available <http://unispal.un.org/>.

comply with international law and that the situation on the ground had worsened.<sup>116</sup>

Due to these factors, the Assembly then requested an Advisory Opinion from the ICJ on the wall.

While Advisory Opinions by the ICJ are non-binding, this does not mean they are without legal effect. The party requesting the Opinion determines the weight of such opinions; however, the Court notes,

“It remains nevertheless that the authority and prestige of the Court attach to its advisory opinions and that where the organ or agency concerned endorses that opinion, that decision is as it were sanctioned by international law.”<sup>117</sup>

In this particular case, the Court noted that the route of the wall often traced that of Israeli settlements, which the Court reiterated were illegal under international law and inhibited the Palestinians’ right to self-determination.<sup>118</sup> The ICJ also stated that the wall created a “fait accompli” on the ground and was “tantamount to de facto annexation.”<sup>119</sup> With respect to violations of international law, the Court concluded that Israel’s construction of the wall contravened the Hague Regulations of 1907, the Fourth Geneva Convention, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>120</sup>

Although the UN Security Council holds chief responsibility for the organization and the power of the UNGA is largely limited to discussing issues, conducting studies, and making recommendations through resolutions, the actions by

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<sup>116</sup> UNGA, Resolution ES-10/14, “Illegal Israeli Actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the Rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory,” 8 December 2003, 3; <http://unispal.un.org/>.

<sup>117</sup> ICJ, “How the Court Works,” <http://www.icj-cij.org>.

<sup>118</sup> ICJ, Reports 2004, Advisory Opinion, “Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,” 9 July 2004, 184 paragraph 120; [www.icj-cij.org](http://www.icj-cij.org).

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, paragraph 121.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 189-192 paragraphs 132-134.

the Assembly were noteworthy with respect to Israel's construction of the wall.<sup>121</sup> To this effect, the Assembly resumed an Emergency Session to take up the issue and then passed several resolutions that not only called for the cessation and dismantling of the wall, but also made the request for the ICJ Advisory Opinion. This indicated strong support among many states throughout the world especially those in the Arab and Muslim world, and in the Non-Aligned movement, in proving Israel was in violation of international law in constructing a wall in internationally recognized occupied Palestinian territory.<sup>122</sup>

The ICJ Advisory Opinion was significant for Palestinian organizations that saw it as a major political opportunity to use as a tool to further the cause of the Palestinian struggle. Following the Opinion, the editors of *al-Majdal*, the quarterly magazine of Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, a prominent Palestinian organization, wrote:

“The long-range impact of the ICJ opinion will similarly depend on the ability of civil society actors, Palestinian, Israeli, and others, to effectively use it as a tool for mobilization, advocacy, and action. Academic, consumer, cultural, and sports boycotts, divestment and a campaign for sanctions by states must all be considered.”<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> UN, Charter of the United Nations, “Chapter V: The Security Council,” Article 24 and “Chapter IV: The General Assembly” Articles 10, 11, 13, and 14; [www.un.org](http://www.un.org).

<sup>122</sup> The tenth emergency session of the UNGA was resumed at the request of Arab states, who then submitted two resolutions for the UNGA to consider and vote on with respect to Israel's wall. Of the 18 speakers that made statements prior to the passing of the UNGA resolutions nearly all condemned Israel's building of a wall in occupied territory. This included the representatives of the Arab League, the Non-Aligned Movement, the OIC, as well as Afghanistan (as Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People), South Africa, Indonesia, Cuba, Senegal, and Pakistan. The following resolution in October demanding Israel stop and reverse construction of the wall was approved with 144 votes in favor to 4 against (Federated States of Micronesia, Israel, Marshall Islands, United States), with 12 abstentions. The resolution in December requesting an Advisory Opinion on the wall from the ICJ passed with 90 in favor to 8 against (Australia, Ethiopia, Federated States of Micronesia, Israel, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, United States), with 74 abstentions.

<sup>123</sup> Madjdal Editorial Team, “The ICJ Advisory Opinion on the Wall – An Alternative Road Map,” *al-Majdal* Autumn 2004; [www.badil.org](http://www.badil.org).

For many Palestinian organizations and Palestine solidarity groups around the world, the Advisory Opinion was a landmark. It was a substantial piece of legal documentation that legitimized Palestinian claims about the wall and indicated significant support from many states in the UN General Assembly. Because activists viewed the Opinion as a political opportunity to showcase Israel's violations of international law, it would be cited and strategically deployed as a collective action frame used to mobilize participants and garner support for the movement. As many previous initiatives had referred to international law as a reason to support boycott of Israel, the Advisory Opinion only reinforced these already existing frames of reference to those involved in boycott initiatives. The Advisory Opinion and international law more generally have proven to be important in the discourse and framing of the BDS movement given the increased utilization of such references in future calls for BDS. Bolstered by the Advisory Opinion and following the framing of already existing boycott initiatives (discussed below), the official call for BDS in 2005 cited the ICJ opinion and emphasized Israel's violations of international law as a justification for mobilization.

### **1.3 The Rise of BDS II: Mobilizing Dynamics**

In the previous section, I outlined the main structural factors that created a political context for the emergence of the BDS movement. It is important to identify these constraints and opportunities in the form of the Oslo process and its fallout along with the ICJ Advisory Opinion on the wall, as important contributing conditions to the development of the movement. As critiques of the political process approach have shown in the social movement literature, political constraints and opportunities are important, yet insufficient, for entirely explicating the origins of a movement. As with

other movements, the BDS movement clearly indicates other factors in the form of mobilizing dynamics that have played an important role in the movement's development. This was collectively manifested on a number of occasions, such as the NGO Forum of the World Conference Against Racism in 2001, the establishment of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI), early calls for a moratorium on research funding between Europe and Israel, initial divestment initiatives, a 2004 conference in London on resisting Israeli apartheid, and finally in 2005 the culmination of all these efforts in the form of the 2005 Palestinian global call for BDS.

*The NGO Forum at the World Conference Against Racism in 2001*

A year after the second intifada began, the UN held the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR). In addition to the official diplomatic forum held in Durban, a Youth Summit and an NGO Forum were also held, although they were held in separate locations and were not part of the formal WCAR proceedings.<sup>124</sup> While the NGO Forum had no official bearing on the events of the WCAR and its subsequent Declaration and Programme of Action, the text of the NGO Forum Declaration and Programme of Action were to be submitted to Mary Robinson, then UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Secretary-General of the conference. The comprehensive 65-page document was the result of the Forum's meetings, workshops, and preparatory sessions. While the

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<sup>124</sup> Modeled off the preparatory process of the WCAR, regional planning meetings for the WCAR NGO Forum were held in France, Chile, Senegal, and Iran along with sub-regional NGO meeting held in Poland, Nepal, Egypt, and Ecuador. The NGO Forum Declaration and Programme of Action were presented on the final day of the forum.

document covered a plethora of ethnicities and issues around the world, the Palestinian problem was mentioned several times throughout.

One of 62-paragraphs in the Introduction affirmed the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination as stipulated in UN Resolution 194. In the Declaration, Israel was proclaimed a racist, apartheid state, engaging in systematic human rights violations, specifically through Israel's denial of Palestinian refugees' right of return, its colonial-military occupation of Palestinian territories, and discriminatory practices against Palestinian citizens of Israel.<sup>125</sup> Among a host of recommendations outlined in the Programme of Action was the enforcement of international law, the implementation of relevant UN resolutions, withdrawal from occupied Palestinian territories, the commencement of an anti-Israeli Apartheid movement, and the enactment of comprehensive sanctions and embargos by all states against Israel.<sup>126</sup>

The text of the NGO Forum's Declaration and Programme of Action relating to Palestinians reflects a strong contingent of Palestinian participants and NGO support around the world for Palestinian justice. Palestinian participants in the Forum pushed for and gained international recognition of Israel's racially motivated offenses against Palestinians, thereby showing the strength of Palestinian organizations and their capacity to network across borders to mobilize support.

The text at the NGO Forum in Durban strategically referenced South Africa's struggle against apartheid, and provided many examples of Israel's violations of international law and human rights, illustrating Israel's "brand of apartheid."<sup>127</sup> The importance of the South African apartheid analogy, along with Israel's violations of

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<sup>125</sup> "WCAR NGO Forum Declaration and Programme of Action," (Durban, South Africa, 28 August – 3 September 2001) 15-16, 24-25.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, 57-59.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, 15, 25.

international law and human rights, would feature prominently in future calls for boycott of Israel. In addition, the main issues affecting Palestinians – Palestinian refugees’ right of return, Israel’s prolonged military occupation of Palestinian territories, and discrimination against Palestinian citizens in Israel – would reappear throughout early boycott and divestment initiatives, and would eventually be a centerpiece of the official call in 2005 for BDS made by Palestinian groups and organizations.

*Early Palestinian Calls for Boycott and the Creation of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel*

On 29 March 2002, Israel launched “Operation Defensive Shield” in the West Bank, the largest military invasion into the territory since the 1967 war. All major Palestinian cities and surrounding towns were re-occupied by the IDF during the operation with curfews imposed, movement restricted, and international journalists, human rights monitors, and medical personnel frequently denied entry to assess conditions and provide humanitarian assistance.

In the midst of Israel’s widespread invasion in 2002, prominent Palestinian intellectuals published a letter online. The letter called on “global civil society to use the momentum it has generated and the ethical integrity it has demonstrated” to immediately act to end Israel’s unprecedented invasion by intensify efforts to stop Israel’s sustained campaign of apartheid, occupation, and ethnic cleansing.<sup>128</sup> The call specifically asked activists to demand governments end military assistance to Israel and suspend economic relations.

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<sup>128</sup> Heydar Abdel-Shafi, Hanan Ashrawi, Mustafa Barghouti et al. “Urgent Call to World Civil Society: Break the Conspiracy of Silence, Act Before it is too Late,” 29 March 2002; [www.matzpun.com](http://www.matzpun.com).

A few months later, Palestinian organizations published a more comprehensive call. The majority of the statements recalled the declarations made the previous year at the NGO Forum of the WCAR in Durban. In particular, the call by Palestinian groups directly quoted the article on establishing a global anti-apartheid movement and the article calling on the complete isolation of Israel through sanctions and embargos. The call states:

“...we as members of Palestinian civil society welcome all recent initiatives to boycott Israel which have been launched in many parts of the world. 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.”<sup>129</sup>

In the following year (2003), a group of Palestinian academics and intellectuals in the occupied Palestinian territories and in the diaspora issued another call for boycott.<sup>130</sup> This was built on in the following year when in April 2004, Palestinian academics and intellectuals formally established the Palestinian Campaign for Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI).

Just three days before the ruling of the ICJ Advisory Opinion was read in July 2004, PACBI issued its official call for the international community to boycott all Israeli academic and cultural institutions or state-sponsored events in support of the Palestinian struggle for justice. The academic and cultural boycott of Israel is based on the premise that Israeli institutions of higher education are complicit in the state's violations of international law and human rights through direct funding or intellectual support. The boycott calls on academics and cultural workers around the world “to

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<sup>129</sup> Badil, “Boycott Israel to Enforce Respect and Implementation of International Law, Human Rights, and UN Resolutions,” 2002; [www.badil.org](http://www.badil.org).

<sup>130</sup> PACBI, “History,” <http://pacbi.org>.

comprehensively and consistently boycott all Israeli academic and cultural institutions...” in support of the Palestinian struggle.<sup>131</sup> According to the cultural boycott guidelines, “these institutions (mainly major state and public entities), all their products, and all the events they sponsor or support must be boycotted.”<sup>132</sup> In addition, the call for cultural boycott asks international artists and cultural workers to refrain from publishing, or taking part in events or lectures with complicit Israeli institutions.

The establishment of PACBI was important because it built on and extended previous efforts since 2000 to establish a formal boycott campaign among Palestinians. Prior Palestinian boycott calls mentioned above were noteworthy, but tended to be isolated appeals. The global call for an academic and cultural boycott of Israel along with the establishment of PACBI provided an avenue for Palestinian boycott activists to connect with other campaigns and activists across borders. The formation of PACBI and its global call represented a determination among Palestinian academics and intellectuals to expand the organizational capacity and repertoire of boycott in Palestine. It also indicated the establishment of a mobilizing mechanism among Palestinian academics and intellectuals that would be used to organize and develop border-crossing academic and cultural boycotts of Israel in years to come.

*Initial Calls for a Moratorium on Research Funding and an Academic Boycott of Israel*

Appalled by the images and information coming out about Israel’s Operation Defensive Shield, Hilary and Steven Rose, both well-known British academics, published an open letter in *The Guardian* newspaper on 6 April 2002, calling for a

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid, “Call for Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel,” 6 July 2004; <http://pacbi.org>.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

moratorium on collaborative research funding between the EU and Israel until Israel complied with UN resolutions and entered into serious negotiations with the Palestinians.<sup>133</sup> The call was issued on the basis that any member country, or trading or research partner with member states, must adhere to human rights under the terms of the Framework of the European Research Area. The letter was originally signed by 123 other academics and by July of that year, the number had reached 700.<sup>134</sup>

Inspired by the Roses' initial letter calling for a moratorium on research funding with Israel in April, a similar call was published in France. On 16 December 2002, the Administrative Council of the Pierre and Marie Curie University (Paris VI) passed a resolution similar to the Roses' call for a moratorium on EU research funding with Israel, and was later joined by two other universities – Grenoble and Montpellier III – that took similar positions.<sup>135</sup>

At the time Tanya Reinhart, an Israeli Linguist working at Tel Aviv University, sent a letter in support of Paris VI to *Le Monde*. In the letter she stated “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. It is not that a motion in that direction failed to gather a majority, there was no such motion anywhere in the Israeli academia.”<sup>136</sup> She admitted that a cut in research funding from the EU would certainly be felt in Israeli academic institutions; however, given the inaction of Israeli academics and their institutions on the conditions affecting Palestinian scholars, it was necessary.

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<sup>133</sup> Hilary Rose and Steven Rose, “More Pressure for Mid East Peace,” *The Guardian*, 6 April 2002.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, “Why We Launched the Boycott of Israeli Institutions,” *The Guardian*, 15 July 2002.

<sup>135</sup> Tanya Reinhart, “Academic Boycott: In Support of Paris IV,” *Borderlands eJournal* 2 no.3 (2003); [www.borderlands.net.au/issues/vol2no3.html](http://www.borderlands.net.au/issues/vol2no3.html).

<sup>136</sup> Reinhart, [www.borderlands.net.au/issues/vol2no3.html](http://www.borderlands.net.au/issues/vol2no3.html).

After the Roses published their open letter, interest in the call spread rapidly as it was forwarded through email to more scholars around the world. John Docker and Ghassan Hage organized a call for boycott in Australia, which was quickly endorsed by nearly a hundred scholars.<sup>137</sup> Although the Australian call gained fewer signatures than the Roses call, it was significant for a number of reasons. The letter by the Roses called for a moratorium on joint research funding due to the specific relationship between Europe and Israel on collaborative projects; however, Australia had no such funding relationship with Israeli academic institutions at the time. The call from Australia specifically called for an academic and cultural boycott, and made a comparison to the role of boycotts in bringing down apartheid in South Africa. Docker and Hage's call was similar to the Roses in that it drew attention to Israel's activities in the occupied Palestinian territories, specifically the intensification since 2000, although the call from Australia went further by contextualizing these activities in a larger program of Israeli colonization.<sup>138</sup> The distinction between the two calls is important because it illuminates a range of options that scholars were debating and strategizing for future organizing of an academic boycott.

Then in 2005, the Council of Associations of University Teachers (AUT) passed a historic resolution that called for a boycott of the University of Haifa and Bar Ilan University in Israel for their active role in perpetuating Israeli state policies toward the Palestinians.<sup>139</sup> After intense pressure, a special meeting was called a month later and the AUT membership overturned the vote and the union set up a

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<sup>137</sup> John Docker and Ghassan Hage, "Call for Australian Boycott of Research and Cultural Links with Israel," [www.monabaker.com/AustralianCallforBoycott.htm](http://www.monabaker.com/AustralianCallforBoycott.htm); John Docker, "Settler Colonialism as Genocide: Implications for a Strategy of Solidarity with the Palestinians," (Paper presented at Resisting Israeli Apartheid: Strategies and Principles Conference, SOAS London, 5 December 2004).

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> AUT, "Israel Universities – Statement by AUT Secretary General Sally Hunt," 22 April 2005; [www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1201](http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1201).

special commission to investigate international boycotts.<sup>140</sup> The following year the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education in the UK passed a stronger resolution than the AUT, which criticized Israel's apartheid policies and encouraged its members to boycott Israeli academics and institutions that are complicit in Israel's policies. Although both resolutions were overturned at the time, the issue of academic boycott would be kept alive at union meetings in future years and would continue to be a top priority among a committed segment of union membership.<sup>141</sup>

The critical engagements that scholars were undertaking in Britain, France, Australia, and elsewhere would help shape dynamics for mobilizing formidable academic boycotts in various countries in the future. Analyzing the Roses initial open letter calling for a moratorium on joint research funding with Israel, one anti-BDS critic commented, "The petition brought about the globalization of the boycott."<sup>142</sup> In addition, the early moratorium and boycott calls that were occurring at the same time as numerous divestment campaigns discussed below were similarly important in referring to international law and human rights violations. These themes would go onto be critical in framing calls emanating from Palestinians, and in the boycott and divestment campaigns that would be organized in the future.

### *Early Divestment Initiatives*

Similar to the anti-apartheid movement against the South Africa regime, divestment campaigns among Palestine solidarity activists have been a popular way to raise

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<sup>140</sup> Matthew Taylor, "Storm Blows Union off Course," *The Guardian* 31 May 2005.

<sup>141</sup> See Chapter 2 on the Academic Boycott in Britain for more information on this topic.

<sup>142</sup> Manfred Gerstenfeld, "The Academic Boycott Against Israel," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 15 (Fall 2003); <http://jcpa.org/phas/phas-gersten-f03.htm>.

awareness and exert pressure on companies that contribute to Israel's violations of international law and human rights. On 30 November 2000, Francis Boyle, a professor of international law, gave a public lecture at Illinois State University in which he called on students in the US to learn from their predecessors in the anti-apartheid movement against South Africa and develop a similar movement to bring down the apartheid regime in Israel. He specifically mentioned divestment as a tactic that played a crucial role in building the anti-apartheid movement, which helped to create tangible victories in the movement and was an important component in bringing down formal apartheid in South Africa.<sup>143</sup>

As a means of withdrawing or withholding of assets, divestment campaigns in the Palestinians struggle seek to eliminate investments in businesses that contribute to Israeli occupation and its violations of human rights. The purpose of divestment campaigns is to curtail the profits of those companies contributing to Palestinian oppression, raise awareness of companies that participate in the prolongation of the conflict, and illuminate issues of corporate responsibility and socially responsible investment in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Inspired by Boyle's speech, which was subsequently disseminated as a call to action, students from around the US started organizing, and in the following year, the first formal divestment campaign was launched by Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) at the University of California – Berkeley. A divestment petition was circulated around campus and in 2002, SJP hosted the first national student conference, which led to the creation of the Palestine Solidarity Movement (PSM). The PSM was a

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<sup>143</sup> Francis Boyle, "The Al Aqsa Intifada and International Law," (Lecture given at Illinois State University – Bloomington-Normal, 30 November 2000); <http://i-p-o.org/intifada-boyle.htm>; Francis Boyle, "In Defense of a Divestment Campaign Against Israel," *Counterpunch* 20 May 2002; [www.counterpunch.org/2002/05/20/in-defense-of-a-divestment-campaign-against-israel/](http://www.counterpunch.org/2002/05/20/in-defense-of-a-divestment-campaign-against-israel/).

national coalition of mostly student-based Palestine solidarity groups, whose top priority was to establish divestment campaigns on campuses across the US. In the following years, the PSM held four additional conferences at the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, Ohio State University, Duke University, and Georgetown University.<sup>144</sup> The conferences provided a space for activists to communicate and share knowledge with each other, and coordinate national days of action. Although the PSM eventually collapsed due to internal disagreements, campus-based divestment continued and by 2004, over 40 campuses in the US were working on divestment campaigns.<sup>145</sup> Besides UC – Berkeley, divestment petitions were disseminated around prominent US universities and college campuses such as Princeton, Harvard, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). In addition to campus-based divestment initiatives, divestment among faith-based groups started to increase, with a resolution that was passed in the Presbyterian Church.

For a number of years, several Christian Churches in the US such as the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church, the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church, the American Friends Service Committee, and the Mennonite Central Committee had made statements calling for economic pressure on corporations as a way to effect change in the Middle East. In 2004, the Presbyterian Church became the first to officially begin a process of “corporate engagement” and “selective divestment” from companies that

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<sup>144</sup> Abraham Greenhouse, “Palestine Activism on Campus and Beyond: Overcoming Israel’s Efforts to Erase History,” *Electronic Intifada* 8 November 2012; <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/abraham-greenhouse/palestine-activism-campus-and-beyond-overcoming-israels-efforts-erase>.; Robert Gaines, “UK Academic Boycott, U.S. Divestment Campaign Target Israeli Occupation,” *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, July 2005; [www.wrmea.org/wrmea-archives/275-washington-report-archives-2000-2005/july-2005/8477-education-uk-academic-boycott-us-divestment-campaign-target-israeli-occupation.html](http://www.wrmea.org/wrmea-archives/275-washington-report-archives-2000-2005/july-2005/8477-education-uk-academic-boycott-us-divestment-campaign-target-israeli-occupation.html).

<sup>145</sup> Lawrence Davidson, “On Divestment,” (Paper presented at Resisting Israeli Apartheid: Strategies and Principles Conference, SOAS London, 5 December 2004).

support or maintain the Israeli occupation, contribute to the expansion or maintenance of Israeli settlements, or assist any organization/group that enables violent attacks against civilians.<sup>146</sup> In the following years, the United Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ, the Church of England, and the World Council of Churches would all take up divestment campaigns as a means to exert economic and symbolic pressure on multinational corporations contributing to conditions in the region.

A number of corporations were targeted as a result of divestment campaigns; however, the most emphasis was placed on the Caterpillar Corporation, whose equipment was being used by the Israeli military in their operations (home demolitions, construction of the wall, razing olive trees and agricultural land, etc.) in the occupied Palestinian territories. Numerous groups took up divestment campaigns, specifically against the Caterpillar Corporation. Among a host of smaller groups taking up the Caterpillar campaign, large groups and coalitions also targeted the company. This included StopCat – a Chicago-based coalition of Caterpillar boycott and divestment initiatives, Stop US Tax-funded Aid to Israel Now! (SUSTAIN) – a DC-based organization with chapters around the country, the US Campaign to End the Occupation – a coalition of US Palestine solidarity organizations, The Rachel Corrie Foundation – an organization started by the parents of Rachel Corrie, an American peace activist that was killed in Gaza in 2003 with a Caterpillar bulldozer, and Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) – a Jewish peace and justice organization with chapters throughout the US.

These organizations along with smaller community-based groups pressured Caterpillar through divestment campaigns and raised awareness about the issues by

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<sup>146</sup> Ecumenical Advocacy Group, “Economic Pressure as a Tool for Establishing a Just Peace in the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict,” (Spring 2005).

sending letters to congressional representatives, signing petitions, writing letters to Caterpillar's CEO, and contacting local Caterpillar dealerships to encourage them to hold the company accountable for use of its equipment in the occupied Palestinian territories. The groups and organizations working on Caterpillar campaigns organized international days of action that included demonstrations at the company's headquarters in Peoria Illinois, and local actions, usually at a Caterpillar dealership in the community. Similar to the Presbyterian Church that first began a process of corporate engagement with Caterpillar and other companies, JVP began pursuing shareholder activism by purchasing stock in Caterpillar as a way to influence the company's activities from the inside. Since 2003, JVP has presented resolutions at the annual shareholder meeting trying to prevent the use of Caterpillar equipment in violating human rights in the occupied Palestinian territory.<sup>147</sup>

Caterpillar also received the attention of large NGOs such as Human Rights Watch (HRW) and War on Want, who were researching and documenting the use of Caterpillar D9 armored bulldozers in Israel's violations of international law and human rights. Two significant reports were "Razing Rafah," a 135-page report published by HRW in October 2004 and "Caterpillar: the Alternative Report" issued by War on Want in the following year.<sup>148</sup> The destruction from Operation Defensive Shield in 2002, especially in the Jenin refugee camp, the construction of the wall later in that year, the killing of Rachel Corrie in 2003 in the Gaza Strip, and the massive destruction during "Operation Rainbow" in Rafah in 2004 all led to an awareness of Caterpillar's nefarious role in the Israeli occupation. In all instances of destruction to

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<sup>147</sup> US Campaign to End the Occupation, "Caterpillar Power Point Presentation," [www.endtheoccupation.org/article.php?id=1214](http://www.endtheoccupation.org/article.php?id=1214).

<sup>148</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Razing Rafah," 18 October 2004; [www.hrw.org/reports/2004/10/17/razing-rafah](http://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/10/17/razing-rafah); War on Want, "Caterpillar: The Alternative Report," March 2005; [www.waronwant.org/campaigns/justice-for-palestine/hide/inform/17109-caterpillar-the-alternative-report](http://www.waronwant.org/campaigns/justice-for-palestine/hide/inform/17109-caterpillar-the-alternative-report).

property and life, the reports documented and drew attention to Israel's widespread use of Caterpillar bulldozers to conduct its military operations in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Then, in 2005, the US Campaign to End the Occupation, voted in its Annual Conference to make the Caterpillar Campaign a top priority for the organization that year. The purpose of the campaign was to raise awareness on the use of the company's equipment in ongoing international law and human rights violations in the occupied Palestinian territory and pressure the company to terminate sales of its equipment to the Israeli military. Organizing the national campaign included a three-pronged approach – grassroots, institutional, and legislative – to educate people on the company's complicity in war crimes and mobilize participants into the campaign. To help do this the US Campaign established a collection of online resources (fact sheets, tool-kits, presentations, posters, etc.) to help activists start local divestment campaigns against Caterpillar and facilitate the development of the national campaign.<sup>149</sup>

The Caterpillar campaign received another boost later in that year when the parents of slain activist Rachel Corrie filed a lawsuit against Caterpillar in a US Federal Court. The case was filed on behalf of the Corrie family and four Palestinian families that also had family members killed or injured as a result of bulldozers destroying their homes and the structures collapsing on them. The case charged the Caterpillar Corporation with complicity in war crimes and other human rights violations on the grounds that the company sold its equipment to the Israeli military

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<sup>149</sup> US Campaign to End the Occupation, "Caterpillar Campaign," [www.endtheoccupation.org/article.php?list=type&type=158](http://www.endtheoccupation.org/article.php?list=type&type=158).

knowing it would be used illegally to indiscriminately destroy civilian homes and endanger civilian lives.<sup>150</sup>

The early divestment initiatives were important because they indicated a substantial interest among some activists to pursue Palestine solidarity through divestment campaigns. These initial activities – by US university students, Christian church members, community-based and coalition organizations – all helped set in motion a process for additional and better-strategized divestment projects in the future. In this way, the early divestment initiatives established mobilizing dynamics that would develop more concretely after the Palestinian call was made in 2005. It was also the initial activities that helped incorporate divestment as a viable tactic within a collective action framework that would coalesce into a transnational movement in the years following the Palestinian BDS call.

With important reference to the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, international law, and human rights, the initial divestment initiatives also played a role in constructing how the movement would be framed in the future. These themes are important for raising awareness of the BDS movements and its targets, justifying BDS action, and mobilizing participants into the movement. As important principles embraced through the development of the border-crossing movement, the themes would become part of a template that nearly every BDS campaign in the future would draw on in some way.

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<sup>150</sup> The Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace and Justice, “The U.S. Caterpillar Case: Corrie et al. vs. Caterpillar,” <http://rachelcorriefoundation.org/trial/the-legal-docket-case-overviews#thenazarethcase>.

### *Other Early Boycott Efforts*

In April 2001, a group of 35 Israelis and Jews of other nationalities called for a boycott of Israel. The call was issued six months after the second intifada began, as Israel had set in motion its brutal campaign to suppress the Palestinian uprising. The call referenced South Africa, noting the positive impact boycott had on bringing down the apartheid regime, and the hope that a similar effect could be produced from a boycott of Israel. The boycott asked people to endorse and circulate the call, immediately begin boycotting Israel on a personal level by not buying Israeli industrial and agricultural products or coming to Israel for vacation, and encouraging respective governments to sever economic relations and preferential trade agreements with Israel. The call gained the support of nearly 1,000 signatories from around the world.<sup>151</sup>

At the same time that the Roses published their open letter in *The Guardian* and divestment petitions were circulating at prominent US universities such as MIT and Harvard, a petition for an artistic and cultural boycott was disseminated online. The petition asked artists to “...cancel all exhibitions and other cultural events that are scheduled to occur in Israel, to mobilize immediately and not allow the continuation of the Israeli offensive to breed complacency.” The appeal mentioned the positive role of artistic boycotts in South Africa. The petition garnered over 180 signatories from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Palestine, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, and the US.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Matzpun, “Appeal,” April 2001; [www.matzpun.com/](http://www.matzpun.com/).

<sup>152</sup> “Boycott all Israeli Art Institutions, End the Occupation,” 7 April 2002; [www.oznik.com/petitions/020407.html](http://www.oznik.com/petitions/020407.html).

*2004 Conference on Resisting Israeli Apartheid: Strategies and Principles*

A few months after the launch of PACBI, a conference was held in December at the School for Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London titled, “Resisting Israeli Apartheid: Strategies and Principles.” The purpose of the conference was to rationalize the principles and ideas, refine arguments, and strategize how to mobilize participants and develop the boycott movement. The conference brought together a diverse group of speakers and participants that had been active in crafting early boycott efforts such as Hilary and Steven Rose, Ilan Pappé, Omar Barghouti, John Docker, Mona Baker, Nur Masalha, Lawrence Davidson, and Lisa Taraki. Although not yet forged into a comprehensive movement, people were meeting each other, forming networks, and sharing ideas and knowledge about boycott campaigns. Many of the conference speakers also drew parallels between the boycott movement that helped bring down the apartheid regime in South Africa, and their hopes that a similar movement could bring change to Israel/Palestine.

Overall, the conference was very successful for several reasons. It was the first formal international gathering after PACBI made its official call for boycott of academic and cultural institutions of Israel in July 2004. This provided PACBI an international arena to explain its rationale for boycott, present powerful rebuttals to arguments against it, and promote the academic and cultural boycott across borders. Although conferences had occurred in the past relating to Palestine, it was the first international conference of its kind that brought together numerous leading proponents of boycott from various countries, and included over two hundred participants.<sup>153</sup> The conference represented the coming together of boycott and

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<sup>153</sup> Paul de Rooij, “London Conference, a Prelude to Academic Boycott of Israel,” *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* January/February 2005, [www.wrmea.org/component/content/article/271-](http://www.wrmea.org/component/content/article/271-)

divestment initiatives and was a key event in strengthening dynamics of mobilization in the movement by providing a space for activists to meet and network with each other, share information, and strategize future organizing of BDS campaign

*The Palestinian Call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Against Israel*

One year after the historic Advisory Opinion by the ICJ declared Israel's construction of the wall illegal under international law, the official Palestinian call for BDS was issued to the world on 7 July 2005. The call is endorsed by over 170 Palestinian NGOs, associations, trade unions, charities, and other groups in the occupied Palestinian territories, present day Israel, and the diaspora. The BDS statement asks people around the world to enact boycott initiatives and pressure their respective governments to sanction Israel until it complies with international law and respects principles of human rights. Specifically, the call states that boycott tactics should be used until three demands are met. These demands are that Israel end its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantle the wall, that Israel recognize the fundamental rights of Arab-Palestinian citizens in Israel to full equality, and finally that Israel respect, protect and promote the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as specified in UN resolution 194.<sup>154</sup> The call is important in the development and emergence of the movement for a number of reasons discussed below and represents a major turning point in the movement.

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[www.wrmea-archives/washington-report-archives-2000-2005/january-february-2005/8643-special-report-london-conference-a-prelude-to-academic-boycott-of-israel.html](http://www.wrmea-archives/washington-report-archives-2000-2005/january-february-2005/8643-special-report-london-conference-a-prelude-to-academic-boycott-of-israel.html), 15.

<sup>154</sup> BDS Movement, "Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS," 9 July 2005, [www.bdsmovement.net](http://www.bdsmovement.net); See Appendix I for the full-text of the BDS call.

*Analyzing the Emergence of the BDS Movement in the Theoretical Framework*

As outlined in the previous section, the tactical repertoire of boycott was utilized in a variety of ways prior to 2005 as numerous BDS activities had taken place by that time. However, the official Palestinian call for BDS in that year helped transform seemingly disparate boycott and divestment activities into a transnational movement. As a call to mobilize, it gave focus to ongoing BDS activities and provided cohesion to a movement developing around a tactical repertoire of boycott across borders. It also provided a rationale for mobilization (Israel's violations of Palestinian human rights and other international laws), which would become primary collective action frames that the movement would draw on in conceptualizing a program for action. The 2005 official Palestinian call for BDS is the primary document of the movement and referenced throughout this thesis.

Much of what was written in the call for BDS had been previously articulated in early boycott and divestment efforts discussed in this chapter. For example, the three demands enumerated in the BDS call were outlined in 2001 at Durban and featured prominently among the early boycott and divestment campaigns. Similarly, the collective action frames of human rights and international law were incorporated into the NGO Forum Declaration and Programme of Action in Durban in 2001, in the initial campaigns for a moratorium on joint research funding and academic boycott, and in early divestment initiatives on university campuses and in Christian Churches. Thus, the Palestinian call in 2005 in many ways was a culmination and coalescing of BDS mobilizing dynamics until that time. It brought together a conceptual (through collective action frames) and tactical (through the repertoire of boycott) framework for intensifying and expanding BDS campaigns across borders.

