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## [The Boycott of Israel is Gaining Speed](#)

Posted on 08. Sep, 2010 by [Raja Mujtaba](#) in [Gaza Today](#)

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An Analysis By Professor Lawrence Davidson



On September 5, 2010 the Israel newspaper Haaretz published an article the headline of which read “[Anti-Israel Economic Boycotts are Gaining Speed.](#)” The subtitle went on to state that “the sums involved are not large, but their international significance is huge.” Actually, what seems to have triggered the piece was not international. Rather, it was the decision of a “few dozen theater people” to boycott “a new cultural center in Ariel,” an illegally settled town in the Occupied Territories. This action drew public support from 150 academics in Israel. The response from the Israeli right, which presently controls the government and much of Israel’s information environment, was loud and hateful.

Though this affair was domestic, it provided a jumping off point for Haaretz to go on and examine the larger international boycott of Israel which is indeed “gaining speed.” It noted that Chile had recently pledged to boycott products from the Israeli settlements and Norway’s state pension plan had divested itself of companies involved in construction in the Occupied Territories. The Haaretz article pointed out that these incidents (and there are others that can be named in such countries as Ireland and Venezuela) are signs that the boycott movement –so long the province civil society– is now finding resonance at the level of national governments. The Israeli paper declared that “the world is changing before our eyes. Five years ago the anti-Israel movement may have been marginal. Now it is growing into an economic problem.”

The article puts forth two explanations for this turn of events one of which is problematic, and the other incomplete. Let’s take a look at them.

1. “Until now boycott organizers had been on the far left. [Now] they have a new ally: Islamic organizations....The red side has a name for championing human rights, while the green side [the Islamic side] has money.” I have some personal knowledge of the boycott movement and I find some of these particulars to be, at best, exaggerations. The term “far left” must be based on some arbitrary Zionist definition of the political spectrum. Worldwide community support for the growing boycott movement has gone beyond political alignments. Today, it is a reflection of real united front seeking the promotion of Palestinian human rights (in this Haaretz is on the mark). As for the “green side” there is certainly an understandable affinity here. Muslims too are concerned about the human rights of Palestinians (including the Christians ones). However, the claim of any significant flow of cash is, as far as I know, another exaggeration. The Haaretz piece cites the

example of the aid flotilla to Gaza, with its link to Turkey. But this is just one case in a worldwide movement. And, there was nothing illegitimate (despite Israeli propaganda) about the involvement of Turkish charities. It might come as a surprise to the Israelis, but you can run a boycott movement without heavy outside funding—as was the case of the boycott against South Africa.

2. Haaretz continues, “but then came the occupation, which turned us into the evil Goliath, the cruel oppressor, a darkness on the nations.” The article suggests that this is such a contrast with the righteous stand that helped convince the West to support the original formation of Israel that many have turned away from Israel in disappointment. “And now we are paying the price of presenting ourselves as righteous and causing disappointment: boycott.” No doubt there is much disappointment. The horrors of Israeli expansionism and occupation are such that they draw worldwide attention. And rightly so. But, they are symptoms of some deeper cause. What might it be? The state of Israel was founded on an ideological program called Zionism. That program called for the establishment of a state designed to serve the exclusive interests of one religiously identified group. While the Zionists felt this aim was justified by the centuries of persecution suffered by European Jews, it actually carried within it the seeds of its own corruption. The simple truth is that you cannot successfully design a state for one group only unless you found it on some desert island. If you put it down in a place that is occupied by others who are not of your group, what is the most likely next step? You turn into racists, ethnic cleansers, or worse. The Zionist adherence to their ideology and its program is the cause of their turning into “cruel oppressors.” The means dictated by their end made it so.

The Haaretz article does not go beyond these points, but there is plenty more to say. Those who wonder whether they should support the boycott should certainly consider the horrors of the Israeli occupation and its ghettoizing of the people of Gaza. They might also consider the following:

1. The non-Jewish population of Israel proper, that is Israel within the 1967 borders (the “Green Line”) are subject to segregation and economic and social discrimination that is both de jure and de facto. Their overall standards of living are lower than the Israeli Jews, their educational facilities inferior and their economic prospects poorer. This is to be expected. If you are running your state based on a racist principle, by definition discrimination must infuse the home front. This fact does not appear to fit with the often heard claim that the Israelis are “just like us” Americans. However, in a rather anachronistic way they are “like us” – that is like the United States prior to our civil rights legislation. In other words, Israel is like, say, Georgia or Alabama circa the 1920s.

2. The second factor worthy of consideration is the negative international impact of Zionist ideology, for the harm Zionism is not confined to either Israel or its Occupied Territories. The fact is that Zionist influence spreads far beyond Israel’s area of dominion and now influences many of the policy making institutions of Western governments, and particularly those of the United States. This influence is corruptive if only because it distorts both official and popular notions of national interests in the Middle East. When you have a powerful and single-minded lobby that is able to manipulate your government in such a fashion that it pours its national treasure into a racist state, arms it and protects it to the point of becoming an accomplice to its crimes, and by doing so willfully alienates 22% of the world’s population, you know that your notion of national interest has been seriously mangled. This harmful influence makes it imperative that Israel’s oppressive behavior be singled out as a high priority case from among the many other oppressive regimes that may be candidates for boycott.

So no one in Israel, the U.S. or anywhere else should be surprised that the boycott against Israel, in its many manifestations, is “gaining speed.” If you are not yet a supporter you should become one. To join the boycott is good the world’s future in general. It is certainly good for the Palestinians, and yes, it is good for the Jews too.

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*Chester Pennsylvania. He is the author of *America's Palestine: Popular and Official Perceptions from Balfour to Israeli Statehood* (University Press of Florida, 2001), *Islamic Fundamentalism* (Greenwood Press, 2003), and, co-author with Arthur Goldschmidt of the *Concise History of the Middle East*, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Editions (Westview Press, 2006 and 2009). His latest book is entitled *Foreign Policy, Inc.: Privatizing American National Interest* (University of Kentucky Press, 2009). Professor Davidson travels often and widely in the Middle East. He also has taken on the role of public intellectual in order to explain to American audiences the impact of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East.*

*Davidson is a regular contributor to [Opinion Maker](#).*



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1.



Dr. A.K. Tewari

08. Sep, 2010

Dr. Devidson ,what impact it will have on Israeli economy if all muslim country will boycott when the maket of America, India, and China will remain open for them .I think it would be a futile excersize better option would be to recognise the existence of Israel and sign a peace deal with them.

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