

Supporting the AUT boycott of Haifa and Bar Ilan Universities

This Union Notes:

1. That the AUT is having an emergency conference on 26th May, as a result of complaints from some branches about the decision to boycott Haifa and Bar Ilan Universities in Israel.
2. That part of the the AUT motion says:
“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; ... 4. Exclude from the above actions against Israeli institutions any conscientious Israeli academics and intellectuals opposed to their state's colonial and racist policies;”
3. That this boycott is in line with similar action taken against institutions in South Africa during the apartheid, and with the call out made by pro-Palestine groups during the 5th World Social Forum in January 2005.
4. That the Israeli Minister of Education is alleged to have called for the firing of academics she has blacklisted as 'traitors of the national cause', i.e. Who do not support the occupation of Palestine, that this constitutes a restriction on Academic Freedom.
5. That it (UBU) already has policy in support of the Palestinian Cause but that the university's branch of the AUT has no formal view of the boycott.

This Union Believes:

1. That academic freedom is vital, but that while the Palestinians are subjected to restrictions on their academic freedom, and while Israeli academics are forced to support their government's actions, the Israeli University system should not be allowed to continue as normal.
2. That it is morally correct to use a boycott as a means of non violent support for the Palestinians that enables the international community to demand Israeli compliance with international law in relation to Palestinian human rights, self-determination and equality.
3. That these institutions have given specific reason to be boycotted. In the case of Bar Ilan, through helping to restrict the rights of Palestinians and in the case of Haifa through restricting the freedom of it's academics when they are critical of their government, in particular, noted academic Ilan Pape, who recently spoke at UK universities in opposition to the occupation.

This Union Resolves:

To support the AUT locally and nationally on this issue, and to issue the following statement:

“University of Bradford Union supports, in principle, the boycott of Bar Ilan and Haifa Universities, and calls on the AUT, and it's University of Bradford branch, to maintain the boycott in the face of the extreme pressure they are now receiving, and to respect the sovereignty of their annual conference in dictating the Union's future policy.

UBU supports calls for the Palestinian Right of Return, and for full freedoms to be granted to Palestinians living in Israel. It wishes to express solidarity with students and academics in Palestine who face immense hardship while trying to continue the normal course of Higher Education, especially local and international travel restrictions.”

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