Importantly, the call for BDS represents the three main segments of the Palestinian population around the world – those living in the occupied territories, Palestinians in the diaspora (including refugees), and Arab-Palestinian citizens in Israel. The BDS call is inclusive in terms of the Palestinians it represents and their corresponding demands – that Israel end the occupation, end discrimination against Palestinian citizens in Israel, and respect the Palestinian right of return. In addition, the call is endorsed by over 170 Palestinian groups, associations, organizations, trade unions, etc. that are comprised of Palestinians from the three segments and working toward the demands enumerated in the 2005 call. The call's broad base in terms of representation and endorsement is significant in the history of Palestinian politics, as Palestinians have historically been separated geographically due to colonial policies and often politically fragmented due to internal divisions.

It is also important to note that the Palestinian call for BDS does not proffer or prescribe any particular political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a point to which I return in chapter six on the movement's challenges. The three demands listed in the call serve to create conditions towards resolving the conflict, though the call does not outline a projected political end goal, especially in the form of one state or two. While opinions vary on this among BDS activists and opponents, the call's demands act as a "common denominator" among Palestinians that have been disconnected from each other and have frequently lacked political cohesion. While Palestinians may have a wide range of opinions about the BDS movement, many support the demands outlined in the call because they are the basic conditions for resolving the conflict as articulated by the historical experience of Palestinians in the diaspora (especially refugees), those in the occupied Palestinian territories, and Palestinians in Israel.

As examined throughout this chapter, the transnational BDS movement that clearly took off after 2005 can be traced back to the historical usage of the tactical repertoire of boycott in the Palestinian struggle, specifically through boycotts, non-cooperation, anti-normalization, and border-crossing solidarity activism. The movement also originated in a context of political constraints, in which the Oslo process and its fallout did not create positive, meaningful change for a majority of Palestinians. At the same time, an environment of political opportunities was created when the ICJ ruled that Israel violated international law in the construction of its wall in occupied Palestinian territory. The Court ruling, and the issue of international law more generally, became key collective action frames that the movement would use to justify mobilization and action. In addition to the structural-historical context that the movement emerged in, the mobilizing dynamics of the movement was initiated by the hard work of original campaigners documented in this chapter. Together these causal conditions were an impetus for developing a transnational movement that emerged following the official Palestinian call for BDS in 2005.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I analyzed causal conditions in a historical context that have led to the emergence of the BDS movement. Specifically, this chapter has traced the origins of the BDS movement to a long history of Palestinian boycotts, non-cooperation, and anti-normalization, along with border-crossing solidarity activism during the second intifada that set in motion dynamics of mobilization for activists to participate in BDS activities, especially upon returning to their home countries after being in Palestine. In comparison with other ways of confronting Israel such as armed resistance or the

state-based Arab boycott – the scope and way that much of BDS activism is being organized indicates a new form of transnational activism in the Palestinian struggle.

In addition to the this background on challenging Israel in a historical context, the Oslo process and its fallout, and the ruling by ICJ in 2004 that determined Israel's wall was illegal under international law were important developments for activists interpreting political constraints and opportunities. Although boycott is not a new tactic used in the Palestinian struggle, the emergence of the current BDS movement can be traced in part to a range of boycott and divestment activities. The movement began with individual and small group initiatives, but quickly expanded within a few years as activists became more connected and networked with each other. This was facilitated by in person gatherings such international days of action against the Caterpillar Corporation and the 2004 strategizing conference in London. The initial boycott and divestment campaigns established mobilizing dynamics that developed more in the future, and in addition to historical roots and a ripe political environment, contributed to the official call for BDS from Palestinians in 2005 and the expansion of a transnational movement thereafter. In the following three case study chapters, I examine in detail the organizing and operationalization of three BDS campaigns that are part of the larger movement that took-off after the Palestinian call in 2005.

## Chapter 2 – BDS Case Study: The Academic Boycott in Britain

### Introduction

The academic boycott of Israel is based on the premise that Israeli institutions of higher education are complicit in the state's violations of international law and human rights through direct funding or intellectual support. The academic and cultural boycott calls on academics and cultural workers around the world "to comprehensively and consistently boycott all Israeli academic and cultural institutions..." in support of the Palestinian struggle.<sup>155</sup>

In this chapter, I investigate the boycott of Israeli academic institutions in Britain, as these activities were some of the earliest undertakings that partly led to the movement's emergence, as identified in the previous chapter, and became part of the larger BDS movement across borders. First, I consider both the background of Israeli academic institutions and the academic boycott against them that has developed in Britain. From there I explore the major groups involved and the organizational dynamics of the academic boycott, specifically the processes that occurred in Britain's academic unions. Following this section, I lay out the significance of the academic boycott in Britain and the interplay between boycott campaigners and opponents. The chapter ends with an analysis of the case study in which I discern a number of aspects about the campaign that illuminate organizing dynamics in the larger BDS movement.

The first of these aspects is that the movement is decentralized and takes on hybrid forms of organizing, using vertical and horizontal dynamics in its operationalization. Based partly on information from this chapter, this feature of the

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<sup>155</sup> BDS Movement, "Academic Boycott," <http://www.bdsmovement.net/activecamps/academic-boycott>.

movement is considered more in depth in chapter five on the movement's structure and processes. The second aspect identified by an examination of the academic boycott in Britain is that anti-BDS proponents have pursued legal action as a strategy of silencing and weakening the movement. As the movement is decentralized, which will be shown in this and other chapters, the "lawfare" strategy for attacking the BDS movement can attempt to significantly damage local campaigns. This is a point I further consider in chapter six on the movement's challenges and limitations. Thus, this case study provides evidence on the movement's scope and organizational structure, which contributes to my argument that the BDS movement is an innovative approach to challenging Israel.

## **2.1 Background of Institutions of Higher Education in Israel and the Academic Boycott in Britain**

### *Background of Israeli Institutions of Higher Education*

There are eight universities in Israel, with an additional university in Ariel, an Israeli settlement in the occupied West Bank, and nearly 60 colleges throughout Israel.<sup>156</sup> A doctorate can only be obtained through a university, while a bachelor's, and often master's, degrees can be obtained from colleges. The Council for Higher Education (CHE) is the accrediting and governing body of higher education in Israel, which is a 25-member council that is recommended by the Israeli government and appointed by the President. The Planning and Budgeting Committee, a subcommittee of the CHE, disperses the budget allotted for higher education to the universities and college, and is responsible for all budgetary related matters to the academic institutions.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Council for Higher Education, "Institutions of Higher Education;" Israel; [http://che.org.il/en/?page\\_id=15417#Universities](http://che.org.il/en/?page_id=15417#Universities).

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, "About the Council for Higher Education;" [http://che.org.il/en/?page\\_id=4097](http://che.org.il/en/?page_id=4097).

Accordingly, a majority of academic institutions in Israel are funded by the state; research in particular is significantly supported, with the government spending \$260 million annually.<sup>158</sup>

In addition to a close relationship with the state, Israeli institutions of higher education also closely collaborate with private industry. Israeli universities that are research-based have research and development foundations that “facilitate the commercialization of innovation abilities and industrial know-how of the universities personnel.”<sup>159</sup> In addition, “science-based industrial parks” have also been created, frequently located near university campuses.<sup>160</sup> To support technological advancement in the parks the government “provides investment incentives, loans, grants, and tax benefits to industries moving into the parks.” Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs boasts that the parks provide the expertise of university personnel and expenditure savings through joint purchasing with the universities.

According to campaigners for an academic boycott, Israeli academic institutions are complicit in the state’s violations of Palestinian human rights and other international laws. The rationale for boycott is based on connections between the state, private industry, and Israeli academic institutions; in particular, the latter’s production of knowledge and equipment used in perpetuating oppressive policies and practices towards Palestinians. Academic boycott plays an important contributing role

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<sup>158</sup> European Commission, “Higher Education in Israel,” [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/participating\\_countries/overview/israel\\_tempus\\_country\\_fiche\\_final.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/participating_countries/overview/israel_tempus_country_fiche_final.pdf) and Dan Izenberg, “Science and Technology in Israel,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2 July 1998;

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/israelat50/pages/science%20and%20technology%20in%20israel.aspx>.

<sup>159</sup> Izenberg,

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/israelat50/pages/science%20and%20technology%20in%20israel.aspx>.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

in the larger BDS movement by bringing the Palestinian struggle to the academic sector across borders and pressuring Israel through its academic institutions.

*Background of the Academic Boycott of Israeli Academic Institutions in Britain*

As stated in chapter one, early BDS activities that in part led to the emergence of a border-crossing BDS movement included a 2002 moratorium call regarding joint research projects between Europe and Israel. The call was made by Hilary and Stephen Rose and was based on Israel's violations of the human rights terms set out in the framework of the European Research Area.<sup>161</sup> That same year, Mona Baker, one of the signatories to the Roses' open letter and professor of Translation Studies at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology removed two Israeli professors from their roles on academic journals that she published.<sup>162</sup> The move was especially controversial, as it appeared discriminatory of scholars based on their nationality. The matter was significant because it illuminated the inconsistency in how an academic boycott might be interpreted and applied. Baker was widely criticized for the decision and responded by stating, "This is the interpretation of the boycott statement that I've signed."<sup>163</sup> Though still in its early stages, the heated debate of an academic boycott had already begun.

In April 2004, PACBI issued the official call for the international community to boycott all Israeli academic and cultural institutions or state-sponsored events in support of the Palestinian struggle.<sup>164</sup> Specifically, the academic boycott asks scholars and cultural workers to apply the following:

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<sup>161</sup> Hilary and Stephen Rose, "More Pressure for Mid East Peace," *The Guardian*, 6 April 2002.

<sup>162</sup> Suzanne Goldenberg and Will Woodward, "Israeli Boycott Divides Academics," *The Guardian*, 8 July 2002.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> For the full text see Appendix III: The Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel.

1. Refrain from participation in any form of academic and cultural cooperation, collaboration or joint projects with Israeli institutions;
2. Advocate a comprehensive boycott of Israeli institutions at the national and international levels, including suspension of all forms of funding and subsidies to these institutions;
3. Promote divestment and disinvestment from Israel by international academic institutions;
4. Work toward the condemnation of Israeli policies by pressing for resolutions to be adopted by academic, professional and cultural associations and organizations;
5. Support Palestinian academic and cultural institutions directly without requiring them to partner with Israeli counterparts as an explicit or implicit condition for such support.<sup>165</sup>

Following the PACBI call and building on the Roses' call for a moratorium on joint research funding between Europe and Israel in 2002, the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine (BRICUP) was formed in 2004. In support of the Palestinian call for academic and cultural boycott, BRICUP's specific mission is to:

1. Continue to put pressure on the EU and the UK government for the exclusion of Israel from the European Research Area.
2. Develop a policy which encourages individual academics to break their professional links with Israel by such actions as:
  - Refusing research collaborations with Israeli institutions or to referee papers or grant applications issuing from such institutions
  - Refusing to attend academic conferences in Israel
  - Supporting Israeli academic colleagues working with Palestinian colleagues in their demand for self-determination and academic freedom
3. Work within our trades unions and professional organisations in support of such actions
4. Explore forms of support to Palestinian academic colleagues.<sup>166</sup>

## **2.2 Groups Involved in the Academic Boycott in Britain**

BRICUP is one of the main groups in Britain promoting an academic boycott. It is a group of UK-based academics and cultural workers that organized in response to the

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> BRICUP, "BRICUP Mission;" <http://www.bricup.org.uk/what.html>.

Palestinian call for academic and cultural boycott in 2004. BRICUP supports Palestinian universities and academics along with opposing the occupation of the Palestinian territories, with its specific mission outlined above. The group says that an academic boycott of Israeli academic institutions is justified based on the complicity of these institutions in supporting the state policies and practices that oppress Palestinians. According to one member in the group, “The complicity is through support the universities give to the Israeli military, the research they do on arms and technologies of occupation and on the ideological legitimization of the forms of Israeli society and governance.”<sup>167</sup> In addition to supporting the Palestinian academic and cultural boycott, BRICUP has also played a role in the medical boycott. The group has sought to expose the links between the Israeli Medical Association and the military, particularly through its condoning of unethical practices such as torture and preventing Palestinians from obtaining medical treatment. The group identifies itself as part of the larger BDS movement and works with groups such as the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC), Boycott Israeli Goods (BIG), Jews for Boycotting Israeli Goods (J-BIG), the Boycott Israel Network (BIN), and the Architects and Planners campaign.

Another group involved in the academic boycott is the University and College Union (UCU), which was formed in 2006 with the merger of the AUT and NATFHE. The union currently represents approximately 120,000 faculty and staff from a range of institutions of higher and further education in the UK, and is the largest union of its kind in the world.<sup>168</sup> The union is comprised of members who are organized into local branches and associations, usually through their workplace. Policies of the union are

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<sup>167</sup> Mike Cushman, “The British Committee for the Universities of Palestine (BRICUP),” *Postcolonial Studies Association Newsletter* no. 3 (May 2009); <http://www.bricup.org.uk/documents/PSA.pdf>.

<sup>168</sup> UCU, “About UCU,” <http://www.ucu.org.uk/1685>.

determined at the UCU's Annual Congress. Members directly elect delegates to the Annual Congress and representatives for the National Executive Committee, which oversees union affairs between congress meetings.<sup>169</sup> The UCU has a number of active campaigns including fair pay, workload and stress, ending casual contracts, and fighting privatization in education.<sup>170</sup> Their role in the academic boycott is discussed more below in the section on organizational dynamics.

The Boycott Israel Network (BIN) in Britain was formed in response to the global call for BDS by Palestinians in 2005, and works on a variety of BDS campaigns including academic boycott. It consists of individuals and organizations that support BDS, and works toward building and developing the movement throughout the UK. The network has two co-conveners and six regional contacts. Numerous BDS activists part of BIN are also active in student groups and trade unions. BIN has taken on a number of BDS campaigns, although these are largely determined by local interest and are not necessarily national campaigns. Activists part of the network have taken part in consumer campaigns against Israeli agricultural products, diamonds, Sodastream, Eden Springs, and Ahava, the cultural boycott, the sports boycott, campaigns against Veolia and G4S, along with the academic boycott.<sup>171</sup>

### **2.3 Organizational Dynamics of the Academic Boycott in Britain**

In April 2005, the National Council of the AUT voted to boycott the University of Haifa and Bar-Ilan University in Israel. Motion 7D regarded a boycott of the University of Haifa that concerned the potential trial and dismissal of Dr. Ilan Pappé,

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid, "Structures and Decision Making;" <http://www.ucu.org.uk/structures>.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, "Campaigns;" <http://www.ucu.org.uk/campaigns>.

<sup>171</sup> BIN, "About BIN;" [http://www.boycottisraelnetwork.net/?page\\_id=2](http://www.boycottisraelnetwork.net/?page_id=2).

a Senior Lecturer in Political Science at the University. Dr. Pappé had defended a controversial Master's thesis of a student, which argued that Israel's pre-state army (the Haganah) committed a massacre of unarmed civilians near Haifa. The motion that was carried called on AUT members to boycott the University of Haifa until it committed itself to academic freedom and ended the victimization of faculty and students who seek to research the establishment of the state. The motion also stated that the boycott of the University should follow that of the 2004 Palestinian call for a boycott of Israeli academic institutions.<sup>172</sup>

Motion 7E regarded the boycott of Bar-Ilan University for its connections with the College of Judea and Samaria, now known as Ariel University, which is located in Ariel – an Israeli settlement in the northern West Bank. The University was originally founded as a regional branch of Bar-Ilan University in the early 1980s, and at the time the AUT passed its motion, was supervising degree programs in the settlement's university. Based on its direct support for an institution of higher education in a location that contravenes UN resolutions, the AUT Council carried the boycott motion. It called on AUT members to boycott Bar-Ilan University until it discontinued its links with the College of Judea and Samaria and any other academic institution located in the occupied Palestinian territories. The motion also stated that the boycott should be consistent with the Palestinian call for academic boycott in 2004.<sup>173</sup>

After intense internal and external pressure and a request from 25 members of the Council, a special meeting was called a month later to debate the motions passed relating to the boycott of Israeli universities. In addition to the debate going on inside

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<sup>172</sup> AUT, "Report to Members from the AUT National Council," 2005; <http://web.archive.org/web/20060130124019/http://www.kcl.ac.uk/kis/unions/aut/council.htm>.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

the meeting, those for and against the boycott resolutions held protests outside the meeting.<sup>174</sup> In the special meeting, the National Council passed several motions in which a number of points were resolved. The motions stated that the policy to boycott Israeli universities had not been given due deliberation or debate, the existing policy to boycott should be set aside, the Union valued academic freedom and the previous motions threatened these ideas, and a number of professional associations abroad had condemned the AUT's previous motions based on ideals of academic freedom. One of the motions also called for an "investigative commission" to be set up and work with NATFE and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) to determine how to work in solidarity with Palestinians and Israeli trade unionists that value academic freedom while asserting the need for Israel to comply with UN resolutions. Yet another motion called upon all members threatening legal action against the Union to accept the conclusions of the Special Council and withdraw all such threats.<sup>175</sup>

The following year, NATFHE passed Motion 198C on Academic Responsibility at its Annual Conference in May. The motion noted "continuing Israeli apartheid policies," particularly Israel's construction of its separation wall and practices of educational discrimination against Palestinians. The motion invited members to consider their own role in these practices through their contacts with Israeli academics and institutions and "to consider the appropriateness of a boycott of those that do not publicly dissociate themselves from such policies."<sup>176</sup> At the same time, the AUT adopted the report of the investigative commission on Israel/Palestine that was established by resolution in its Special Council the year prior. The report set

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<sup>174</sup> Matthew Taylor, "Storm Blows Union off Course," *The Guardian*, 31 May 2005.

<sup>175</sup> AUT, "AUT Special Council 2005" 26 May 2005;

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1212>.

<sup>176</sup> NATFHE, "Annual Conference 2006: Motions," 29 May 2006; <http://www.ucu.org.uk/2645>.

out an interim international policy and a mechanism for implementing the policy. The interim policy stated that solidarity with colleagues abroad should protect and extend academic freedom and trade union rights. The mechanism for boycotting academic institutions required 1) a trigger to provoke the activity 2) a graded approach in using the tactic and 3) practical likelihood of securing support.<sup>177</sup> When NATFHE merged with AUT to form the University and College Union (UCU) on 1 June 2006, all policies of the two unions took on advisory status.<sup>178</sup>

In the UCU's first annual conference in 2007, it passed Motion 30 on the Boycott of Israeli Academic Institutions. In the motion, congress noted how Israel's 40-year old occupation had severely harmed Palestinian society, it deplored the denial of educational rights to Palestinians, and condemned the complicity of Israeli academic institutions in occupation. Furthermore, the motion instructed the National Executive Committee (NEC) to circulate to all local branches and associations the 2004 Palestinian call for academic boycott, urged union members to consider the moral implications of sustaining links with Israeli academic institutions, and called for organizing a tour of Palestinian scholars to UK university campuses.<sup>179</sup>

Again due to extensive internal and external pressure, particularly the threat of legal action, which will be examined more in the section below on dynamics between proponents and opponents of academic boycott in Britain, the Union sought legal advice regarding academic boycotts. In September 2007 UCU General Secretary, Sally Hunt, recommended that the Union inform local branches and associations that based on legal advice a call for boycott would be unlawful and could not be

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<sup>177</sup> AUT, "Recommendations of the Investigative Commission on Israel/Palestine," April 2006; <http://www.ucu.org.uk/circ/aut/html/la7753.html>.

<sup>178</sup> Tom Hickey, Interview, June 2012; UCU, "AUT Council 2006;" <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1628>.

<sup>179</sup> UCU, "International Greylisting and Boycott Policy," 30 May 2007; <http://www.ucu.org.uk/2555>.

implemented, that members' opinions could not be tried at union meetings, and that the recommended tour for Palestinian scholars could not proceed. According to the legal advice obtained by the UCU,

“It would be beyond the union's powers and unlawful for the union, directly or indirectly, to call for, or to implement, a boycott by the union and its members of any kind of Israeli universities and other academic institutions; and that the use of union funds directly or indirectly to further such a boycott would also be unlawful.”<sup>180</sup>

In 2008, the issue was again discussed at the UCU's Annual Congress. Although not explicitly calling for an academic boycott, Motion 25 passed that year in which a number of related topics were stated. In this regard, the Congress noted the “legal attempts to prevent UCU debating boycott of Israeli academic institutions, and legal advice that such debates are lawful,” and asked members “to consider the moral and political implications of educational links with Israeli institutions, and to discuss the occupation with their Israeli collaborators.”<sup>181</sup> Once again, legal action was threatened, particularly by a group of 12 union members that claimed the motion was implicitly a boycott motion.<sup>182</sup> However, in December of that year UCU General Secretary Sally Hunt stated, “...the position of the union, has not changed. There was no motion calling for a boycott and the implementation of Motion 25 within the law will continue.”<sup>183</sup>

The following year the UCU passed Motion 29, which “affirm[ed] support for the Palestinian call for a boycott, disinvestment and sanctions campaign” and called

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid, “Israel Boycott Illegal and Cannot be Implemented, UCU Tells Members,” 28 September 2007; <http://www.ucu.org.uk/2829>.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid, “UCU Congress and Sector Conferences 2008: Agenda,” May 2008; <http://www.ucu.org.uk/circ/html/ucu104.html>.

<sup>182</sup> Donald MacLeod, “Academics 'Have Abandoned Israeli Boycott', say Opponents,” *The Guardian*, 10 December 2008.

<sup>183</sup> UCU, “UCU Refutes Claims it has ‘Dropped Boycott Motion,’” 10 December 2008; <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3649>.

for an inter-union conference of BDS supporters to determine how to legally implement such a policy.<sup>184</sup> However, Leading Counsel for the Union advised that the passing of the motion could be unlawful “because it is likely to be viewed by a court as a call to boycott Israeli academic institutions.” Although Motion 29 was passed by the Union’s membership, the leadership of UCU immediately determined the motion null and void.<sup>185</sup>

Motions relating to a boycott of Israeli academic institutions that were raised in the 2010 UCU Annual Congress reaffirmed the 2009 motion with several additional clauses. Unlike the year prior, the motion was not considered unlawful as the Union, “reaffirm[ed] its support for BDS, and to seek its implementation within the constraints of the existing law.”<sup>186</sup> The motion also called for dissolving any relationship with the Histadrut, Israel’s trade federation, as the Palestinian BNC had appealed for this. The motion urged other trade unions to also sever their links with the Histadrut. In addition, the motion called for an active campaign against the EU-Israel Association Agreement, and working with other trade unions to coordinate these efforts.

In 2011 and 2012, no new motions relating to academic boycott were proposed. Motion 36 was carried in 2011, which instructed the NEC to circulate the 2004 Palestinian call for academic boycott to local branches and associations, although this had been affirmed in a number of previous motions that had passed. The motion also called for the circulation of an Israeli call by 155 academics to withdraw

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid, “UCU Congress and Sector Conferences 2009: Agenda,” May 2009; <http://www.ucu.org.uk/circ/html/UCU180.html>.

<sup>185</sup> Jessica Shepherd, “Lecturers Vote to Boycott Israeli Universities,” *The Guardian*, 27 May 2009.

<sup>186</sup> UCU, “UCU Congress and Sector Conferences 2010 Agenda,” May 2010; <http://www.ucu.org.uk/circ/html/UCU270.html>.

support and collaboration with Ariel University (previously the College of Judea and Samaria), as it was in the process of seeking university accreditation by Israel's CHE.

## **2.4 Significance of the Academic Boycott in Britain**

The case of the boycott of Israeli academic institutions in Britain is significant primarily due to its successes in processes such as those in the academic unions described above. The academic boycott has played a considerable role in the UCU, the world's largest academic union of its kind, where the process of debating and passing boycott-related motions have raised awareness of the BDS movement.<sup>187</sup> In addition, the endorsement of the academic boycott by high-profile supporters such as Professor Stephen Hawking, which is discussed below, has contributed to an environment whereby boycott is reaching influential elites. This suggests that the movement has a wide scope, where boycott activities take place in a variety of settings such as union meetings or in supportive pronouncements by elite allies.

The PACBI call and its related endorsements for academic and cultural boycott make clear that "academia is not exempt" from boycott actions as Israeli institutions of higher education are used in the maintenance and production of the Israeli state's status quo.<sup>188</sup> One such way that British academics have operationalized the academic boycott is through their professional unions. The processes that occurred in the academic unions in Britain were important in securing a space for discussing the boycott of Israel, thereby pushing the BDS movement into previously uncharted territory. As this case indicates, academic boycott campaigns can take shape in a range of places and venues, even beyond primary targets (i.e. institutions of higher

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid, "About UCU;" <http://www.ucu.org.uk/1685>.

<sup>188</sup> Ben White, "Why a Boycott of Israeli Academics is Fully Justified," *The Guardian*, 12 September 2012.

education). This is significant because as I argue throughout this thesis, the geographic and multi-sector scope of the broader BDS movement partially contributes to it being a new and different approach to challenging Israel in the Palestinian struggle.

In addition to the academic boycott activities that have taken place in the academic unions in Britain, in May 2013, it was announced that renowned theoretical physicist and cosmologist Professor Stephen Hawking would not be attending the fifth Israeli Presidential Conference, Facing Tomorrow 2013 that was to take place from 18-20 June in Jerusalem. A statement approved by Hawking's office at the University of Cambridge and published by BRICUP said that his decision to not attend the conference was based on "...his independent decision to respect the boycott, based upon his knowledge of Palestine, and on the unanimous advise of his own academic contacts there."<sup>189</sup> Contention surrounding a person of Hawking's stature in endorsing the academic boycott of Israel unsurprisingly resulted in a flurry of media attention, and initially led to a dispute of the true reasoning behind Hawking declining his invitation to the conference.

As stated above, BRICUP first published a statement approved by Hawking's office regarding his participation in the academic boycott, which was immediately picked up by *The Guardian* and published on 8 May 2013. Shortly thereafter, Cambridge University released a statement that declared, "Professor Hawking will not be attending the conference in Israel in June for health reasons – his doctors have advised him against flying." BRICUP denied this was the reason Hawking would not be attending the conference and published on its website an email they had received

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<sup>189</sup> BRICUP, BRICUP Newsletter 64 (May 2013); <http://www.bricup.org.uk/documents/archive/bricupnewsletter64.pdf>.

from Hawking's office the previous day. The email showed that Tim Holt, Acting Director of Communications at the University of Cambridge, and Hawking's personal assistant had approved BRICUP's initial statement on Hawking and the boycott.<sup>190</sup> In addition, Hawking sent a letter to conference organizers on university letterhead on 3 May explaining his reasons for not attending the conference. It stated,

“I accepted the invitation to the Presidential Conference with the intention that this would not only allow me to express my opinion on the prospects for a Peace Settlement but also because it would allow me to lecture on the West Bank...However, I have received a number of emails from Palestinian academics. They are unanimous that I should respect the boycott. In view of this, I must withdraw from the conference. Had I attended, I would have stated my opinion that the policy of the present Israeli government is likely to lead to disaster.”<sup>191</sup>

Hawking's support for the academic boycott by not attending the conference in Israel was significant for the movement. It indicates that the academic boycott in particular and the BDS movement more generally, are capable of reaching academic and cultural icons. This is a major success for the movement, and as I argue in chapter six on the movement's challenges and limitations, is an effective way of bringing a sector specific boycott such as the academic boycott to those not in scholarly professions. With his endorsement, Hawking brought attention to the academic boycott and the BDS movement to a wide audience, including people that knew little or nothing about the movement. Similar to the union processes by British academics described above, Hawking's endorsement of the boycott has contributed to the movement's broad scope in that Israel is challenged in range of venues across borders.

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Matthew Kalman, “A Brief History of Hawking's Boycott,” *The Daily Beast*, 8 May 2013; <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/05/08/a-brief-history-of-stephen-hawking-s-boycott.html>.

## 2.5 Dynamics between Campaigners of Academic Boycott in Britain and Opponents

From the 2002 letter that the Roses published in *The Guardian* calling for a moratorium on joint research funding between Europe and Israel there have been prolific efforts to stop an academic boycott of Israeli academic institutions. A number of groups have mobilized against a British academic boycott of Israel; these groups include Engage, Academic Friends of Israel, Academic Study Group, Union of Jewish Students, The Board of Deputies of British Jews, and the Campaign Group for Academic Freedom. In this chapter, I draw on a particular instance – that of Ronnie Fraser’s lawsuit against the UCU – to illustrate the use of “lawfare,” or the use of the law to engage in attacking opponents, against the BDS movement. While the case specifically refers to circumstances occurring in Britain, anti-BDS activism corresponds to nearly all BDS campaigns and the Fraser case is but one example of the lawfare strategy utilized to stifle the movement.

In 2012, Ronnie Fraser, a mathematics teacher in colleges and secondary schools, brought a harassment case against his union, the UCU. The case was heard in an Employment Tribunal with a 20-day hearing in December 2012. The case garnered 23 volumes of evidence, and heard from 34 witnesses; 29 were called on behalf of Fraser and five on behalf of UCU.<sup>192</sup> Fraser charged the union with “institutional anti-Semitism,” which he argued comprised harassment of him as Jew, a “protected characteristic” of race and religion or belief under the Equality Act of 2010. Fraser’s lawyer, Anthony Julius, best known for negotiating Princess Diana’s divorce

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<sup>192</sup> “R Fraser v. University and College Union, Judgment of the Employment Tribunal,” 25 March 2013, 6 para. 16; [www.judiciary.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/JCO/Documents/Judgments/eemployment-trib-fraser-v-uni-college-union-judgment.pdf](http://www.judiciary.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/JCO/Documents/Judgments/eemployment-trib-fraser-v-uni-college-union-judgment.pdf).

settlement, argued that an attachment to Israel was a “related aspect” of the aforementioned “protected characteristics” in the Equality Act. While the 2010 Act protects against harassment in an employer-employee relationship, and an Employment Tribunal can rule on employment disputes, Fraser argued that harassment was wider in the UCU and that liability extended to acts of Congress, the NEC, officials, employees, and members of the union. He made 10 claims to support his argument.

Among others, these claims related to resolutions passed in Congress pertaining to Israel, behavior on the union’s email Activist List, resignations of Jewish members from the union, the invitation of a South African trade unionist that was being investigated for hate speech, behavior at union meetings, and rejection by the union of a then working definition of anti-Semitism produced by the former European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia. Despite the large size of the case in terms of evidence and witnesses, the Tribunal dismissed the proceedings, finding “...almost the entire case as manifestly unmeritorious.”<sup>193</sup> In its Findings and Conclusion, the Employment Tribunal denied that an attachment to Israel could be a protected characteristic, as the sentiment is not inherently Jewish. The Tribunal also found it “wholly untenable” that the union could be held liable for the conduct of fellow members at union meetings or on the email list, and denied that resignation by some Jewish members constituted harassment of Fraser by the union. In chiding language the Tribunal asserted,

“We regret that the case was ever brought. At heart, it represents an impermissible attempt to achieve a political end by litigious means. It would be very unfortunate if an exercise of this sort were ever repeated.”<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid, 42 para. 169.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid, 44 para. 178.

The Tribunal went on to state that it was concerned by the implications of Fraser's complaints, remarking that, "Underlying it we sense a worrying disregard for pluralism, tolerance and freedom of expression..."<sup>195</sup> In closing, the Tribunal additionally expressed that the costs incurred due to the case were burdensome and should not be misused in the future. They said,

"The Employment Tribunals are a hard-pressed public service and it is not right that their limited resources should be squandered as they have been in this case...[nor] should the Respondents have been put to the trouble and expense of defending proceedings of this order or anything like it."<sup>196</sup>

In response to the judgment of the Employment Tribunal, UCU General Secretary Sally Hunt said,

"I am delighted that the Tribunal has made such a clear and overwhelming judgment in UCU's favour. There are many different views within UCU and wider society about Israel and Palestine and this decision upholds our and others' rights to freedom of expression and to continue to properly debate these and other difficult questions."<sup>197</sup>

The union acknowledged Fraser's right to bring the case forward and said he and his views would be treated fairly in the union in the future. They also stated that they hoped the Tribunal's judgment would encourage Fraser and other union members to debate issues within union meetings rather than seek legal recourse.

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid, 44 para. 179.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid, 45 para. 180.

<sup>197</sup> UCU, "UCU Cleared of Harassment in Landmark Tribunal," 25 March 2013; <http://www.ucu.org.uk/6562>.

## **2.6 Analyzing the Case of the Academic Boycott in Britain**

The academic boycott in Britain case represents the hybrid nature of the movement's organizational structure and processes. The structure of the union and the processes that took place there were rooted in a vertical style of organizing and decision-making. The strategy of passing motions concerning Israel/Palestine and boycott specifically, was a bottom-up approach, where local branches and associations would discuss the issues and then propose a motion for the annual congress. Proposed motions by local branches would then be discussed by elected regional delegates at congress, and if passed, then implemented by the union's leadership. As documented in this chapter, these motions included: in 2005 AUT passed motion 7D and 7E, in 2006 NATFHE passed motion 198C, in 2007 UNC passed motion 30, in 2008 UCU passed motion 25, in 2009 UCU passed motion 29, in 2010 UCU reaffirmed motion 29, and in 2011 UCU passed motion 36. The process of discussing and passing these motions were part of the unions' centralized power structures.

Overall, however, the process of implementing an academic boycott in Britain has been horizontal in the sense that activists there determine how to proceed with and implement an academic boycott of Israel. The movement is operationalized through networks of Palestinians and solidarity activists in a decentralized power structure. In the border-crossing BDS movement, the principles and values of the movement are determined by Palestinians. Specifically in this case, the call for academic and cultural boycott was formulated by PACBI in 2004 with fairly specific guidelines for implanting boycotts published shortly thereafter. Nonetheless, the actual process of implanting boycotts is largely determined by participants in their own locale. While groups such as BRICUP or BIN may coordinate or seek advice occasionally from the

Palestinian BNC or PACBI, their activities and the ways they proceed are not predetermined or activated through a centralized structure.

In addition, the academic boycott in Britain shows how exercising “lawfare” is a strategy that anti-BDS proponents use for challenging the movement. The Fraser case was important because it represents one of several attempts to legally challenge the ability to discuss or engage in activities surrounding boycotts of Israel. While the Fraser case was fought by UCU’s legal team and not BDS activists, the lawsuit had wider implications for the movement, and free speech more generally. If Fraser’s case would have prevailed, even after an appeal by the union, it would have made discussion critical of Israel and boycotts very difficult in not only unions, but elsewhere as well. In this way, the case represented an experiment for UK unions’ rights to discuss boycott and promote the BDS movement.<sup>198</sup>

In addition, the charge of anti-Semitism and/or the delegitimization of the state of Israel, as either the motivation or effect of boycotts against Israel has been a powerful accusation driving the lawfare strategy. In BRICUP’s special issue on the matter, Brenna Bhandar, a Lecturer in Property Law, said that attempting to challenge BDS through legal action has an “underlying rationale,” which is that “political criticism of the State of Israel and political action that supports BDS are viewed as anti-Semitic – with inherently so or in particular instances.”<sup>199</sup> Due to the potent and sensitive nature in deploying the charge of anti-Semitism, if it were upheld it would at the minimum produce a silencing effect against BDS activism. Clearly, a central tactic of anti-BDS advocates is an attempt to restrict the scope of debate around the Israeli-

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<sup>198</sup> BRICUP, “Union Defeats Legal Challenge Alleging Antisemitism: Right to Advocate Boycott of Israel Upheld,” Press Release, 26 March 2013; <http://bricup.org.uk/documents/FraserCasePR.pdf>.

<sup>199</sup> Brenna Bhandar, “Debating BDS: Fraser v. UCU,” BRICUP Newsletter Special Issue “Abusing the Law: Fraser v. UCU,” 10; <http://www.bricup.org.uk/FraservUCU.pdf>.

Palestinian conflict and the space in which BDS activists can legitimately (legally) operate.

Because the ability to express views critical of Israel and dispense those views through BDS activism is vital to the movement's growth and expansion, the judgment had border-crossing effects for the movement. In particular, the judgment removed the legitimacy of a legal challenge to BDS on grounds that it is inherently anti-Semitic.<sup>200</sup> The Fraser case was brought against the UCU, but it set an important precedent for the movement as it demonstrated that the allegation of anti-Semitism in the lawfare strategy is not a forgone conclusion in silencing or debilitating the movement.

The last major action of the academic boycott of Israel in Britain was in 2013, when Stephen Hawking announced he would not be attending a conference in Israel. There has been no significant activity with respect to boycott motions in the academic union since the last motion was passed in 2011 as numerous motions are currently in force. As the academic boycott of Israel in Britain has waned in the academic union, it has greatly picked up in the US, although mostly in academic associations. Similar to the motions passed in British academic unions, grassroots organizing takes place among like-minded scholars that build support among the membership of their association. When a significant amount of support is gained, activist-members push for a motion in support of the BDS movement to be passed. Over ten academic associations in the US currently endorse the academic boycott of Israel, though as the case with the academic boycott of Israel in Britain demonstrates, the path forward will be challenging and will be subject to lawfare tactics by BDS opponents.

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<sup>200</sup> Tom Hickey, "Three Moves to Defeat: A Zionist Game Plan That Has Unravelled in the Trade Union Movement," BRICUP Newsletter Special Issue "Abusing the Law: Fraser v. UCU," 19.

## **Conclusion**

This case study chapter has critically investigated the academic boycott in Britain to illuminate aspects of the transnational BDS movement. To do this, I first outlined the background of Israeli institutions of higher education and of the academic boycott in Britain that has arisen against them. I then described some of the groups involved in these boycott activities and organizational dynamics of the academic boycott, especially as occurred through the trade union processes. Next, I discussed the significance of these boycotts and the dynamic interaction between academic boycott campaigners and opponents, particularly the Fraser case that was brought against the UCU. I concluded the chapter by ascertaining various features about the campaign case study that demonstrate aspects of the broader BDS movement across borders.

In this regard, the academic boycott in Britain demonstrates the decentralized structure of the movement, along with its vertical and horizontal forms of organizing. The processes that occurred in Britain's trade unions regarding the academic boycott represent vertical organizing processes from the bottom, up to the union leadership. Though these are specific processes of organizing that stem from codified union procedures, the process of implementing academic boycotts in general has been horizontal. As this case study suggests, the BDS movement is operationalized across borders in ways specific to the places and people that are organizing a particular BDS campaign. This point is further addressed in chapter five on the structure and organizing in the movement. In addition, the academic boycott in Britain shows how opponents of BDS campaigns use lawfare as a strategy to silence BDS activists and weaken the border-crossing movement. Because the movement is decentralized, these attacks can be daunting for individual, local campaigns, and is considered more in chapter six on the movement's challenges and limitations. In furnishing evidence on

the movement's scope and organizational structure, this case study contributes to my assertion that the movement is a new and different way of confronting Israel in the Palestinian struggle for justice.

## Chapter 3 – BDS Case Study: The We Divest Campaign

### Introduction

Divestment campaigns within the BDS movement seek to illuminate issues of ethical and socially responsible investment in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Divestment campaigns in the BDS movement want to eliminate investments in businesses that contribute to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories or its violations of Palestinian human rights. The aims of divestment campaigns are twofold: "to curb the profits of Israel's war and apartheid economy" and to "raise awareness about Israel's policies."<sup>201</sup> The most notable divestments have come from Christian churches, universities, banks, and pension funds.

This chapter examines the case of the We Divest campaign as an example of a divestment initiative of the BDS movement. The campaign targets TIAA-CREF, one of the largest retirement fund providers in the US, to divest funds currently held in a number of companies the campaign has identified. The chapter is structured just as the previous and following case study chapters by showing the background of the target (TIAA-CREF) and the We Divest campaign. The chapter describes groups involved in the campaign, organizational dynamics, the significance of We Divest in the BDS movement, and the interaction between challengers (We Divest) and opponents (anti-We Divest) in the development of the campaign. I conclude with an analysis of the case study in which I identify a number of features about the campaign and the movement overall.

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<sup>201</sup> BDS Movement, [www.bdsmovement.net](http://www.bdsmovement.net).

The first of these features is that similar to the academic boycott in Britain, the We Divest campaign is decentralized, and uses both vertical and horizontal structures and processes for organizing. Information from these chapters is analyzed more in chapter five on the movement's organizational dynamics. Secondly, the We Divest campaign uses collective action frames such as international law, corporate complicity, socially responsible investment, etc., which are similar to other BDS campaigns, and are used to mobilize participants and garner support for the movement. These frames parallel those of other contemporary transnational movements, which I explore more in chapter six where I consider the BDS movement in a global justice framework. By pointing to critical components of the movement – its organizational structure and collective action frames – this case study supports a central claim of this thesis that the movement is a new and unique way of confronting Israel in the Palestinian struggle for justice.

### **3.1 Background of TIAA-CREF and the We Divest Campaign**

#### *TIAA-CREF Background*

The Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association (TIAA) was established in 1918 by Andrew Carnegie as a pension system for university professors. Due to a number of factors including rising inflation during the 1940s and 1950s, TIAA established the College Retirement Equities Fund (CREF), a variable annuity that would allow clients to invest in the stock market. Today, TIAA-CREF is considered one of the 100 largest US corporations and is currently ranked 97 in the Fortune 500.<sup>202</sup> As such, the company is a predominant supplier of financial services for those in the academic,

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<sup>202</sup> “Fortune 500 - TIAA-CREF,” <http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune500/2013/snapshots/10606.html>.

governmental, medical, and cultural sectors. TIAA-CREF presently manages \$542 billion worth of assets for 4.8 million individuals, of which 3.9 million participants are in institutional retirement plans.<sup>203</sup>

In addition to its size and client-base, the financial organization prides itself on socially responsible investment (SRI). The company says it began responsible investment practices in the 1970s by engaging with companies on social issues. In a historical slideshow on the website, the organization boasts:

“TIAA-CREF was one of the first institutional investors to engage with portfolio companies on social responsibility issues, including automotive safety, pollution control, and apartheid policies in South Africa. We continue to champion responsible investing and strong corporate citizenship.”<sup>204</sup>

In 2004, TIAA-CREF began an advertising campaign with the slogan “Financial Services for the Greater Good.” The campaign included national and local television, newspaper, magazine, and radio ads with a debut television ad during the opening ceremonies of the 2004 summer Olympics – the company’s first time it had advertised on national television. According to TIAA-CREF executive vice president Steven Goldstein, “TIAA-CREF is a model financial service company with an impeccable reputation and great financial strength – that’s a story worth telling.”<sup>205</sup> The motto was also featured prominently on the company’s website and became part of its official logo. It was this slogan that the We Divest campaign initially chose to focus on in pressuring the financial services organization to live up to its motto by divesting

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<sup>203</sup> TIAA-CREF, “About TIAA-CREF,” [www.tiaa-cref.org/public/about-us](http://www.tiaa-cref.org/public/about-us).

<sup>204</sup> Ibid, “Who We Are,” [www.tiaa-cref.org/public/about-us/who-we-are-at-tiaa-cref](http://www.tiaa-cref.org/public/about-us/who-we-are-at-tiaa-cref).

<sup>205</sup> “TIAA-CREF Rededicates Brand with Launch of ‘For the Greater Good’: National Campaign Starts with Olympic Television Buy,” *PR Newswire*, 13 August 2004; <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/tiaa-cref-rededicates-brand-with-launch-of-for-the-greater-good-71619892.html>.

from companies that profit from Israel's violations of human rights and other forms of international law.

### *We Divest Campaign Background*

The We Divest campaign is a divestment initiative of the BDS movement that was built on the research of Adalah-NY: The New York Campaign for the Boycott of Israel. In 2009, Adalah-NY determined that TIAA-CREF had investments in Africa-Israel, a company owned by Lev Leviev, a major developer of Israeli settlements and target of an already existing boycott campaign of the group. The following year, JVP launched the We Divest campaign by delivering a petition to TIAA-CREF. Over 250 TIAA-CREF participants and supporters that included professors, doctors, authors, rabbis, and others signed the petition. The petition asked the company to divest from businesses that:

1. Directly profit from or contribute to the Israeli occupation of the Gaza strip and the West Bank, including east Jerusalem.
2. Provide products or services that contribute to the construction and maintenance of Israeli settlements and/or the separation Wall, both of which are illegal under international law.
3. Provide products or services that contribute to or enable violent acts that target civilians<sup>206</sup>

The overall aim of the We Divest campaign as set out in its initial petition is to pressure TIAA-CREF to divest from companies that profit from Israel's violations of human rights and other forms of international law. The petition illustrated how several companies that TIAA-CREF invests in are involved in activities related to Israel's separation wall or its Jewish-only settlements in the West Bank, and identified

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<sup>206</sup> JVP, "Divest from the Israeli Occupation," [https://org.salsalabs.com/o/301/images/JVP\\_PetitionJune2010FINAL2.pdf](https://org.salsalabs.com/o/301/images/JVP_PetitionJune2010FINAL2.pdf).

businesses that TIAA-CREF should divest from based on these violations of international law. The original petition to the company listed five examples of companies along with reasons for their listing.

The businesses named were Caterpillar, Veolia, Northrop Grumman, Elbit, and Motorola. In the petition, the groups stated that Caterpillar supplies armored bulldozers used in the destruction of Palestinian homes and uprooting of Palestinian orchards. Veolia operates a landfill in the West Bank for Jewish-only settlement refuse and takes part in a light rail system that connects illegal Israeli settlements with Jerusalem. Northrop Grumman supplies parts for Apache helicopters and F-16 jets that were used against civilians in the Gaza Strip during Israel's assault in 2008-09, and Elbit provides surveillance equipment for Israel's wall. Motorola provides surveillance equipment used in Israeli settlements, checkpoints, and bases in the West bank, and provides communication systems for the IDF and Israeli settlers. The campaign says that investments in these companies by TIAA-CREF "implicate the retirement fund in Israel's systematic violation of Palestinian rights."<sup>207</sup>

The We Divest campaign pressures TIAA-CREF to stop investing in companies the group has identified as profiting from Israel's colonization and occupation. The campaign has chosen to focus on TIAA-CREF for a number of reasons. The campaign says that the company prides itself on its commitment to SRI, yet it invests in companies that violate human rights standards and international law. The We Divest campaign says it wants to hold TIAA-CREF accountable to its stated interest in pursuing SRI, and that it is more likely to bend to pressure when the demands come from clients or participant institutions than the general public. Because of the financial services organization's involvement in ethical investment, they are

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<sup>207</sup> We Divest, "Why TIAA-CREF," [https://wedivest.org/p/242/why-tc#.Utj25tKSx\\_R](https://wedivest.org/p/242/why-tc#.Utj25tKSx_R).

likely to be more susceptible to pressure than corporations that have no inclination in pursuing SRI.<sup>208</sup>

The size of the financial organization also appears to be a major consideration for the campaign. TIAA-CREF has clients throughout the US, especially within most universities and colleges, and the company has offices in 60 US cities. As a very large financial services organization, divestment would set a precedent. According to the campaign, “[TIAA-CREF’s] divestment from the Israeli occupation would send a powerful signal to other companies violating international laws by abetting the occupation.”<sup>209</sup> In addition, because TIAA-CREF involves a substantial amount of people throughout the country, the campaign has the potential to raise awareness of the campaign and recruit significant support around the country. In addition, the size and geographic span of the corporation makes possible a national We Divest campaign that is networked through the development and collaboration of local community-based campaigns. Similar to most initiatives of the BDS movement, the We Divest campaign is decentralized in that activists organize the campaign at the local level.

Targeting TIAA-CREF is also significant because many of these companies tracked for divestment are chosen as targets for other BDS campaigns. Campaigns against Veolia for example, are widespread in the US and other countries. In Sweden, BDS activists in the group Diakonia and other groups pressured the Stockholm community council, who subsequently announced in early 2009 that it would not renew their contract with Veolia worth \$4.5 billion. Veolia had operated the subway for the Stockholm County for the previous ten years.<sup>210</sup> At the same time in the West

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid, “Why TIAA-CREF,” [https://wedivest.org/p/242/why-tc#.UqgNIdIW1\\_Q](https://wedivest.org/p/242/why-tc#.UqgNIdIW1_Q).

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Diakonia, “Veolia Looses 3,5 Billion EUR Contract in Sweden,” 2009; [www.diakonia.se](http://www.diakonia.se).

Midlands in the England, BDS activists launched the “Sandwell Bin Veolia Campaign” against Veolia’s bid for a waste improvement plan. In March 2009, the Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council announced that it would not consider Veolia for the contract, which was worth \$1.5 billion over 20 years.<sup>211</sup> In Ireland, activists called on city councils to adopt a motion refusing to renew contracts with Veolia and to date, Sligo County, Galway City and Dublin City have agreed.<sup>212</sup> That same year the French “Faisons dérailler Veolia” campaign successfully fought Veolia’s bid for an urban transport network in Bordeaux, a contract worth \$1 billion.<sup>213</sup>

### **3.2 Groups Involved in the We Divest Campaign**

The We Divest campaign was spearheaded by JVP, which as stated above, built on the research of Adalah-NY regarding TIAA-CREF investments. In 2011, We Divest transitioned from being a campaign of JVP to a coalition-based initiative. The main groups that comprise the coalition form the national Coordinating Committee (CC). In addition to JVP, the CC contains Adalah-NY, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, Grassroots International, and the US Palestinian Community Network (USPCN). In addition to the CC, the We Divest Campaign is currently endorsed by over 70 groups and organizations, mostly in the US. These organizations include (but are not limited to) local BDS groups in the US, a number of university-based SJP chapters, several Christian related organizations, a number of Jewish-American peace and justice groups, and the Palestinian BNC.

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<sup>211</sup> “West Midlands PSC Bin Veolia Campaign,” *LabourNet*, 23 March 2009; [www.labournet.net](http://www.labournet.net).

<sup>212</sup> Adri Nieuwhof, “Derail Veolia Campaign: Showcase of International Cooperation and Creative Action,” 2010; [www.bdsmovement.net](http://www.bdsmovement.net).

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

All the groups involved in the We Divest Campaign are organizations that work on peace and justice issues. Some of the groups only work on these issues within the context of Israel/Palestine, while others are engaged in a wide-variety of work around the world. In this section, I briefly outline the basic composition of organizations in the national CC of the We Divest campaign to present an overview of the kinds of groups involved in the divestment initiative.

The organization that originally launched the We Divest campaign – JVP – is a Jewish-American peace and justice organization that works on challenging Israel’s occupation of the Palestinian territories and US support for its occupation. The group was established in 1996 in response to the opening of an archeological dig site under Jerusalem’s Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif that caused fatal confrontations between Israelis and Palestinians. JVP’s activities include demonstrations, educational activities, and cultural events to end Israel’s occupation, advance human rights, and change US policies in the Middle East. The group has offices in California and New York, 25 local chapters throughout the US, a small paid staff, a Rabbinical Council, and an Advisory Board with influential Jewish figures such as Noam Chomsky, Udi Aloni, Judith Butler, Avi Shlaim, and the late Howard Zinn. According to the group, it is the only major national Jewish organization that works towards equal rights of Israelis and Palestinians as the basis for its activism.<sup>214</sup>

Adalah-NY, the group that originally learned of the financial ties between TIAA-CREF and companies involved in Israel’s occupation, identifies itself as “a local, grassroots, non-hierarchical volunteer-only group of concerned individuals that advocates for justice, equality, and human rights for the Palestinian people...”<sup>215</sup> As

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<sup>214</sup> JVP, “Mission,” <https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/mission/>.

<sup>215</sup> Adalah-NY, “Adalah-NY Statement,” <https://adalahny.org/page/130/adalahny-statement>.

the group's name indicates, it is only active in the New York area. Similar to other Palestine solidarity groups that engage in BDS activities, the group states that it "organizes in support of the 2005 call by Palestinian civil society organizations" and will protest Israel's policies and actions until it respects international law and Palestinian human rights. Although BDS is a major priority of the group it also engages in demonstrations and educational activities that have focused on Israel's attacks on Gaza and Lebanon, the US and Israeli walls with Mexico and Palestine, and Palestinian citizens' rights in Israel. Adalah-NY collaborates with other groups on Israeli Apartheid Week, Nakba commemoration events, anti-Iraq war activities, and immigrant rights protests.<sup>216</sup>

The US Campaign to End the Occupation also works on the We Divest campaign. It is a coalition organization that presently includes more than 400 Palestine solidarity groups in the US, and exclusively "works to end US support for Israel's occupation." The group supports "a US policy that upholds freedom, justice, and equality."<sup>217</sup> Although BDS campaigns are a major component of the work of the US Campaign to End the Occupation, the organization also works on a number of other Palestine solidarity related activities such Nakba commemoration activities and challenging US policy through congressional advocacy. The organization provides a wealth of research, information, and educational materials for supporting BDS and other Palestine-related campaigns on its website.

Another group that is part of We Divest is the USPCN, a US-based network of Palestinians in the diaspora. According to the group, it aims to strengthen the voice of Palestinians in the US to "affirm the right of Palestinians in the Shatat (exile) to

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> US Campaign to End the Occupation, [www.endtheoccupation.org/](http://www.endtheoccupation.org/).

participate fully in shaping our joint destiny.” The organization has a few chapters in communities around the US. The three objectives of the USPCN stated on their website are nearly identical to the three demands outlined in the global Palestinian call for boycott in 2005.

The AFSC is a Quaker organization that was established in 1917 during World War I and is also on the We Divest CC. At the time, AFSC provided a way for American conscientious objectors to serve their country without joining the military or participating in the violence of war. To this day, the AFSC places great emphasis on finding nonviolent alternatives to fighting injustice through development, service, and peace projects.<sup>218</sup> Prior to and during World War II, the AFSC became experienced in providing assistance to refugees and other displaced persons. Due in part to this background, the UN requested in 1948 that the AFSC assist in providing relief to Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip. Since that time, AFSC has been active in Israel/Palestine, with a focus on peace-building and humanitarian assistance.

Finally, Grassroots International takes part in the We Divest campaign. It is a human rights and development organization that works in various locations around the world. Partnering with local organizations on projects in nearly 20 countries, Grassroots International works on “community-led, sustainable development projects” around issues such as food sovereignty, climate justice, and movement building. The organization aims to “speak out in support of global justice” by supporting political struggles that work toward securing human rights.

The groups that are involved in the We Divest Campaign in particular, and the BDS movement more generally, have done so for various, although similar, reasons. According to the We Divest campaign,

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<sup>218</sup> AFSC, “About AFSC,” <http://afsc.org/about>.

“BDS is a form of economic activism which is premised on the idea that violations of Palestinians’ rights result not only from Israeli government policies and actions, but also from corporate and institutional policies and actions that support and sustain Israel’s occupation and violations of human rights and international law.”<sup>219</sup>

In another statement on its website, the group says that the various BDS campaigns around the world are connected with each other through “their common goal of ending corporate and institutional complicity” with Israel’s violations of human rights and other forms of international law.<sup>220</sup>

The AFSC officially endorsed the We Divest campaign in 2010, although it had been involved in BDS activities prior to that time.<sup>221</sup> For example, in March 2008, the Board of the AFSC approved screening investments relating to Israel/Palestine. According to the Board,

“Investments should not be made in any company that provides products or services, including financial services, to Israeli governmental or military bodies that are used to facilitate or undertake violent acts against civilians or violations of international law, or to Israeli or Palestinian organizations or groups that are used to facilitate or undertake violent acts against civilians or violations of international law.”<sup>222</sup>

The investment screen approved by the Board supplements the AFSC “Social Investment Policy and Guidelines,” which avoids among others, AFSC investment in businesses that manufacture weapons, tobacco, or contribute to environmental degradation. Shortly after the Board approved the screen for investments in Israel/Palestine, a committee created a plan for implementation and a “No-Buy List”

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<sup>219</sup> We Divest, “About BDS,” [https://wedivest.org/p/240/bds#.UqcgrtIW1\\_Q](https://wedivest.org/p/240/bds#.UqcgrtIW1_Q).

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> AFSC, “TIAA-CREF Summary,” <https://afsc.org/category/topic/we-divest>.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid, “AFSC’s Israel-Palestine Investment Screen and the TIAA-CREF Divestment Campaign: Frequently Asked Questions,” <https://afsc.org/category/topic/investment-screen>.

of 29 companies. All the companies listed in the original We Divest petition to TIAA-CREF were listed on AFSC's Investment Screen No-Buy List.<sup>223</sup>

Congruent with its history, the AFSC says, "Our support for the use of boycotts and divestments is contextualized by Quakers and AFSC's long support for boycotts, divestment, and sanctions as economic tactics that appeal to human conscience and change behavior."<sup>224</sup> Citing numerous examples, the AFSC points to the use of these tactics in the Free Produce Movement of the 1800s, which boycotted goods using slave labor – to more recent boycott campaigns regarding civil rights, anti-apartheid, farm workers, and prison rights.

Although Grassroots International does not provide specific reasons for its involvement in the BDS movement, its network of partners on the ground in the occupied Palestinian territories along with the issues it focuses on make its participation explicable. Nearly all of Grassroots International partnering organizations in the occupied Palestinian territories are signatories to the global call for boycott in 2005 by Palestinian organizations. This includes the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees, the Palestinian Medical Relief Society, Stop the Wall Campaign, and the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC). In 2012, partial financial support from Grassroots International for the Stop the Wall Campaign and UAWC included a travel grant for activists to participate in the World Social Forum – Free Palestine gathering in Brazil, of which expanding the BDS

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<sup>223</sup> The AFSC Screen List of 29 companies was taken from the list of companies that the Divestment Task Force of the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church researched and compiled with the assistance of Who Profits. The list of companies used by the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church and AFSC was also the list that the Mennonite Central Committee would go onto use for monitoring its investments starting in 2013.

<sup>224</sup> AFSC, "Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Explained," <https://afsc.org/story/boycott-divestment-and-sanctions-explained>.

movement was one of the main agenda items.<sup>225</sup> In addition to local partners that support the BDS movement, Grassroots International is known for focusing on issues such as defending human rights and developing the capacity of social movements around the world. Within the context of Israel/Palestine, the organization states that by “working with allies and partners we facilitate international linkages to support and amplify the Palestinian struggle for self-determination and peace with justice.”<sup>226</sup>

With respect to the We Divest campaign, Grassroots International has specific information on its website requesting TIAA-CREF to divest from Elbit Systems. The webpage, “The Wall, Elbit and TIAA-CREF: Barriers to Resource Rights in Palestine,” contains a fact-sheet on the relationship between TIAA-CREF, Elbit, and Israel’s separation wall. The page also has a FAQ document regarding the relationship and web links with updates on the campaign and stories from local partner organizations regarding the wall. Grassroots International asks TIAA-CREF clients to add their name to the “Call to Action” that requests the financial services organization divests from Elbit, and calls on non-TIAA-CREF participants to sign a different petition making the same request. To date, the call to action has 1,129 client signatures and the petition has 5,462 signatures of general supporters.

### **3.3 Organizational Dynamics of the We Divest Campaign**

In general, the campaign says it “...organizes retirement fund recipients to exercise their rights as shareholders and pressure TIAA-CREF...”<sup>227</sup> As the target of the campaign is TIAA-CREF, not its clients, the campaign does not ask clients to move

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<sup>225</sup> Grassroots International, “Partnerships for Power,” 2012 Annual Report; [www.grassrootsonline.org/sites/default/files/annual\\_report\\_2012\\_web.pdf](http://www.grassrootsonline.org/sites/default/files/annual_report_2012_web.pdf).

<sup>226</sup> Ibid, “Middle East,” [www.grassrootsonline.org/where-we-work/middle-east](http://www.grassrootsonline.org/where-we-work/middle-east).

<sup>227</sup> AFSC, “TIAA-CREF Summary,” <https://afsc.org/category/topic/we-divest>

their retirement funds. Rather the campaign wants to educate and mobilize TIAA-CREF participants at the local level for a national campaign against the pension funds' investments in companies that are involved in Israel's activities in the occupied Palestinian territories. This is operationalized at the national and local levels in various ways.

At the national level, work is organized by the CC, whose members are described above, and working groups. The CC meets in-person twice a year to strategize the campaign. According to the We Divest campaign, the CC utilizes "consensus-based decision making." The working groups comprise members of the CC and their supporters, and include local organizing, campus organizing, socially responsible investment, shareholder activism, outreach, and media.

The campaign was initiated by TIAA-CREF clients signing a petition that requested the retirement fund divest from companies that profit from Israel's violations of international law.<sup>228</sup> The campaign was officially launched when the petition was then delivered to TIAA-CREF headquarters in New York in 2010. The following year, nearly 20 TIAA-CREF participants submitted a shareholder resolution asking the financial services organization to engage with companies in which investments are held and that profit from Israel's occupation. TIAA-CREF requested permission from the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to exclude the resolution from its annual shareholder meeting without consequences from the SEC, which was allowed.<sup>229</sup> In June, the We Divest campaign held a national call-in day in which participants and supporters contacted TIAA-CREF to denounce investments

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<sup>228</sup> For the full text of the petition and a list of signatories, see [https://wedivest.org/sign/64/national-petition?gid=18#.UqhvLdIW1\\_Q](https://wedivest.org/sign/64/national-petition?gid=18#.UqhvLdIW1_Q).

<sup>229</sup> We Divest, "TIAA-CREF Censors their Investors," 26 May 2011; <https://wedivest.org/post/159/tiaa-cref-censors-their-investors#.UxBV0fmSxhg>.

held in companies that profit from Israel’s occupation and voice their displeasure at the withholding of the shareholder’s resolution regarding these investments submitted the month prior.<sup>230</sup> Those that participated were then asked to take their message to social media sites by posting a status on Facebook stating, “just told @tiaa-cref they can’t silence Occupation” or tweeting “just told @tc\_talks they can’t silence Occupation #tiaa-cref #wedivest\_callday.” The group also provided an image stating, “Why is TIAA-CREF censoring you?” that supporters could use for their Facebook profile picture.<sup>231</sup>

The following month, We Divest organized a flashmob in New York’s Times Square to draw attention to the shareholder resolution being ignored by TIAA-CREF, and the companies involved in Israel’s occupation. Dressed in costumes of professions of TIAA-CREF investors, a group of activists sang and danced to the tune of the Village People’s YMCA with substituted lyrics.<sup>232</sup>

<i>Verse</i>	<i>Chorus</i>
T-CREF	It’s time to divest, T-I-A-CREF
Are you listening to me? I said	It’s time to divest, T-I-A-CREF
T-CREF	You got to pull all your funds
Who do you want to be?	From the corporations
I said T-CREF	Profiting from occupation
Invest responsibly	Of Palestine. T-I-A-CREF <sup>233</sup>
So Palestine can be free	

On 19 July, protests were held outside the TIAA-CREF annual meeting held in Charlotte, North Carolina, along with demonstrations in cities across the US. Activists

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid, “Call TIAA-CREF Today!” 1 June 2011; <https://wedivest.org/post/165/call-tiaa-cref-today#.UxBfkvmSxhg>.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid, “Pro-Divestment Shareholders and Allies Take Their Case to NYC Streets and the Internet with Song and Dance,” 5 July 2011; <https://wedivest.org/post/175/shareholders-allies-take-their-case-nyc-streets#.UxBOQvmSxhg>.

<sup>233</sup> “‘We Divest’ Flashmob in NYC” *YouTube*, 1 July 2011; [www.youtube.com/watch?v=UURxeS\\_q-2g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UURxeS_q-2g).

held signs, handed out flyers, encouraged passerby to sign the We Divest petition, and tweeted throughout the day using the hashtag #tcdinvest.<sup>234</sup> Shareholders and proxies also raised the issue of divestment within the annual meeting. Following the demonstrations in 2011, the TIAA-CREF shareholder meeting would be the occasion for a national day of action each year.

Similar to the year before, the national day of action in 2012 included TIAA-CREF investors confronting trustees of the financial services organization inside the meeting and protests outside local TIAA-CREF offices in major US cities across the US.<sup>235</sup> In 2013, campaigners again took to the boardroom and streets in over 12 cities during the annual shareholder meeting. Activist sang and performed street theater, handed out flyers, and encouraged individuals to sign the We Divest petition. As was the case in 2011, TIAA-CREF investors submitted a shareholder resolution regarding investments held in companies that profit from Israel's occupation, and again the corporation asked the SEC for permission to disregard the measure, which the federal regulator granted.<sup>236</sup> This is discussed more in the section below on interactions between We Divest activists and opponents of the campaign.

At the local level, the campaign is organized in various ways. "Context sensitivity" – the notion that local people "know best how to apply BDS most

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<sup>234</sup> We Divest, "We Won't Back Down," 21 July 2011; <https://wedivest.org/post/184/we-wont-back-down#.UxBjWfmSxhg>; JVP, Flickr Photos; <http://www.flickr.com/photos/jewishvoiceforpeace>.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid, "Human Rights Advocates Confront TIAA-CREF Over Investing in Injustice," 17 July 2012; <https://wedivest.org/post/211/human-rights-advocates-confront-tiaa-cref-over-injustice#.UxBOrPmSxhg>; Adalah-NY, "We Divest CREF Annual Meeting 2012 NYC Protest," 17 July 2012; <http://adalahny.org/photo-gallery/971/we-divest-cref-annual-meeting-2012-nyc-protest>; We Divest, "Vigil in Front of the TIAA-CREF Offices in SF," *Flicker*, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/17066944@N00/sets/72157630626239750/>; Chicago Divests, "Chicago Rally Demanding TIAA-CREF Divest From Israeli Occupation," *YouTube* 18 July 2012; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qee1sUICAb0&feature=youtu.be>.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid, "On Day of Shareholder Meeting, Protests Held In 12 Cities Against TIAA-CREF Investments in Israeli Military Occupation," 17 July 2013; <https://wedivest.org/post/293/press-release-national-day-action-july-16-2013#.UxBLCPmSxhg>; and "National Day of Action Photos," *Flicker*, July 2013; <http://www.flickr.com/groups/2256263@N21/>.

effectively in their particular circumstances...” is a priority of the BDS movement, and this is evident in the organizational dynamics of the We Divest campaign.<sup>237</sup> The campaign touts that it is “flexible” and that there are numerous ways that activists can participate in the campaign.<sup>238</sup> The campaign suggests several examples. For instance, organizing at a university could include encouraging faculty to pass a resolution on the matter, having the student body take a stand, or organizing a department around a statement. Local campaigns could also focus on organizing TIAA-CREF participants in Churches, hospitals, or NGOs to request investment options that do not include violating human rights and other forms of international law. Local campaigns could also focus on one of the companies identified as profiting from Israel’s occupation (Caterpillar, Veolia, SodaStream, etc.).

One of the main forms of organizing at the local level is by reaching out to TIAA-CREF clients in that area, educating them about the retirement funds investments in particular companies that the campaign has identified as violating international law and human rights in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and persuading them to take action in various forms. This could be as minimal as signing the TIAA-CREF petition available on the We Divest website or meeting with a representative of the financial services organization at one of the local offices to discuss investment concerns. Another activity at the local level is raising educational awareness of the issues: TIAA-CREF investments in companies that profit from Israeli activities in the occupied Palestinian territories, the BDS movement, and the Israeli-Palestinian

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<sup>237</sup> Omar Barghouti, “BDS: A Global Movement for Freedom & Justice,” *Al-Shabaka* Policy Brief, 5 May 2010; <http://al-shabaka.org/policy-brief/civil-society/bds-global-movement-freedom-justice?page=show>.

<sup>238</sup> We Divest, “Why TIAA-CREF,” <https://wedivest.org/p/242/why-tc#.UuebTNL8Lrc>.

conflict overall. In doing this activists hope to influence the discourse on the conflict, garner support for the movement, and mobilize participants.

Closely connected with its local chapters, JVP says that it has issued guidelines for engaging in BDS campaigns at the local level. The Boston chapter of JVP supports the national We Divest campaign in a variety of ways. For instance, they organize a local protest on the national day of action, usually in front of a TIAA-CREF local office. Last year, the group organized a flashmob as part of its protest of the retirement fund. In the video, a group of approximately 20 activists donning black t-shirts with the We Divest logo sang and danced to the tune of Taylor Swift's song, "Trouble" with alternative lyrics. The video was later uploaded to YouTube and the group's website. In addition to participating in the National Day of Action, JVP Boston says that it also conducts research on SRI, mobilizes TIAA-CREF participants and client institutions, and collaborates with local branches of AFSC, Grassroots International, and SJP to strengthen the We Divest campaign in the Boston area.

### **3.4 Significance of the We Divest Case**

The case of the We Divest campaign is significant for a number of reasons. The first is that the campaign has claimed a number of victories, which serves the movement particularly well for purposes of mobilizing participants and gaining support.

Although the first accomplishment took place before the official inception of the We Divest campaign, it is still important in that it helped set a precedent for the campaign. In 2009 Adalah-NY sent a letter to TIAA-CREF that was signed by approximately 50 clients, and asked the financial services organization to divest from Africa-Israel, a

company involved in the construction of Israeli settlements.<sup>239</sup> The Israeli company announced earlier in the year that it could not meet the liabilities of bondholders and was suffering from financial crisis. TIAA-CREF confirmed in 2009 that it had removed the company from its investment portfolios after it had fallen out of the MSCI Emerging Markets Index.<sup>240</sup> Although the letter from Adalah-NY and the divestment from Africa-Israel were likely coincidental in their timing, it provided incentive to pursue a campaign against TIAA-CREF for divestment from other companies that support Israel's occupation.

Several years later in June 2012, after the We Divest campaign had formalized into its present coalition-based group, TIAA-CREF removed Caterpillar from its Social Choice Fund, a divestment worth \$72 million. This occurred when the company was removed from MSCI ESG indexes that TIAA-CREF uses in determining which companies are suitable for investment among their social choice products. MSCI said the company's status had been downgraded for a number of reasons including environmental concerns, employee safety issues, a plant closure in Canada, and "an ongoing controversy associated with use of the company's equipment in the occupied Palestinian territories."<sup>241</sup>

TIAA-CREF attempted to avoid publicizing the issue by saying "the only reason that (Caterpillar) came off our list was because it came off MSCI's index."<sup>242</sup> However, this disregards the larger context in which the company was initially removed from the indexes that includes the company's association with the Israeli

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<sup>239</sup> Emma L. Carew, "Updated: Professors Urge TIAA-CREF to Divest from Company Involved in West Bank Settlements," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 11 September 2009; <https://chronicle.com/article/Professors-Urge-TIAA-CREF-to/48381/>.

<sup>240</sup> TIAA-CREF, "Statement About Former Holding in Africa-Israel Investments Ltd.," 14 September 2009; [http://www1.tiaa-cref.org/public/about/news/gen0909\\_185.html](http://www1.tiaa-cref.org/public/about/news/gen0909_185.html).

<sup>241</sup> Blake Sobczak, "Caterpillar Pulled from Social Indexes," *Business Week*, 27 June 2012; [www.businessweek.com/ap/2012-06-27/caterpillar-pulled-from-social-indexes](http://www.businessweek.com/ap/2012-06-27/caterpillar-pulled-from-social-indexes).

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

military and the use of its products in the Palestinian territories. In this way, the campaign has contributed to an environment in which the company's activities are scrutinized, particularly among those interested in socially responsible investment.

Directly inserting the BDS movement into the ideas and concepts of global justice, Rabbi Alissa Wise, the Director of campaigns at JVP and National Coordinator of the We Divest Campaign stated in response to TIAA-CREF's divestment from Caterpillar, "We're glad to see the socially responsible investment community appears to be recognizing this and is starting to take appropriate action."<sup>243</sup> Rebecca Vilkomerson, the JVP spokesperson, also stated that because of activism of this nature there is a "consensus in the human rights community" on Caterpillar's violations of Palestinian human rights.

The We Divest campaign is also the largest BDS divestment campaign in the US. The organization is currently endorsed by 71 organizations and is also the largest in terms of groups and organizations that compose the campaign.<sup>244</sup> At the national level, the coalition-based CC is comprised of some very large organizations such as the US Campaign to the End the Occupation, which itself is a coalition organization that currently comprises over 400 Palestine solidarity groups in the US. The CC also contains the AFSC and Grassroots International, both of which include thousands of people and have connections across the globe through their other programs. This means that the We Divest campaign potentially has thousands of participants at its disposal, considering only those linked to the campaign through member groups.

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<sup>243</sup> We Divest, "Caterpillar Removed from TIAA-CREF's Social Choice Funds: Victory for Pro-Divestment Advocates," 21 June 2012; [https://wedivest.org/post/207/caterpillar-removed-tiaa-cref-social-choice-funds#.Uwmt9\\_mSxhg](https://wedivest.org/post/207/caterpillar-removed-tiaa-cref-social-choice-funds#.Uwmt9_mSxhg).

<sup>244</sup> Ibid, "Endorsing Organizations," <https://wedivest.org/endorsing-orgs>.

The significance of the We Divest case, in part, also derives from the endorsement of the Palestinian BNC. The national committee has formally signed onto the campaign as one of over 70 groups that have endorsed the campaign, and the BNC Secretariat published an official statement in support of the campaign on 4 October 2010.<sup>245</sup> Similar to the original We Divest petition sent to TIAA-CREF, the statement by the Secretariat referred to the financial services motto (at the time) and asked the company to live up to “providing ‘financial services for the greater good’”<sup>246</sup> Similar to the campaign’s original petition as well the BNC’s statement listed the companies designated as targets for the campaign (Caterpillar, Veolia, Elbit, Motorola, Northrop Grumman), along with a brief explanation. The BNC Secretariat stated that it urged “all groups working on boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaigns in the U.S., especially on university campuses, to endorse this campaign and join it, whenever possible, to amplify its reach and impact across the U.S.”<sup>247</sup>

### **3.5 Dynamics Between We Divest Campaigners and Opponents**

As is the case with all social movements, there is a dynamic interaction between challengers and opponents in the development of the movement. In this particular divestment campaign, the target (TIAA-CREF) has sought to circumvent the efforts of the We Divest campaign by avoiding divestment-related shareholder resolutions submitted by campaigners. TIAA-CREF has also been the target of anti-BDS organizations such as Shurat HaDin (Israel Law Center), whom threatened legal

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<sup>245</sup> Ibid and BNC, “TIAA-CREF: Divest from Injustice,” 4 October 2010; <http://www.bdsmovement.net/2010/tiaa-cref-divest-injustice-4761>.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid (BNC).

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

action against TIAA-CREF should it consider the shareholder resolutions submitted by We Divest activists.

As briefly mentioned earlier, TIAA-CREF participants that are part of the We Divest campaign filed shareholder resolutions in 2011 and 2013. In 2011, nearly 20 TIAA-CREF investors that are part of the We Divest campaign filed a resolution to be considered by shareholders at the annual meeting. The measure requested that the financial services organization engage with companies such as Caterpillar, Veolia, and Elbit that profit from Israel's occupation, and consider divestment if there is no commitment from the companies to cooperate by the time of TIAA-CREF'S annual meeting the following year. TIAA-CREF sent a letter to the SEC requesting that no enforcement action be taken by the federal regulator should the resolution be excluded from its annual shareholder meeting.

In its request to the SEC, TIAA-CREF argued that the divestment-related resolution was excludable because it interfered with ordinary businesses operations and attempted to "micromanage" the investment decisions of the corporation. It also claimed that the essential objectives of the proposal were already implemented, and finally, that the resolution made statements that were misleading and asked shareholders to take a position on "a complex, controversial geopolitical dispute," and attempted to make the annual meeting a "forum for debate on Middle East politics."<sup>248</sup> A lawyer representing the We Divest participants sent a letter to the SEC refuting all the claims of TIAA-CREF and asked the Commission to deny the no-action request. However, in May of that year, the SEC confirmed to TIAA-CREF that it would not recommend enforcement action based on its first claim that the resolution interfered

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<sup>248</sup> SEC, "TIAA-CREF Initial Submission," 22 March 2011, 8-9; [www.sec.gov/divisions/investment/noaction/2011/cref-levitt050611-14a8-incoming1.pdf](http://www.sec.gov/divisions/investment/noaction/2011/cref-levitt050611-14a8-incoming1.pdf).

with ordinary business operations and therefore it was not necessary to address the other claims proffered by the financial services organization.

We Divest activists again submitted shareholder resolutions two years later, this time on behalf of approximately 200 investors. In March, TIAA-CREF once again requested that enforcement action by the SEC not be taken if the proposal were omitted from that year's annual meeting. The following month, lawyers from the National Lawyers Guild (NLG), who legally assisted the We Divest campaign, submitted an extensive 34-page rebuttal of TIAA-CREF's claims to the SEC.

Shortly thereafter, the corporation sent a letter to the SEC that responded to the campaigners' rebuttal and also submitted another letter to the federal regulator informing them that they had received a letter from Shurat HaDin – an Israeli legal organization that in part aims to prevent BDS activities – threatening legal action against TIAA-CREF should the shareholder proposal be considered. The letter from the Israel Law Center referred to the shareholder proposal as a “racist resolution” that is sponsored by “activists that seek to harm and discriminate against Jewish people and inflict violence against the state of Israel,” and quotes the Anti-Defamation League in stating, “BDS is anti-Semitic.” Referring to We Divest investors as “BDS operatives” the letter further asserts that the BDS movement is a “clear extension of the historic and continuing Arab boycott” and “BDS's demands are fairly clearly made on behalf of [Arab] boycotting countries.” The letter also claimed that the proposed shareholder resolution violated numerous New York state laws and “might be” in violation of US federal law. The letter concluded with the threat of legal action should the shareholder resolution be considered.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Shurat HaDin, “Letter to TIAA-CREF,” 10 April 2013; <http://israelawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/135103865-Civil-Liability-of-TIAA-CREF-for-Potential-Boycott-of-Israeli-Firms-and-Investments.pdf>.

The NLG lawyers on behalf of the We Divest TIAA-CREF investors again sent a letter to the SEC responding to the letters submitted by the corporation. The legal team argued that the threat of third party litigation was not recognized in SEC rules as a justification for exclusion of a shareholder proposal. The letter further outlined how the Shurat HaDin letter to TIAA-CREF sought to infringe on the First Amendment rights of TIAA-CREF participants by attempting to outlaw criticism of Israel and silence critics. Moreover, the letter questioned how any New York state laws were being violated in the state, and implied that Shurat HaDin itself found the claim of federal law violations unsound by the phrasing in its letter. TIAA-CREF and the NLG lawyers sent several more letters to the SEC arguing their legal positions. The SEC did not get involved in the issue or contents of the Shurat HaDin letter sent to TIAA-CREF or the rebuttal by the We Divest lawyers. In May of 2013, the SEC sent confirmation to TIAA-CREF that enforcement action would once again not be taken against the corporation for omitting the shareholder resolution on grounds that it had done so in 2011 and the same criteria of interfering with ordinary business operations still applied. Despite this conclusion last year, it is highly likely that based on their previous activities We Divest campaigners will continue to submit shareholder resolutions in the future, and will develop ways to respond to or work around the SEC rules that permit the omission of their resolutions and the efforts of anti-BDS organizations such as Shurat HaDin.

### **3.6 Analyzing the Case of the We Divest Campaign**

As is the case with the academic boycott in Britain, the We Divest campaign illuminates aspects of the BDS movement's organizational form. In this respect, the We Divest campaign is decentralized with characteristics of horizontal and vertical

organizing. According to the campaign, “We Divest is a national campaign with global reach, but its strength comes from local organizing.”<sup>250</sup> Vertically, the structure of campaign is national in that it is a coalition-based organization of coordinating members from around the US, with priorities and strategies largely set at the national level through the CC. Communicating these objectives and information about the campaign down to the local level occurs through networks using various means of communication such as email, listservs, Facebook, Twitter, and the We Divest website.

The We Divest website is a central channel for spreading information about the campaign; it is the location where groups can endorse the campaign and supporters can sign the petition asking TIAA-CREF to divest from companies that violate human rights principles and international law. It contains the most updated information on the campaign and also highlights the successes of other BDS campaigns that have similar corporate targets. The national campaign provides resources and toolkits for starting local campaigns and facilitates “opportunities to network between campaigners.”<sup>251</sup> The website has a widget that activists can use to find groups with We Divest related campaigns in their area.<sup>252</sup>

Despite the national structure of the We Divest campaign, the initiative is largely decentralized and horizontal in that it is comprised of local campaigns across the country. Local groups determine how local campaigns are organized. They decide the goals of the local campaign (e.g. faculty statement), and how to make it relevant within the larger We Divest campaign and BDS movement. Local groups form a web of activity, that taken together, form a national campaign to pressure TIAA-CREF to

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<sup>250</sup> We Divest, “Organize Locally,” <https://wedivest.org/p/231/local#.UwyPPPmSxhg>.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

divest from companies that profit from violations of international law and human rights standards.

The frames that activists deploy in conceptualizing the We Divest campaign are parallel to the frames that other BDS initiatives adopt. The first is that of human rights and other forms of international law in constructing a basis and justification for action. These themes were written into the original petition to TIAA-CREF organized by JVP in 2010, and further reinforced in We Divest statements as shown in campaign's rationale for BDS quoted earlier. Both shareholder resolutions submitted to TIAA-CREF on behalf of We Divest investors significantly emphasized human rights and international law throughout the short proposals. These themes are also prevalent in the work of all members on the We Divest national Coordinating Committee and in many of the endorsing organizations of the campaign. The AFSC investment screen and the work of Grassroots International discussed earlier are two such examples.

Motivations for participating in the We Divest campaign and the BDS movement more generally indicate that issues of corporate complicity with Israel's violations of international law and Palestinian human rights are important for BDS participants. Activists in the BDS movement want to draw attention to and target corporations that profit from Israel's human rights abuses and violations of other international laws, thereby exposing an underlying system of support and maintenance for Israel's colonization and occupation. By creating bad press through negative associations with Israel's activities, these campaigns hope that individuals and institutions will divest from companies that are engaged in these endeavors.

These frames correspond with other contemporary transnational movements working on justice related causes and are analyzed more in chapter six, where I

consider the BDS movement in a global justice framework. The We Divest campaign embraces ideas of global justice by focusing on issues of socially responsible investment, corporate complicity, international law, and principles of human rights, which resonates with activists working on issues other than Palestine-related activism. As these cross-cutting themes have proliferated, particularly through the development of anti-globalization and global justice movements from the late 1990s onward, the priorities of the We Divest campaign have interconnecting linkages with ideas that are promoted on a wide-range of issues and in other struggles across the globe. From sweatshop labor to climate change, corporations are susceptible to public scrutiny of profit making at the expense human rights and environmental considerations, among others.

Organizationally as well, the We Divest campaign corresponds to the dynamics of other groups and organizations that are involved in issues related to global justice. Coalition-building, consensus-based decision-making, and a decentralized national campaign through local community-based groups parallels how groups working on causes not specific to Palestine are organized. By exploring the organizational dynamics of the We Divest campaign, we can see that BDS campaigns have similarities to other groups that work on other issues. This opens up possibilities for broad-based coalitions in which Palestine is considered among other issues, such as the case in a number of Veolia campaigns where labor, resource-privatization, and Palestine activism have all intersected and worked together to prevent Veolia contracts from going through.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Charlotte Silver, "Palestine Activists, Labor and Environment Groups in US Unite Against Veolia," *The Electronic Intifada*, 4 March 2014; <http://electronicintifada.net/content/palestine-activists-labor-and-environment-groups-us-unite-against-veolia/13221>.

## **Conclusion**

In this case study, I analyzed the We Divest campaign to identify facets of the wider BDS movement across borders. As explained in the chapter, the campaign is one of the largest divestment initiatives in the BDS movement and targets TIAA-CREF, a major provider of retirement funds in the US. The chapter began with an overview of the company and the We Divest campaign aimed at its investments. Some of the groups involved in the campaign and the organizational dynamics of We Divest were then discussed, along with the significance of the case. Following these sections, dynamics between We Divest campaigners and opponents were considered, especially the actions by the SEC and Shurat HaDin, and the chapter ended with an analysis of the case study. In this section, I identified features of the campaign such as its organizational structure and collective action frames that are illustrative of the movement in general.

The We Divest campaign is similar to the academic boycott in Britain that I analyzed in the previous chapter in that both initiatives represent how the movement is decentralized and uses hybrid forms of organizing that are both vertical and horizontal. The campaign is vertical in that priorities and strategies are set at the national level and communicated to local community-based campaigns. However, the campaign is largely decentralized and horizontal as activists in their own locales decide for themselves how to operationalize the campaign in their area. In addition, We Divest utilizes collective action frames such as international law, corporate complicity, and socially responsible investment, which are the same frames used in other BDS campaigns and among other border-crossing movements working on justice-related causes. Evidence from this chapter informs part of my analysis in chapter six on the BDS movement in a global justice discourse. The rationale assigned

in these collective action frames also provides motives for mobilization, and are generally similar for participants in the academic boycott in Britain and We Divest campaigns. Although there are general similarities in motives between the two BDS campaigns analyzed thus far, each campaign illustrates that activists interested in or working in a specific sector are more likely to join a campaign around that theme. Thus, academics are more likely than people in other professions to join the academic boycott of Israel and activists that are TIAA-CREF participants are more inclined to join the We Divest campaign. Taken together, this case study provides evidence on the movement's organizational structure and collective action frames, which reinforces my argument that the movement is a novel approach to challenging Israel.

## Chapter 4 – BDS Case Study: Consumer Boycotts of Ahava Dead Sea Products

### **Introduction**

Consumer or products boycotts in the BDS movement want to eliminate support from companies that profit from Israel violating international law and principles of human rights. Symbolically, consumer boycotts of Israeli products seek to create bad publicity and negative images of corporations that contribute to Israel's oppressive policies and practices towards Palestinians. Economically, consumer boycotts seeks to inflict economic damage on Israeli companies or those that do business in Israel. By pressuring through boycott, activists try to induce the companies to change their behavior and relationship with the state of Israel, thereby indirectly pressuring the state to change the status quo.

In this chapter, I investigate BDS campaigns against Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories, an Israeli cosmetics company located in the occupied West Bank, as these campaigns have scored several notable successes and take place in a variety of locations around the world. First, I outline the background of Ahava and the campaigns against the company. I then describe a number of the groups involved in consumer boycott activities to illustrate the types of groups involved in these efforts. In the section that follows, I summarize various BDS activities against Ahava to explain the organizational form and dynamics of the groups involved. Next, I go over the significance of the campaigns against the business in the BDS movement and the relationship between BDS campaigners and opponents. I conclude the chapter by analyzing aspects of consumer boycott campaigns against Ahava that elucidate characteristics of the broader BDS movement.

The case study indicates that by focusing on a company in an Israeli settlement, the BDS initiatives against Ahava draw attention to a range of violations of international law. The campaigns use international law as a frame in addition to that of corporate complicity, which as is the case in other campaigns such as We Divest in the previous chapter, activists use as a rationale for boycott and to gain support for the campaign and the border-crossing movement. The frames utilized in BDS campaigns against Ahava are also similar to collective action frames used in other forms of activism related to global justice. Based in part on evidence from this chapter, this is discussed more in chapter six where I analyze the BDS movement in a global justice framework. Therefore, this case study contributes to my argument that the BDS movement represents a new and different way of challenging Israel by presenting information on the movement's scope and collective action frames.

#### **4.1 Background of Ahava and BDS Campaigns against Ahava**

##### *Ahava Background*

Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories is an Israeli skincare and cosmetics company that uses Dead Sea minerals and mud in its products. The company was established in 1988 and is currently a global brand that started exporting its products abroad in 1992, and today has a presence in over 30 countries. The company's headquarters are in Holon, Israel; however, its production factory and its visitor's center, which opened the same year the company was created, are located in Mitzpe Shalem, an Israeli settlement in the occupied West Bank. The settlement lies on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea and is located approximately six miles north of the Green Line. Two of Israel's settlements in the West Bank own shares in the company – Mitzpe Shalem, where the

visitor's center and production facility are located, and Kalia. Other shareholders in Ahava include Hamashbir Holdings and Shamrock Holdings.

Marketing its products to conscientious consumers who are interested in more natural products, Ahava reformulated its brand in 2009 to be more "skin friendly" and started advertising that their products are "paraben free, sls/sels free, allergy tested, approved for sensitive skin, not tested on animals, and produced without petroleum, harsh synthetic ingredients, or GMOs."<sup>254</sup> According to the company, it is committed to the environment and has worked to preserve environmental stability in the area. In doing this Ahava says that its water cleaning process is "used for local irrigation and to support a popular nearby park" in a Jewish-Israeli settlement.<sup>255</sup> The company asserts that it wants "to keep the Dead Sea region as it is, for the future and for our children," and is active in raising educational awareness about the ecological risks to the region by teaching children about the importance of sustainability.<sup>256</sup>

In addition to its environmental and skin-friendly branding, Ahava boasts that it invests heavily in research and development. The company does this by actively engaging in studying the therapeutic effects of Dead Sea minerals in a range of technologies such as nanotechnology, human genome research, and biotechnology.<sup>257</sup> According to Ahava, its scientists and researchers work with "leading scientific centers in Israel and Europe" to conduct this research.<sup>258</sup>

Ahava has been the target of several boycott campaigns because of its location and use of natural resources in occupied territory. The groups or individuals that focus

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<sup>254</sup> Ahava, "Our Ingredients," [www.ahavaus.com/discover-ahava/our-ingredients](http://www.ahavaus.com/discover-ahava/our-ingredients).

<sup>255</sup> Ibid, "Reducing the Impact of Beauty: Ahava's Innovative Water Return Process," [www.ahava.com/discover-ahava/ahava-gives-back/ahava-loves-water/](http://www.ahava.com/discover-ahava/ahava-gives-back/ahava-loves-water/).

<sup>256</sup> Ibid, "Ahava Loves Education," [www.ahava.com/discover-ahava/ahava-gives-back/ahava-loves-education/](http://www.ahava.com/discover-ahava/ahava-gives-back/ahava-loves-education/).

<sup>257</sup> Ibid, "Research and Development," [www.ahava.com/discover-ahava/rd](http://www.ahava.com/discover-ahava/rd).

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

on boycotting Ahava products do so for three main reasons. The first is that the company's production facility, visitor's center, and a portion of the company is owned by Mitzpe Shalem, an Israeli settlement, which are considered illegal under international law. The second focus for activists is that Ahava products have often been mislabeled as "Made in Israel," when the products are made in an Israeli settlement in the occupied West Bank. Lastly, activists want to illuminate the exploitation that the company engages in to proliferate Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territory. The company exploits the natural resources of the region for its own profit and for its own objectives, while preventing Palestinians from accessing natural assets in the territories for the development of a Palestinian economy. Similar to other boycott and divestment initiatives in the BDS movement, the campaigns against Ahava seek to raise awareness and educate consumers about the company's violations of international law, thereby pressuring the company to end its illegal and exploitative practices

#### *Background of Campaigns against Ahava*

Campaigns focus on a range of issues that are raised by the existence of the company in an Israeli settlement in the West Bank – its location, mislabeling, and exploitation described in the previous paragraph. In focusing on these issues, activists hope to shed light on aspects of Israel's larger system of colonial control. By focusing on the presence of Israel's illegal settlements, its settlement industries and economy, the lack of Palestinian access to resources in these areas, the prevention of Palestinian economic development, and environmental issues of the area in which Palestinians have no say illustrates structures and processes whereby Israel violates international laws and Palestinian rights. Codepink, a US woman's initiated peace and social

justice group, established its “Stolen Beauty” boycott campaign in 2009 to raise awareness about the company and the ways that corporations such as Ahava profit from Israel’s military occupation. The campaign was formally launched with a demonstration of “bikini-clad” activists holding signs and chanting at Ahava’s booth at the Cosmoprof conference in Las Vegas, a major trade show held by the beauty industry each year.<sup>259</sup> The formal launch of the campaign followed three demonstrations by the “Bikini Brigade” that took place in Tel Aviv and New York, and a fact-finding delegation to the Mitzpe Shalem settlement. According to the campaign:

“ ‘Stolen Beauty’ is Codepink’s contribution to the international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Movement against institutions and corporations that give tacit or material support to the Israel’s occupation of the Palestinian Territory, designed to pressure the Israeli government to end the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.”<sup>260</sup>

In the Netherlands, a group of women called “Badjassenbrigade” (Bathrobe Brigade) started demonstrating outside Ahava stores, wearing bathrobes, carrying signs, and singing in an effort to raise awareness of the company and encourage boycott of their products. Inspired by Codepink’s Stolen Beauty campaign, the Bathrobe Brigade launched “Gestolen Schoonheid – Mooi Niet!” (Stolen Beauty – Not Nice!) in September 2009 and considers itself part of a broader international campaign against Ahava. Inspired by their friends in the Netherlands and their use of bathrobes in protests, Codepink’s Stolen Beauty campaign then started to adopt a variety of spa attire in its demonstrations at Ahava stores.

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<sup>259</sup> Codepink, “Today: Bikini-Clad Activists Protest Ahava Cosmetics at Cosmoprof Trade Show,” *Common Dreams*, 20 July 2009; [www.commondreams.org/newswire/2009/07/20-4](http://www.commondreams.org/newswire/2009/07/20-4).

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*

## **4.2 Groups Involved in BDS Campaigns against Ahava**

There are a number of groups involved in the consumer boycott of Ahava products, although most are short-term campaigns organized for specific goals and are ended once the objective (e.g. removal of Ahava products from a company's shelves) has been met. Codepink has the largest and most formal campaign against the company. Other groups such as the Dutch Badjassenbrigade or the Presbyterian Church (USA) have taken part in the consumer boycott of Ahava, but have less formal campaigns against the company. In this section, I briefly describe a number of the groups that have been or are currently engaged in consumer boycott activities against Ahava to provide an overview of the types of groups that have engaged in this form of BDS.

Codepink is a women's-led grassroots anti-war organization in the US. The group began in 2002, in response to then President Bush's color-coded terrorist threat warnings, and seeks to end US funding for war and militarism through a wide range of campaigns. The group boasts 150 chapters across the US and over 150,000 email list subscribers. The group says it does not have members and does not "require official affiliation to speak, act, or protest" with the group. In addition to Israel/Palestine issues, the group has numerous other campaigns including "Peace with Iran," "Bring our War \$\$ Home," and "Ground the Drones." The group uses a range of tactics in their campaigns such as protests, direct action, street theater, holding educational events such as conferences and workshops, and utilizing social media.

Another group organizing consumer boycotts of Ahava is Open Shuhada Street, a South African organization that works for human rights in Israel/Palestine. The group was established in 2009 after a delegation of South African activists visited Hebron in the West Bank, where the group witnessed the closure of Shuhada street

and lack of freedom of movement that Palestinians experience in the city. The group says that it believes the conflict should be resolved according to international law with respect for the rights of those living in the region. The group uses advocacy, lobbying, research, and education to work towards these goals.

The PSC, one of the largest Palestine solidarity organizations in the UK, also works on boycotting Ahava products. Although headquartered in London with a small paid staff, the PSC has 40 branches across the UK. The organization works through an executive committee, which is elected by PSC members at its Annual General Meeting. PSC says the Annual General Meeting is its “policy-making body,” which is run by its members and affiliates. According to the organization, these members and affiliates make up the PSC. The organization says it was established to “campaign for Palestinian rights” and that it works for justice and peace for Palestinians “in support of international law and human rights and against all racism.”<sup>261</sup> PSC holds events (film screenings, art exhibitions, talks, protests, etc.), letter writing campaigns to companies that supply Israeli products or members of the British government, circulating petitions to artists and cultural workers to refrain from performing in Israel, lobbying MPs, sending media complaints to the BBC, pledges for boycotts, etc.

Finally, the Presbyterian Church (USA) has endorsed the boycott of Ahava. It was formed in 1983, when the Presbyterian Church in the US – the “southern branch” – merged with the Presbyterian Church in the USA – the “northern branch.” Presbyterians trace their history to the Protestant Reformation and are largely influenced by the writings of French/Swiss lawyer John Calvin (1509-1564), who became associated with “Reformed theology” and built on the ideas of Martin Luther (1483-1546). Presbyterians claim that their religious thought of Reformed theology

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<sup>261</sup> PSC, “About,” [www.palestinecampaign.org/about/](http://www.palestinecampaign.org/about/).

and their active and representational form of governance makes them distinctive from other Christian denominations. The Presbyterian Church (USA) is the largest Presbyterian denomination in the United States with 2.3 million members, nearly 11,000 congregations, 21,000 ordained ministers, and 94,000 elders.<sup>262</sup>

### **4.3 Organizational Dynamics of BDS Campaigns against Ahava**

In this section, I present a brief overview of a selection of campaigns and activities against Ahava to illustrate the organizational form and dynamics of consumer boycott activism in the BDS movement. These activities take the form of demonstrations, direct actions, letter-writing campaigns, and approaching celebrities that have connections to Ahava, among other tactics. Campaigns against Ahava have taken place in numerous locations around the world (e.g. US, UK, South Africa, etc.) and are usually very loosely organized with very few taking on formal long-term campaigns. Often an objective will be identified (e.g. removing Ahava products from a department store's shelves) and then individuals and/or groups will organize around that particular goal. If the objective is met, activists will likely move on to a different target. Many of the consumer boycotts in the BDS movement, such as those against Ahava, are short-term with specific goals.

An early success of Codepink's Stolen Beauty campaign was to expose and dissolve the association between Ahava, former Sex in the City star Kristin Davis, and Oxfam. At the time, Davis was a Goodwill Ambassador for Oxfam and then signed a contract with Ahava to be their spokesmodel. Oxfam had previously publicly condemned Israeli settlement products, and according to the organization's Advocacy

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<sup>262</sup> Presbyterian Church (USA), "Presbyterian 101: A General Guide to Facts about the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)," [www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/101/](http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/101/).

and Media Manager, Mike Bailey, “The settlements on the West Bank are illegal under international humanitarian law and that creates a lot of problems for the Palestinians that live there. Consumers that are buying...[products from]...illegal settlements need to have that information so that they can make an informed choice.”<sup>263</sup>

The Stolen Beauty campaign approached Davis with a letter during one of her promotional events at Lord & Taylor in New York. The letter handed to Davis and a subsequent letter sent by the group outlined their concerns about the company and asked her to resign from her position as a spokesperson for Ahava. Shortly after Stolen Beauty activists approached Davis at Lord & Taylor, the story was picked up by Page Six, the gossip column of the New York Post. The article stated, “This has been a huge thing...From an Oxfam perspective, Ahava is a polarizing company and Kristin shouldn't be involved with it.”<sup>264</sup> A statement from Oxfam affirmed, “Oxfam remains opposed to settlement trade, in which Ahava is engaged.”<sup>265</sup> During the remainder of her contact with Ahava, Davis did not appear in public relations activities for Oxfam and a few months after Davis was approached by the Stolen Beauty campaign in New York her contract was not renewed with Ahava. Following the break with Ahava, Davis continued her work with Oxfam.<sup>266</sup>

Although not strictly related to consumer boycotts, another high profile success for the Stolen Beauty campaign was the decision by Abigail Disney to disown her investments in Ahava. Disney is the granddaughter of Roy O. Disney, co-founder

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<sup>263</sup> “Concern Over Israel Settlement Exports,” *BBC*, 5 November 2008; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7708244.stm>.

<sup>264</sup> Richard Johnson et al., “‘Sex’ Star, Oxfam Part Ways,” *New York Post*, 12 August 2009; [www.nypost.com/p/pagesix/item\\_o5m9VIo99OqHDauO3134aK](http://www.nypost.com/p/pagesix/item_o5m9VIo99OqHDauO3134aK).

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>266</sup> Codepink Press Release, “CEO of Israeli Cosmetic Firm Ahava Rattled by Growing Boycott,” *Common Dreams*, 14 September 2010.

with his brother of The Walt Disney Company. Her father Roy E. Disney founded Shamrock Holdings, which in 2008 purchased 17 percent of Ahava shares, worth approximately \$12 million at the time.<sup>267</sup> After learning about Israel's use of natural resources in the occupied West Bank from the Stolen Beauty campaign Disney released a statement saying,

“Recent evidence from the Israeli Civil Administration documents that Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories sources mud used in its products from the Occupied shores of the Dead Sea, which is in direct contravention to provisions in the Hague Regulations and the Geneva Convention forbidding the exploitation of occupied natural resources...I cannot in good conscience profit from what is technically the ‘plunder’ or ‘pillage’ of occupied natural resources and the company’s situating its factory in an Israeli settlement in the Occupied West Bank.”<sup>268</sup>

The evidence from Israel's Civil Administration that Disney referred to was obtained from Who Profits, the research project of the Israeli group Coalition of Women for Peace.<sup>269</sup> Through Israel's Freedom of Information law, Who Profits received confirmation from the Civil Administration that Ahava obtained a permit to extract mud from the West Bank section of the Dead Sea. Due to financial and legal restrictions, Disney was not able to divest her assets from Shamrock Holdings at the time. Instead, Disney said that she would donate funds equal to her investments and profits from the investment firm to organizations that work to end illegal use of natural resources in the occupied Palestinian territories.<sup>270</sup> While not directly related to a consumer boycott of Ahava products, the negative publicity about the company,

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<sup>267</sup> Amira Hass, “Disney Family Member Renounces her Investments in Israel's Ahava Cosmetics,” *Haaretz*, 16 July 2012.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>269</sup> The Civil Administration is Israel's military administrative governance body in the West Bank. During the Oslo process, much of the administrative tasks were handed over to the newly established Palestinian Authority, who is in control of Area A. The Civil Administration handles all administrative tasks in Area C, and coordinates with the PA on tasks relating to Area B.

<sup>270</sup> Hass, *Haaretz*, 16 July 2012.

particularly from a high-profile figure, positively contributed to the Stolen Beauty campaign as it added to an environment where consumers may think twice before purchasing controversial products.

Also in the US, the Presbyterian Church (USA) voted in its 220<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2012) to boycott products made in Israeli settlements. Overture (resolution) 15-02 titled, “On Boycotting Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories and Hadiklaim (an Israeli Date Growers Cooperative)” was submitted by the San Francisco Presbytery to the Middle East and Peacemaking Issues Committee. In the “Rationale” section of the overture the Committee specifically cited the Who Profits research project and the Stolen Beauty Campaign as sources of information about Ahava and other companies operating in the Palestinian territories. The Committee made minor amendments and passed the overture in a vote of 37 to 6 with two abstentions. The New Brunswick Presbytery, the Presbytery of Scioto Valley, and the Synod of the Covenant concurred with the overture. The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) changed the wording to include all settlement products, not just those from Ahava and Hadiklaim, and advised the General Assembly to approve the overture. In the General Assembly, textual changes suggested by the committees were taken into consideration and the final draft was overwhelmingly approved with 457 members voting for, 180 voting against, and three abstaining.<sup>271</sup>

While the company names of Ahava and Hadiklaim names were retained in the title of the overture, due to the amendment process the actual final text reads, “Call for the boycott of all Israeli products coming from the occupied Palestinian

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<sup>271</sup> Middle East and Peacemaking Issues Committee, Presbyterian Church (USA), “15-02 On Boycotting Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories and Hadiklaim (an Israeli Date Growers Cooperative),” July 2012; <http://pc-biz.org/Explorer.aspx?id=3775>.

Territories...” Ahava and Hadikliam are then listed as examples. It is important to note that Ahava was used as an initial example and then the application of a consumer boycott was expanded to include all products produced in Israel’s settlements. In its rationale for the change of wording AREC cited a measure passed by the United Methodist General Conference in April 2012 calling it “...a sweeping boycott of ALL goods from ALL Israeli companies operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territories” [emphasis in original] and recommending “widening this overture from two companies to all Israeli companies based in the illegal settlements.”<sup>272</sup>

In the UK, campaigns against Ahava have also been organized. BDS activists demonstrated outside Ahava’s store in London’s upscale Covent Garden neighborhood, and beginning in 2009, a loose group of boycott activists used direct action to physically block the entrance to the store. That year a number of activists were arrested for aggravated trespass, but the cases were dismissed. The following year, numerous activists were arrested and their cases went to trial, although the trial collapsed and the activists were acquitted. Later in 2010 four activists were arrested, their cases went to trial, and the activists were convicted of the charge of aggravated trespass. Of “the Ahava Four,” as they became known in Palestine solidarity circles, two campaigners appealed their convictions, although failed, in the High Court.<sup>273</sup>

In addition to direct actions, activists in London from the BIG campaign, the informal London BDS group, and other unaffiliated activists held bi-weekly demonstrations outside the Ahava store.<sup>274</sup> The group demonstrated with signs, chants, musical instruments, and leaflets passed out to passerby to educate the public

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<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

<sup>273</sup> Times of Israel Staff, “British High Court rules Against Ahava Boycotters,” *Times of Israel*, 8 February 2014; [www.timesofisrael.com/british-high-court-rules-against-ahava-boycotters/](http://www.timesofisrael.com/british-high-court-rules-against-ahava-boycotters/).

<sup>274</sup> The BIG campaign was a subdivision of the larger Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC) in the UK. The BIG campaign has since dissolved as the PSC now focuses on a variety of boycotts, e.g. academic and cultural, and is not limited to product boycotts.

on Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories and to promote boycott of the company. Israel's most widely circulated daily newspaper, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, stated, "The shop's location...has exposed the organized protest against Ahava to masses of British residents and tourists."<sup>275</sup> Eventually, the activists' campaigns were successful, as the property owner of the shop would not renew Ahava's tenancy in the building due to the controversy the store caused. According to an Ahava spokesperson, "The protests damaged our image and created negative media coverage."<sup>276</sup>

In January 2011, John Lewis, a major retail chain throughout the UK confirmed that it had stopped stocking Ahava products in its stores. In a letter to the PSC, Managing Director for John Lewis Andy Street, stated, "As a socially responsible retailer, John Lewis takes very seriously the treatment of workers and their working conditions. We expect all our suppliers not only to obey the law, but also to respect the rights, interests, and well-being of their employees, their communities, and the environment."<sup>277</sup> A spokesperson for the company later told the *Jerusalem Post*, "John Lewis' decision to no longer stock Ahava beauty products was based solely on the sales performance of the products."<sup>278</sup> The spokesperson confirmed that managing director Andy Street had written to PSC regarding discontinuation of Ahava products at the company's stores and the company's policy on ethical sourcing.<sup>279</sup>

Canadian BDS activists pressured The Bay, a Canadian retailer, not to carry Ahava products. In early 2011, the store confirmed that it had removed the company's

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<sup>275</sup> Yaniv Halily, "Ahava Closes London Store Over Threats," *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 22 September 2011; [www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4125530,00.html](http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4125530,00.html).

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>277</sup> BIG Campaign, "John Lewis Stops Stocking Ahava Products in Britain," 14 January 2011; [www.bigcampaign.org](http://www.bigcampaign.org).

<sup>278</sup> Jonny Paul, "British Retailer Denies Boycotting Israeli Cosmetics," *Jerusalem Post*, 16 January 2011; [www.jpost.com/International/British-retailer-denies-boycotting-Israeli-cosmetics](http://www.jpost.com/International/British-retailer-denies-boycotting-Israeli-cosmetics).

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*

products from its shelves. Originally, a spokesperson for the The Bay stated that the removal of Ahava products was part of their plan to update their wellness area and make room for new, upcoming products.<sup>280</sup> The following day Bonnie Brooks, the CEO of Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), the parent company of The Bay, stated that Ahava "has been discontinued globally by the brand owner, not the Bay..."<sup>281</sup> However, Ahava responded, "Our products are available globally."<sup>282</sup> Brooks maintained the HBC decision was completely financial, but acknowledged, "it occurred at the same time as an aggressive campaign by several groups advocating for a boycott of Ahava products."<sup>283</sup>

In South Africa, activists started encouraging Wellness Warehouse, a natural and wellness retail chain mainly in the Cape Town area, to stop carrying Ahava products. In 2010 activists from the Open Shuhada Street group lodged a complaint with the Office of Consumer Protection that Wellness Warehouse and SDV Pharmaceuticals were misleading consumers by carrying Ahava products, which were incorrectly labeled as "Made in Israel." Activists from the group, along with University of Cape Town Palestine Solidarity Forum and other supporters started organizing regular protests at the store.

Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies published Notice 379 in May 2012 in the Government Gazette, which is the official means of communication between the government and public. The notice required businesses to not incorrectly label goods from the occupied Palestinian territories as goods from Israel, as this would violate the Consumer Protection Act of 2008. The Notice stated,

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<sup>280</sup> Atara Beck, "Confusion Reigns at The Bay," *Jewish Tribune*, 19 January 2011; [www.jewishtribune.ca](http://www.jewishtribune.ca).

<sup>281</sup> Avraham Zuroff, "Ahava Confirms 'The Bay is Committed to Ahava Brand' but Says it Products Were Not Discontinued," *Jewish Tribune*, 26 January 2011; [www.jewishtribune.ca](http://www.jewishtribune.ca).

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> BIG Campaign, "John Lewis Stops Stocking Ahava Products in Britain," 14 January 2011.

“The Open Shuhada.org (Open Shuhada) [group] has alleged that products of Ahava...are being distributed in South Africa as products that originate in Israel whereas they originate from the OPT. In this regard consumers in South Africa should not be misled into believing that products originating from the OPT are products originating from Israel.”<sup>284</sup>

The public had 60 days to comment on the Notice. The government considered the comments and in October 2012 published Notice 832 in the Government Gazette. The Notice stated that goods that originate from “Israeli Occupied Territory (IOT)” must be labeled as such and that only products originating from within the Green Line may be labeled as “Made in Israel.”<sup>285</sup> Again, the public was given 30 days to make comments on the proposed regulation. During that time a range of pro-Israel and anti-BDS groups and individuals claimed that labeling products as made in the IOT was racist, discriminatory, and motivated by “political bias against the state of Israel.”<sup>286</sup> In April 2013, the Ministry published its final Notice on the matter and changed the wording for goods from the occupied territories as originating from “IOT” to “East Jerusalem: Israeli Goods,” “Gaza: Israeli Goods,” and “West Bank: Israeli Goods.”<sup>287</sup>

The combination of repeated protests outside the store organized by BDS activists and the policy decisions of the government, which was itself influenced by BDS activists in the Open Shuhada Street group as indicated in the original Notice, led to the temporary removal of Ahava products from the shelves of Wellness Warehouse. In October 2012, a staff member at the store confirmed that Ahava

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<sup>284</sup> Republic of South Africa, Government Gazette No. 35328 Notice 379, 10 May 2012; [www.greengazette.co.za/documents/national-gazette-35328-of-10-may-2012-vol-563\\_20120510-GGN-35328](http://www.greengazette.co.za/documents/national-gazette-35328-of-10-may-2012-vol-563_20120510-GGN-35328).

<sup>285</sup> Ibid, Government Gazette No. 35796 Notice 832, 12 October 2012; [www.thedti.gov.za/gazettes/gg\\_35769.pdf](http://www.thedti.gov.za/gazettes/gg_35769.pdf)

<sup>286</sup> “Israel Angry at S Africa 'Occupied Territories' Labels,” *BBC*, 22 August 2012; [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-19347577](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-19347577).

<sup>287</sup> Republic of South Africa, Government Gazette No. 36364 Notice 380, 12 April 2013; [www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=190110](http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=190110).

products had been removed from the shelves stating, “the stock was not moving.”<sup>288</sup> In April of the following year when the government issued its final Notice on product labeling from Israel and the occupied territories, Wellness Warehouse issued a press release. In the statement the store said, “The Ahava product labels are not compliant with the new regulation, as they are currently labelled ‘Made in Israel’. Wellness Warehouse has returned the products to the importer for correct labeling in accordance with the regulation.”<sup>289</sup> While Ahava products will likely return to the shelves of Wellness Warehouse at some point, the dedicated efforts of BDS activists in South Africa on the street and through government channels were significant. The activists raised awareness among the public and the government, and were instrumental in changing product labels for goods made in Israeli settlements.

In addition to these boycott activities leveled at Ahava by BDS activists, a number of key reports from organizations have been published about the company. B’Tselem, an Israeli NGO that works on Palestinian human rights in the occupied territories, published in May 2011 a report titled, “Dispossession and Exploitation: Israel’s Policy in the Jordan Valley and the Northern Dead Sea.” The report specifically mentioned Ahava as a company engaging in economic exploitation. In addition, the report provided a detailed context of Israeli control over natural resources in the area (especially land and water), and the restrictions on movement and development imposed on Palestinians. The organization urged Israel to evacuate the settlements, close any businesses operating there, allow Palestinians access to natural resources, and permit building in Palestinian communities.

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<sup>288</sup> “Retailers Sticks to Ahava,” *Voice of the Cape*, 3 October 2012; [www.vocfm.co.za/index.php/news/general/item/6551-retailer-sticks-to-ahava](http://www.vocfm.co.za/index.php/news/general/item/6551-retailer-sticks-to-ahava).

<sup>289</sup> Wellness Warehouse, “Wellness Warehouse Returns Ahava Products to Importer for Relabeling in Accordance with Consumer Protection Act,” Press Release 23 April 2013; [www.wellnesswarehouse.com/blog/?blogID=374](http://www.wellnesswarehouse.com/blog/?blogID=374).

In 2012 Al-Haq, a prominent Palestinian organization focusing on legal issues, published, “Pillage of the Dead Sea: Israel’s Unlawful Exploitation of Natural Resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.” The report argued that Israel violates humanitarian and human rights laws by favoring Israeli interests in the occupied Palestinian territories, thereby preventing Palestinian self-determination, and contributing to the pillage of Palestinian natural resources by private actors. Ahava was cited as a particular example of these violations. The report called on Israel to cease all violations of international law and human rights and called on third parties to ensure Israel conforms to international conventions. The report particularly mentioned that EU-funded research projects with Ahava and incorrect labeling of settlement products not only violated European laws, but also the EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy and the European Neighborhood Policy, which allows duty free access to European markets.

In April 2012, Who Profits (mentioned earlier) published “Ahava: Tracking the Trade Trail of Settlement Products.” The report is the most extensive and detailed of the Ahava corporation to date. The report tracked the company’s supply chain that involves numerous companies who source raw ingredients to Ahava, which the company then combines to form its brand of products. The report revealed these companies, as they are not listed on Ahava products yet contribute to violations of international law. The information also showed that Ahava excavates mud from the occupied portion of the West Bank, which according to Israel’s Civil Administration is the only company that has a permit to extract the mud for commercial purposes. Who Profits also considered how Ahava labels its products in foreign markets. In Europe and South Africa in particular Ahava’s “Made in Israel” label has come under scrutiny. The report stated that the company knowingly misleads consumers and

incorrectly labels its products, which is illegal in the European Union. The report concluded that the company undeniably extracts components for its products from occupied Palestinian territory, that companies involved in the supply chain of Ahava products indirectly violate international law, and that the company falsely labels its products. Taken together, Who Profits said these practices exploit Palestinian natural resources, violate international law, and contribute to Israel's prolonged occupation of the Palestinian territories.

As discussed earlier, the relationship between Oxfam and their Goodwill Ambassador Kristin Davis became problematic when Davis signed a public relations contract with Ahava. Oxfam's stated positions on Israel's settlements were not compatible with a celebrity publicly promoting settlement products. In addition to previous statements, Oxfam published a briefing paper in July 2012 titled, "On the Brink: Israeli Settlements and their Impact on Palestinians in the Jordan Valley." Although the report only focused on Israeli settlements in a particular area of the West Bank, the thrust of the findings and recommendations were similar to those echoed in other reports. The report stated that Israel expropriates and exploits Palestinian natural resources, which helps maintain and expand the settlement economy. At the same time, these policies and practices destroy Palestinian livelihood in the area and the possibility for a Palestinian state in the future on the land.

In addition, a group of 22 prominent European organizations published a report titled "Trading Away Peace: How Europe Helps Sustain Illegal Israeli Settlements" in October 2012. Similar to other reports, it provided a background on the impact of illegal Israeli settlements on Palestinian livelihoods, the two unequal economies in the West Bank – that of the settlement economy and that of the Palestinian economy, European economic links with settlements, and European

policies on settlements. The report listed 12 recommendations including banning the import of settlement products to European markets, excluding settlement companies from public procurement, excluding settlements from bilateral agreements and cooperation schemes, and removing organizations funding settlements from tax deduction systems.

These reports add to a general boycott environment of Ahava often providing activists with the ethical and legal legitimization for pursuing further BDS activities against the company. These reports are cited by activists and frequently appear on websites promoting consumer boycott. The Stolen Beauty website for example contains links to the reports described above, along with links to the latest news regarding campaigns against Ahava or other BDS campaigns, particularly those against settlement products. The links to news and analysis on the Stolen Beauty website do not follow that of formal campaigns; rather these info-links provide general news and analysis that relates to the BDS movement. For example, at the time of writing, selected news titles included “Close the EU to Israeli Settlement Products” in Haaretz newspaper, “9 Brands You Can Boycott to Hold Israel Accountable for its Violations of International Law” on the PolicyMic website, and “In West Bank Settlements, Israeli Jobs are Two-Edged Sword” from the New York Times. The reports by organizations on Ahava along with other news and analysis leads to the production of research and information within the movement, which supports the goal of raising awareness of consumer boycotts against Ahava and the BDS movement more generally.

In addition to presenting research and information, the websites of groups involved in activities against Ahava are also interactive portals for further activism. On its Stolen Beauty website, Codepink has numerous ways that activists can

participate in boycotts of Ahava products. The first is by signing the boycott pledge, which is available in seven languages. The next is by taking action at an Ahava store, for which Codepink has provided a 10-point guide. Activists can also participate in online actions. This includes asking Nordstrom to stop selling Ahava products, thanking Lonely Planet for removing the Ahava visitor's center from its suggested itinerary for the Dead Sea region, signing the Codepink e-card thanking Abigail Disney for her stand against Ahava, and contacting Macy's department store to ask them to stop carrying Ahava and SodaStream products. The website also has links for following the campaign on Twitter and Facebook. On the PSC website, green buttons with capital letters stating "TAKE ACTION" take participants to specific pages with information for action. Once redirected to the specific webpages, users can take part in a variety of ways – often something as simple as typing in one's postcode to find their MP and sending a form letter prewritten by the organization. These user-friendly tasks can disseminate information quickly and easily mobilize participants, particularly for actions such as letter-writing campaigns.

#### **4.4 Significance of Consumer Boycotts against Ahava**

Campaigns against Ahava are significant for a number of reasons. The first is that, as illustrated in the previous section, there have been a number of achievements in the campaigns against Ahava. Codepink's success in exposing and breaking the link between Kristin Davis, Oxfam, and Ahava, along with persuading Abigail Disney to denounce her connection and investments with the company has raised the issue of settlements and consumer boycott in high profile cases. The Presbyterian Church (USA) resolution calling for a consumer boycott of Ahava products that was extended to include all settlement products was a recent iteration of increasing church-related

activism in the BDS movement. The closing of an Ahava store in central London due to continued activist pressure made clear that the company cannot open stores wherever it would like. Moreover, the formal channels through which South Africa's Open Shuhada Street and other BDS activists were successful in changing the labels that appear on settlement products so that consumers are aware of where goods originate prevents the company from incorrectly labeling its products as "made in Israel."

As this chapter has indicated, campaigns and actions against Ahava are not limited to a specific location and have taken place across borders. A selection of activities detailed in this chapter against the company have taken place in the US, Israel, the Netherlands, South Africa, Britain, and Canada. This is significant because Ahava is a global brand that wants to develop and expand its markets abroad, particularly as the Israeli market is limited due to its size and is the source of less than half of the company's revenue. Activists use the company as a target to bring contention across borders – seeking to illuminate not just aspects of the company discussed in this chapter, but also to raise the issue of settlements among the general public and use the company as a representative example of many of the related problems in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Campaigns against Ahava are also significant because the Palestinian BNC has endorsed them. With respect to the Presbyterian Church (USA) 2012 resolution that calls for the prohibition on imports of Israeli settlement products in which Ahava is specifically named, the BNC stated,

"As Palestinians, we are inspired by the impressive mass mobilization brought by this resolution and the spirit of genuine international solidarity demonstrated by those who have tirelessly worked to stand up firmly behind the full set of Palestinian human rights... We salute the

Presbyterian Church (USA) for its decisive steps towards ending forms of direct complicity in Israel's oppression of Palestinians."<sup>290</sup>

In November 2012, the BNC published an article titled, "Five Ways to Effectively Support Gaza through Boycotts, Divestment, and Sanctions." The first way mentioned was to refrain from purchasing Israeli goods. The document encouraged supporters to refuse to buy Israeli products, let merchants know the products are being boycotted, and encourage family and friends to also not buy Israeli goods. Of the five companies listed, Ahava is the first one named. Finally, although not relating to Ahava in particular, the BNC endorsed in February 2013 the report of the "UN Fact Finding Mission on Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory." The BNC said that it particularly appreciated the Mission's conclusion that Israel's settlement enterprise involves third-party accountability, including legal responsibilities of private businesses. The BNC went on to call on governments and corporations to implement the Mission's recommendations and encouraged activists to use the report "as a tool to intensify the global civil society BDS Campaign."

#### **4.5 Dynamics between Campaigners and Opponents**

The dynamic interaction between the campaigners of consumer boycotts in the BDS movement and opponents shows that the relationship between the two sides is ongoing and contentious. Boycott activists produce negative publicity about the company and bring to the fore the issue of Israel's settlement project in the occupied Palestinian territories. In response, those that support Israel's colonial endeavors strive to impede boycott activities against Ahava and other companies. This has taken

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<sup>290</sup> Palestinian BNC, "Palestinian Civil Society Welcomes Presbyterian Church (USA) Israel Boycott Resolution," 7 July 2012; [www.bdsmovement.net/2012/palestinian-civil-society-welcomes-presbyterian-church-usa-israel-boycott-resolution-9197](http://www.bdsmovement.net/2012/palestinian-civil-society-welcomes-presbyterian-church-usa-israel-boycott-resolution-9197).

several forms, including an official response from Ahava's CEO refuting the claims (e.g. that the settlement's location violates international law) of boycott activists and pro-Israeli settlement activists directly contesting consumer boycotts by purchasing Israel's settlement products.

In 2010, Ahava CEO Yaacov Ellis sent a letter to suppliers of Ahava products in response to boycott activities against the company. In the letter, Ellis addressed the main points and countered the claims of BDS activists. Ellis referred to those that organize boycott campaigns against Ahava as "small, radical fringe organizations," and a "fanatical group."<sup>291</sup> He said the groups are known for their "anti-American...[and] anti-Israeli conduct..."<sup>292</sup> With respect to the legal status of the West Bank, Ellis stated,

"Ahava's use of the Mitzpe Shalem facility is legal and does not violate any provision of International Law, especially as there is no recognized right of any people's other than Israel to the West Bank."<sup>293</sup>

In regards to effect of the settlement or its industries on Palestinians, the CEO said that the company had not received any complaint from "any legitimate representative of the Palestinian population and does not violate any rights of any peoples." He went on to say that the company would resist any boycott actions against it and would consider legal action if required.

In addition to the official response from the company to BDS campaigns, a group has formed in the US to directly challenge the consumer boycott efforts of BDS activists. Buy Israeli Goods (BIG) was formed by the America-Israel Chamber of

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<sup>291</sup> Codepink, "Letter from Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories President and CEO Yaakov Ellis," 2010; [www.codepinkalert.org/article.php?id=5548](http://www.codepinkalert.org/article.php?id=5548).

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

Commerce Chicago and StandWithUs. The America-Israel Chamber of Commerce Chicago is an organization that seeks to build business connections between the US and Israel, and StandWithUS is a pro-Israel advocacy organization with branches across the US.<sup>294</sup> The group's name – Buy Israel Goods – is an explicit play on the phrase “Boycott Israeli Goods,” (BIG), for which there was an official campaign of the PSC discussed earlier. The goal of Buy Israel Goods is to promote the purchase of Israeli products, specifically those being targeted for boycott by Palestinians and solidarity activists. According to the group's website, “...the frequent purchase of Israeli products will have a broad and significant impact on the Israeli economy and its citizens, and perhaps even on its ability to survive.”<sup>295</sup> The group's website is a database of stores that carry Israeli products, from which consumers can search for retailers in their local area or for online stores that carry Israeli products.<sup>296</sup>

Specific actions have been planned by these groups and others to oppose boycott actions by BDS campaigners. For example, 30 November 2010 was planned as a “Buy Israel Goods Day” in direct response to an Ahava boycott action organized by Codepink at Ricky's in New York for the same day. The two organizations that formed the Buy Israel Goods website “urg[ed] members of synagogues, schools, colleges and community groups to go to local stores and request Israeli-made products, particularly those targeted by boycotters.”<sup>297</sup> Similarly, when The Bay was targeted by Ahava boycotters in Canada, anti-BDS challengers recommended that supporters visit their local store, purchase Ahava products, and thank the store for

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<sup>294</sup> The America - Israel Chamber of Commerce Chicago, “About AICC,” [www.americaisrael.org/scripts/abo\\_Index.asp](http://www.americaisrael.org/scripts/abo_Index.asp); StandWithUs, “About Us,” [www.standwithus.com/aboutus/](http://www.standwithus.com/aboutus/).

<sup>295</sup> Buy Israel Goods, “Help Israel,” [www.buyisraelgoods.org/](http://www.buyisraelgoods.org/).

<sup>296</sup> StandWithUS, “Buy Israeli Goods,” [www.buyisraelgoods.com/landing2013.asp](http://www.buyisraelgoods.com/landing2013.asp).

America-Israel Chamber of Commerce & Industry. “Buy Israel Goods,” [www.buyisraelgoods.org/](http://www.buyisraelgoods.org/).

<sup>297</sup> Sue Fishkoff, “Nov. 30 Declared Buy Israel day,” 23 November 2010; [www.jta.org/2010/11/23/news-opinion/united-states/nov-30-declared-buy-israel-day](http://www.jta.org/2010/11/23/news-opinion/united-states/nov-30-declared-buy-israel-day).

stocking Ahava. Those opposing BDS were also asked to write to The Bay executives, for which the contact details were provided for the Chairman, President and CEO, and the Director of Beauty Products, to encourage them to continue carrying Ahava products in their stores.<sup>298</sup> In these particular actions, challengers to BDS campaigners directly sought to thwart the boycott goals of activists.

In this way, the dynamics between boycotters and opponents is somewhat of a tit for tat interplay. BDS activists will push the status quo by calling for a boycott and other punitive measures, which lead the opposing side to respond, often with reverse actions. The letter written by Ahava's CEO to suppliers of the company's products and the Buy Israeli Goods days organized in response to boycott actions are direct forms of contesting consumer boycotts in the BDS movement. The goal of BDS opponents is to overturn the abilities and achievements of BDS activists, or at the least to hamper these efforts; however, this has yet to be accomplished as consumer boycott campaigns and activities successfully continue against Ahava.

#### **4.6 Analyzing the Case of BDS Campaigns against Ahava**

In analyzing the case of BDS campaigns against Ahava, a number of attributes can be identified about the campaigns and the movement overall. The first has to do with the campaigns targeting a company located in an Israeli settlement in occupied Palestinian territory. BDS campaigns or even less formal boycott activities against Ahava raise the issue of settlements in Palestine activism. By concentrating on settlements, activists can explain how settlements are contrary to international law, why Palestinians lack access to resources in the occupied territories, and how this

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<sup>298</sup> StandWithUs, "URGENT BUYcott Israel Alert: Shop AHAVA at the Bay," [www.standwithus.com/news/article.asp?id=1720](http://www.standwithus.com/news/article.asp?id=1720).

prevents the development of a Palestinian economy. Therefore, the focus on settlements that arises from consumer boycott efforts against Ahava illuminates part of a larger Israeli system of colonial control over Palestinians.

As is the case with most BDS campaigns, a major objective in participating in such boycott activities is to raise public awareness of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the BDS movement. By directing attention to the contentious nature of Jewish-Israeli only colonies, activists broach topics that supporters of settlements would prefer go unnoticed and unquestioned so that the status quo prevails. By focusing on a particular company located in a settlement that uses natural resources not granted to the state of Israel, campaigns and actions against Ahava have brought to the fore the illegal and colonial character of Israel's settlement endeavors in the occupied Palestinian territories. In doing this activists justify boycott as a legitimate tactic to pressure the company and the state to comply with international law and respect Palestinian rights.

Another important aspect of the consumer boycott campaigns against Ahava and the movement is the importance in continually referring to international law by BDS activists. This frame of reference morally and legally justifies the campaigners' claims that Israel violates international standards and principles, thereby requiring action. Codepink's website, the resolution passed by the Presbyterian Church (USA), letter-writing campaigns by British activists to John Lewis and Canadian activists to The Bay, and all the reports written by organizations discuss Israel's violations of international law. Specifically activists focus on the illegal nature of Israel's settlements in occupied Palestinian territories, the economy surrounding settlement industries that maintains and supports their existence, and the harm this causes Palestinians individually and collectively in pursuit of their rights. Focusing on

international law provides BDS activists with moral and legal justification for boycott action against companies such as Ahava.

Campaigns and actions against Ahava also indicate that corporate complicity in Israel's system of control is an important underlying reason for activists to pursue targets such as Ahava. This aspect of the movement is identifiable in other BDS campaigns, specifically in the We Divest campaign discussed in the previous chapter. Similar to the divestment campaign against TIAA-CREF, activists believe that corporations should be held accountable for their actions and that profit making at the expense of human rights or the environment can be subject to consumer attention. Clearly, the role of businesses in supporting and continuing Israel's policies against the Palestinians is essential for activists in the BDS movement.

This facet of the movement conceptually situates BDS activism alongside the work of other causes. The ideas of international law and corporate complicity are widespread across a range of global justice issues, thereby making the notions recognizable to activists not familiar with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or the BDS movement. The collective action frames that BDS activists use in their campaigns is one point of intersection that I suggest the border-crossing movement has with other contemporary transnational movements. Collective action frames along with other points of intersection are discussed more in chapter six, where I explore the connective linkages between the BDS movement and other movements working on justice-related causes across borders.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has investigated the case of consumer boycotts against Ahava in the BDS movement. Specifically, this chapter has laid out the background of Ahava and

campaigns against the company. I provided an overview of a number of the groups involved in the campaigns, and then examined the organizational form and dynamics of consumer boycott campaigns and activities against the company. This was to offer a summary of the kinds of groups involved in consumer boycotts in the movement and the ways in which these boycotts take shape. I also discussed the significance of campaigns against Ahava and the dynamic interactions between boycott campaigners and opponents to illuminate the contested terrain in which BDS campaigns develop. The chapter ended with an analysis of the campaigns in which I identified aspects of the consumer boycott campaigns against Ahava and the wider BDS movement across borders.

These boycott campaigns and activities aim to expose the company as a business that contributes to and promotes the proliferation of Israel's state-building project in the occupied Palestinian territories. Throughout these BDS efforts, activists attempt to raise awareness of Israel's Jewish-only settlements and the industries that sustain them, which form an integral part of Israel's occupation and colonization on the ground. By raising the issue of settlements, consumer boycotts against Ahava indicate that the role of international law and corporate complicity are important conceptual themes for activists within the BDS movement as they ultimately try to pressure the state to change its policies and practices towards Palestinians. These collective action frames resonate with activists working on other causes and are not unique to the BDS movement. Information from this chapter partly contributes to an analysis of these frames and other points of intersection with other contemporary transnational movements in chapter six. In these ways, the case of consumer boycott campaigns against Ahava in the BDS movement indicate that the movement's scope

and frames play a part in the movement's distinctiveness in the Palestinian struggle for justice.

## Chapter 5 – BDS Movement Structure and Processes

### **Introduction**

The BDS movement is organized in a variety of ways across borders and is widely flexible in terms of its structure and processes. As indicated in the case study chapters, groups and organizations involved in the BDS movement largely determine their own campaigns – the target, the tactics (boycott, divestment), and the sub-tactics such as demonstrations, sit-ins, flashmobs, etc. Individuals, groups, and organizations for the most part participate in the BDS movement as they would like. There is no formal membership or terms for participation in the movement. The basic conditions of support are agreement with the three demands in the Palestinian call for BDS in 2005.

In this chapter, I first consider the Palestinian Boycott National Committee and the question of leadership. I examine how the committee came into existence, what its main roles are, and then consider precisely what is Palestinian-led in the BDS movement. I argue that the principles and goals, historical use of boycott in the Palestinian struggle, many foundational efforts in developing the movement, and the movement inside the occupied Palestinian territories are all Palestinian-led. Outside these areas, there is a large degree of autonomy in local campaigns around the world. I then consider context sensitivity and the role of local organizing in the movement. In this section, I maintain that this is a critical component in the structure of the movement and makes possible a border-crossing, decentralized movement based on BDS. Finally, I analyze networks and border-crossing coordination in the movement. Vast connections among groups form the web of the BDS movement. Taken together, these aspects of the BDS movement contribute to and further demonstrate the

movement's decentralized structure and fluid organizational processes, which represents a new and different way of challenging Israel in the Palestinian struggle.

### **5.1 The Palestinian Boycott National Committee and the Question of Leadership**

The global call for BDS in 2005 was endorsed by over 170 Palestinian groups, organizations, unions, and political parties in the Palestinian territories, present-day Israel, and the diaspora. The Palestinian body that speaks on behalf of the movement and for Palestinians is the Palestinian BNC. According to the BDS movement's website, the current role and mandate of the BNC is:

- To strengthen and spread the culture of boycott as a central form of civil resistance to Israeli occupation, colonialism and apartheid;
- To formulate strategies and programs of action in accordance with the 9 July 2005 Palestinian Civil Society BDS Call;
- To serve as the Palestinian reference point for BDS campaigns in the region and worldwide;
- To serve as the national reference point for anti-normalization campaigns within Palestine;
- To facilitate coordination and provide support & encouragement to the various BDS campaign efforts in all locations<sup>299</sup>

The BNC was established following the first BDS conference in Ramallah in 2007 and is comprised of 27 members.<sup>300</sup> Structurally the BNC includes a General Assembly (GA) and a Secretariat. The GA includes representatives from each BNC member, while the Secretariat is smaller and “designed more as a working body.”<sup>301</sup> Groups that are part of the BNC internally select their representatives that attend GA and Secretariat meeting.<sup>302</sup> The GA meets approximately every three months in open meetings, where the Secretariat presents reports and updates members on activities.

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<sup>299</sup> BDS Movement, “Palestinian BDS National Committee,” [www.bdsmovement.net/bnc](http://www.bdsmovement.net/bnc).

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> Michael Deas, BNC, interview by author, 7 September 2012.

<sup>302</sup> Mohammed Yahya, GUPW, interview by author, GUPW, 4 April 2012.

Any Palestinian coalition that signed the 2005 global call had the opportunity to join the BNC; those that wanted to play a more direct and active role in the movement are the organizations that comprise the BNC. Members of the BNC Secretariat are directly involved in day-to-day decisions and implementing BNC plans.<sup>303</sup>

With respect to the position of the BNC within Palestinian civil society, George Giacaman, a prominent Palestinian intellectual and Director of Muwatin, The Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy, said “...those civil society organizations that are represented are the most prominent, more effective, largest, most well-known; the ones that can influence internal Palestinian public opinion...”<sup>304</sup> PACBI member and member of the BNC Secretariat Omar Barghouti says the BNC “[is the] biggest Palestinian coalition in existence – nothing is as wide and democratic as the BNC...” He explains,

“[the] BNC is a coalition of coalitions and networks – if you are a single organization you can’t join the BNC, but if you are part of a coalition then the coalition can be a member of the BNC. That’s why it’s the biggest and most important coalition in Palestinian civil society today...If you are part of PFLP student group you can’t be part of the BNC. This guarantees that no political party dominates and all political parties participate. This guards our independence and autonomy; [the] most important aspects. [The] BNC commands respect in Palestinian society because it is totally autonomous and inclusive – everyone is in it and no one controls it.”<sup>305</sup>

In 2008, the BNC published a position paper titled, “United against Apartheid, Colonialism, and Occupation – Dignity and Justice for the Palestinian People.” This document would become an ideological cornerstone for Palestinian goals for a border-crossing BDS movement. According to the BNC, it “provides the legal and ethical

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<sup>303</sup> Omar Barghouti, PACBI and BNC, interview by author, 17 April 2012.

<sup>304</sup> George Giacaman, Muwatin, interview by author, 3 March 2012.

<sup>305</sup> Omar Barghouti, PACBI and BNC interview by author, 17 April 2012.

foundation for the BDS campaign.”<sup>306</sup> It detailed Israel’s three-pronged system of control over Palestinians, and how each of the three demands of the BDS movement specifically corresponded to each aspect.

Shortly after the BNC adopted the strategic position paper described above, “The Bilbao Initiative: Towards a Just Peace in Palestine” took place in the Basque country. At the Initiative, Palestinian organizations that were members of the BNC gathered with Israeli and European groups to strategize new ways to support the Palestinian struggle. To participate in the Initiative, organizations had to agree to “The Document of Reference,” which included the three demands of the Palestinian call for BDS made in 2005. During the Initiative, the BNC position paper mentioned above was discussed and accepted. Similar to other gatherings before and after dealing with BDS and related themes, the Initiative was a space for activists to meet in person, strategize, and coordinate activities. The first point of the Action Plan that was adopted because of the proceedings specifically called for global implementation of BDS based on the 2005 call.

The BNC clearly has an important position in the movement. Its stated role and mandate are to promote and assist in the development of a movement across borders, and the coalitions and networks on the BNC indicate broad representation of Palestinian organizational actors. The committee articulated moral and legal legitimacy for the movement in its strategic position paper in 2008 and has deployed that rationale in border-crossing meetings such as the Bilbao Initiative. While the importance of the BNC is apparent, its function and standing within the larger movement does not suggest a hierarchical or centralized structure that commands the

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<sup>306</sup> BNC, “Apartheid, Colonisation and Occupation,” [www.bdsmovement.net/apartheid-colonisation-occupation](http://www.bdsmovement.net/apartheid-colonisation-occupation).

transnational movement. In this regard, it is necessary to address the question of a “Palestinian-led” movement.

It is often repeated within the BDS movement and by opponents that the movement is Palestinian-led. The We Divest campaign, for example, states in the “About BDS” section on its website that it is a “Palestinian-led movement.”<sup>307</sup> In a letter to the Director of Public Relations for Nordstrom, Code Pink’s Linda Frank called on the fashion retailer to boycott Ahava products to comply with the company’s own guidelines regarding product labelling and “to honor the Palestinian-led call for an international boycott...”<sup>308</sup> In 2014, a New Jersey Rabbi developed an app called Am Yisrael Buy to help consumers support Israeli-made products. The app “is meant to act against BDS, a Palestinian-led movement that calls for a boycott of Israeli goods...”<sup>309</sup> In a 2010 Policy Brief for al-Shabaka, Barghouti stated that the transnational BDS movement is “guided by its Palestinian leadership” and the establishment of the BNC “created a unified *reference* and guiding force for the global BDS movement” (emphasis in original). Later in the document, Barghouti referenced the South African anti-apartheid struggle stating, “genuine solidarity movements recognize and follow the oppressed.”<sup>310</sup>

In the organizational survey that I conducted as part of my doctoral research on the BDS movement the following statement was posed to Palestine solidarity organizations: “It is important to support the BDS movement because the principles and ideas are Palestinian-led.” Of the 83 responses, 62 answered Strongly Agree, 17

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<sup>307</sup> We Divest, “About BDS,” <https://wedivest.org/p/240/bds#.VSFUcPmUefg>.

<sup>308</sup> Stolen Beauty, “Letter from Linda Frank to Tara Darrow, Nordstrom’s Director of Public Relations,” [www.stolenbeauty.org/article.php?id=5389](http://www.stolenbeauty.org/article.php?id=5389).

<sup>309</sup> Jessica Mazzola, “N.J. Rabbi Creates App to Combat Palestinian-Led Boycott of Israel,” NJ.com, 8 October 2014; [www.nj.com/essex/index.ssf/2014/10/nj\\_rabbi\\_creates\\_app\\_to\\_combat\\_palestinian-led\\_boycott\\_of\\_israel.html](http://www.nj.com/essex/index.ssf/2014/10/nj_rabbi_creates_app_to_combat_palestinian-led_boycott_of_israel.html).

<sup>310</sup> Barghouti, “BDS: A Global Movement for Freedom and Justice,” [http://al-shabaka.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/bds-global-movement-freedom-amp-justice\\_0.pdf](http://al-shabaka.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/bds-global-movement-freedom-amp-justice_0.pdf).

Agree, and 4 Neutral. Of all respondents, none disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Of the 83 respondents, 95.2 percent responded positively to the importance of supporting the movement because of Palestinian-led principles and ideas.<sup>311</sup>

Is the BDS movement guided by Palestinians? Do Palestinians lead the movement? Do Palestine solidarity groups follow Palestinians? If so, *how* is the movement Palestinian-led? What appears to be the case in the border-crossing BDS movement is less formal, established, or potentially even agreed upon. In the following paragraphs, I outline the ways the movement is Palestinian-led.

First, and most importantly, the principles and goals of the movement are Palestinian-led and form the basis for the border-crossing BDS movement. These are based in the specific historical experience of Palestinians that has to do with colonial subjugation and the long-term pursuit for freedom and justice. Specifically, the experiences associated with the state of Israel's creation in 1948 and the resulting Palestinian nakba, the continued military occupation of Palestinian territories, and discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel, have been the tangible basis for organizing a BDS movement across borders. These experiences inform the principles and goals in the Palestinian call for BDS in 2005, specifically the three demands in the global call.

In addition, the historical repertoire of boycott in the Palestinian struggle plays a significant role in developing a BDS movement for Palestinian justice. This has been analyzed in chapter one of this thesis on the origins of the BDS movement. As illustrated in that chapter, boycotts, non-cooperation, and anti-normalization are broadly connected concepts and practices of refusing to engage with colonial

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<sup>311</sup> BDS Survey, Question Number 5. See Appendix II for the complete survey.

authorities that have been repeatedly used in the Palestinian struggle. In particular, these tactics have been collectively demonstrated during the 1936 revolt, the first intifada that began in 1987, and the second intifada that started in 2000.

Moreover, many (although not all) of the foundational efforts towards developing the movement were Palestinian-led. As evidenced in chapter one of this thesis on the emergence of the BDS movement, Palestinian initiatives have been active from 2000 on. At the NGO Forum at the World Conference against Racism in 2001 Palestinian organizations showed their ability to organize and mobilize support for their agenda among NGOs around the world. Specifically, the reference to the South African struggle against apartheid and Israel's violations of human rights and other international laws would go on to be strategically deployed frames within the movement and utilized by nearly every BDS campaign around the world thereafter. The main issues affecting Palestinians – the right of return for Palestinian refugees, ending the occupation in the Palestinian territories, and equality for Palestinian citizens of Israel – were coherently articulated as a platform for action. As mentioned above, the BNC adopted this platform in its 2008 position paper, which according to the BNC provides the ethical and legal basis for the BDS movement. Also in chapter one, I noted that Palestinian intellectuals issued a letter in 2002 during Operation Defensive Shield calling for the suspension of economic relations and military aid to Israel. Two years later, the academic and cultural boycott was established and formalized through the creation of PACBI.

Lastly, the movement in Palestine, specifically within the occupied Palestinian territories, is Palestinian-led.<sup>312</sup> Academic boycott, cultural boycott, and anti-normalization campaigns are active. Specific Palestinian groups and organizations

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<sup>312</sup> BDS activities in Israel are organized by Palestinian-Israelis and Jewish-Israelis.

such as PACBI, PTUC-BDS, the BNC, etc. are directly engaged in the BDS movement in Palestine (and abroad to a certain degree through networks and campaign coordination). In addition to specific BDS groups and organizations, some organizations such as Badil have particular BDS campaign sections as part of their larger organizational program.

Outside these areas, the transnational BDS movement is operationalized outside of Palestine at the local level by activists living in those locales. This is not to suggest that Palestinians in the diaspora do not play important roles in BDS campaigns outside of Palestine, including leadership roles in various groups and organizations.<sup>313</sup> What is meant here is that campaigns outside of Palestine are not directed from a centralized command structure in Palestine. There is not a formal chain of command, again leading to the movement's fluid organizational structure and processes. There is flexibility within the movement and a large degree of autonomy in local campaigns. These local campaigns largely determine for themselves their targets, tactics, sub-tactics, and how much they coordinate with other Palestine solidarity groups or the BNC.

## **5.2 Context Sensitivity and the Role of Local Organizing**

In outlining what is precisely Palestinian-led in the border-crossing BDS movement, the notion of context-sensitivity or context specific BDS campaigns is a critical component in the structure and processes of the movement. The concept is vital and a core principle of the movement. This important part of the movement provides the ability to challenge the state of Israel and bring the Palestinian struggle to various

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<sup>313</sup> See Rafeef Ziadah, "Sixty Years of Nakba: Palestinian Refugees and the New Anti-Apartheid Movement," *Left Turn* (April/May 2008); [www.leftturn.org](http://www.leftturn.org).

sites across the world. Context-sensitivity and the role of local organizing makes possible a decentralized movement across borders based on BDS.

In the organizational survey that I conducted as part of my research on the BDS movement, the following statement was posed to Palestine solidarity groups and organizations: “My group supports BDS because it is flexible. It allows activists to decide their own targets for BDS campaigns and strategies for confronting those targets.” Of 81 respondents, 26 answered Strongly Agree, 42 Agree, 11 Neutral, and 2 Disagree. Zero respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. Of all answers to the statement, 84 percent positively reacted, indicating that among those that responded to this statement in the survey, there is great importance in the movement’s flexibility and context-sensitivity.<sup>314</sup>

Additionally, the emphasis on context-sensitivity is frequently repeated throughout the movement. According to former BNC Coordinator Hind Awwad,

“The BNC has consistently provided a strong and unified Palestinian voice, and continues to lead and guide the global BDS movement, while fully respecting the principle of context sensitivity—the idea that the call for BDS should be implemented in each community in a way that suits the particular circumstances in the local environment, as decided by local activists.”<sup>315</sup>

Current BNC Europe Coordinator Michael Deas says that context sensitivity “[is a] really important principle that we interact with our partners. The idea is that each partner organization knows how best to move forward and develop the movement in that particular area and that particular context. It’s certainly not the role of the BNC to micro manage or dictate to partners what their strategy should be.”<sup>316</sup> Referring to the

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<sup>314</sup> BDS Survey, Question Number 8. See Appendix II for complete survey.

<sup>315</sup> Hind Awwad, “Six Years of BDS: Success!” *Ceasefire Magazine*, 15 May 2012; <https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/hind-awwad-six-years-bds-success/>.

<sup>316</sup> Michael Deas, BNC, interview by author, 7 September 2012.

We Divest campaign against TIAA-CREFF, discussed in chapter three, Nadia Hijab says, “Through such context-specific actions, BDS is putting a financial price tag on Israel's occupation.”<sup>317</sup>

Many of the early and foundational efforts that went into developing the BDS movement that were discussed in chapter one of this thesis on the emergence of the movement were context-specific actions. The divestment initiatives that emerged on university campuses around the US, in Christian churches, and in local and coalition-based organizations outside Palestine were important for incorporating divestment as a viable tactic in the movement. Similarly, the initial academic boycott efforts in Britain, France, Australia and elsewhere, along with other early boycott efforts such as the 2001 boycott call from Israelis and Jews around the world and the 2002 call for cultural boycott that garnered signatories from 18 countries all helped set in motion the border-crossing BDS movement.

In addition to the foundational efforts that went into establishing a context-sensitive, decentralized border-crossing movement, the case studies in this thesis show how context-specific campaigns are organized in the movement. The academic boycott in Britain that was discussed in chapter two of this thesis was established after the Roses publically called for a moratorium on joint research funding between the European Union and Israel. Their call for a moratorium was context-specific – they are both scholars that live and work in the European Research Area. In addition, the work for boycott in the academic unions in Britain involved passing motions there in local branches and national councils. The motions largely had to do with British institutions and British academics, and their relationships with Israeli institutions and

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<sup>317</sup> Nadia Hijab, “For Human Rights Advocates, Supporting BDS is a No-Brainer,” *bitterlemons*, 21 July 2011, Edition 22; [www.bitterlemons-international.org/inside.php?id=1414](http://www.bitterlemons-international.org/inside.php?id=1414).

academics. Finally, BRICUP's mission and activities play a critical role in operationalizing an academic boycott of Israel in Britain. BRICUP was established after the call for an academic and cultural boycott in 2004 by PACBI. PACBI (a BNC member) and BRICUP communicate and coordinate with each other, however; BRICUP Secretary Robert Boyce recalled a disagreement between the two and said, "PACBI didn't dictate. We had a serious debate about it and simply chose to differ in the end."<sup>318</sup>

Also, the We Divest campaign that was discussed in chapter three of this thesis is based and organized outside the Middle East. We Divest is a US-based divestment initiative that targets TIAA-CREF – one of the largest retirement fund providers in the US. The campaign is based and organized entirely in the US. Activists there decided the target (TIAA-CREF), the tactic (divestment), and at the national and local level sub-tactics are chosen among activists there (petitions, shareholder resolutions, flashmobs, protests, etc.). The BNC endorsed the We Divest campaign and supports its activities, but it does not lead the campaign.

Similarly, the consumer boycott campaigns against Ahava discussed in chapter four of this thesis have taken place outside Palestine and without direction from the BNC. Code Pink's Stolen Beauty Campaign, Open Shuhada Street in South Africa, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Dutch Badjassenbrigade, and various groups in London such as PSC and London BDS have targeted Ahava through demonstrations, direct-actions, letter-writing campaigns, and approaching celebrities in their own locales. Similar to the We Divest campaign against TIAA-CREF, the BNC has endorsed many of the campaigns against Ahava, and actively encourages the boycott of Ahava products, but it does not lead these campaigns abroad.

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<sup>318</sup> Robert Boyce, BRICUP, interview by author, 18 June 2013.

Although not studied as a case in this thesis, the BDS campaign against G4S is another major campaign in the movement. G4S is a British private security corporation that provides security services and equipment for Israel's prisons, checkpoints, military bases, police stations, and private businesses inside the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel. In 2012, Palestinian political prisoners held inside Israel's prisons began a mass hunger strike, and BDS campaigns started developing to hold G4S accountable by calling on companies and public bodies to cancel their contacts with G4S. In recounting how the campaign against G4S developed Michael Deas, the BNC Europe Coordinator said,

“The G4S call for example, that wasn't a bunch of people sitting in Palestine deciding on G4S. The decision to achieve its goal and provide support to G4S campaigns came out of knowing that there was already a body of work taking place on G4S in Belgium, Denmark, the UK, and partners elsewhere in Europe and the US. That particular moment, in the middle of the hunger strike, releasing the call and working with [Palestinian] organizations like Adameer who are directly involved in the hunger strike to produce stuff on G4S, turned out to be really helpful to ongoing [G4S] campaigns.”<sup>319</sup>

Campaigns such as G4S, We Divest, the academic boycott in Britain, and product boycotts against Ahava comprise the BDS movement. Without local campaigns, the movement could not exist in its current form. Therefore, the role of local organizing and context-sensitivity plays a significant part in the structure and processes of the movement, specifically how the movement is organized across borders in a decentralized manner. PACBI coherently summarized the movement in the following statement:

“As was the case in the international struggle against apartheid in South Africa, taking guidance from broadly-endorsed representatives of the oppressed, in this case the Palestinian leadership of the BDS movement,

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<sup>319</sup> Michael Deas, BNC, interview by author, 7 September 2012.

the BNC, and respecting boycott guidelines set by the great majority in the oppressed society is an ethical obligation for any conscientious person or group genuinely standing in solidarity with the oppressed. This must be understood in the context of a decentralized global movement based on respect for partners' tactics and choice of targets, so long as the overall principles of the movement are safeguarded."<sup>320</sup>

The role of context-specific local organizing is paramount to understanding the larger organizational dynamics of the broader transnational BDS movement. The operationalization of the movement in this way allows activists to challenge Israel in different contexts around the world and bring the Palestinian struggle to range of sites such as boardrooms and storefronts. The various BDS campaigns around the world are nodes across borders that form the web of the BDS movement. These activists, groups, campaigns, etc. are connected to each other through networks. These networks provide the infrastructure for border-crossing coordination in the movement.

### **5.3 Networks and Border-Crossing Coordination**

Tilly's influential definition of social movements emphasizes the fact that they are sustained interactions between participants making collective claims at power holders.<sup>321</sup> While useful for understanding certain movements, the formal state-based model that Tilly suggests does not account for many contemporary social movements engaged in transnational activism. Mario Diani, on the other hand, argues that social movements are more than the sum of sustained interactions and instead exemplify particular political and social forms of collective action. According to Diani, social movements are "networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups, or associations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a

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<sup>320</sup> PACBI, "Debating BDS: On Normalization and Partial Boycotts," 1 April 2012; <http://pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1850>.

<sup>321</sup> Charles Tilly, *Social Movements, 1768-2004* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2004).

shared collective identity.”<sup>322</sup> In their work on transnational advocacy networks, Keck and Sikkink say, “The network concept travels well because it stresses fluid and open relations among committed and knowledgeable actors working in specialized areas.”<sup>323</sup> Conceptualizing the BDS movement in this way emphasizes its networked nature and is useful for analyzing its border-crossing structure and processes, which in part indicates how the movement is organized.

Many contemporary social movements, including the BDS movement, are comprised largely of groups and organizations that work with or have connections with other groups. Within the movement, there is extensive layering in the networks, further contributing to the dynamic web that forms the border-crossing BDS movement. According Keck and Sikkink, networks are “communicative structures” and “the flow of information among actors in the network reveals a dense web of connections among these groups, both formal and informal.”<sup>324</sup> In the following paragraphs, I show the “dense web of connections” among some of the participant groups in the BDS movement. I outline how groups and organizations working in the BDS movement are networked, and how the movement is coordinated through its participants’ websites, social networking sites, email lists, and frequent conferences. The movement is comprised of networks upon networks and through informal, loose coordination, which further illustrates the movement’s decentralized structure and fluid organizational processes.

As was explained in chapter two of this thesis, BRICUP is one of the main groups in Britain promoting an academic boycott of Israel. The group has worked

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<sup>322</sup> Mario Diani, “The Concept of Social Movement,” *The Sociological Review* 40, no. 1 (February 1992): 13.

<sup>323</sup> Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, Google ebook, 22.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid, “Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics,” UNESCO (1999), 92.

with numerous groups such as PSC, BIG, J-BIG, BIN, and the Architects and Planners campaign. In addition, a number of BRICUP members have been active in the academic unions, which as discussed in the case study chapter, have repeatedly debated and voted on boycott-related matters. In addition to these formal networks and areas of coordination, scholars and cultural workers often have other networks (formal and informal), such as professional networks, that may be utilized to disseminate information and garner support for specific campaigns or events.

The We Divest campaign that was analyzed in chapter three of this thesis is coordinated as a coalition-based initiative. JVP has local offices across the US that work with other groups in their locales. Adalah-NY works with other New York-based groups on a number of campaigns and actions. Among other activities in 2013, they participated in protest against SodaStream with JVP-NY and Park Slope Food Coop Members for BDS. On the TIAA-CREF Student Day of Action, they participated in demonstrations with New York City-based SJP chapters. The group also participated in a number of conferences, workshops, and other educational activities such as the US Campaign to End the Occupation's 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Organizers Conference, and organized cross-issue events such as "Building Solidarity across Black, Native American, and Palestinian Struggles," featuring discussion and music.<sup>325</sup>

Other members in the We Divest Coordinating Committee such the US Campaign to End the Occupation, is a coalition-organization that currently comprises over 400 Palestine solidarity groups across the US, and the USPCN is a network of diaspora Palestinians throughout the US. The AFSC has 38 offices in the US and has a presence in 15 international locations. The AFSC Screen List of 29 companies

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<sup>325</sup> Adalah-NY, "Year End Report, 2013," <http://adalahny.org/page/1193/year-end-report-2013>.

mentioned in chapter four was taken from the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church that was researched and compiled with the assistance of Who Profits. It was also the list that the Mennonite Central Committee would go onto use for monitoring its investments starting in 2013. Grassroots International works with partners in 13 countries. As stated in the case study, nearly all organizations that Grassroots International works with in Palestine are signatories to the 2005 Palestinian call for BDS. In addition to these networks, the companies targeted within the campaign against TIAA-CREF (Africa Israel, Caterpillar, Elbit, G4S, Hewlett-Packard, Motorola, Northrop Grumman, SodaStream and Veolia) are the same targets in other BDS campaigns, thus providing opportunities for networking and coordinating with other Palestine solidarity groups and/or the BNC.

In the consumer boycotts against Ahava that were discussed in chapter four of this this thesis, many of the groups active are also working on other issues and coordinating with a variety of other groups. Codepink, the group that organizes the Stolen Beauty campaign against Ahava, works on numerous other campaigns (outside the BDS movement) and has an entire web page with links to a long list of “campaign allies.”<sup>326</sup> PSC in the UK has over 40 branches working on a number of Palestine-related campaigns and coordinates with trade unions, students, faith groups, and other Palestine solidarity groups. Numerous PSC activists are involved in other groups such as trade unions in the UK, and the PSC has recently announced that it will be coordinating a trade union network to strengthen and widen work on Palestine in UK trade unions. At the regional level, PSC works to ensure Palestine is on the EU agenda with the European Coordination of Committees and Associations for

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<sup>326</sup> Codepink, “Campaign Allies,” [www.codepink.org/campaign\\_allies](http://www.codepink.org/campaign_allies).

Palestine, which is comprised of 52 European committees, organizations, NGOs, unions and international solidarity movements from 22 European countries.

As demonstrated in the previous paragraphs, the BDS movement is comprised of extensive connections among groups. Palestine solidarity groups work with other Palestine solidarity groups. Christian churches active in issues related to the Middle East work together and share information, particularly regarding divestment. Large organizations such as AFSC and Grassroots International have partner organizations in several other countries. Various groups participate in cross-issue events and numerous groups have allies and partners working on issues other than Palestine. In addition, common targets within the movement provide the opportunity for networking and coordinating. Illustrating the extensive networks present in the BDS movement is useful for understanding its structure and processes, as they in part describe how the movement is organized.

Similar to much of the BDS movement, coordination through these networks is often informal. Groups can and do coordinate with each other and the BNC on campaigns, actions, events, etc. although none of it is required within the movement. In the organizational survey that I conducted on the BDS movement, the following two statements were posed to Palestine solidarity groups: “My group coordinates with the Palestinian Boycott National Committee (BNC)” and “My group coordinates with other Palestine solidarity groups on BDS campaigns.” 75 groups responded to the first statement and 78 responded to the second statement. With respect to coordination with the BNC, 18 (24 percent) responded Frequently, 37 (49.3 percent) responded As Needed, and 20 (26.7 percent) responded Never. Regarding coordination with other

Palestine solidarity groups, 47 (60.3 percent) responded Frequently, 30 (38.5 percent) responded As Needed and 1 (1.3 percent) responded Never.<sup>327</sup>

In addition to the above statements in the organizational survey, groups were asked if coordination with the BNC and other Palestine solidarity groups working on BDS campaigns *should increase*. 76 responded to the first statement regarding coordination with the BNC and 74 responded to the statement regarding coordination with other Palestine solidarity groups. With respect to the first statement that coordination should increase with the BNC, 23 (30.3 percent) responded Strongly Agree, 35 (47.4 percent) Agree, 14 (18.4 percent) Neutral, 2 (2.6 percent) Disagree, and 1 (1.3 percent) Strongly Disagree. With respect to the second statement that coordination with other Palestine solidarity groups working on BDS campaigns should increase 35 (47.3 percent) responded Strongly Agree, 27 (36.5 percent) Agree, 12 (16.2 percent) Neutral, and none responded Disagree or Strongly Disagree.<sup>328</sup>

Taken together, the survey data indicates that coordination is medium between Palestine solidarity groups working on BDS and the BNC (just as many groups frequently or never coordinate as those that coordinate on an as needed basis). Thus, most groups coordinate on an as needed basis with the BNC, although many groups believe that coordination should increase.

With respect to Palestine solidarity groups working on BDS campaigns there is strong coordination (of those groups that responded to the question, only one said they had never coordinated with another group). The same amount of groups think coordination between Palestine solidarity groups and the BNC should increase as

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<sup>327</sup> BDS Survey, Question number 18 and Question number 19. See Appendix II for complete survey.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid, Question number 20 and Question number 21.

those that believe that coordination among Palestine solidarity groups working on BDS campaigns should also increase.

To assist in this coordination through its networks, various tools are utilized in the movement such as group or campaign websites, social networking through Facebook, Twitter, etc., and email groups and lists. In addition to internet-based tools, frequent conferences and other events such as Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) have regularly brought people together to share knowledge and further develop the movement. According to Jeffrey Juris, "...Internet use, including electronic distribution lists and interactive web pages has broadly facilitated new patterns of social engagement...Using the Internet as technological infrastructure, such movements are increasingly 'glocal,' operating at both local and global levels, while seamlessly integrating both online and off-line political activity."<sup>329</sup> In this way, the BDS movement combines a variety of mechanisms for coordinating movement campaigns locally and across borders.

Nearly every group and organization involved in the BDS movement has an extensive website. BRICUP's has a plethora of news and analysis on its homepage, in addition to the BRICUP newsletter (currently 85 editions available online), an events/action calendar, background information and links for reading, podcasts, information on other campaigns, and ways to get involved. The We Divest website has information on the campaign, TIAA-CREF, and the companies targeted as part of the campaign. On the homepage, activists can sign the petition, get information on upcoming events, tools for organizing a local campaign, read posts from social networking sites, and donate to the campaign. Similarly, the Stolen Beauty campaign

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<sup>329</sup> Jeffrey Juris, "Networked Social Movements: Global Movements for Global Justice," in *The Network Society: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, ed. Manuel Castells (Northampton: Edward Elgar, 2004), 347.

website by Codepink has information on Ahava and the campaign to boycott the company, sign the boycott pledge and other ways to take action, links to the campaign on social networking sites, the latest BDS-related news, and the reports by al-Haq, Who Profits, and the EU that were mentioned in chapter four.

These websites act as info sites and portals within the transnational, decentralized, networked movement. On the surface, the websites provide a wealth of information on Palestine, the BDS movement, and its campaigns. Border-crossing aspects of the movement can be found in the multiple languages available for key documents in the movement and its campaigns. For example, the BDS movement website has the 2005 Palestinian call for BDS available in English, Arabic, Spanish, French, Italian, German, and Hebrew. The boycott pledge on the Stolen Beauty website is available in Arabic, Czech, Dutch, English, French, Hebrew, and Spanish. In addition to news and information, many websites in the movement contain information for activists to participate in the movement and provide “activist tool kits” – specific information for organizing local campaigns or actions and educational materials such as factsheets, flyers, and posters to support the creation of local campaigns and/or actions. These groups actively facilitate the further development of a decentralized movement by encouraging the proliferation of local, context-specific campaigns.

While still in its infancy when the BDS movement was first being established, the use of social networking through sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, Instagram, Flickr, Tumblr, Pinterest, etc. has become more common for organizing and coordinating the border-crossing movement. Nearly all groups and/or campaigns in the movement have a presence on social media and anyone can join BDS groups on Facebook or follow a group on Twitter. Groups and campaigns

frequently share or retweet each other's posts contributing to information sharing within the movement. Some events are live tweeted, depending on the activists present and their interest in doing so. Anyone can film a protest or flashmob and upload the video to YouTube, and some of the campaigns feature YouTube videos on their websites of past actions or activities. While the use of social networking sites has clearly increased in recent years, they have not completely replaced other forms of electronic communication (e.g. email), which still plays an important role in coordinating the movement.

As is the case with websites and social media in the BDS movement, all groups and organizations have email groups or lists. Similar to other internet-based tools in the movement, email lists are used to facilitate organizing in the movement by disseminating news, information, and updates. Despite a range of other web tools available, email groups and lists are still important for organizing and coordinating the movement as almost everyone has an email address. Email lists provide the ability to quickly communicate with numerous people, thus enabling much of the day-to-day coordination and decision-making that takes place within the movement.

In addition to internet-based tools used to facilitate organizing in the border-crossing movement, coordinating the broader movement has taken place during frequent conferences, workshops, symposia, etc. While not all conferences have been mentioned in this thesis, those that have include the five conferences of the Palestine Solidarity Movement on US university campuses in the early 2000s, the 2004 conference at SOAS, the 2007 conference in Ramallah that led to the creation of the BNC the following year, the Bilbao Initiative in 2008, and the US Campaign to End the Occupation Annual Organizer's Conference. Other major conferences include the annual BDS conference in Palestine that the BNC has organized since 2010. In

addition to conferences, IAW has been a major event for coordinating and further developing the movement. The stated aim of the IAW “is to educate people about the nature of Israel as an apartheid system and to build Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaigns as part of a growing global BDS movement.”<sup>330</sup> Since IAW began in 2005 in Toronto it has increased to over 100 cities in 2015, and includes lectures, films, workshops, demonstrations, and other activities for organizing and coordinating the movement.

The dense web of connections among groups in the BDS movement indicates that much of the movement’s structure consists of extensive networks through which coordination is informal and nonobligatory. Extensive linkages and support for starting context-specific campaigns facilitate the further development of a transnational BDS movement for Palestinian justice. Networks and border-crossing coordination in the movement contribute to its decentralization and fluidity. These aspects are important for identifying how the BDS movement organizationally represents a new way of challenging Israel across borders.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have outlined the BDS movement’s organizational structure and processes, referencing throughout aspects of the case studies in this thesis to highlight how the movement is organized. In particular, I have outlined the structure of the Palestinian BNC and addressed the question of a Palestinian-led movement. In this regard, I have argued that the movement’s principals and goals, the historical repertoire of boycott in the Palestinian struggle, key foundational efforts in establishing the movement, and all aspects related to the movement in the Palestinian

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<sup>330</sup> Israeli Apartheid Week, “Basis of Unity,” <http://apartheidweek.org/basis-of-unity/>.

territories are Palestinian-led. Beyond these areas, there is much autonomy in local campaigns around the world. I then considered the concept of context-specificity and the role of local organizing in the movement, arguing that these are key components of the border-crossing movement and that the movement could not exist in its current form without these necessary local campaigns. Finally, I considered networks and border-crossing coordination in the movement. I showed how groups working in the movement form a dense web of connections, and through these networks, the movement is coordinated across borders.

It is important to identify these aspects of the movement's structure and processes because it shows how the movement is a new and different way of challenging Israel. Transnational activism organized in this way in the Palestinian struggle has not been seen in the past. Specific aspects of the movement are necessarily Palestinian-led, but the question of leadership in the movement, even when examining the role and relationships of the BNC, does not suggest a formal top-down, centralized command structure from Palestine (or Palestinians in the diaspora as was the case when the PLO directed the national liberation movement from abroad). No other time in Palestinian history has witnessed such fluid structures and processes on a transnational level for organizing in the Palestinian struggle. Specifically, when boycotts, non-cooperation, and anti-normalization have been historically used in the Palestinian struggle, as shown in chapter one of this thesis, they have largely been localized, at best regional, initiatives.

The movement's organizational structures and processes have facilitated the development of a movement that resists the fragmentation of Israel's policies that separates Palestinians in the diaspora, the occupied territories, and in Israel from one another. Principles and goals of the movement are shaped from these historically

specific experiences while the ability to participate in the movement anywhere and create context-specific campaigns makes possible a transnational movement.

Coordination through movement networks illustrates how the BDS movement is a web of activity across borders. The transnational movement's decentralized and networked structure, along with fluid organizational processes all contribute to a new and different way of challenging Israel, which can affect future dynamics in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

## Chapter 6 – Strategizing Movement Outcomes

### **Introduction**

In the first chapter of this thesis, I considered the causes, both in terms of structure and agency, which led to the creation and development of a border-crossing BDS movement for Palestinian justice. Then, I examined and analyzed in detail specific BDS campaigns in three case study chapters to illuminate the inner-workings and dynamics of the movement through its constituent campaigns. In the previous chapter, I investigated the movement's structure and processes, specifically referencing the case study chapters throughout, to illustrate how the decentralized movement is organized at the grassroots level across borders. In this chapter, I consider how the movement might strategically conceptualize moving towards achieving outcomes. I suggest that this may be done by acknowledging and advancing the movement's position in a global justice framework and by handling its limitations.

In the sections that follow, I first consider the BDS movement in a global justice framework to situate the movement in a larger transnational context. In particular, I analyze four main points of intersection between the BDS movement and other movements working on causes related to global justice. In the sub-sections within this category, I outline how the movement's frames, targets, tactics, and organizational structures and processes parallel other contemporary transnational social movements oriented around justice. In identifying a larger context for the movement and its connective linkages with other movements I argue that the BDS movement utilizes these points of intersection to broaden its base of support among like-minded activists not necessarily engaged in the Palestinian cause. In the second part of the chapter, I explore challenges and limitations of the movement. In line with

crafting movement-relevant research, I consider three main impediments for the movement. The first is that the BDS movement alone cannot solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The second is that the movement's structure and processes can be a weakness, and lastly, not all movement targets are familiar and legitimate to activists not involved in the Palestinian struggle. With each challenge, I consider why this may be a limitation for the movement, and how the movement might manage these difficulties to offset opponents' objectives of distracting or debilitating the movement.

### **6.1 BDS in a Global Justice Framework**

Historically, the current BDS movement for Palestinian justice has the closest resemblance to the BDS activities that were part of an anti-apartheid movement against the ruling white regime in South Africa. As suggested in the review of this literature in the introduction to this thesis, these tactics were utilized over decades and were part of a larger strategy that was successful in ending formal apartheid in that country. In comparison to more recent movements, the BDS movement shares similarities and connections with a number of movements. According to John Collins,

“For those who see it as the last remaining struggle against colonialism, it is the quintessential Third World issue, one that still awaits resolution in the form of Palestinian statehood. For others, however, Palestine's primary importance lies in its connection with wider struggles for social, economic, and even environmental justice.”<sup>331</sup>

The BDS movement is similar to other movements working on global justice in a number of ways. First, the movement frames are familiar and accessible to a range of activists. Collective action frames such as justice, international law, human rights,

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<sup>331</sup> John Collins, *Global Palestine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 134.

corporate complicity, socially responsible investment, etc. resonate with a wide variety of activists. Second, many of the targets of BDS campaigns are within the purview of other activists. In particular, the corporate targets, some of which have been named in the thesis (e.g. Caterpillar, Ahava, G4S, etc.), make sense and are legitimate targets for their profit making at the expense of human rights or the environment, among other reasons. Third, the tactics – boycott, divestment, and sanctions – are enduring tactical repertoires that have been historically applied to a range of issues around the world, and often have been effective in pressuring for change. Finally, the organizational structure and processes that were analyzed in the previous chapter are well-known ways of organizing among a variety of activists working on issues related to anti-globalization and global justice. Because these four main areas represent potential intersection with other movements, the BDS movement provides a way for people to come to the Palestine issue. The similarities with other movements opens doors of opportunity for coalitional and cross-sector organizing through ways of thinking (frames, targets) and acting (tactics, organizational structure and processes) about Palestine and the world overall.

It is important that BDS is organized in ways similar to other movements, particularly to those working in the global justice movement, because it indicates a number of features about current activism relating to Palestine and about transnational activism relating to global justice more generally. The former is noteworthy because the ways that the BDS movement is organized represents a new way of confronting Israel. While the BDS movement has firm historical roots in Palestinian resistance to colonial rule as illustrated in chapter one of this thesis, the structure and processes of the movement take on a new form of transnational activism in the Palestinian struggle. This organizing is intrinsically border-crossing as demonstrated in chapter

one of this thesis, and opens possibilities for expanding mobilization by bringing new participants and bystander support to the Palestinian issue through common ways of thinking and acting. In addition to this, similarities between the BDS movement and other movements are important because it indicates how a portion of transnational activism is being operationalized, specifically among those movements organizing around the idea that “another world is possible.” Within a global justice framework, Palestinian freedom and justice are part of this actualization as the continued oppression of Palestinians through violations of their rights are unacceptable to activists trying to create a more just and equitable world.

While this chapter seeks to identify points of intersection between the BDS movement and other movements working on global justice related issues, it is important to point out that the BDS movement is unlike many groups or organizations working within a global justice framework. For example, large NGOs such as Amnesty International, Greenpeace, HRW, etc. are very active in the global justice movement, though have little resemblance to the BDS movement overall particularly regarding tactical repertoire and organizational structures and processes. These international NGOs do however share some similarities in frames and targets with the BDS movement, and some are indirectly involved in the movement through the production of research and information regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (e.g. Amnesty International and HRW reports on companies such as Caterpillar mentioned in chapter one of this thesis). In the following sections, I outline the similarities (frames, tactics, targets, and organizational dynamics) among justice-oriented movements to analyze how the BDS movement broadens its base of support among amenable activists working on other causes.

## *Frames*

The theoretical concept of collective action frames within the social movement literature is useful for understanding how social movements work as they are mobilized partly through the ideas they advocate. With respect to movements working on global justice related issues, Della Porta says:

“Transnational campaigns against multinational corporations such as De Beers, Microsoft, Monsanto, and Nike favored transnational networking and the building of global frames of action. The underlying logic of many movement campaigns is the ‘naming and shaming,’ which especially when targeting multinationals, aims at increasing public awareness of especially glaring cases of ignoring human rights – spreading detailed information and often asking people to punish the companies involved by boycotting their products.”<sup>332</sup>

Similar to other social movements, BDS activists frame their campaigns around particular themes to construct an alternative way of seeing and thinking about Israel/Palestine. Reorienting the conceptual focus of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict around specific ideas such as Palestinian rights or corporate complicity in Israel’s occupation challenges dominant and existing frames of the conflict that stress Israel’s securitization. Framing the movement through these lenses is important in constructing a way of thinking of Israel/Palestine that challenges the status quo while also indicating how the movement understands itself. By setting a conceptual program for collective action, strategic framing provides a bridge between the BDS movement and other movements working on justice related issues.

In analyzing similar frames between the BDS movement and other movements it is useful to begin with one of the main themes underlying these movements –

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<sup>332</sup> Donatella Della Porta, “The Global Justice Movement: An Introduction,” in *The Global Justice Movement: Cross-national and Transnational Perspectives*, ed. Donatella Della Porta (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2007), 13.

justice. With respect to the global justice movement Della Ports says, "...the main aim of the movement(s) is the struggle for justice – a general term that encompasses more specific domains of intervention such as human rights, citizens' rights, social rights, peace, the environment, and similar concerns."<sup>333</sup> In their mapping of "core ideological concepts" of actors within the global justice movement, Manfred Steger and Erin Wilson find that justice applies to range of entities such as governments, international financial institutions, and multinational corporations, and encompass broad themes such as poverty and climate change.<sup>334</sup> With respect to rights, the authors note that this refers to universal rights – concepts that actors associate as being inherent and involve a range of rights that include human rights, women's rights, workers' rights, etc. According to the authors,

"An emphasis on rights often informs the organization's view of justice and how justice is to be pursued or realized in practice. Justice may be understood as the recognition and realization of rights – human, political, civil, economic, social and cultural, workers' rights, and the many other types of rights that are talked about among the organizations."<sup>335</sup>

Justice for Palestinians is an underlying concept in the BDS movement. In the "Introducing the BDS Movement" on the movement's website, it states, "BDS is a strategy that allows people of conscience to play an effective role in the Palestinian struggle for justice."<sup>336</sup> The global call for BDS made by Palestinian organizations in 2005 mentions injustice twice and justice once in the short text, and the strategic position paper that the BNC adopted in 2008 that was mentioned in the previous chapter has "Dignity and Justice for the Palestinian People" as its subtitle. Although

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<sup>333</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>334</sup> Manfred Steger and Erin Wilson, "Anti-Globalization or Alter-Globalization? Mapping the Political Ideology of the Global Justice Movement," *International Studies Quarterly* 56 (2012): 447.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid, 448.

<sup>336</sup> BDS Movement, "Introducing the BDS Movement," [www.bdsmovement.net/bdsintro](http://www.bdsmovement.net/bdsintro).

the 2005 call for BDS does not prescribe any particular political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, clearly the three demands suggest a common foundation among Palestinians for a just remedy to violations of their rights.

In addition to the prominent theme of justice, Jeffrey Ayres argues that from approximately the 1980s onward, activists started to develop a transnational “anti-neoliberal” globalization master frame. Though grievances to neoliberal policies had started to take shape in national and regional contexts in previous decades (what some scholars refer to as the “new social movements”), these ideas needed to be coalesced together to form a master frame that could carry the very diverse and pressing concerns of a range of people and issues around the world. According to Della Porta et. al., the process of developing a master frame was negotiated and led to a broad and generalizable frame – one that could include the wide diversity of struggles around the world.<sup>337</sup> Ayres says this master frame carried “...such various concerns as the degradation of the environment, emerging democratic deficits and the decline of popular sovereignty, human rights abuses under sweatshop conditions, or even opposition to the US war in Iraq or the rights of Palestinian refugees...”<sup>338</sup>

While the anti-neoliberal globalization frame of anti-globalization and global justice movements is not a central frame of the BDS movement, a related concept – that of corporate complicity – in Israel’s policies and practices that violate Palestinian rights is. This can be seen in numerous local BDS campaigns, and was specifically

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<sup>337</sup> Della Porta et. al. *Globalization From Below: Transnational Activists and Protest Networks* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006) Google e-book, 63.

<sup>338</sup> Jeffrey M. Ayres, “Framing Collective Action Against Neoliberalism: The Case of the ‘Anti-Globalization’ Movement,” *Journal of World-Systems Research* 10, no. 1 (Winter 2004): 28. It is important to note that Ayres argues that it was the “very inclusiveness and accommodating character of this anti-neoliberal master frame” that revealed divisions in strategies for confronting neoliberalism and proposing possible alternatives. He asserts that despite these divisions and 11 September attacks in the US, which a number of scholars have argued was a debilitating condition for the “anti-globalization” movement, the anti-neoliberal master frame “has remained a durable feature” in this transnational activism.

evidenced in the case study chapters on the We Divest campaign and product boycotts against Ahava. Similar to the idea of justice, the BDS movement sees not just the state of Israel, but also all those who are connected to the state's violations of international law and Palestinians rights, as complicit and a potential target of the movement. In particular, there is a close connection between the BDS movement and other movements working on justice related issues in an underlying critique of the increasing power of corporations, particularly those that blatantly put profit making before human rights or environmental concerns.

In a similar vein, ideas relating to corporate social responsibility and socially responsible investment have risen in importance for a variety of activists and movements. Specifically activism from the 1960s-70s, in which social movements surrounding civil rights, the Vietnam war, women's issues, and nuclear energy all contributed to a growing discourse of socially responsible investment. This set a foundation for pressuring the ruling South African apartheid regime through investment-related activism in the 1980s, and continued to gain traction as major events such as Bhopal, Chernobyl, and Exxon Valdez illuminated environmental considerations. According to Gay Seidamn, "By the late 1990s, in part because of the experiences with transnational campaigns with the anti-apartheid movement and the Nestle campaign, business leaders were much more likely to accept some level of social responsibility in the communities where they did business."<sup>339</sup> More recently, activists have used SRI to address issues of human rights, work place conditions, and climate change.

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<sup>339</sup> Gay W. Seidman, *Beyond the Boycott: Labor Rights, Human Rights, and Transnational Activism* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation), 42.

In addition to ideas of corporate social responsibility and socially responsible investment, activists in the past decades have increasingly relied on the discourse of international law, specifically human rights, to press for change. Smith, who has extensively researched transnational social movements, particularly anti-globalization and global justice movements notes,

“An important element...is to expose the hypocrisy of governments, which often sign international human rights treaties to enhance their image in the eyes of the international community while continuing to violate international norms. Activists appeal to international law, and the gaps between a government’s words and deeds, as a source of political leverage in their struggles against national governments...they seek to raise the legitimacy costs to government’s wishing to preserve autonomy in ways that go against international norms.”<sup>340</sup>

Jean Quataert argues that with respect to human rights the interplay between numerous struggles and mobilizations for rights on the ground and the development of institutional mechanisms for monitoring and protection mainly through the United Nations has led to the rise of a human rights discourse among a range of activists and social movements. In addition, the spread of the discourse can be found in the increase of NGOs dedicated to human rights, especially since the 1960s-70s. This includes a vast array of organizations including NGOs that monitor and lobby for human rights, transnational professional organizations (e.g. Doctors without Borders), and transnational advocacy organizations (e.g. Amnesty International and HRW).<sup>341</sup> According to Quataert, “By the last third of the twentieth century, the language of human rights has become an increasingly effective medium by which to press a moral claim.”<sup>342</sup>

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<sup>340</sup> Smith, *Social Movements for Global Democracy*, 159.

<sup>341</sup> Alison Brysk, “Introduction: Transnational Threats and Opportunities,” in *Globalization and Human Rights*, ed. Alison Brysk (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 2.

<sup>342</sup> Jean H. Quataert, *Advocating Dignity: Human Rights Mobilizations in Global Politics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), Google ebook, xxiii.

In her study of the BDS movement, Carter Hallward says the movement is “Operating from a justice-oriented framework that seeks to ensure human rights and the application of international law...” and that Palestinians attempt to appeal to people across the world in the 2005 global call to “demonstrate their legitimacy through international law...”<sup>343</sup> Likewise, Palestinian legal scholar Noura Erakat states that the BDS call is based “within the universal frame of international law and human rights norms...”<sup>344</sup> Furthermore she says that in contradistinction to the discourse of terrorism and securitization that is proffered by Israel, “Human rights discourse, together with growing popular movements, has steadily exposed the bankruptcy of this security framework and helped reframe the Palestinian question as an indigenous struggle against colonial domination in the global north.”<sup>345</sup> In this way, the BDS movement frames the Palestinian struggle through themes and ideas that can resonate with activists not specific to the Palestinian cause.

The continuity between the collective action frames (justice, anti-neoliberal globalization/corporate complicity, socially responsible investment, international law, human rights) that are utilized in the BDS movement and other movements working on global justice causes suggest shared ideas and values among activists seeking to create a more just and equitable world. Framing the BDS movement in this way positions it among a range of movements, in which activists interpret other problems and solutions in the world in common ways. For many activists working on anti-globalization or causes connected to global justice the discourse of justice, rights, corporate complicity, etc. is the parlance of our times. By portraying the Palestinian

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<sup>343</sup> Carter Hallward, *Transnational Activism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, 45 and 59.

<sup>344</sup> Noura Erakat, “Beyond Sterile Negotiations: Looking for a Leadership with a Strategy,” *al-Shabaka* Policy Brief (January 2012): 3.

<sup>345</sup> Erakat, “What Role for the Law in the Palestinian Struggle for Liberation,” *al-Shabaka* Policy Brief (March 2014): 6.

struggle through these common lenses, the BDS movement unleashes an underlying potential to mobilize new participants and garner bystander support for the movement and the Palestinian cause more generally.

### *Targets*

Targets of divestment initiatives, consumer boycott, and other boycotts are selected because they are connected in some way with the state of Israel's policies and practices toward Palestinians. Many targets within the BDS movement, especially corporate targets, are legitimate to activists not specific to the Palestinian cause. Some of these targets have been mentioned throughout this thesis such as: Ahava, SodaStream, Eden Springs, Caterpillar, G4S, HP, Hadiklaim, Carmel Agrexco, Veolia, Alstom, and Elbit. Corporate targets of BDS campaigns always have a clear connection to the state of Israel, which forms the basis for boycott or divestment and is used as the foundation for initiating and developing any campaign. The targets are important because they are used to illustrate Israel's policies and practices that violate international law and Palestinian rights. In addition to their specific problematic connection with the state of Israel via its relationship with Palestinians, corporate targets within the BDS movement are also problematic in ways not necessarily specific to Israel/Palestine. For instance, Eden Spring and Ahava raise issues of resource privatization, G4S and Elbit are part of a global military and security industry, and Carmel Agrexco and Hadiklaim bring up the theft of natural resources and food sovereignty.

Corporate targets, such as those named above, are justifiable not just within the BDS movement but to activists that have concerns with neoliberal globalization and corporate complicity in violations of the rights of an indigenous population. In

this regard, Israel's insertion into the global economy has been well documented. Jonathan Nitzan and Shimshon Bichler's, *The Global Political Economy of Israel*, remains the most extensive investigation into the subject. They demonstrate through different periods of capitalist development how Israel has transformed over decades to a globally integrated economy. In addition to academic studies, Israel's economy, and its dominant industries (e.g. technology, security, etc.), are the subject of much journalistic inquiry. For example, Israel plays a major role in weapons exports around the world. According to the British defense publication *Janes*, Israel was the sixth largest arms exporter in 2012, more than doubling its exports from 2001-2012.<sup>346</sup> One of the industry's largest selling points is that its technologies are "combat proven," indicating that technologies battle-tested (in occupied territories) are marketable in the global arms industry. Canadian journalist Naomi Klein, who has extensively covered issues such as the anti-globalization movement, Israel/Palestine, and climate change, stated, "Israel has learned to turn endless war into a brand asset, pitching its uprooting, occupation, and containment of the Palestinian people as a half-century head start in the 'global war on terror.'" <sup>347</sup>

It is no surprise that in 2011, the BNC officially called for a comprehensive military embargo on Israel. According to the call,

"A comprehensive military embargo on Israel is long overdue. It forms a crucial step towards ending Israel's unlawful and criminal use of force against the Palestinian people and other peoples and states in the region, and it constitutes an effective, non-violent measure to pressure Israel to comply with its obligations under international law." <sup>348</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> *Janes* cited in Markus Becker, "Factory and Lab: Israel's War Business," *Der Spiegel*, 27 August 2014; [www.spiegel.de/international/world/defense-industry-the-business-of-war-in-israel-a-988245.html](http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/defense-industry-the-business-of-war-in-israel-a-988245.html).

<sup>347</sup> Naomi Klein, "How War was Turned into a Brand," *The Guardian*, 16 June 2007.

<sup>348</sup> BDS Movement, "Military Embargo," [www.bdsmovement.net/activecamps/military-embargo](http://www.bdsmovement.net/activecamps/military-embargo).

In addition to the call, the BNC produced a background paper supporting the call. The paper “examines the legal framework in which the call is made,” highlighting the lawful and unlawful use of armed force by states in international law, Israel’s record of unlawful use of armed force, Israel’s military industry, the role of the Israeli academy in supporting violations of international law, and the international community’s responsibility to act.

In addition to academic studies, journalistic coverage, the movement’s own analyses on BDS targets, numerous activist-produced resources abound with data and information regarding Israel’s economy that BDS activists utilize in forming campaigns against specific targets. According to South African professor and activist Salim Vally, “...careful research played an important role in exposing the economic, cultural, and armament trade links with South Africa to make our actions more effective as well as to ‘name and shame’ those who benefited from the apartheid regime.”<sup>349</sup> Some of these resources and research for BDS activism has already been mentioned in this thesis such as Who Profits, the Israeli research center that investigates Israeli and international corporations that are involved in Israel’s occupation of Palestinian and Syrian lands. The center publishes reports and case studies (e.g. Ahava, SodaStream, and G4S) and has one of the most extensive online databases of corporations engaged in occupation-related activities.

Corporate Watch, another example, is a UK-based research group that provides information and analysis on the impacts of corporations to activists. While the group compiles research on a range of topics, Palestine is one of their main research areas, and the group seeks to specifically compile relevant research for the

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<sup>349</sup> Salim Vally, “From South Africa to Palestine, Lessons for the new Anti-Apartheid Movement,” *Left Turn* (8 April 2008); [www.leftturn.org/south-africa-palestine-lessons-new-anti-apartheid-movement](http://www.leftturn.org/south-africa-palestine-lessons-new-anti-apartheid-movement).

BDS movement. According to the group, “Since 2009 our *Corporate Occupation* research project has been providing information-for-action and analysis to the growing global BDS movement.”<sup>350</sup> The group has published reports such as “Imprisoned voices: Corporate complicity in the Israeli prison system” (specifically addressing the role of G4S and HP), “Gaza: Life Beneath the Drones” (Elbit and Israel Aerospace Industries specifically highlighted) and the expansive *Targeting Israeli Apartheid: A BDS Handbook*. The near 400-page compendium (including 20 chapters on sector specific industries) contains detailed information on corporations and suggestions for BDS targets of campaigns. These resources help inform activists about Israel’s political economy, specifically as it relates to policies and practices oppressing Palestinians, and directs activists towards potential targets for BDS campaigns.

### *Tactics*

As indicated in the review of boycott literature in the introduction to this thesis, the tactic has been used as least since the concept was named after Captain Charles Boycott in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when laborers refused to harvest crops on the estate for which he was a land agent. Since that time, it has become a repertoire for understanding the concept of withdrawing support in some way. Many groups and social movements have utilized the tactic of boycott such as labor unions, animal rights groups, environmental organizations, faith-based groups, and consumer organizations. In the introduction to this thesis I listed several famous historical boycotts. More recent boycotts include those against Nike for its use of child labor in sweatshop factories, Coca-Cola for human rights abuses in Latin America and India,

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<sup>350</sup> Corporate Watch, “Palestine,” [www.corporatewatch.org/categories/palestine](http://www.corporatewatch.org/categories/palestine).

Nestle for its promotion of baby formula in developing countries, Shell for its environmental degradation of the Niger Delta, and Chick-fil-A for its position on same-sex marriage.

Divestment is most notably associated with the movement against apartheid in South Africa. Divestment initiatives were brewing for decades, although in the 1980s campaigns were greatly expanded and comprehensively enacted. More recently, divestment has been a popular tactic used to pressure the Sudanese government for its role in human rights abuses and among activists that seek to hold the fossil fuels industry accountable for its involvement in climate change. Similar to the BDS movement, activists use the tactic to pressure universities, municipalities, faith-based groups, and retirement funds to divest from companies complicit in activities that activists have identified as problematic.

Any discussion of the movement's tactics would be somewhat remiss if sanctions were not addressed in some fashion. This thesis has mainly examined the tactics of boycott and divestment as these are currently employed by BDS activists. The level of sanctions, largely the domain of states and international institutions, has not been covered for the most obvious reason that sanctions against Israel have not yet been exercised in any notable way for purposes of this thesis. There have been minor diplomatic and economic actions that could potentially be considered a sanction, though these are largely isolated incidences that often have little connection to the current BDS movement. It is possible that as boycott and divestment campaigns expand, new campaigns could be organized that specifically target governments or international bodies to sanction Israel. Though not currently engaged in any major way in the movement, the tactic itself is similar to boycott and divestment in that it is

familiar. It has been historically used in a number of instances, with the South African example as a key identifier for BDS and many other activists.

In addition to the widely known tactics of BDS, the sub-tactics that many of the campaigns utilize are familiar forms of action. Some of these sub-tactics have been mentioned throughout this thesis, particularly in the case study chapters. With respect to the academic boycott in Britain, these sub-tactics include debating and passing boycott-related motions in unions, signing petitions, and making public statements regarding BDS by academics and cultural figures. The We Divest campaign has employed shareholder activism, protests, and flashmobs to operationalize its campaign across the US. Likewise, boycotts against Ahava have used protests (those in the US, UK, South Africa, and the Netherlands have been mentioned in this thesis), and have utilized creative tactics such as “guerilla theater” in their use of spa attire and other props to bring attention to the activities of the skincare company. As with the broad political tactics of the movement (BDS), the sub-tactics used by activists in their individual campaigns are familiar and legitimate ways to achieve campaign objectives.

### *Organizational Structures and Processes*

In the previous chapter, I analyzed the organizational structure and processes of the BDS movement. I showed how the movement is decentralized and in which ways specifically the movement is Palestinian-led. The movement is flexible in that there is a significant amount of autonomy in local campaigns. As demonstrated in the chapter, context sensitivity and the role of local organizing are critical components of a decentralized movement organized across borders. I referenced the case studies examined in this thesis (the academic boycott in Britain, the We Divest campaign, and

product boycotts against Ahava) throughout the preceding chapter, illustrating how context-specific campaigns are organized in the transnational movement. The movement has an undefined and fluid organizational structure that is comprised largely of networks of Palestinians and solidarity activists in their BDS campaigns, in which coordination through these networks is informal and at the will of those involved.

Similar to frames, tactics, and targets, the organizational structure and processes of the BDS movement are similar to that of other movements working on global justice related issues across borders. In discussing Via Campesina and other groups and organizations in the book *Food Security Governance*, Nora McKeon notes, “Organizational modes that are able to operate effectively globally while respecting egalitarian horizontal exchanges and the autonomy of locally rooted action are the much quested-after holy grail of social movements generally, including the food sovereignty movement.”<sup>351</sup> On its website, Via Campesina states that it “is a grassroots mass movement whose vitality and legitimacy comes from farmers’ organizations at local and national level. The movement is based on the decentralization of power between nine regions.”<sup>352</sup> Similarly, in discussing the Occupy movement Alyssa Figueroa and Sarah Jaffe state, “What started as a couple hundred people in a park with no plan has turned into a decentralized, distributed network of activists, affinity groups, organizations and organizers, working on everything from free education to fracking.”<sup>353</sup> While these movements work on a range of issues that are not directly connected to the Palestinian struggle, the BDS

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<sup>351</sup> Nora McKeon, *Food Security Governance: Empowering Communities, Regulating Corporations* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 143.

<sup>352</sup> Via Campesina, “Organization,” <http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/organisation-mainmenu-44>.

<sup>353</sup> Alyssa Figueroa and Sarah Jaffe, “Occupy Infiltrates Financial District with Creative, Decentralized Actions for First Anniversary,” *AlterNet* (18 September 2012); [www.alternet.org/hot-news-views/occupy-infiltrates-financial-district-creative-decentralized-actions-first-0](http://www.alternet.org/hot-news-views/occupy-infiltrates-financial-district-creative-decentralized-actions-first-0).

movement, as a contemporary transnational social movement parallels the organizational dynamics of other current social movements working on global justice related issues.

In all the ways elaborated above (frames, targets, tactics, and organizational dynamics), the BDS movement corresponds and shares connections with other contemporary social movements, particularly those organizing around causes associated with global justice. These are points of intersection between the BDS movement and other movements, which benefits the BDS movement for widening its base of support across borders. In identifying these connective linkages and their value to the BDS movement, activists will likely continue to strengthen these bonds with like-minded activists to interweave the Palestinian struggle into a larger global justice discourse. In doing so, the BDS movement not only positions itself to be more successful in meeting its objectives (the three demands of the call), but also playing a role in contributing to a more just world overall.

## **6.2 Movement Challenges and Limitations**

As with all forms of collective action, and social movements specially, there are challenges and limitations of the BDS movement. Certainly, opponents of the movement are quick to locate areas of contention, some of which has been evidenced in the sub-sections “Dynamics between BDS Campaigners and Opponents” in the case study chapters. In line with conducting and crafting movement-relevant research, I will present areas that appear to be the most pressing challenges and limitations for the movement’s further development. In the following section, I outline three main challenges and limitations of the movement. The first is that the BDS movement alone cannot resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The second is that the movement’s

structure and processes can leave it vulnerable to attack by opponents of the movement; and finally, not all targets of the movement are familiar or legitimate to activists working outside the Palestinian cause. For each of these limitations, I analyze why this aspect of the movement may be a challenge and then proffer how the movement might manage these impediments to minimize their impact on campaign and movement objectives.

As indicated throughout this thesis, boycott, divestment, and sanctions are political tactics used for the strategic purpose of pressuring Israel to abide by international law and respect Palestinian rights. That said, the BDS movement does not comprise the entire Palestinian struggle; rather is a component of this process that exists alongside other tactics and forms of resistance against Israel. PACBI member al-Botmeh notes, “BDS should be looked at as part and parcel of the resistance movement – the popular committees, the BDS movement, stop the wall campaign, etc. All of these are closely linked by trying to think outside the box...”<sup>354</sup> Similarly, Nidal Abu Zuluf of the YMCA and YWCA-Joint Advocacy Initiative states,

“For all the signatories [to the BDS call] it is not the only strategy, but one. If you go to any of the organizations [in Palestine] that work on BDS, you see this is only part of the strategy that they developed, believing that it should accompany other strategies. To actually work on ending injustice here means that you also need to tackle the causes related to this.”<sup>355</sup>

Clearly, the BDS movement has a role to play in the Palestinian struggle, particularly across borders, but for all its campaign achievements and its innovative new form of transnational activism in the struggle, the BDS movement alone cannot resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. According to Erakat,

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<sup>354</sup> Samia al-Botmeh PACBI, interview by author, 28 February 2012.

<sup>355</sup> Nidal Abu Zuluf, YMCA and YWCA-JAI, interview by author, 7 March 2012.

“...the three rights-based demands enshrined in the BDS call are necessary but not sufficient for the achievement of national self-determination. In addition, they do not correspond to a particular political program among Palestinians...[thus] BDS’s major successes can only expand the call for rights....”<sup>356</sup>

Given Erakat’s statement above, it is important to note again that the BDS movement takes no political position on a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This has been a critique of the movement from numerous scholars and activists alike, though arguably the call’s demands have acted as a common denominator and unifying force for gaining support and mobilizing participants.

It is important that the BDS movement (part of the means) not be confused with the ends, whatever this may be. Political tactics alone, despite strategically forming a larger transnational movement, are but one piece of a much larger puzzle for resolving the decades-long colonial conflict. Here the lessons of the South African experience are all too apt. BDS campaigns were part of a broader movement to bring down apartheid, and although crucially important in that struggle, there was much work done on numerous other fronts to bring formal apartheid to an end in that country.

Clearly the BDS movement is a critical element, among others, of the wider Palestinian struggle for justice and legal scholars such as Erakat are correct that the movement’s scope is insufficient for solving the Palestinian problem. It can, however, create conditions towards that end, which is important for understanding the value and power of the movement. According to BRICUP Secretary Robert Boyce,

“As with all great events in modern history, it won’t be BDS movement alone that brings change, but as the crisis unfolds in the region, BDS offers another way of understanding it and giving it coherence for

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<sup>356</sup> Erakat, “Beyond Sterile Negotiations,” 3.

people. This enables people to put what they read on the front page of the newspaper and the television news into a different context.”<sup>357</sup>

Thus, the BDS movement has an important role to play in bringing the Palestinian struggle to many sites around the world, and provides a way for people to think (and potentially act) towards Palestine. I have argued throughout this thesis that the BDS movement embodies a new form of transnational activism in the Palestinian struggle, and thus a novel way to challenge Israel. It does this in various ways (e.g. its well-known collective action frames and organizational dynamics), which should be appreciated and contextualized within the broader Palestinian struggle.

The next challenge for the movement is in regards to its organizational dynamics. The organizational structures and processes of the BDS movement were analyzed in depth in the previous chapter, and I argued in the previous section that these dynamics are comparable to other contemporary social movements working on causes associated with global justice. In part, the movement’s organizational dynamics contribute to it being a new way of challenging Israel in the Palestinian struggle. Not only novel, but also a great strength as the movement can be operationalized practically anywhere in the world through its emphasis on context-sensitivity and the important role of local organizing. Nevertheless, the movement’s structure is also a potential weakness. With respect to networks, Collins says, “a system built on networks also leaves itself vulnerable to attack from virtually anywhere.”<sup>358</sup> This has occurred in the BDS movement, some of which has been documented and analyzed in the case study chapters in the subsection on “Dynamics between BDS Campaigners and Opponents.” However, this only represents a

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<sup>357</sup> Robert Boyce, BRICUP, interview by author, 18 June 2013.

<sup>358</sup> Collins, 14.

modicum of what opponents of the BDS movement have and intend to do in terms of disrupting BDS activism and attempting to debilitate the movement. As the BDS movements grows and expands, so too will anti-BDS endeavors.

In addition to the ability to attack the movement on numerous fronts due to its decentralized and networked form, a number of scholars and activists have argued that the movement's form also lacks coherence, which limits the movement's ability to stave off attack. Carter Hallward says, "While decentralization and diversity allow campaigns to be rooted in local realities, the lack of coherence across campaigns – particularly the lack of a common set of aims, goals, and discipline – has limitations."<sup>359</sup> Similar to Collins, Carter Hallward believes that the movement's structure can leave it vulnerable to attack by opponents. Because the movement is comprised of local campaigns across borders, Carter Hallward says the decisions and actions of any local BDS campaign can have repercussions for the broader movement. Opponents can rally fear around a local campaign and then make the claim that a particular campaign is "illustrative of the 'movement.'"<sup>360</sup>

The foregoing analysis is in no way meant to imply that the BDS movement could or should become more centralized to prevent attack on its constituent campaigns. As I have argued, the organizational structure and processes of the movement are part of what makes the movement in its current form viable and an innovative, new way to resist Israel. At first glance, centralizing the movement may seem a solution to persistent attack on local BDS campaigns; however, centralization would create other, new sets of challenges and limitations for the movement. Assaults on the movement would continue by opponents but would be directed in different

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<sup>359</sup> Carter Hallward, 34.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid, 34.

directions, namely to the center of the movement. For example, if the movement were centralized, opponents could launch a lawfare campaign (as was the case with the academic boycott in Britain evidenced in chapter two and the We Divest campaign discussed in chapter three) directed at the core and potentially do substantial damage to the movement's principal infrastructure. While a decentralized structure leaves the movement vulnerable to attack from any direction, it also prevents the entire movement from being taken down with a lone offensive.

Rather than centralizing the movement and compromising not only its infrastructure, but also its character, the BDS movement will need to manage the damage that opponents seek to wrack on local campaigns. Without bestowing power to a central leadership, the movement could try to coordinate better in this regard across borders. Knowledge sharing is key as more and more campaigns come under attack, some with serious financial and labor costs (as was the case with the Fraser case in the academic boycott of Britain that was discussed in chapter two). More coordinated support in various forms such a fundraising or legal support from other BDS campaigns would also be helpful to campaigns under attack. While context-sensitivity and local campaigns are key components of the broader movement's structure and processes, this does not mean that local campaigns need to survive these difficulties on their own.

The last challenge and limitation of the movement presented here regards the acceptability of some of the movement's targets. In the previous section on "BDS in a Global Justice Framework," I argued that targets of the BDS movement, particularly corporate targets, would likely be seen as legitimate to a range of activists working on various issues related to anti-globalization and global justice. A critique of the increasing political power of corporations has always been a central tenant of these

movements, which corresponds to corporate targets of the BDS movement that are chosen for their complicity in violations of international law and Palestinian rights. Framed in this way, BDS corporate targets can resonate with activists not specific to Palestine. This is a point of intersection that the BDS movement has with other movements, again thereby positioning itself with the possibility to gain greater support for the Palestinian cause.

Though many targets of the BDS movement are legitimate and easily identifiable to other activists, this may not be the case with all targets of the movement overall. Targets of the academic and cultural boycotts may be harder to legitimize to activists not specific to Palestine because these areas of activism are not high priorities to those working in the global justice movement, except as they relate to privatization of education or other aspects of neoliberal restructuring. Unlike product boycotts or divestment campaigns, the academic and cultural boycotts of Israel are more sector specific and do not necessarily appeal or apply to activists outside these fields, even to those that support the Palestinian struggle or are BDS activists. An activist that is not an academic can generally support the academic boycott, but will have few outlets for operationalizing this activism. For this reason, the academic boycott, for example, is largely taken up by those in the academic profession. Therefore, the academic and cultural boycotts do not provide as many points of intersection with activists working on other issues.

Targets of the academic and cultural boycotts are institutions, events, and other activities that are used for nefarious purposes of the state. For example, to implement the cultural boycott, artists that are scheduled to perform in Israel are often asked not to do so by BDS activists. While the cultural boycott addresses the global entertainment industry, and particularly Israel's entertainment industry, more

importantly it attempts to challenge Israel in a largely symbolic way – by bringing the boycott to the realm of culture it is designed to confront Israel’s international public relations apparatus, specifically those in the service of reproducing state-based narratives. The academic and cultural boycotts attempt to confront Israel on terrain that the state not only prides itself on, but also calls upon for the state’s maintenance and reproduction of its narrative. Until the BDS movement, these sectors have largely been spared confrontation with widespread Palestinian or solidarity resistance activism. For this reason, the academic and cultural boycotts are critical to the BDS movement as they are part of the larger strategic framework to bring the Palestinian struggle to a range of sectors, venues, etc. and challenge Israel on a numerous fronts.

One way to deal with this limitation of the movement is to continually try to popularize the issues and make them relevant to activists outside these fields. For example, thus far the BDS movement has been most successful in utilizing the tactic of cultural boycott when strategically deployed at cultural workers that are recognizable and popular to a variety of activists working on a range of causes. A recent example was the cancellation of a concert in Tel Aviv by the American artist Lauryn Hill. Known for her conscientious song writing of personal and political issues, Hill’s cancellation of her show in Israel reverberated far beyond activists in the BDS movement. Similarly, the academic boycott travels far beyond the confines of the academy when scholarly icons such as Stephen Hawking boycott academic conferences in Israel, as was the case in 2013. While not every campaign within the academic and cultural boycotts will resonate with activists outside these fields or the BDS movement, the movement seeks to make great strides whenever possible to make connections with a broader audience.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have considered how the BDS movement might strategize outcomes, specifically by conceptualizing the movement as a global justice framework and by addressing challenges and limitations of the movement. With respect to a global justice framework, I have outlined four points of intersection between the BDS movement and other contemporary transnational social movements organizing around issues related to global justice. These connections can be found in the movement's frames, targets, tactics, and organizational dynamics. The movement's frames of justice, corporate complicity, socially responsible investment, international law, and human rights are advantageous for positioning the movement within a wider discourse available to activists around the world working on a variety of justice-oriented causes. Targets of the movement, particularly corporate targets, are another link between the BDS movement and other movements as the role of corporations in violations of international law and (Palestinian) human rights are unacceptable to global justice activists. Similarly, the tactical repertoires of the movement (boycott, divestment, sanctions) are prominent, and often successful, forms of action that activists use to pressure for change from a range of entities. Finally, the organizational structure and processes of the BDS movement parallel how other social movements seeking to create a more just world organize campaigns across borders. Located in this framework, the movement has the potential to mobilize new participants and broaden its base of support, thereby positioning itself towards positive outcomes in the form of continuing campaign achievements and eventual movement goals.

While every social movement encounters difficulties, the challenges and limitations of the BDS movement outlined in this chapter are not a *fait accompli* for the movement. In particular, I have addressed three constraints and how the

movement might deal with each to overcome any major setback for the movement. The first is that the movement alone cannot resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. BDS exists alongside other tactics and strategies for challenging Israel, and the movement does not have the full capacity to bring justice to Palestinians. The movement does, however, play a critical role in bringing the Palestinian struggle to a variety of fronts across borders and provides a new way for people to understand the conflict. The second challenge for the movement is that its structure and processes could be a weakness as opponents are able to attack constituent campaigns of the movement from virtually any direction. In this regard, local campaigns (including the BNC) that comprise the movement could coordinate better across borders, especially in times of adversity to prevent local campaigns from shouldering the burden of a particular attack. Finally, I argued that not all targets of the movement, particularly those in the academic and cultural boycotts, are legitimate to activists outside the Palestinian cause. While these campaigns are vital to the larger BDS movement, especially as they target specific sectors essential to the state's narrative, the targets that can resonate with activists beyond these specific fields are very beneficial for the movement. Taken together, if drawbacks of the movement are acknowledged and managed appropriately there is no reason to suggest that opponents would be able to use any single weakness to incapacitate the movement entirely.

## Conclusion

In pursuing initial research for this thesis on Palestinian resistance, it became clear that the BDS movement played a role in current activism, though because of its newness, there were few scholarly forays into the topic. Thus, this study set out to explore the relatively un-researched BDS movement, at the very least to conduct a pioneering full-scale investigation on the movement. The research began with the questions, what are the causal conditions that led to the movement's emergence, what mobilizing dynamics helped the movement develop, and how can the movement strategically conceptualize moving toward outcomes? I was specifically interested in understanding how the movement is organized and operationalized across borders to determine the place of such transnational activism in the Palestinian struggle and within a broader global justice framework.

To conduct this study, secondary questions guided the research process and facilitated the structuring of the thesis. To answer the questions I first considered the historical background to the movement, comparing the movement to other forms of challenging Israel and the rise of the BDS movement through both structural factors of political opportunities and constraints and agentic factors of early mobilizing dynamics. I then examined in-depth three BDS campaign case studies to illuminate aspects of the larger movement, particularly how the movement is operationalized across borders through its constituent campaigns. Lastly, I analyzed organizing dynamics of the BDS movement through the movement's organizational structure and processes along with strategizing movement outcomes.

In this concluding chapter, I first synthesize the evidence from the study with respect to the research questions. This section integrates arguments made throughout

the thesis body chapters to demonstrate how the information and data presented in each chapter answers the research questions. In general, the presentation of analyses throughout the thesis relates to the movement's causal emergence, mobilizing dynamics, and outcomes. The section thereafter considers the implications and contributions of the study to the scholarly literature and the BDS movement itself. In this regard, this thesis adds to the literature on the BDS movement, Palestinian resistance, and social movement theory. I finish the chapter by considering the limitations of the study and corresponding areas for further research such as internal divisions in the BDS movement, pre-existing networks that assisted in the organizational development of the movement, and a comparative study of the BDS movement with other contemporary transnational movements.

### **Synthesizing the Evidence and Arguments**

With respect to the question about the movement's similarities or dissimilarities with other forms of challenging Israel, as analyzed in chapter one, the BDS movement draws on a long historical use of the tactical repertoire of boycott in the Palestinian struggle and border-crossing solidarity activism. In particular, the experience of boycotts, non-cooperation, and anti-normalization along with solidarity activism, especially that developed during the second intifada, accounts for a specific Palestinian context for the development of the BDS movement. That said, the movement differs dramatically from other historical forms of challenging Israel, such as the long-standing use of armed resistance in the Palestinian struggle and the Arab League boycott of Israel. Armed resistance is not part of the official Palestinian call for BDS made in 2005, nor are arms part of the BDS campaigns that are organized across borders. In addition, the Arab League boycott is a state-based initiative,

whereas the current BDS movement is initiated by non-state actors in grassroots organizing efforts.

While the BDS movement builds on the historical use of boycott and solidarity activism in the Palestinian struggle, it fuses these strategies and tactics, and transcends their isolated use in a specific place such as Israel/Palestine. The current BDS movement has a wide scope geographically as the movement can be organized anywhere and applies to a variety of sectors (academic, culture, sports, etc.). This difference in scope, tactical repertoire, and organizational structure partially accounts for the movement being a new and different form of transnational activism in the Palestinian struggle.

In terms of why the BDS movement emerged at this particular historical juncture, the evidence suggests that a number of structural and agency-related factors led to the creation of the BDS movement. Utilizing the political processes approach within social movement theory, I examined the political constraints and opportunities that led to a context for the development of the BDS movement. In this respect, the counterproductive Oslo process acted as a constraint in the Palestinian political system because it failed to deliver meaningful change to Palestinians, and in many instances made matters worse. The political environment created by the Oslo process and its fallout revealed that negotiations were a failed strategy for establishing Palestinian justice. At the same time, initial mobilizing efforts around a tactical repertoire of boycott started to emerge, which created mobilizing dynamics that developed more after the official Palestinian call for BDS was made. These early initiatives included the call for a moratorium on joint research funding between Europe and Israel, and divestment campaigns on US university campuses and in Christian Churches. Shortly thereafter, the ICJ declared in its Advisory Opinion that

Israel's wall is illegal under international law. Activists seized the moment and interpreted the Opinion as a political opportunity for showcasing Israel's violations of international law, citing it in most BDS activities afterwards, including the official Palestinian call in 2005. In this way, the ICJ Advisory Opinion helped international law become a collective action frame of the movement.

While these initial mobilizing activities helped set in motion a transnational movement, it was the Palestinian call for BDS in 2005 that became a major turning point in the movement, and this responds to the research question about when a movement can be discerned. Palestinians made an official call to action that provided a rationale and formulated demands based on the historical experiences of the three disconnected segments of the Palestinian population. Much of what was written in the call had been previously articulated in early boycott and divestment activities, and thus represented a culmination of these initiatives. Because the call is broadly based in terms of Palestinian representation and endorsement, it is widely supported among Palestinians and solidarity activists. Thus, the official Palestinian call gave focus to ongoing BDS activities and helped solidify disconnected boycott and divestment initiatives into a border-crossing movement.

I then investigated three BDS campaign case studies to answer the question about how local campaigns within the movement are operationalized. In this regard, the academic boycott in Britain and the We Divest campaign illustrate how the movement is decentralized, and uses vertical and horizontal forms of organizing. The dynamics between academic boycott campaigners and opponents, as indicated by the Fraser case, and to a lesser extent the attempts by Shurat HaDin against the We Divest campaign, indicate that lawfare is an important strategy for those against BDS in attempting to silence BDS activists and debilitate the movement. In addition, the We

Divest campaign and consumer boycott campaigns against Ahava show the use of collective action frames such as human rights and other international laws, corporate complicity, etc. that activists use to gain support for the movement by blaming targets and providing a justification for boycott. These frames parallel those of other contemporary transnational movements, and as I argued later in the thesis, are a point of intersection between the BDS movement and other movements organizing around issues related to global justice. Therefore, the evidence showcased in the three case study chapters demonstrates aspects of the movement's scope, organizational structure, and collective action frames, which contributes to my overall claim that the movement is a novel approach for resisting Israel.

Following the case study chapters, I set out to answer the research question relating to how the movement is organized across borders. To do this, I first considered the role of the Palestinian BNC in the transnational movement and addressed the question of leadership, specifically how the movement is Palestinian-led. I argued that the principles and goals of the movement, the historical use of the tactical repertoire of boycott in the Palestinian struggle, many of the foundational efforts for organizing a transnational movement, and BDS activities organized in the Palestinian territories are all Palestinian-led. Outside these areas, as indicated in the case study chapters and in the early BDS activities discussed in chapter one, groups and organizations in the BDS movement decide for themselves how to operationalize the movement in their locale. Context sensitivity is a critical feature of the movement's structure as it makes possible a decentralized BDS movement across borders. The organizational structure of the movement allows activists to challenge Israel in different places around the world and bring the Palestinian struggle to a range of venues such as union meetings, academic conferences, church assemblies,

storefronts, etc. Finally, I analyzed how the BDS movement is comprised of a dense web of connections among groups. The movement consists of networks upon networks and through informal, loose coordination via participant websites, social networking sites, email lists, and frequent in-person gatherings such as conferences and IAW.

The next research question asked how the BDS movement fits within a larger global justice framework. To respond to this, I analyzed four points of intersection between the BDS movement and other contemporary transnational movements, which included movement frames, targets, tactics, and organizational structure and processes. The movement's frames (human rights and other forms of international law, corporate complicity, justice, etc.), targets (especially corporate targets), its tactical repertoire of boycott, and its decentralized structure and processes, parallels other movements working on justice related causes across borders. I argued that this provides the movement with critical connective linkages that are used to expand its support.

To answer the final research question on the movement's challenges and limitations, I outlined three areas that are important for the movement's development. The first is that the movement alone cannot resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is an important contributing component to the broader Palestinian struggle, yet insufficient alone in its capacity to create a political solution to the conflict. The movement can create conditions towards that end in the form of weakening Israel's institutional capacity to oppress Palestinians, but another mechanism is needed for moving beyond this to create a just solution. The second challenge of the movement relates to its organizational structure and processes. Due to the movement's decentralized and networked form, opponents of the movement have the power to

attack the movement on many fronts. As the movement is comprised of many local, community-based campaigns, those that seek to weaken the movement can attempt significant damage by exhausting the physical and fiscal resources of local campaigns. Finally, I argued that while some targets of the movement, particularly corporate targets, are legitimate and resonate with activists not specific to Palestine, other targets, such as some in the academic and cultural boycott might not have the connective linkages with other movements. If these challenges within the movement are acknowledged and managed, organizing dynamics in the movement can be strengthened.

Thus, taken together and in comparison with other forms of resisting Israel, these findings show that based on the movement's geographic and multi-sector scope, its decentralized organizational structure that uses vertical and horizontal forms of organizing through networks of Palestinians and solidarity activists, and its collective action frames of international law, corporate complicity, justice, etc., it represents a new and different approach to challenging Israel in the Palestinian struggle.

### **Implications and Contributions of the Study**

This study is one of the first to analyze the BDS movement, and as such has unique implications and contributions to the scholarly literature and movement alike. As indicated in the review of BDS literature in the introduction to this thesis, the texts included in this area are small, but growing. This thesis adds to this corpus, and is one of the only studies to analyze the movement's operationalization across borders. As part of an expanding literature on the movement, this research has specifically proffered insight into the causes for the movement's emergence and how the border-crossing movement is organized. This is important not only because studies on the

movement are few, but also for coherently presenting information and data on the movement that can be utilized in future studies. While this thesis sets a solid foundation for a preliminary analysis of the movement, it is hoped that this study introduces new questions for further research, some of which I discuss in the section below.

This study also contributes to the literature on Palestinian resistance as BDS activism is a contemporary form of challenging Israel. In particular, this study has demonstrated how the movement draws on the historical use of a boycott repertoire and related practices along with border-crossing solidarity activism in the Palestinian struggle. This was essential for establishing a specific Palestinian context in the rise of the transnational movement. Yet, the movement differs considerably from other forms of confronting Israel such as the armed resistance and the state-based Arab League boycott. In this way, this thesis has supplemented the broader literature on Palestinian resistance by situating the movement in a historical trajectory, and analyzing the ways the movement is similar to or dissimilar from other forms of challenging Israel. As one of the main forms of resisting Israel at the present time, research on the BDS movement plays an important role in deepening analyses on strategies and tactics used in the Palestinian struggle for justice.

In constructing a theoretical framework for researching the BDS movement, I utilized theoretical concepts from the literature to create a tool-kit for analyzing the BDS movement. This included political constraints and opportunities, mobilizing dynamics, collective action frames, and (tactical) repertoire. These concepts were the best suited for investigating the movement as they provided a framework for answering the thesis research questions. Specifically, these concepts provided a way for analyzing the structural and agentic factors that led to the movement's emergence,

and how the movement is organized across borders. The framework that I formed for investigating the movement represents a synthesis of approaches available in social movement theory, and thus contributes to the literature by providing an integrative analysis that is based in a contemporary example.

In addition to established concepts available in the social movement literature, I have also sought to include the notion of crafting movement-relevant research where possible. My aim in including this in my theoretical framework for researching the BDS movement was to critically engage in the social movement literature and produce research that would be practically relevant for activists. While Bevington and Dixon's call for producing movement-relevant theory might slowly be gaining traction, there is still very little available in the literature. In part, this study contributes to a movement-relevant analysis by acknowledging the importance of such considerations in researching social movements, and particularly does so in this thesis with respect to the BDS movement's challenges and limitations. In addition to contributing to the scholarly literature on social movements, it is hoped that aspects of this thesis are relevant and practical for the BDS movement. As already noted the section on the movement's challenges and limitations in particular is important for addressing how the movement can manage impediments and further expand.

### **Limitations of the Study and Further Research**

Because this is one of the first major studies on the BDS movement, it advances a number of areas that could be researched further to contribute to studies on the movement, transnational activism in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and border-crossing social movements. While this study considered the dynamic interactions between BDS campaigners and opponents, this thesis did not investigate internal

divisions within the movement itself. In developing initial research questions for studying the BDS movement this aspect did not seem significant, as it is not a topic extensively covered in the existing social movement literature. Only when considering the nexus between the BDS movement's limitations and crafting movement-relevant research did it become clear that pursuing this line of interrogation would be greatly beneficial to the movement and fill a gap in the literature. Starting points might include addressing what issues divide activists in the BDS movement and investigating where internal divisions are occurring most (i.e. within campaigns, between campaigns, between the Palestinian BNC and BDS campaigns, etc.). Additional questions might include how the movement deals with its internal divisions, and what effects (negative and positive) have been the result of such disagreements? Research in this area can help the movement understand what kinds of divisions there are, where they are most prominent, and how to best deal with them as opportunities for strengthening and advancing the movement.

Further research could also be pursued on the pre-existing networks that assisted in the development of the BDS movement. Social movements are often built on the organizational infrastructure of previous movements and investigating these networks in the case of the BDS movement would deepen and expand an analysis of the movement's emergence, particularly at an operational level. What is the organizational groundwork that the movement builds on – prior solidarity networks, diaspora networks, the anti-war movement, anti-globalization/global justice activism? In this thesis, I have argued that a number of causal conditions led to the emergence of the movement, but investigating the networks that existed prior to the formation of the movement would answer other questions about how the movement could organizationally take off, especially across borders. It would be helpful to examine the

organizational capacity that the BDS movement draws on and how the movement has utilized these underpinnings in creating a movement. This line of questioning would contribute to greater understanding on the organizational origins of the movement and would add to the literature on movement building in social movement theory.

Finally, a comparative analysis of the BDS movement with other contemporary transnational social movements would be very useful. This kind of study would inform an analysis of organizational features of the BDS movement that are unique and aspects that are generalizable to transnational activism. In this thesis, I briefly analyzed four points of intersection that the BDS movement has with other border-crossing movements that work on justice related causes. These interconnections, and others, could be more fully developed to create an analytical framework for comparing the BDS movement and other transnational movements. For example, how has the human rights frame developed in various movements, how is it deployed, and is it effective in creating the desired social and political change these movements wish to see? Another area might consider what global and domestic mechanisms have led to the development of decentralized movements and horizontal organizing practices in transnational movements. A comparative approach would illuminate organizational dynamics of the BDS movement that are specific to Palestine activism and those that apply to organizing transnational activism more broadly.

## **Conclusion**

I began this thesis by investigating Palestinian resistance in general to understand a dimension of Palestinian politics that related to my previous research, though was a topic I had spent little time formally analyzing. During that time, questions about the

BDS movement arose, but due to the movement being relatively new there were few scholarly texts available from which to seek answers. To fill a gap in the literature and answer these research questions, I then began one of the first major studies on the movement. In this thesis, I have illustrated that the movement is a novel and distinctive approach to challenging Israel in the Palestinian struggle. It confronts Israel across the globe in a wide range of venues, and in a variety of sectors. The movement does this through a decentralized structure, with horizontal and vertical forms of organizing that occurs through extensive networks of Palestinians and solidarity activists. The movement thematically focuses on Israel's violations of international law and Palestinian human rights, showing how corporations are complicit in these violations, thereby strategically framing the movement in a way that resonates with other activists working on justice related causes across borders. While the BDS movement does not guarantee an elimination of Palestinian oppression, it has the potential to affect future dynamics in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and create conditions conducive to achieving Palestinian justice.

## Appendix I: Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS

Palestinian Civil Society Calls for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel Until it Complies with International Law and Universal Principles of Human Rights

9 July 2005

One year after the historic Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) which found Israel's Wall built on occupied Palestinian territory to be illegal; Israel continues its construction of the colonial Wall with total disregard to the Court's decision. Thirty eight years into Israel's occupation of the Palestinian West Bank (including East Jerusalem), Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan Heights, Israel continues to expand Jewish colonies. It has unilaterally annexed occupied East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights and is now de facto annexing large parts of the West Bank by means of the Wall. Israel is also preparing – in the shadow of its planned redeployment from the Gaza Strip – to build and expand colonies in the West Bank. Fifty seven years after the state of Israel was built mainly on land ethnically cleansed of its Palestinian owners, a majority of Palestinians are refugees, most of whom are stateless. Moreover, Israel's entrenched system of racial discrimination against its own Arab-Palestinian citizens remains intact.

In light of Israel's persistent violations of international law; and

Given that, since 1948, hundreds of UN resolutions have condemned Israel's colonial and discriminatory policies as illegal and called for immediate, adequate and effective remedies; and

Given that all forms of international intervention and peace-making have until now failed to convince or force Israel to comply with humanitarian law, to respect fundamental human rights and to end its occupation and oppression of the people of Palestine; and

In view of the fact that people of conscience in the international community have historically shouldered the moral responsibility to fight injustice, as exemplified in the struggle to abolish apartheid in South Africa through diverse forms of boycott, divestment and sanctions; and

Inspired by the struggle of South Africans against apartheid and in the spirit of international solidarity, moral consistency and resistance to injustice and oppression;

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

Endorsed by:

The Palestinian political parties, unions, associations, coalitions and organizations below represent the three integral parts of the people of Palestine: Palestinian refugees, Palestinians under occupation and Palestinian citizens of Israel.

#### Unions, Associations, Campaigns

Council of National and Islamic Forces in Palestine (Coordinating body for the major political parties in the Occupied Palestinian Territory)  
Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizen's Rights (PICCR)  
Union of Arab Community Based Associations (ITTIJAH), Haifa  
Forum of Palestinian NGOs in Lebanon  
Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU)  
General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW)  
General Union of Palestinian Teachers (GUPT)  
Federation of Unions of Palestinian Universities' Professors and Employees  
Consortium of Professional Associations  
Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees (UPMRC)  
Health Work Committees – West Bank  
Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC)  
Union of Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC)  
Union of Health Work Committees – Gaza (UHWC)  
Union of Palestinian Farmers  
Occupied Palestine and Syrian Golan Heights Advocacy Initiative (OPGAI)  
General Union of Disabled Palestinians  
Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committees (PFWAC)  
Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI)  
Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign  
Union of Teachers of Private Schools  
Union of Women's Work Committees, Tulkarem (UWWC)  
Dentists' Association – Jerusalem Center  
Palestinian Engineers Association  
Lawyers' Association  
Network for the Eradication of Illiteracy and Adult Education, Ramallah  
Coordinating Committee of Rehabilitation Centers – West Bank  
Coalition of Lebanese Civil Society Organizations (150 organizations)  
Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR), Network of Student-based Canadian University Associations

## Refugee Rights Associations/Organizations

Al-Ard Committees for the Defense of the Right of Return, Syria  
Al-Awda Charitable Society, Beit Jala  
Al Awda – Palestine Right-to-Return Coalition, U.S.A  
Al-Awda Toronto  
Aidun Group – Lebanon  
Aidun Group – Syria  
Alowwad Cultural and Theatre Training Center, Aida refugee camp  
Association for the Defense of the Rights of the Internally Displaced (ADRID),  
Nazareth  
BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, Bethlehem  
Committee for Definite Return, Syria  
Committee for the Defense of Palestinian Refugee Rights, Nablus  
Consortium of the Displaced Inhabitants of Destroyed Palestinian Villages and Towns  
Filastinuna – Commission for the Defense of the Right of Return, Syria  
Handala Center, ‘Azza (Beit Jibreen) refugee camp, Bethlehem  
High Committee for the Defense of the Right of Return, Jordan

(including personal endorsement of 71 members of parliament, political parties and unions in Jordan)

High National Committee for the Defense of the Right of Return , Ramallah  
International Right of Return Congress (RORC)  
Jermana Youth Forum for the Defense of the Right of Return, Syria  
Laji Center, Aida camp, Bethlehem  
Local Committee for Rehabilitation, Qalandia refugee camp, Jerusalem  
Local Committee for Rehabilitation of the Disabled, Deheishe refugee camp,  
Bethlehem  
Palestinian National Committee for the Defense of the Right of Return, Syria  
Palestinian Return Association, Syria  
Palestinian Return Forum, Syria  
Palestine Right-of-Return Coalition (Palestine, Arab host countries, Europe, North  
America)  
Palestine Right-of-Return Confederation-Europe (Austria, Denmark, France,  
Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden)  
Palestinian Youth Forum for the Right of Return, Syria  
PLO Popular Committees – West Bank refugee camps  
PLO Popular Committees – Gaza Strip refugee camps  
Popular Committee – al-’Azza (Beit Jibreen) refugee camp, Bethlehem  
Popular Committee – Deheishe refugee camp, Bethlehem  
Shaml – Palestinian Diaspora and Refugee Center, Ramallah  
Union of Women’s Activity Centers – West Bank Refugee Camps  
Union of Youth Activity Centers – Palestine Refugee Camps, West Bank and Gaza  
Women’s Activity Center – Deheishe refugee camp, Bethlehem  
Yafa Cultural Center, Balata refugee camp, Nablus

## Organizations

Abna’ al-Balad Society, Nablus

Addameer Center for Human Rights, Gaza  
 Addameer Prisoners' Support and Human Rights Association, Ramallah  
 Alanqa' Cultural Association, Hebron  
 Al-Awda Palestinian Folklore Society, Hebron  
 Al-Doha Children's Cultural Center, Bethlehem  
 Al-Huda Islamic Center, Bethlehem  
 Al-Jeel al-Jadid Society, Haifa  
 Al-Karameh Cultural Society, Um al-Fahm  
 Al-Maghazi Cultural Center, Gaza  
 Al-Marsad Al-Arabi, occupied Syrian Golan Heights  
 Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights, Gaza  
 Al-Nahda Cultural Forum, Hebron  
 Al-Taghrid Society for Culture and Arts, Gaza  
 Alternative Tourism Group, Beit Sahour (ATG)  
 Al-Wafa' Charitable Society, Gaza  
 Applied Research Institute Jerusalem (ARIJ)  
 Arab Association for Human Rights, Nazareth (HRA)  
 Arab Center for Agricultural Development (ACAD)  
 Arab Center for Agricultural Development-Gaza  
 Arab Educational Institute – Open Windows (affiliated with Pax Christie International)  
 Arab Orthodox Charitable Society – Beit Sahour  
 Arab Orthodox Charity – Beit Jala  
 Arab Orthodox Club – Beit Jala  
 Arab Orthodox Club – Beit Sahour  
 Arab Students' Collective, University of Toronto  
 Arab Thought Forum, Jerusalem (AFT)  
 Association for Cultural Exchange Hebron – France  
 Association Najdeh, Lebanon  
 Authority for Environmental Quality, Jenin  
 Bader Society for Development and Reconstruction, Gaza  
 Canadian Palestine Foundation of Quebec, Montreal  
 Center for the Defense of Freedoms, Ramallah  
 Center for Science and Culture, Gaza  
 Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ramallah- Al-Bireh District  
 Child Development and Entertainment Center, Tulkarem  
 Committee for Popular Participation, Tulkarem  
 Defense for Children International-Palestine Section, Ramallah (DCI/PS)  
 El-Funoun Palestinian Popular Dance Troupe  
 Ensan Center for Democracy and Human Rights, Bethlehem  
 Environmental Education Center, Bethlehem  
 FARAH – Palestinian Center for Children, Syria  
 Ghassan Kanafani Society for Development, Gaza  
 Ghassan Kanafani Forum, Syria  
 Gaza Community Mental Health Program, Gaza (GCMHP)  
 Golan for Development, occupied Syrian Golan Heights  
 Halhoul Cultural Forum, Hebron  
 Himayeh Society for Human Rights, Um al-Fahm  
 Holy Land Trust – Bethlehem  
 Home of Saint Nicholas for Old Ages – Beit Jala

Human Rights Protection Center, Lebanon  
 In'ash al-Usrah Society, Ramallah  
 International Center of Bethlehem (Dar An-Nadweh)  
 Islah Charitable Society-Bethlehem  
 Jafra Youth Center, Syria  
 Jander Center, al-Azza (Beit Jibreen) refugee camp, Bethlehem  
 Jerusalem Center for Women, Jerusalem (JCW)  
 Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center (JLAC )  
 Khalil Al Sakakini Cultural Center, Ramallah  
 Land Research Center, Jerusalem (LRC)  
 Liberated Prisoners' Society, Palestine  
 Local Committee for Social Development, Nablus  
 Local Committee for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled, Nablus  
 MA'AN TV Network, Bethlehem  
 Medical Aid for Palestine, Canada  
 MIFTAH-Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy,  
 Ramallah  
 Muwatin-The Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy  
 National Forum of Martyr's Families, Palestine  
 Near East Council of Churches Committee for Refugee Work – Gaza Area  
 Network of Christian Organizations – Bethlehem (NCOB)  
 Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace, Jerusalem  
 Palestinian Counseling Center, Jerusalem (PCC)  
 Palestinian Democratic Youth Union, Lebanon  
 Palestinian Farmers' Society, Gaza  
 Palestinian Hydrology Group for Water and Environment Resources Development  
 Gaza  
 Palestinian Prisoners' Society-West Bank  
 Palestinian Society for Consumer Protection, Gaza  
 Palestinian University Students' Forum for Peace and Democracy, Hebron  
 Palestinian Women's Struggle Committees  
 Palestinian Working Women Society for Development (PWWSD)  
 Popular Art Centre, Al-Bireh  
 Prisoner's Friends Association – Ansar Al-Sajeen, Majd al-Krum  
 Public Aid Association, Gaza  
 Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies  
 Saint Afram Association – Bethlehem  
 Saint Vincent De Paule – Beit Jala  
 Senior Citizen Society – Beit Jala  
 Social Development Center, Nablus  
 Society for Self-Development, Hebron  
 Society for Social Work, Tulkarem  
 Society for Voluntary Work and Culture, Um al-Fahm  
 Society of Friends of Prisoners and Detainees, Um al-Fahm  
 Sumoud-Political Prisoners Solidarity Group, Toronto  
 Tamer Institute for Community Education, Ramallah  
 TCC – Teacher's Creativity Center, Ramallah  
 Wi'am Center, Bethlehem  
 Women's Affairs Technical Committee, Ramallah and Gaza (WATC)  
 Women's Studies Center, Jerusalem (WSC)

Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling, Jerusalem (WCLAC)  
Yafa for Education and Culture, Nablus  
Yazour Charitable Society, Nablus  
YMCA-East Jerusalem  
Youth Cooperation Forum, Hebron  
YWCA-Palestine  
Zakat Committee-al-Khader, Bethlehen  
Zakat Committee-Deheishe camp, Bethlehem  
The Palestinian Center for Rapprochement between People (PCR)  
Alternative Voice in the Galilee (AVIG)

## Appendix II: BDS Survey

1. What is the name of your organization or group?
2. Where is your group located?  
City/Town:  
Country:  
Email Address:
3. When was your group established?
4. When did your group start supporting BDS?
5. It is important to support the BDS movement because the principles and ideas are Palestinian-led.  
Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree
6. BDS campaigns are the most important way solidarity activists can contribute to the Palestinian struggle.  
Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree
7. BDS worked in South Africa so it could work in Israel/Palestine.  
Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree
8. My group supports BDS because it is flexible. It allows activists to decide their own targets for BDS campaigns and strategies for confronting those targets.  
Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree
9. One reason my group supports BDS is because campaigns can be done anywhere in the world.  
Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree
10. BDS campaigns are the most effective way to pressure Israel to comply with international law and human rights.  
Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral

- Disagree  
Strongly Disagree
11. BDS campaigns are the most effective way to raise awareness about Israel's violations of international law and human rights.  
Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree
12. BDS campaigns can change the discourse on Israel/Palestine.  
Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree
13. If there are any other reasons that your group supports BDS that have not been mentioned in this survey, please include these reasons.
14. My group primarily works on BDS campaigns.  
Yes  
No  
Other (please specify)
15. My group has worked on other Palestine solidarity activities in the past, but now we mainly focus on BDS.  
Yes  
No  
Other (please specify)
16. BDS campaigns must be combined with other solidarity activities (e.g. sending medical supplies, planting olive trees, participating in demonstrations against the wall, etc.) to obtain justice and rights for Palestinians.  
Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree
17. What kind of BDS campaigns does your group work on? (check all that apply)  
Academic Boycott  
Cultural Boycott  
Product Boycott - any products from Israel  
Product Boycott - only products from Israeli settlements  
Sports Boycott  
Divestment - from Israeli or foreign companies that are connected to the state of Israel  
Divestment - from companies that are involved in Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories  
Sanctions  
Other (please specify)
18. My group coordinates with the Palestinian Boycott National Committee (BNC).  
Frequently  
As Needed

- Never
19. My group coordinates with other Palestine solidarity groups on BDS campaigns.
- Frequently  
As Needed  
Never
20. Coordination between Palestine solidarity groups working on BDS campaigns and the BNC should increase.
- Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree
21. Coordination between Palestine solidarity groups working on BDS campaigns should increase.
- Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree
22. Please feel free to add any additional information to this survey in the space below.

## Appendix III: Call for Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel

Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI)  
6 July 2004

Whereas Israel's colonial oppression of the Palestinian people, which is based on Zionist ideology, comprises the following:

- Denial of its responsibility for the Nakba -- in particular the waves of ethnic cleansing and dispossession that created the Palestinian refugee problem -- and therefore refusal to accept the inalienable rights of the refugees and displaced stipulated in and protected by international law;
- Military occupation and colonization of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza since 1967, in violation of international law and UN resolutions;
- The entrenched system of racial discrimination and segregation against the Palestinian citizens of Israel, which resembles the defunct apartheid system in South Africa;

Since Israeli academic institutions (mostly state controlled) and the vast majority of Israeli intellectuals and academics have either contributed directly to maintaining, defending or otherwise justifying the above forms of oppression, or have been complicit in them through their silence,

Given that all forms of international intervention have until now failed to force Israel to comply with international law or to end its repression of the Palestinians, which has manifested itself in many forms, including siege, indiscriminate killing, wanton destruction and the racist colonial wall,

In view of the fact that people of conscience in the international community of scholars and intellectuals have historically shouldered the moral responsibility to fight injustice, as exemplified in their struggle to abolish apartheid in South Africa through diverse forms of boycott,

Recognizing that the growing international boycott movement against Israel has expressed the need for a Palestinian frame of reference outlining guiding principles,

In the spirit of international solidarity, moral consistency and resistance to injustice and oppression,

We, Palestinian academics and intellectuals, call upon our colleagues in the international community to ***comprehensively and consistently boycott all Israeli academic and cultural institutions*** as a contribution to the struggle to end Israel's occupation, colonization and system of apartheid, by applying the following:

1. Refrain from participation in any form of academic and cultural cooperation, collaboration or joint projects with Israeli institutions;

2. Advocate a comprehensive boycott of Israeli institutions at the national and international levels, including suspension of all forms of funding and subsidies to these institutions;
3. Promote divestment and disinvestment from Israel by international academic institutions;
4. Work toward the condemnation of Israeli policies by pressing for resolutions to be adopted by academic, professional and cultural associations and organizations;
5. Support Palestinian academic and cultural institutions directly without requiring them to partner with Israeli counterparts as an explicit or implicit condition for such support.

Endorsed by:

Palestinian Federation of Unions of University Professors and Employees; Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions; Palestinian NGO Network, West Bank; Teachers' Federation; Palestinian Writers' Federation; Palestinian League of Artists; Palestinian Journalists' Federation; General Union of Palestinian Women; Palestinian Lawyers' Association; and tens of other Palestinian federations, associations, and civil society organizations.

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